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# Old Huntsville

HISTORY AND STORIES OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY



## The Glory Patch

Men would grow silent as they remembered the legends they had heard all their lives about places hidden in some dark cove on the side of the mountain where ginseng grew so thick you couldn't walk without stepping on the plants. It was rumored that some of the glory patches were so big that whoever found them would be set for life.

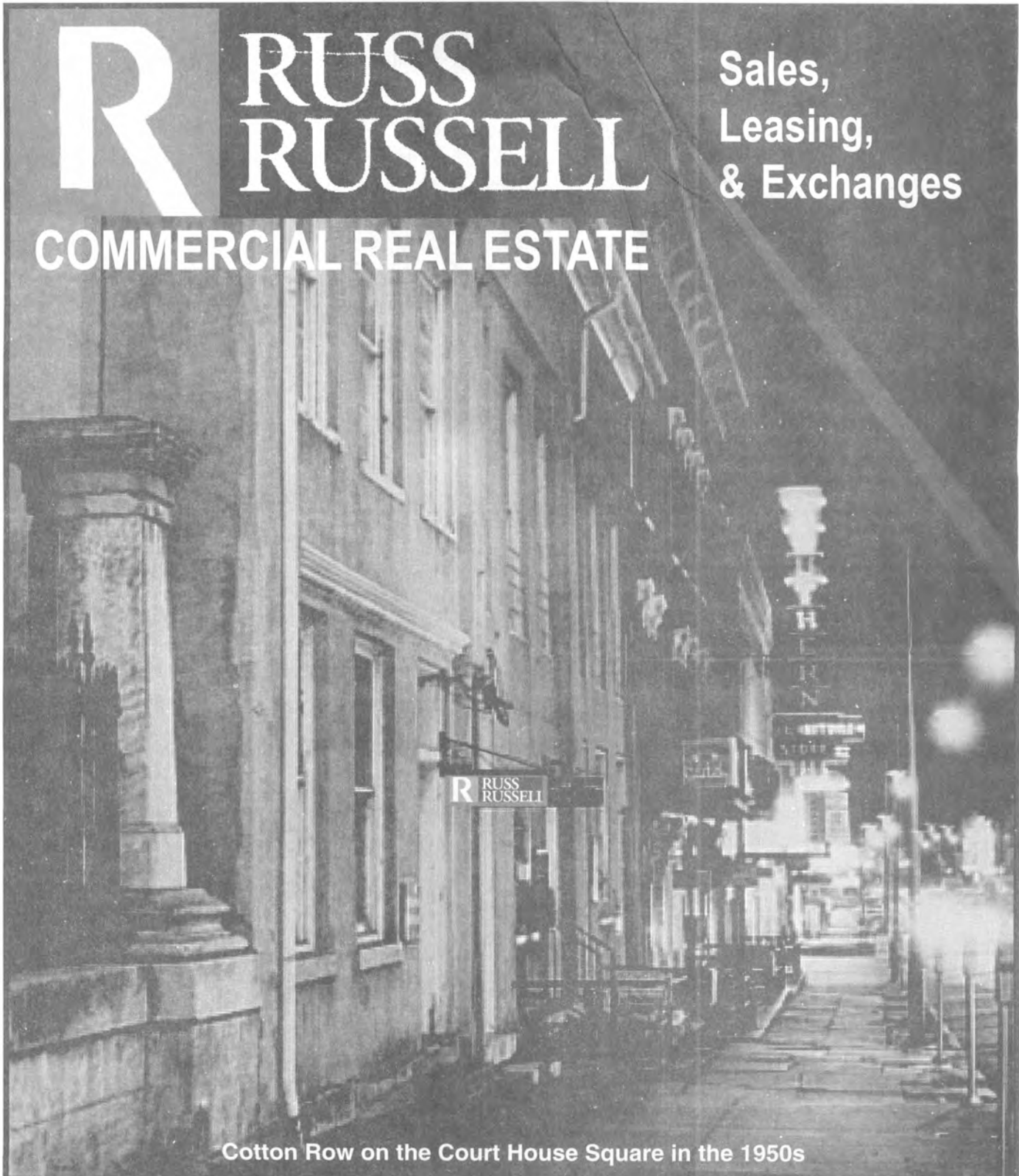
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# The Glory Patch

From the time early settlers first moved into the Tennessee Valley, they had looked to the nearby mountains for a source of income. The mountains provided timber, wild game and even coal for the fireplaces, but the most coveted treasure were the roots of a small plant known as ginseng.

Ginseng had been used for energy & medical purposes in China for thousands of years but, due to over-harvesting, had almost become extinct. By the 1800s most of China's ginseng was imported from the United States, with over 200,000 tons being shipped in a single year. Even Daniel Boone was involved in the business; gathering and trading for over two tons in a single year before losing it when a flat boat overturned.

High quality wild ginseng sells today for almost five hundred dollars a pound, so one can easily see the attraction it had for early settlers.

Many families, after the crops were laid by, would camp in the mountains and spend weeks at a time searching the coves and ridges for the elusive plant. As each year passed it became more difficult to find. By the 1930s ginseng in Madison County was almost extinct. It could still be found, if a person had the patience, but now success was measured by fractions of ounces rather than pounds.

The lure of finding instant riches was still strong enough to cause many men to toss and turn in bed at night as they agonized over where to hunt the following day. Whenever ginseng was found, regardless of how little, it became an intriguing topic of conversation. It was like striking gold. Men would gingerly touch the roots, trying to guess the age and weight. The lucky finder would be carefully questioned about the locale in which the plant was found. Were there many hardwood trees? What kind of rocks were nearby? How thick were the leaves on the ground? What were some of the landmarks?

This would almost always start a debate about the best place to find ginseng. The lucky finder, if he were experienced, would be evasive about the location. Many a "senger" could tell stories about finding a likely patch only to



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return the next day to find it had been completely dug out.

Once the conversation about the new find had died out, some one would invariably mention a story he had once heard about a "glory patch." Men would grow silent as they remembered the legends they had heard all their lives about places hidden in some dark cove on the side of the mountain where ginseng grew so thick you couldn't walk without stepping on the plants. It was rumored that some of the glory patches were so big that whoever found them would be set for life.

Whenever someone would express doubts about the existence of glory patches, they would quickly be put in their place by someone saying simply, "Mr. Taylor....."

Although Mr. Taylor was the kind of man whom legends were built around, no one really knew much about him. He was reported to have been somewhere around seventy or eighty years old at this time, always dressed in an old pair of overalls with an old army jacket, with pure white hair that flowed down to his shoulders. A birth defect had left him unable to speak but gestures and nods of his head allowed him to communicate during the rare times he chose to be around other people.

People were not even sure how they knew his name; he didn't

offer this information and no one was sure where the name came from.

Nothing is known of his childhood, or where he was born, except that at a young age, possibly because of his birth defect, he fled to the solitude of the mountains where he became a skilled trapper. Foxes, beaver and other fur bearing animals were plentiful if a person had the skill and could stand the loneliness and hardships of the life.

From all appearances Mr. Taylor had no home. At various times he would be seen as far south as the Tennessee River and north to the mountains of Jackson County. He never rode in a car or truck. Even when people would offer him a lift he would shake his head and continue walking. Most people assumed he lived in caves or abandoned cabins when the weather was too bad to camp out.

At that time many country stores supplemented their regular income by buying and selling farm produce, eggs and fur pelts. Once or twice a year Mr. Taylor would appear at one of these stores loaded down with bundles of skins. The store owners were

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"Because of your experienced staff

Betty's life was saved."



Steadman, Dr. Gilbert and Karen

always glad to see him as his pelts were always of the finest quality that could be sold for top prices.

Mr. Taylor would always stand quietly as the owner examined each skin and added the figures in a note book. After being paid he would motion to the proprietor for a can of pork and beans and crackers which he would take outside and eat before disappearing for another three or four months.

As far as is known, a can of pork and beans with crackers several times a year, along with an occasional box of shells for the old decrepid .22 rifle he carried, were the only items he ever purchased. No one knows what he did with the rest of his money.

Occasionally, if a farmer was plagued by foxes in his chicken pen or raccoons in the corn field he would leave word, along with a few coins, for Taylor at the country store.

Many people still talk about seeing him sitting motionless near a cornfield for hours at a time without flinching a muscle. Eventually the farmer would hear the sharp crack of a rifle and minutes later Taylor would disappear back into the woods.

Taylor had always hunted for ginseng, but like most other people, he was probably lucky to find a few ounces a year. Once a year, in the late fall, he would bring the roots to Huntsville to sell.

It was probably 1928 or 1929 when Mr. Taylor first showed up

at the Tennessee Poultry and Hides Company, on Washington Street, with a sack slung over his shoulder. The owner Louie Miller was a crusty old Russian Jew who would drive a hard bargain but was also honest.

After waiting patiently for Miller to conclude his business with another customer, Taylor handed the sack to them. Miller carefully began emptying the sack on a small wooden table. Suddenly there were gasps of amazement as people gathered around the ginseng.

There were almost twelve pounds of high quality ginseng, with most of the roots being about nine to ten years old and a uniform size. It was obvious that Taylor had carefully selected only the best roots, leaving the rest to be harvested later.

The same thought went through everyone's mind. Mr. Taylor had found the Glory Patch.

Finally, when Miller had finished weighing the ginseng, he wrote a price on a piece of paper and showed it to Taylor.

Taylor nodded his head and minutes later, with a large roll of bills in his pocket, more than many people made in a year, he walked to a nearby grocery store

**"A person who is nice to you, but rude to a waiter, is not a nice person."**

*Dave Barry*

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where he purchased a can of pork and beans and crackers. An hour later he was back in the mountains.

Strange as it may seem, Mr. Taylor's good fortune brought a ray of hope to many people who were suffering through the depression. People who could not buy shoes for their children now had a reason to dream - maybe they could find their own Glory Patch someday.

While many people redoubled their efforts in hunting ginseng, others decided it would be easier to hunt Taylor in the hope they could follow him to wherever he had harvested the roots. He was seen many times, but it was impossible to follow him for any distance.

Two men, expert woodsmen, followed him from Monte Sano all the way to Gurley and then back to Monte Sano. When they realized that Taylor was taunting them, they gave up.

If people had any doubts about the Glory Patch, it was confirmed the following year when Taylor once again appeared at Miller's with another twelve pounds of quality ginseng. After

purchasing his ritual can of pork and beans, he retreated back to the mountains with another pocket full of cash. The same routine was repeated each year.

With each trip to town his reputation grew. People began to spin fantastic yarns, equating his skill as a woodsman with Davy Crockett and Daniel Boone.

Some claimed he could track a field mouse through the woods and shoot flying doves with a .22 rifle. Others said he visited the Glory Patch and harvested the ginseng only when the moon was dark so people could not follow him.

Everyone knew he was being paid large sums for the ginseng but never appeared to spend any money. This led to even more outlandish tales.

One of the most popular stories told of a cave somewhere in the mountains where Mr. Taylor supposedly lived. It was claimed that one room of the cave was packed full of wooden boxes, each containing thousands of silver dollars. According to the story, Taylor spent all his time carefully counting and recounting the

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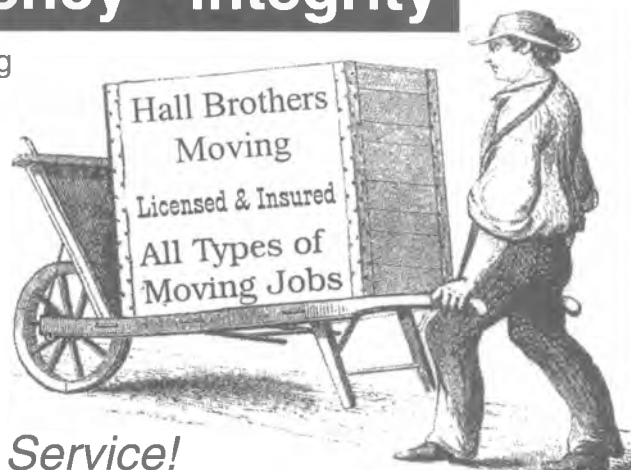
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money, much like the cartoon character of Uncle Scrooge.

Although it is doubtful that many people believed the stories, they did provide good entertainment whenever people gathered around a stove on cold wintry nights.

The stories would have probably died of their own accord had not Emmett Baker decided, in the fall of 1934, to take his family berry picking near Cold Springs on Monte Sano. Accompanying Baker were his two children, a girl eight years old and a boy who had just turned five.

The weather was beautiful and the huckleberries plentiful. Baker and his wife spent the morning filling buckets with the berries while the children played in the woods. By early afternoon Baker decided they had enough and began loading the buckets on the truck.

"Just in time," he thought as he watched dark ominous clouds begin to roll in from the west. "We're going to have some bad weather." Almost before he finished the thought, a torrential downpour, driven by fierce winds, began to sweep over the mountains.

Yelling for his wife to get the children, Baker hurried to fin-

ish loading the truck. Seconds later his daughter came running for the safety of the truck, trying to shield herself from the pulverizing rain.

Baker sat in the truck waiting for his wife and son but when several minutes had passed he began to suspect something was wrong.

Running to the edge of the clearing he began to call for his wife. When there was no answer he plunged further into the woods, yelling as loud as he could, trying to make his voice heard over the fury of the storm. After what seemed like an eternity he heard his wife shouting.

Minutes later he was at his wife's side. Her cotton dress



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was soaked to the skin and tears mixed with rain was pouring down her cheeks. "He's gone," she cried. "I can't find him anywhere!"

Baker ordered his wife back to the truck while he continued to search for his son. He instantly understood what had happened. His son had been playing and wandered off the trail. When he realized he was lost he tried to find his way back to the truck and had probably headed in the wrong direction. As he became frightened and the storm began the young boy had probably started walking faster, all the while going in the wrong direction.

Baker knew, deep in his heart, that his son could be almost anywhere, even miles away, and it would take a miracle to find him before nightfall.

An hour went by, and then another hour, with Baker frantically searching and yelling but to no avail. Finally he made his way back to the truck and told his wife they needed help. He would stay on the mountain and continue searching while she took the truck

and went to find others to help search.

At the bottom of the mountain was a small general store where a group of men had gathered on the porch watching the storm. Mrs. Baker was almost hysterical but finally managed to explain what had happened. Without a word, the men began piling into trucks and cars to go to her assistance.

All this time, sitting on the far end of the porch was Mr. Taylor, eating a can of pork and beans and watching the rain.

When Mrs. Baker stopped and looked at him intently for a moment, everyone knew what she was thinking. If only half the stories they had heard about the old man were true, he was still the man who could find her son.

Mr. Taylor had been listening to the conversation. Slowly,

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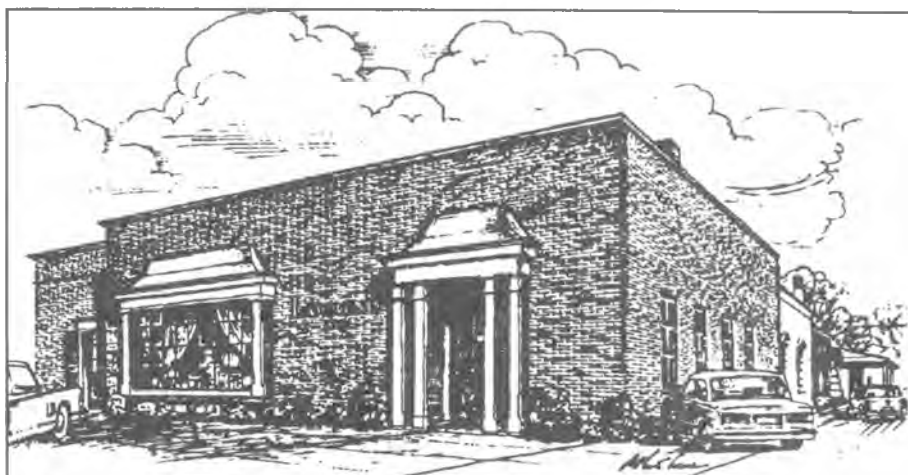
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without being asked, he got up and walked to her truck. After seating himself on the truck's tail gate, he motioned for her to drive.

Minutes later they were on the mountain where a crowd had begun to gather. Making motions for everyone to stay where they were he walked into the woods about a hundred yards and began to make a slow circle around the clearing, all the time searching for signs on the ground. When nothing was found he walked maybe another hundred feet into the forest and repeated the same process.

The storm had flattened the leaves on the ground and washed away any signs the young boy might have left.

Many of the men in the crowd had grown up in the woods and knew it was impossible to track someone in a pouring rain.

Still, Mr. Taylor persisted, sometimes walking at a rapid pace and other times almost crawling on his hands and knees.

After about a half hour, and a half mile from the clearing, he

found what he was looking for; some small fresh broken branches on a bush about two and a half feet from the ground. A five year old child running through the woods and pushing branches out of his way would break a limb at the same height.

The crowd knew Mr. Taylor was on a trail and followed be-

hind him closely. Every few feet he would stop and angrily motion for the men to go back. For a few minutes the men would comply, before once again following him.

About a mile from the clearing the trail led to a small cove that seemed to be so overgrown with thick brush that a rabbit

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might have trouble finding its way through it. Taylor stopped and angrily made signs for the crowd to go back. When they retreated only a few feet, he again motioned them to go back, this time waving his arms in a belligerent manner.

The crowd stood motionless and so did Taylor. Finally, with a look of resignation on his face, he dropped to his knees and began crawling through a small opening in the brush. After about thirty feet the brush cleared, revealing a clearing maybe a quarter acre in size, dotted here and there with hardwoods.

It was so well hidden that it would have been impossible to find unless you knew exactly where it was.

Taylor's instincts had been right. The young boy was lying at the foot of a large tree, soaking wet, scared and sobbing.

Seconds later the crowd of men poured through the small opening in the brush. The first reaction was joy at finding the youngster safe and sound. Then, almost immediately, a hushed silence came over the men as they realized what they were seeing.

The clearing was full of gin-

seng, so thick you couldn't walk without stepping on a plant. It was obvious that someone had gone to great lengths to take care of the patch, and to keep it well hidden.

All the men had the same thought: they had found the Glory Patch.

Almost in a nonchalant manner, the men started drifting away, each pretending to go their separate ways. Mr. Taylor stood in the clearing for a long time with a sad look on his face. Perhaps he knew what would happen next.

Dozens of men, carrying lanterns and hoes, swarmed over the clearing that night. By the time the sun came up it had the appearances of a freshly plowed field.

No one ever saw Mr. Taylor again. He disappeared back into the mountains where he came from and soon became simply another legend that people loved to tell stories about.

Once the initial excitement had died down about the Glory

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Patch, people realized there had to be more than one. The amount of ginseng he sold every year was much too large to have come from that single location.

Perhaps there are still other Glory Patches, and a cave packed with silver dollars, hidden somewhere in the mountains above Huntsville.

Today the gathering, buying and selling of ginseng is strictly regulated by the state. Failure to comply can result in large fines as well as possible jail sentences.

It has been estimated that 3/4 of the ginseng gathered in North Alabama is smuggled to other states where the laws are not as strictly enforced.

## A Prolonged Courtship

After a prolonged courtship, Edward T. Lowery and Elizabeth Gentry were married Saturday in a simple ceremony at a friend's home. All seven of their children were in attendance. The children range in age from six to twenty seven, with three having children of their own.

Their 25-year old son gave the bride away. Lowery has been living with his parents near the Woodville community but is expected to take up residence with his bride and children.

The couple has no plans for a honeymoon.

*from 1923 newspaper*



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# Letter From A Soldier

Dear Wife:

It is with great pleasure that I am seated to pencil you a few lines to let you know that I am reasonable well and hope these few lines may find you all well.

I received your letter of the 10th of July this morning after long waiting but you had better believe I was glad when I come off from guard and they told me that there was a letter for me.

I will now tell you that I have had four shakes with the ague last week. Last Saturday was the last when I took three doses of quinine and that broke it up but I still don't feel quite as well as I did before as my bones ache considerable but I am getting better every day.

Last Sunday our battalion and 8 Companies of infantry and two pieces of Artillery started with four days rations for Gunter's Landing on the Tenn. River where there were a

lot of Rebels. They went and destroyed the ferry boats and burned several houses by throwing shells into them.

They said there was one woman came out of a house and showed her backsides to the men and then went into the house. After she shut the door the Artillery threw a shell which exploded in the house and in an instant the whole house was in flame and nothing more was seen of the woman.

Our men killed, they supposed, about 20 and our men lost one man killed and one wounded in the foot. I was not along because my horse was not fit to ride.

We do not know but think before long we will go to Shelbyville where the rest of the division is. That is in Tenn. still a little closer home and I will


try to get a furlough and come home if I can this fall.

I am sorry to learn that Angelina is so low.

You wrote to me to tell Albert should try and get a furlough which is out of the question as he started for Louisville and on the road (it is reported) he died of Typhoid fever. He was very sick when I saw him the last time at Tuscombina in the hospital. I did not think he would ever get well again but was in hopes he would get home.

Henry is well. He had a letter from George this morning and he was well. He said that they had got their new tents and knapsacks and clothing and he said that they were pretty well fixed.

We had new clothing issued to us such as shirts and drawers stockings, boots, and they



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*Darryl Goldman*

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are going to give us hats so you need not send me any hat. I have not drawn any boots yet. I found a pair about the time my other pair gave out. That was about the first of May and I think they will last me about a month longer. I did not draw anything today except 1 pr. Drawers. The first shirts I drew are just going through the elbows, but I think they will last me till cold weather by patching.

We have all the peaches we can make use of at present but the weather has been too dry so they are very small. We had very hard rains day before yesterday and the day before and the weather is not so hot at present as it has been.

You think the way they are enlisting soldiers it don't look like the war closing. I don't think so myself but they have issued stricter orders at Wash-

ington to the officers so that may make some difference.

You ask me whether I want a handkerchief. I sent my silk one away in my jacket and I have a linen one yet so I do not need any but if you could send me some needles and linen thread they would be of some use to me. I have given you all the particulars I can think of so I will come to a close in hopes of soon hearing from you again. I remain as ever your true and affectionate husband,

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### Weak and Weary

A young beau, at his sister's evening party, began to sing "Why am I so Weak and Weary?" when a little brother brought the performance to a close by yelling out, "Aunt Mary says it's because you come home so late and drunk almost every night!"

*From 1870 Newspaper*

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# Laws to Live By in 1870

- Any person convicted of visiting a bawdy house and who returns to the same house shall be fined fifty dollars, and may be imprisoned or sentenced to labor for thirty days; and for each subsequent return to said house such person shall be fined fifty dollars and imprisoned or sentenced to labor for thirty days.

- Riding or walking with a prostitute in public place. Any male person over the age of sixteen years, except an officer in the discharge of his duty, who rides or walks through the public square, or the streets, or other public place in the city, with any public prostitute or woman of ill-fame, shall, on conviction, be fined not less than ten nor more than twenty-five dollars.

- Visiting bawdy house in day time. Any male person over the age of sixteen years, except an officer in discharge of duty, or a physician in case of sickness, or unless in a case of necessity, to be judged of by the manor, who shall go into, come out of, or be in a bawdy house within the limits of the city after seven o'clock A. M., and before nine o'clock p.m., shall, on conviction, be fined not less than ten nor more than fifty dollars.

- Indecent exposure, etc. Any woman or girl notoriously abandoned to lewdness, who walks upon the streets or sidewalks indecently attired, or stands or sits at the door or gate, or on the steps of the premises occupied by her, in an indecent posture or lewd manner, shall be fined ten dollars.

- Any person who exposes the person in an indecent manner, or does any obscene or indecent act in any street or alley, or about the public spring, or in any other public place, shall be fined not less than five nor more than twenty dollar.

- Obscene language or conduct in presence of females. Any person who uses profane or obscene language, or does any indecent act in the view or hearing of any female, shall be fined five dollars.



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# New Labor Laws for Huntsville's Cotton Mills

*From 1903 Newspaper*

The new child labor law adopted by the Alabama legislature will not affect any of the cotton mills in Huntsville. The report had been circulated that the operation of the law would compel 300 children to quit working in the Dallas mill, but this is emphatically denied by W. R. Rison, general manager of the Dallas company.

Mr. Rison states that it is against the rules of the company to employ any child under 12 years of age, and if there are any younger operatives, their ages have been misrepresented by

their parents.

Other representatives of the mills praised the mills' policy in providing work for children who would otherwise become vagrants and a nuisance to peaceful society. The spokesman also said that many of the children alleged to be under the lawful employment age of twelve were merely stunted in their growth, giving a false impression to people investigating mill conditions.

Mills in other states have overcome this problem by having potential employees swear they are at least twelve years of age, thereby relieving the mills of any legal responsibility.

**"Many dead animals in the past changed to fossils, while others preferred to be oil."**

*Seen on kid's science exam*

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# Hermit who claimed to be John Hunt's grandson dies in Athens

*From 1916 newspaper*

Alone he lived, alone he died - did Limestone County's man of mystery, whose charred body was found in the ruins of his cave home, east of Athens on the Nick Davis road.

The recluse was called John Hunt, when he went to Athens a quarter of a century ago and bought 25 acres of land near Athens. He dug his home, rather than having built it. Into the earth he bored and excavated a large room, over which he built a roof and called it home. In later years he added two more rooms, both underground.

Hunt claimed his grandfather settled Huntsville and from the family name the city received its name. His pathetic death last week, under mysterious circumstances, brought to light the weird

story of the hermit's life.

Hunt had been a federal army man during the Civil War and he received a pension from the government. Together with the money he received from selling a few farm products, he eked out a meagre existence.

One of the strange features of the hermit's life, now being related by Athens people, is the fact that Hunt never sold a chicken, though he raised hundreds in the woods about his home. On the other hand, he treated them much as he would

a human being. At noon he frequently rang a big bell to call them to be fed. The fowls would jump upon his shoulders and he made pets of all of them. "They are too near and dear to me to be sold," he explained to curious visitors, who visited his dugout by the hundreds.

The recluse treated them all with civility, but never claimed their friendship. When he first moved to Limestone, the section in which he settled had few people in it. Later it built up, but he continued to keep him-

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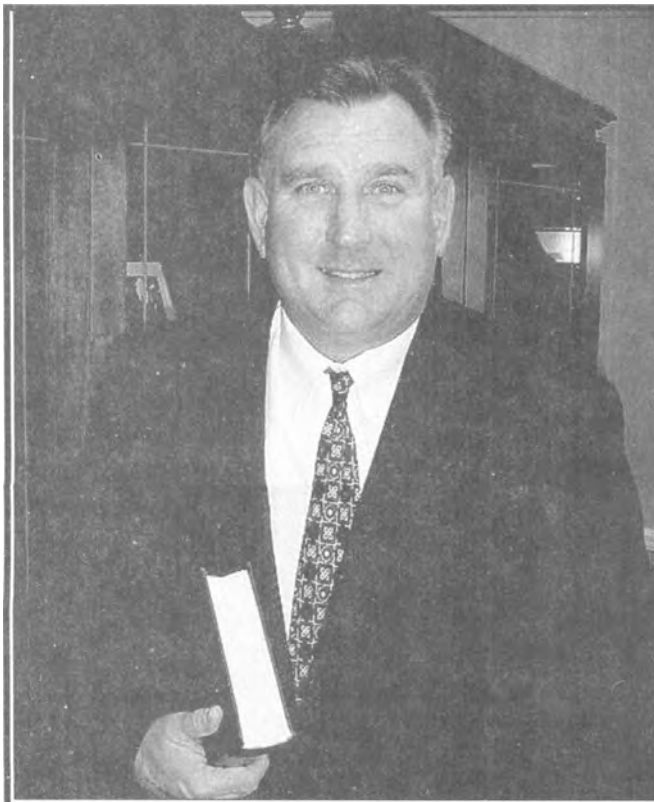
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self withdrawn from human companionship.

Recently, Negroes passing by the hut, found only the smoking embers left. A hurried investigation was made and in the ashes the body was found. It was buried by the people of the neighborhood in the Athens cemetery.

## Trouble in Hazel Green

*from 1878 newspaper*

We learn of two serious difficulties in the Hazel Green district, last week. On Tuesday night, a Mr. Talent shot William Weaver in the head, the ball passing through the only good eye Weaver had, leaving him totally blind.

They were in a quarrel at Key's Mill, and it is said that there was a good deal of whiskey around.

The second affair was between two brothers by the name of Holloway in which Gabe Holloway was cut in the abdomen by his own brother.

There was a game of cards going on and Gabe Holloway was trying to induce his brother, who was engaged in the game, to quit playing and go to work, whereupon his brother grew angry, according to our information, and cut him. He is in very critical condition.

## Bad Excuse

*from 1913 newspaper*

W.G. Maloney, a young man arrested today for riding trains contrary to the law, claimed in the police court this morning that he was making a study of the underworld and became a hobo in order to get a closer view.

Mayor Smith imposed a 20 day sentence and informed him that he would be given every opportunity to make a study of hobos and the underworld while serving on the chain gang. He also warned Maloney to think of a better excuse next time.

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# Heard On The Street

by *Cathey Carney*



The Photo of the Month for January was **Shirley Frazier**. Shirley was a popular police dispatcher in Huntsville for 25 years. Her daughter, **Ann Hill**, works with the fire department on Redstone Arsenal. Congratulations to **Margaret Tucker** for placing the winning call. Mrs. Tucker is the lovely wife of **J.B. Tucker**, the famous Mayor of Hurricane Creek.

We were very sorry to hear that **Seg Parks** had died recently. His family thought the world of him and he will be missed very much. We send our deepest sympathy to all the family and his many friends.

The big topic of conversation in political circles is **Glenn Watson's** announcement that he will run against **Faye Dyer** in the next election. That will be one interesting race!

**Ruth Ann** and **Pluitt Dean** are the proudest Grandparents! Their daughter **Jessica** and son-in-law, **Mark Williams** are the proud new parents of **Colton Terry Williams**, born December 14. This is the first child for them, and he is gorgeous!

**Sam Keith** had his annual Christmas Party, that took place

entirely in the garage! There was food, drinks, old cars to look at - and Great company! He said the garage was easier to clean.

**Walt** and **Lil Stone** recently celebrated their first anniversary. They own the Enchantment Beauty Academy, in the location that used to be the Dwarf Restaurant, that many of us remember. Congratulations to you two!

We keep hearing rumors out of Montgomery that **Gov. Riley** is on **John McCain's** short list to be Vice President if he wins the nomination. That should shake up Alabama politics.

**Nelta Benson** wants to wish **Elmond Lee** the happiest birthday! He lives in Gulf Breeze and sure misses Huntsville!

**Rebecca Temple**, owner of Rebecca's boutique on Pratt Avenue in Five Points, sends a big Hello to her son **Jason Temple**, who is currently serving in the Navy. Jason is married to **Shannon** and their girls **Lillian**, 5, and

**Claire**, 2, are the sweetest grandkids.

A group of folks who live at **Redstone Village** recently went on the bus to an Amish restaurant in Danville, near Hartselle. They said the food was wonderful, with home-cooked vegetables, meats, desserts, etc. and it sounded like all had a great time.

**Tony Mason** is packing the crowds in at Lee Ann's. Recently he was joined on stage by **Tommy Miller**, **Danny Banks** and the legendary **Curtis J. Hall**. It was standing room only and some of the best entertainment we have seen in years.

**Luther Wikle** sure would have been proud of his grandson, **Luke**, who is currently serving our country in Iraq. We are so grateful for him and all the other men and women who are serving in the military.

Happy birthday to **Lisa Dejarnatte!** She recently celebrated in Arkansas with her

## 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 boy, and his lovely wife, are seen by many people every week.



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sweet husband **Dr. Ralph Dejarnatte, Jr.**

**Kathy Mefford Ogle & Frank Ogle** recently celebrated their 37th wedding anniversary. Frank's uncle **Jimmy** used to own Ogle's Trailer Court. Congratulations, Kathy, you look much too young to be married that long!

It sure was fun recently to have a cup of coffee & read a book at the Coffee Tree on Bailey Cove!

Many people remember **Danny Dyer**. He lived in Huntsville for years and could tell some great stories. He leaves family and good friends who will miss him always.

Happy birthday to **Barbara Fortner!**

Next time you are driving around Huntsville and see a cotton field, stop and take a long look. You may never see it again. Next year, for better or worse, the field will probably be a sub-division or shopping mall.

I recently met **Robert Sable**, who works for Labcorp, in the office of **Dr. Scott Royster**. Robert is the most interesting guy to talk with and is crazy about his wife, **Joy**, and son **Robby**. His message to his family - "Thanks for putting up with me!"

It was great seeing **Johnny Frazier** recently. Johnny has a home inspection business so next time you buy a home give him a call!

We were thrilled to hear that Terry's Pizza is BACK! **Darden Heritage**, who owns Star Market & Propst, decided to buy the business when the company closed after the death of owner **Louie Pejza**. Darden says he wants to keep as many of the old traditions alive in Huntsville as possible. You can buy the pizzas in all Star Market locations.

Happy February birthday to **Barbara Saunders!** We know that her romantic hubbie **Chuck** will do something special for her!

Thiokol Chemical Corporation employed many here in

Huntsville throughout the years. **Walt Terry, Sam Zeman, Chuck Owens, Durwood White, Don Royston and Bob Langley, Don Harper** are just some of the many people who worked together. Recently we heard that one of their co-workers, **R. T. "Bob" Davis** died, after a bad accident. He was 83.

**Ken and Diane Owens** recently made a long trip to Tucson, Arizona to visit their son, **Brandon**, and his wife **Susan**. They sure do love it out West.

**Robert Martin**, that sweet guy who lives at Morningside Assisted Living in Madison, is so proud of his son **Randy**, a full Colonel in the National Guard who is on his second tour in Iraq. He's going to be there 9 more months, but his family has faith he'll be back safe and sound.

Happy anniversary to **Rebecca & Al Temple**. The romantic couple were married 42 years ago on Valentines Day!

Congratulations to **John Connelly**, who just turned 1 in January. His parents are **Tricia** and **Steve Connelly** of Old Town, and you can't find prouder grandparents than **Susan & Hall Bryant!**

Well, That's all for this month but just remember how lucky we are to live in Huntsville. Alabama.

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# Diabetic & Delicious

The following are diabetic recipes

## Stuffed Pepper Shells

4 small red peppers, halved & seeded

1 c. reduced fat Mozzarella cheese

2 T. Pesto

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Fill the peppers with cheese, mounding slightly. Place on a baking sheet & drizzle with pesto.

Bake for 10-12 minutes to melt the cheese, and serve hot.

## Bacon-Pineapple Appetizer

(Per Appetizer)

1 slice bacon, halved cross-wise

1 whole water chestnut, halved

1 pineapple chunk, drained

Low sodium soy sauce

Preheat your oven to 400 degrees. Wrap bacon slice around a pineapple chunk and water chestnut. Secure with wooden toothpick. Bake on rack in a shallow pan for 15 minutes. Brush with soy sauce and bake 5 to 10 minutes, and bacon is crisp.

## Heavenly Fruit Dip

1 pkg. (1-oz) sugar-free vanilla pudding mix

2 c. fat-free half and half

1 T. sugar

1/2 t. rum extract

1/2 t. vanilla extract

Combine ingredients and beat with a whisk about 2 minutes. Cover and chill at least 2 hours to blend flavors.

This is wonderful with all types of fresh fruit.

## Pork Roast Dijon

1 (2 1/2 lb.) Pork Loin

2 t. dijon mustard

1 t. dried rosemary

1 t. garlic powder

Salt and Pepper

Preheat your oven to 350 degrees. Place roast on a rack in a roasting pan, spread with mustard and sprinkle with rosemary, salt, garlic powder & pepper.

Bake 40-50 minutes or until meat reaches 140 degrees. Cover with foil and let stand 15 minutes on your counter before slicing, to let the juices soak into the meat.

## Baked Bacon

1 lb. bacon

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Arrange bacon slices on a roasting pan rack and bake 20-25 minutes. Drain on paper towels.

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# Gibson's BAR-B-QUE

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## Salmon Steaks

- 4 (4-oz) salmon fillets
- 1 T. oil
- 2 T. lemon juice
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 T. minced fresh basil

Pat salmon dry and place on a broiler pan. Combine remaining ingredients, brush some of this over the salmon.

Broil 8-10 minutes til salmon is cooked through, basting a few times with the sauce. No need to turn the salmon.

## Spicy Garlic Shrimp

- 1 T. olive oil
- 1 1/2 lb. lrg. shrimp, thawed
- Salt & pepper
- 3 garlic cloves, chopped
- 1/2 t. crushed red pepper
- 1 T. lemon juice

Heat oil in large skillet over medium high heat. Add shrimp and sprinkle with salt & pepper. Cook about 2 minutes, stirring frequently.

Stir in garlic and red pepper and cook over medium heat til shrimp is opaque and pink throughout - don't overcook! Remove from heat and add the lemon juice.

This is really good with pasta or spaghetti.

## German Green Beans

- 1 lb. green beans, cooked
- 4 slices bacon, cooked & crumbled
- 1 T. finely chopped onion
- 2 pkg. Splenda
- 1 T. red wine vinegar

Cook onion in 1 tablespoon bacon drippings. Add Splenda and vinegar, then beans & bacon. Cook til heated throughout.

## Dark Chocolate Macaroons

- 2 (3.5 oz) bars low-carb dark chocolate
- 1 1/4 c. unsweetened shredded coconut
- 1/2 t. almond extract

Melt chocolate in heavy small saucepan over low heat. Add coconut & extract. Drop by mounded teaspoons onto baking pan. Let stand til set.

## Almond Ice Cream

- Nonfat vanilla ice cream
- Amaretto liqueur
- Toasted, sliced almonds

With an ice cream scoop, place a ball of ice cream into a wine glass, spoon liqueur over this and top with almonds.



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# Mill Street Playground

by Johnny Johnston

During and just after World War II, little money was available for the entertainment of children in the community of Huntsville. The Big Spring Park and some school playgrounds were about the only place to go to see other children or spend a little time away from the sadness of a War.

A war which would eventually take a half million lives from the United States of America and many from Madison County as well.

Huntsville was fortunate to have as a citizen one Mr. Milton J. Cummings. Mr. Cummings had made his money buying and selling, especially cotton. He was a man concerned with his city, the people in his city and he had compassion for those of us who had very little.

Another young man lived in the community who had come to town with an idea of expanding the YMCA. At that time the YMCA was primarily an overnight place to sleep or for men to live for a short time while moving to the city looking for work. His name was Russell Barber. Russell could see a need where no one else could. He

could also administer to the needs he identified, find money to develop a project and pull enough people together to make it happen.

My mother had been working the night shift at Redstone Arsenal Laundry while keeping

the house and taking care of five children at home. She was maybe the hardest working person I ever knew but had lived through the depression without adequate food for the family and very little to call her own. She and Dad had managed to



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buy the house on Maple Street and move in during the school break of 1941. Now in 1945 the war was ending and things were looking somewhat better. She was approached by Mr. Barber to help him start a playground in an impoverished area. The money was very little and the work hard but she decided to fall in line to see if that was something she wanted to do.

Thus the Mill Street Playground was developed. Russell Barber supported the project as District Director of the YMCA. Mr. Cummings furnished the money and someone allowed use of a field which was located just near the Train Depot on Church Street.

An area was prepared to create a softball field, someone else donated a set of monkey bars and I think I remember a small merry-go-round.

One thing I definitely remember was the smell of a Hide House which sat on the same property. It was impossible to go into the playground without going real close to the Hide House.

A Hide House is where raw cow or other animal hides are hung to dry out and to cure before they are made into coats, upholstery, collars or other items for purchase by people who had money.

If you have ever smelled a dead animal in the summer time which has been lying on the road too long, multiply that by

100 and you can imagine the smell of a Hide House.

It was so bad that if the wind was drifting across the playground from the eastward direction, attendance would be down that day.

Normally it was a fun day at the playground. Someone donated softballs, basketballs, kick balls and the like. I don't remember any fielding gloves but we did have bats. I also remember the difficulty in walking from Lincoln with my broth-

ers and my mother carrying all those balls and bats every day. There was nowhere to lock them up at the playground.

The walk was only about two miles but it seemed much longer. A softball game or any type of competition usually caused someone to get angry. A lot of fights were started over some trivial thing that really meant nothing. There were a few black eyes, broken bones and such but no one pulled a knife or gun the way people do now when they get angry.

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**"Never take a sleeping pill and a laxative on the same night."**

*Jeremy Jones, Arab*

My Mother was very adept at stopping any fight or angry situation which might start. When the action was over she would pull the combatants over to the side and preach to them for a time and quote a few verses from the Holy Bible.

There were even occasions when she would have an evening picnic and invite a preacher to have church services there on the playground. Any gathering such as that was well attended as there was no television, money to go to the movies or any other form of entertainment.

Money was made available on occasion to provide a picnic for kids attending the playground. Mother made a deal with Ragland Brothers Wholesale Groceries to buy bread, peanut butter, mayonnaise and some sliced meats at wholesale prices which we prepared at home.

This required our entire family to get up early in the morning to start making sandwiches which were carried over to the playground. We were not able to walk and carry all the food so Mom would always make arrangements for someone to take us over in a car.

**"A permanent set of teeth consists of eight canines, eight cupids, two molars, and eight cuspidors."**

*Seen on middle school science exam*

Maybe the most embarrassing thing to happen that I remember was on one of those days when food was provided. Mr. Barber brought Mr. Cummings over to visit and see how much people appreciated his kindness. There were some children who attended who simply had not learned the simplest form of manners. Mr. Barber and Mr. Cummings were standing back of the area where we were eating when one of the boys bit into a sandwich which was not to his liking. He cursed the sandwich and threw it over his shoulder. The sandwich hit Mr. Cummings directly in the chest while he was standing there supported by a set of crutches.

It was so shocking to Mr. Cummings that he almost fell. I remember Mom grabbing this kid by his ear, hauling him over to the side and forcing him to apologize to Mr. Cummings.

Here it is over sixty years after closing of the Mill Street Playground and the memories

are still there. My family met a lot of people there who are still friends after all this time. Many of these good people have done well in the community and made good names for themselves.

Not everyone fell in that category however. Some of the very people who came to the playground have spent most of their life in jails; some did not even live to be middle aged.

Three days after the Lee High School Bus accident which killed four students and injured many, I

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drove over to the site like many others to witness the devastation which had occurred. The area by then had been cleaned up, funerals were being held or scheduled, and survivors were healing at home or in hospitals.

The scene was very much where I thought the accident had occurred. As I maneuvered through the side streets underneath Interstate 565 and came closer and closer to the makeshift memorial over by a cyclone fence, I became aware that the bus had fallen on the former entrance of the Mill Street Playground.

## Judge orders some of Huntsville's Wealthiest Families to Pay Up

*from 1910 Huntsville paper*

Judge T. Betts of the law and equity court heard several suits brought by the city of Huntsville against property owners who have contested the assessments against them for the cost of paving streets in front of their property.

The judgments of the court in favor of the city against the property owners are as follows:

- Harry M. Rhett. \$250
- Miss Mattie P. Barnard \$250.
- Mrs. Maria Jones a
- A. L. Rison \$200.
- Mrs. Kate Caldwell \$250
- Mrs. Maria Jones \$300 - John R. Connor \$300
- J. N. Mazza \$140 - Mrs. Annie Powell \$175

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# A Huntsville Mystery

Huntsville was in the grips of one of the coldest winters on record when in February, 1906, a stranger appeared at the Huntsville Hotel and requested a room.

The stranger, a quiet elderly man, was dressed in summer clothing and carried no luggage. He asked for a room for two weeks and paid in advance with cash.

He also asked that no one, not even the maids, be permitted to enter his room.

The following morning he began a routine he would follow every day for the next two weeks. Eat breakfast, at the hotel, walk three blocks to a

barber shop where he would request a shave, sit on a bench in front of the Courthouse, in the bitter cold for the rest of the day until finally returning to the hotel for dinner.

At the end of two weeks, the stranger disappeared. The manager of the hotel, worried about the man's strange behavior, finally entered the room. The room was exactly the way it was when the stranger had rented it. The bed had not been slept in and there was no sign anyone had been in the room since it was last cleaned, two weeks previously.

Adding to the mystery were six envelopes lying on the bed, addressed to different individuals around town. In each envelope were five one hundred dollar bills.

Later checking revealed that none of the individuals knew the stranger.

Another Huntsville story that has never been explained.

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## Want Ads from 1907

Wanted - agent for Nashville Banner. Pays forty dollars a month. Must be reliable and a hustler. See John H. Lackey, Huntsville Hotel.

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For rent - two furnished rooms heated by furnace. Men preferred. 242 Walker Street. \$1.50 a week.

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# The Family Recipe

**Warning:** *These recipes are presented for amusement and historical purposes only. The possession of a still and the manufacture of spirits is against the law and can result in heavy penalties. Also, spirits not properly made can seriously damage your health.*

## Original Corn Whiskey;

- 50 lb. Corn, whole kernel
- 50 gal. water
- 10 cups Yeast

Place the corn in a feed sack and buried in the warm moist center of a manure or compost pile for about ten days. When the sprouts are about a quarter inch long, the corn is fully "modified" or malted. Wash the corn in a tub, rubbing the shoots and roots off in the process, then skim them off. Place the grain in an open wooden barrel, mash it with a pole, add five gallons of boiling water and when the mash cools down, add the yeast and let it sit and fer-

ment. Some people may cover the vat with plastic to slow the evaporation. Fermentation will normally take between 3 to 7 days depending on the temperature.

### First Run

Place the mash in the still pot. Gradually heat the mash and expect the first condensate to begin dripping in the receiver in about an hour between 170 F and 180 F. Collect all that comes over on this first run. About 2 hours later when 205 F is reached, stop collecting. You should have about 12 gallons of distillate that will be about 40 to 60% and by-products (80-120 proof) Throw away the residue in the pot, rinse it out and flush out any solids that may have boiled over into your tubing.

**Caution:** Too high heat will cause the mash to boil over through the tubing, clouding the distillate and possibly clogging the tubing. The more slowly you heat, the less impurities will be in the finished product.

### Second Run

Gradually heat the first run distillate in the pot and begin collecting the condensate in the receiver between 160 F and 180 F In about an hour, when 204 F is reached, stop collecting. You should have about 10 gallons of 70% alcohol plus by-products. Discard the residue from the pot

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as before.

**Third Run:**

Gradually heat the second run in the pot. Action is fast. The temperature moves rapidly to about 170 F. Discard whatever distillate comes over before 170 F or that which comes over before the trickle steadies into a solid stream. Stop collecting at about 184 F in about 45 minutes. You should have about five gallons of about 85% alcohol.

Throw away any residue in the pot.

---

## News from New Market in 1888

- We regret to learn that our old and esteemed citizen, Mr. W. F. Hereford, was severely bitten on the calf of his leg a few days ago by his rabid jack.

- G. L. Terry sent in the largest peach of the season. It measured 11 inches around and weighed 11 ounces.

- Mr. Bradford Smithy, of Hurricane, was here Tuesday and reports crops never better and in finer condition. Large crops of oats and wheat have been harvested and are now in good condition awaiting the thresher.

- We regret to hear of the illness of our oldest citizen, Mr. Isaac Cook. Mr. Cook celebrated the 80th anniversary of his birthday last Tuesday.

- Mr. Wm. A. Cochran, of this place, left on the 7th inst., on a visit to relatives at Larkinsville, Ala. We wish him a rich, rare and racy time.

- Mr. Bradford Hill, an old Confederate member of Col. Russell's regiment, fourth Alabama cavalry, was in town a few

days ago with a large lot of cedar. He owns a valuable lot of cedar and farm lands in the mountains, from which he derives a good living. Mr. Hill accepted the inevitable results of the war, like all good and true soldiers, and has ever since labored for the comfort and welfare of his family and the prosperity of his county, and now subscribes for the Enterprise.

- Merchant J.W. Cochran advertised for 100 bushels of peach seeds and 10,000 pounds of dried peaches and apples. Make full and ample preparations for drying them all by beginning now. We can assure them that their entire surplus can be sold at good and remunerative prices for all their labor and outlay.




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# Going to Huntsville in 1931

By James T. Syler

When I was just 7, we made my first trip to Huntsville from our home in Big Cove. I had never been to what was called the "big" town. Someone made arrangements for Mr. Tabor to take us to town in his car. Getting to ride in a car was a thrill for me.

About 9am that day he came for us and we were off. Along with us, he took many vegetables, eggs, chickens and milk to sell at the courthouse square in Huntsville. In fact, I held a gallon of milk in my lap the entire trip to town.

Everything was wonderful until the car started up Monte Sano mountain. The trees in the valley were so far below the road, I really hugged that jug of milk for dear life. I could just see the car, and us, going down into that valley, end over end.

Finally the top of the mountain came into view. At that point Mr. Tabor flipped a button (the car didn't have a key) to turn the motor off. He then put the car in neutral gear, and we coasted all the way to Huntsville Hospital. At the time I didn't realize the danger of a trip down the mountain with squealing brakes, that could fail at any time.

With the motor running again, we arrived at the Court House. There were many wagons parked all around the square, and a few cars. Grandpa said they were model "T"s and model "A" s.

One could buy anything he wanted, and there were crowds of men and women picking through the large selections on each wagon. A few of the men were yelling to the buyers, telling what they had to sell. One car had some large tubs containing fish. There were some huge fish - bigger than the any I had ever caught in the bog. It was rumored that the fish salesman would take out the entrails and put a quart of "White Lightning" inside each fish.

This turned out to be true, but I don't think they sold any of these fish to the policemen.

Everything was astounding to me. I looked at the tall buildings around the square and wondered how on earth could people get to the top of them. I had no idea what an elevator was.



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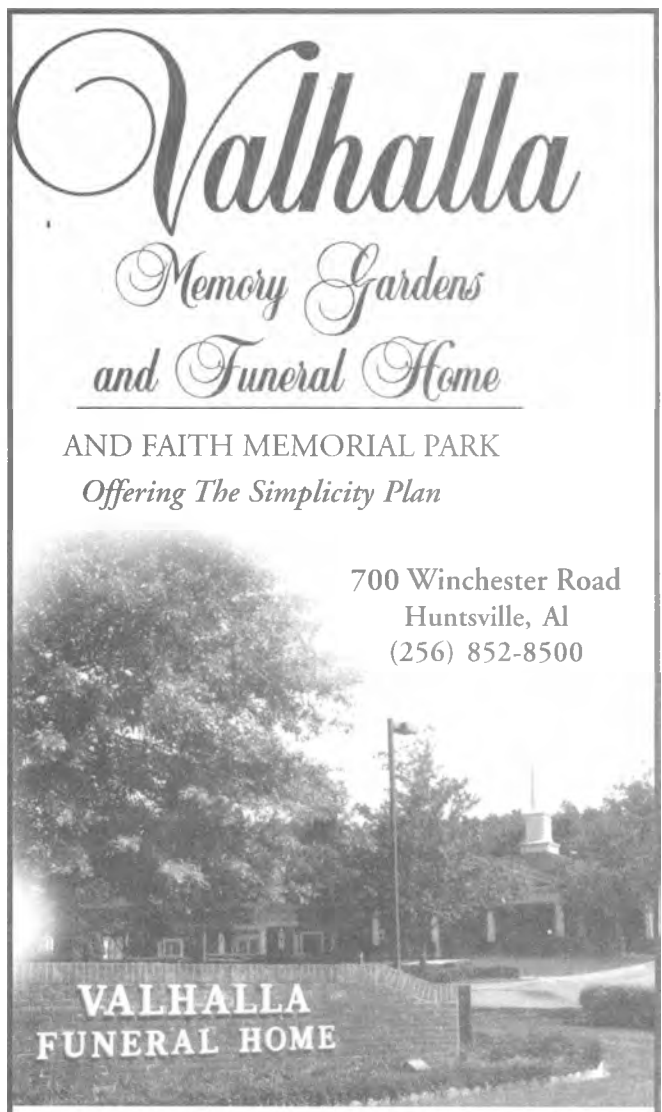
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I remember that the streets were paved with bricks and at one of the street corners was a man holding what looked to be a rope.

I asked what that man was doing, and was told that he was making the light in the middle of the street turn red or green. The cars would cross the street for a while, then he would pull the rope so the people could cross. People would hope for the best in crossing the streets.

I also remember the wonderful smell of something cooking. It was coming from a "greasy spoon" and smelled wonderful. I had heard the kids at school tell me how good the hamburgers tasted and how many they could eat, but I had never had one.

No amount of begging and pleading to my grandfather worked. He said he had a better idea for dinner. We would go to T. T. Terry" to have a dime's worth of cheese and crackers.

We carried our cheese and crackers to the back of the store where we used large feed bags as chairs. It didn't taste good to

me because what I wanted was a large, greasy, hot hamburger.

T. T. Terry's slogan was "Great is the Power of Cash," painted on a sign over the doors of the store.

After our crackers & cheese, I begged my grandpa to see the Big Spring. To my surprise he agreed, until he saw the number of steps he would have to take coming back up. He finally gave in and we started down. What a spring! The water was very cold and not hot, which I imagined.

We went back up and I went up the courthouse stairs to another floor, where I noticed a drinking fountain. It was marked "White Only" and a little further down was another one marked "Colored." I couldn't understand that and asked about it. I was told that was the rule, I wondered who made that rule but no one paid attention to me.

My grandmother wanted to go to Kress's 5&10 cent store. I was thrilled because I thought we could buy anything in the store for 5 cents and no more than a dime.

I was shocked beyond speech when I found out that was not true, things cost a lot more. I couldn't understand why they tried to fool people with that sign on the glass window.

I ended up with a pair of blue socks to wear to Sunday school. I was happy with that as I wanted

a souvenir to take from town.

We found our car and started on our way home. Going back down the mountain towards home Mr. Tabor switched off the car again and barely held it between the ditches while I said



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*Hannah Troup, age 6*

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prayer after prayer, with my eyes shut tight.

At the end of the day, I was really happy to get home, and see Bingo, my dog, greet me at the yard gate. The day had been great but there was no place like home.

I heard years later that Mr. Tabor had ended his life in that same car, when he was hit from behind by a another car.

## News From 1911

- William Moore is being held here for charges of forgery and bigamy. He tried to commit suicide in his cell by eating the heads of a large number of matches. The jailer discovered his plight and administered medicine. Before eating the matches he wrote letters to his mother, companion and chief detectives.

Also in jail is Harry Bennett who is accused of placing dynamite under his neighbor's home. They have not been getting along.



# Real Estate For Sale in 1907

- \$5,500 Two story, 7 room brick residence on Randolph Street, large lot.

- \$5,000 The old Gordon property on Lincoln Street opposite Presbyterian church. Large lot and brick house.

- \$4,100 Two story 8-room

brick residence on Randolph Street, lot 106 x 200 feet.

- \$2,000 Buys 17 lots in Gast's addition on Patterson Street.

- \$2,750 Buys 4-room tenant house on Adams Avenue with large lot and 3-4 room tenant house in rear.

\$2,600 Buys a nice 5-room cottage on East Holmes Street - hot and cold running water.

- \$2,300 One two story, 7-room house on Maiden Lane. Large lot.

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# A Fight and a Funeral

*from 1875 newspaper*

The original fight was about a dog, and it occurred more than a year ago, culminating in a fatal fight on Friday evening last, the result of which was a Coroner's inquest and a funeral.

Joe Green and John Schrimsher were on their way home from town in a wagon, and when near the place of Elias Donegan (colored) near the toll gate on the Whitesburg Pike, they came across Charles Donegan, son of Elias, the boy with whom one of the Schrimshers had had the difficulty with the dog.

They concluded that right then was the time to settle the argument, and proceeded to get in a row with Charles.

Elias saw the trouble his

son was in and got involved in the fight, with rocks and wagon standards being used freely.

One thing is known - that John Schrimsher's head was broken, and that he died very soon from the effects of it, but whether it was done with a rock or a wagon standard, or who struck the fatal blow, no one could tell.

A strange part of the story is that John Schrimsher, with his skull crushed, traveled home several miles, part of the way on foot, exhibiting no signs whatsoever that his wound was serious. He died in a few hours after reaching home.

Elias Donegan and his son were arrested and on Tuesday had their trial before Judge Richardson, resulting in an acquittal. Lawyers for the prosecution were Messrs. Coleman, Hundley and Cooper. For the defense were Messrs. Davis and Jones and Brandon.



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# Memories

*These memories of Mrs. Lola Haney were recorded in 1995 by Julia Haney, Mrs. Haney's great-great granddaughter.*

I was born in 1898, in a two room log cabin near Paint Rock. My Daddy grew cotton and tobacco. One of my earliest memories is my Mother carrying me to the fields and placing me on a blanket in the shade of a tree while she helped Daddy in the fields.

By the time I was 6 or 7 years old, I had to help in the fields, too. Daddy made me a cotton picking sack out of old pillow cases and I helped pick cotton. My other job was fetching water for the field hands. My cousin and I were both expected to pick a certain amount of cotton each

day. One day, realizing we didn't have enough, we decided to put some heavy rocks in our bags to make them weigh more.

When Daddy got home from the gin he took a belt to both of us. We learned later that the rocks had tore the gin up.

Daddy also raised honey bees. After he robbed the hives every fall he would take the honey to Huntsville where he would trade it. We also dug ginseng to trade in town.

Going to town was always a big event for us. The night before Daddy would load the wagon with crock jars full of honey packed with straw so they wouldn't break. The next morning we would get up before daylight, and after Daddy had hitched the wagon up, we would start for town.

Late in the afternoon we would get to Huntsville Mountain (Chapman Mountain). The

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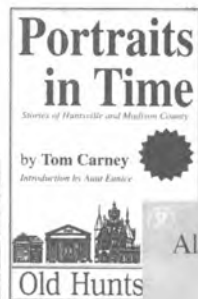
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road going up the mountain was washed out most of the time and very steep. There was a doublehitch station at the foot of the mountain where people could rent another set of mules to help pull their wagons up the mountain. Our wagon wasn't that heavy and we always made it up with our own mules.

Our first stop in town was at the Big Spring. All the people from out in the county camped out there when they went to town. Daddy had a piece of canvas he would make a tent out of, and that's where we spent the night.

One night it came up a terrible storm and Daddy took me and Mother to the hotel to spend the night. He had to go back and stay with the wagon to make sure the honey wasn't stolen. Once someone stole a dog from someone camped next to us and there was almost a shooting before it got settled.

The next morning we would hitch the wagon and take the honey up to Harrison's. Daddy and the man who had the store would always argue and shout for what seemed like hours and

finally they would make a deal. We got paid in half cash and half trade out. Next we would look up a man by the name of Foster, who always bought our ginseng. He didn't have a store or an office, but was always hanging around the Courthouse square. He would look at it real carefully and if he liked it, we would go to another place where they would weigh it. I think we got paid by the ounce and it was always in cash money.

While Daddy got supplies, Mother and I would go shopping at the other stores. I still remember the first store-bought dress I ever had. Before that they were always made from scratchy flour sacks.

When we got done we would always meet Daddy in the Courthouse yard. He had already taken the wagon and mules back to the Big Spring and he would always spend the rest of the day

You know it's going to be a bad day when your wife says "Good morning, Bill" and your name is George.

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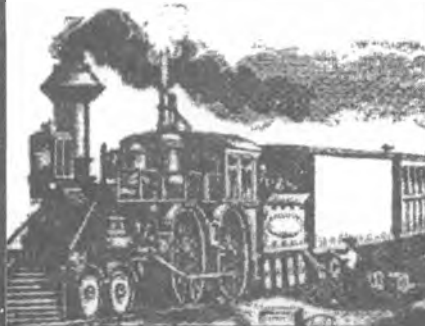
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talking to the other men who were also waiting for their families to finish shopping. I never knew for sure but I always suspected the men were drinking whiskey.

Someone later told me they had deer in the Courthouse yard back then but I don't remember it. The only thing I remember about any animals there is stepping in mule droppings and Mother washing my shoes under the pump. There were lots of pigeons too. I remember you could throw a piece of bread on the ground and hundreds of pigeons would fight over it.

They hung a man once while we were in town but I don't remember his name. Daddy made me go back to the wagon and stay while they went and watched. There was a preacher holding a revival at the Spring on the same day but more people were interested in the hanging than getting saved.

Once Daddy carried us to a hotel for dinner and we had oysters. Daddy liked them but Mother and I got sick. Most times, however, we just ate at the Spring

whatever Mother had cooked.

The next morning, before the sun came up, we would start for home. On the way we always stopped at the creek again and had crackers and cheese that Mother had purchased in town for lunch. Going to town was fun but after being gone for three days, it was always good to be back home.

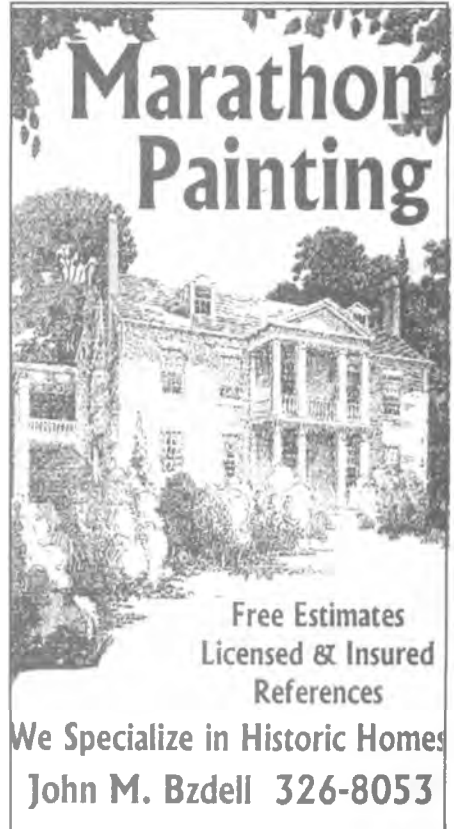
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## Looking for Mother

*from 1869 newspaper*

Looking for my mother Lizzie Fortner who was sold to a man in Madison County, Al. in 1860. I do not know the name of the man who purchased her but he is said to have only one arm. Reward will be paid.



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*Rodney Dangerfield*

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# After the War

*Excerpted from "Early History of Huntsville, Ala., 1804-1870," by Brig. General E.C. Betts and originally published in 1909. Betts leaves no doubt as to where his sympathies were.*

After the close of the war, and military discipline was relaxed, conditions became unspeakably depraved. Huntsville and her citizens suffered "degradation, robbery, murder, arson and rapine" at the hands of marauding hordes of "tortes," "scalawags" and federal and Confederate "deserters." The county was overrun with this scum of humanity, the flotsam and jetsam of ignominy itself. For a great while the local traffic in whiskey was enormous. The streets were crowded with the drunken and debauched, and lawlessness stalked abroad unbridled. These conditions were accentuated by the presence, in large numbers, of ladies of easy virtue; who by their indecent demeanor in all places, and especially public thoroughfares, lent an air of degradation to the entire community.

Former citizens of the county, who had become "tortes" during the war and through fear had left the country, now returned to vent their hate and avenge their own self-imposed dishonor, upon the defenseless, who had lain down the weapons of war and taken up those of peace.

Their lust for blood and insatiable desire for revenge knew no bounds and recognized no ties. Confederate veterans now pursuing the arts of peace, were deliberately shot and killed while seated with the remnants of their families around their firesides, and while at work in the fields.

These general conditions and special influences cooperated to make the seven years of reconstruction infinitely and inestimably more harsh, cruel and inhuman than the four years of bloody war itself.

We have already learned that the bureau at Huntsville had

formed Union or Loyal Leagues for political purposes. As these leagues became stronger, after the ballot was given the negro, many negroes were elected to office through its influence. The higher and more important offices were preempted by the "carpetbaggers" and held at the hands of the "Black Man's Party."

These leagues having become strong in membership and powerful in politics, under the pro-

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*Maxine*

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**"Never underestimate the power of stupid people in large groups."**

*George Carlin*

tection of the Union troops garrisoned here, became very disorderly and obnoxious. The conduct of the members was offensive to the last degree.

The league meetings were held at night. Going to and from the meetings the members would march, through the streets, armed, in military formation, and execute drills about the court house. The meeting over, many of them would loiter about the streets, acting boisterously; using abusive and obscene language, discharging firearms and making threats of violence.

In short, the "carpetbaggers" contrived every conceivable means of intimidating the Southern whites into submission.

More or less encouragement was given these disreputable bodies and their policies, by the waning opposition of a certain element of the whites; who were beginning to organize themselves into "loyal" bands, proclaiming the North; renouncing and denouncing the Confederacy and all it had stood and fought for.

Prior to the election of 1868, the Ku-Klux, were not active, locally. Though from time to time individual corrections were administered by small bands of Ku-Klux.

With the result of the election of 1868, came a realization of the enormity of the danger to the white man and his social institutions, and the extent of his dilemma. After this election Huntsville and surrounding country had well organized Klans of Ku-Klux.

The Ghouls, or privates of the Klans in Madison county, when in active service, in addition to the regulation disguise and mask, wore red flannel trousers with white stripes down the sides, and around the waist a brace of revolvers.

After the spring of 1868, the newspapers frequently carried Klan warnings and

threats. Printed warnings were posted in prominent places. Individuals, who by their conduct and associations had become undesirable were given a limited and fixed time to depart. Failing to take heed, they were captured and severely thrashed, and in some instances, made to leave.

Be it said, however, it was not often necessary to administer a thrashing; for as a general thing the first notice received by an individual, signed "Ku-Klux-Klan" was obeyed without undue loss of time and without argument. The Klan at Huntsville, deeming I. D. Sibley an undesirable citizen, sent the following warning written mostly in "plain English," to him, which explains itself.

*"Mr. Sibley, you had better leave here. You are a thief and you know it. If you do not leave in ten days we will cut your throat. We ain't after the negroes; but we intend*

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for you damn carpetbagger men to go back to your homes. You are stealing everything you can find. We mean what we say. Mind your eye."

This notice to a "carpetbagger" illustrates the viewpoint of the South with clearness; namely, the negro himself was not primarily to blame for the conditions, but the "carpetbagger" and "scalawag" were.

The activities of the Ku-Klux became more strenuous and purposeful as the oppression of the "carpetbag" regime grew. During this time, additional troops were sent to Huntsville to suppress the Ku-Klux, but to no avail. Later, martial law was declared over Madison county. Even this did not seriously impede the work of the Klan as a social regulator.

During the reconstruction period there were elected, from Huntsville, three State senators, "carpetbaggers," Spencer, Hinds and Sibley. The self-interest which governed the activities of these unworthy solons, and the manner in which they were willing to wreck the county to further their political ends, is revealed very clearly and unmistakably by their opposition as senators to any legislation which might emasculate the Ku-Klux Klan of power.

Though the Ku-Klux had them marked, and they dreaded the power of the Klan, they desired the existence rather than the extinction of the Klan. For the reasons, as stated by them, in moments of rare candor, that the continued strife between the whites and blacks enabled them to make effective speeches against

the former and thereby obtain the negro vote.

The most famous parade and "riot" of the Ku-Klux-Klan occurred at Huntsville just before the presidential election of 1868.

A body of Ku-Klux, 1500 strong, rode into the city and paraded the streets. Both men and horses were disguised with masks and sheets. All of their evolutions were executed with the greatest precision, skill and

silence. The freedmen were in a frenzy of fear. One of them fired a shot; immediately a riot was on. "The negroes fired randomly at the unmasked whites indiscriminately. The unmasked whites returned the fire. The Ku-Klux fired not a shot, but formed a line and looked on silently. Several negroes were wounded. Judge Thurlow, a "scalawag" of Limestone county, was accidentally shot and killed



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**"Dear God, My brother told me about being born but it doesn't sound right. He's kidding, right?"**

*Kid's note to God*

by a stray bullet. The whites who participated received only slight wounds. The military authorities arrested some of the Ghouls, who were released later. This was known throughout the North as one of the greatest "outrages" committed by the Ku-Klux.

This is only one of many similar "riots" enacted in the South, and accredited to the Ku-Klux Klan, as "outrages."

By the year 1870, the mission of the Klan had been accomplished in a large measure. So nearly readjusted and normal had conditions become, that the need of its protection practically had ceased entirely.

## Heard on the Street in 1875

- Some thief stole J. J. Parton's pocketbook - a large one - from his coat pocket as it hung in his shop, Monday last. It contained only about \$1.30 in currency, but several notes and other valuable papers were in there. Some of the notes were payable to Halsey & Parton, and others to Parton himself.

He warns persons not to trade for such notes. He will give a liberal reward for the return of the papers.

- Dr. Tutt's Hair Dye is easily applied, imparts a beautiful black or brown sheen and acts like magic. Sold by all druggists. Price, \$1 a box, wholesale and retail by John L. Rison, Huntsville

- Wanted - to rent a good piano by a lady who will use it but seldom and with care. Address Dr. Dickson, Huntsville, Ala.

- John Portlock's gun-

smith shop was burned last week. Luckily he was insured.

- For Sale - all the lands belonging to the Estate of George Jude, deceased. 600 acres in three tracts, lying at the base of a small mountain, finely watered with springs and wells on every tract, just 4 miles north of Huntsville. Contact John Weaver.

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# News From The Year 1882

## News From Huntsville and Around The World

### Texas Revolution Begins

The long-simmering conflict between Mexico and Americans in Texas has finally erupted into a full scale civil war and revolution.

Leaders of the secession movement today issued their declaration of independence from the dictatorship of Mexican President Santa Ana and officially proclaimed the creation of the Republic of Texas.

For more than a year, the Texans have been in constant preparation for this momentous day. On October 2, the first significant battle between the Texan and Mexican armies took place on the Guadalupe River near Gonzales.

This fight erupted when Mexican soldiers came to retrieve a cannon that they had given the Texans for protection against Indian attacks. When the Mexicans tried to repossess it, the Texans unfurled a battle flag that said, "Come and get it!" The

Mexicans didn't. Then the Texans created a navy as well as the Texas Rangers, and named Sam Houston, former Tennessee Governor, to head an army.

### Seminoles on Warpath

Major Francis L. Dade and 108 soldiers were massacred by Seminole Indians near Fort Brooke today and Indian agent Wiley Thompson was killed near Fort King. The Dade massacre was the bloodiest incident since the Seminoles began efforts earlier this year to block their ouster from Florida.

Under two recent treaties, the Indians were to give up their lands here and move west by January 1. The Seminoles' settlements center around the Everglades, but stretch from Sil-

ver Springs to the southern tip of Florida. Pressure to remove the Indians has been building because white settlers want to take over more of their lands in the former Spanish province.

Chief Osceola is leading the Indians with the help of Negroes, some slaves of the Indians and others runaways from Georgia, who have encouraged Indian resistance because they fear enslavement elsewhere.

### New Orleans gets Streetcars

Residents are riding steam-driven streetcars for the first time as the line puts its horses out to pasture. There has been much opposition to the idea fueled by the knowledge of a street car exploding in New York last year and injuring 12 people.

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# Six Shooter Patented

Samuel Colt has patented a handgun that fires up to six shots in rapid succession. The 21-year-old inventor calls the weapon a revolver because it uses a cartridge cylinder that revolves to bring each bullet under the hammer. Colt carved the model of his revolver out of wood while serving as a seaman on a merchant ship after running away from home at the age of 16. He plans to produce the gun in a factory here and hopes to interest the military. He thinks he has a good case since the revolver will greatly increase the firepower of infantrymen, who now have to re-load after each shot.

## Liberty Bell Cracks

The death knell that sounded today for Chief Justice John Marshall dealt a fatal blow to the Liberty Bell as well, cracking it and silencing the symbolic voice of American freedom.

The Liberty Bell was cast in England and recast twice in the United States, then installed in

the State House (now Independence Hall), before the Revolution.

The bell rang to commemorate significant events in American history, including the first reading of the Declaration of Independence, in spite of the Philadelphians who petitioned to have it muted in 1772.

Though it may never ring true again, the Liberty Bell remains a symbol of American democracy.

## Indian Village is Incorporated

Long a meeting place for Indians, the settlement of Milwaukee on the western shore of Lake Michigan in the Michigan Territory was incorporated as a town today.

Situated at the confluence of the Menomonee, Milwaukee and Kinnickinnic Rivers, it was visited by Father Zenobius of La Salle's expedition in 1679. Jacques Vieau, another Frenchman, started a fur-trading post here in 1795.

His son-in-law, Solomon Juneau, arrived in 1818 and is called the town's founder. Most other settlers are from New England and New York.

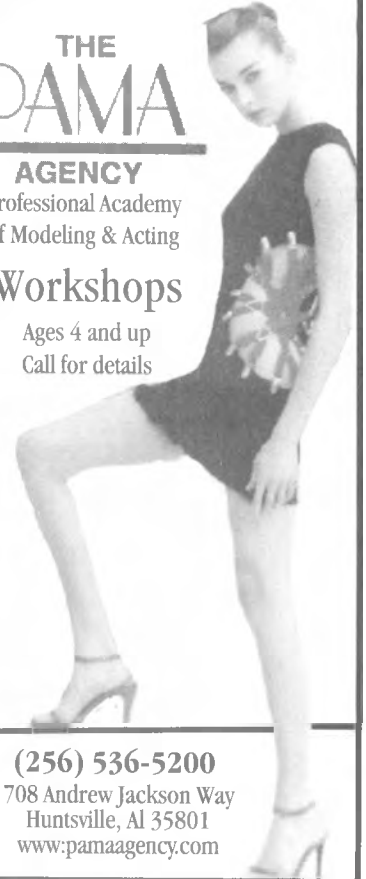
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*Mo Phillips, Madison*

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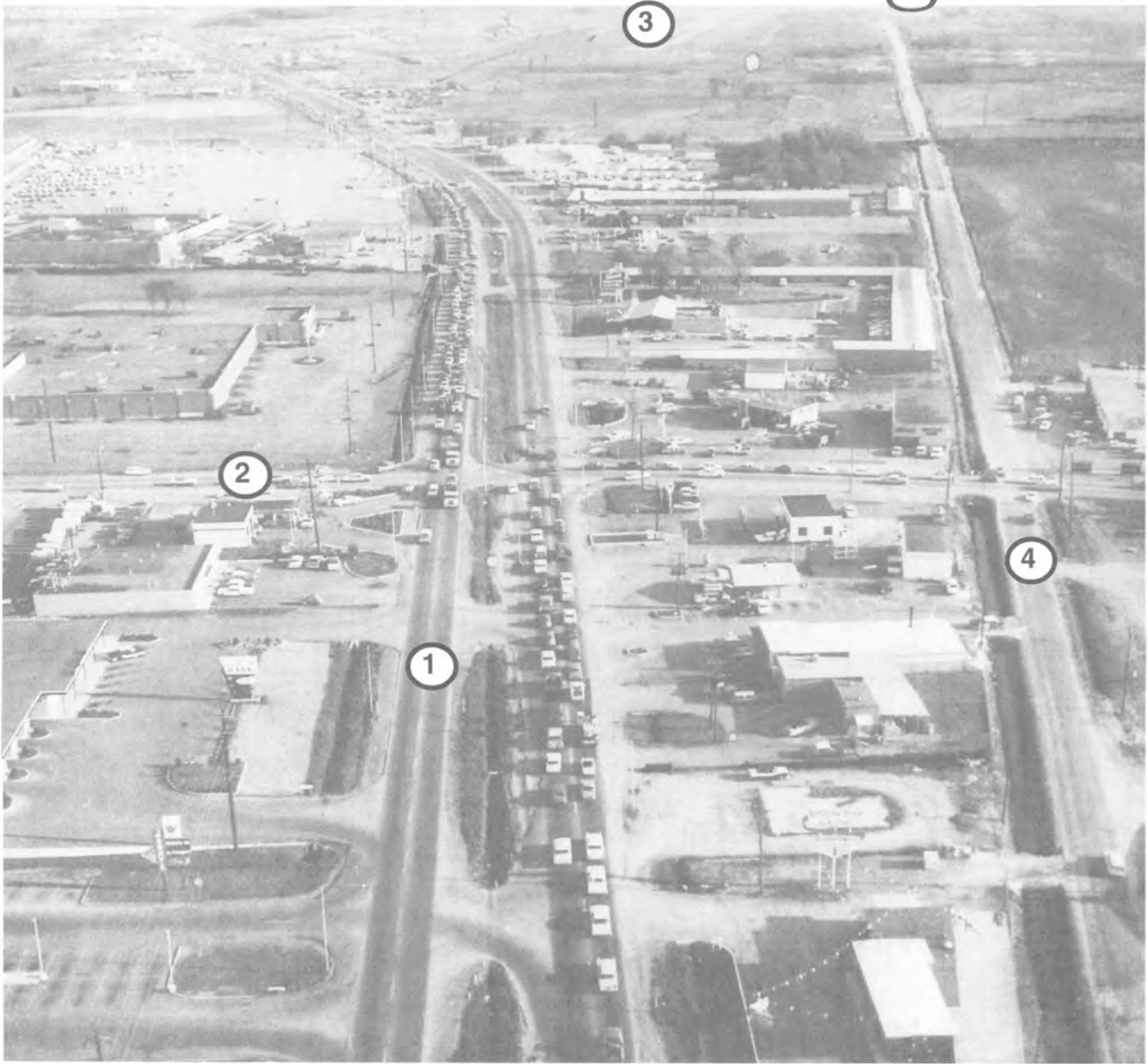
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# A Soldier's Diary

*The following are excerpts from the journal of R.S. Dilworth who was stationed in Huntsville in 1862 as part of the occupying forces. He was a 2nd Lieut. of Co. G, 21st Regt. of the Ohio Volunteers.*

**Huntsville, April 13th**

Our troops came in this morning from Chattanooga. They took 3 locomotives and all the cars on the road, and burned the bridge.

One of Alban's boys stopped at a house and asked for something to eat, and the fellow told him that he had some nice hams in his smokehouse and told him to come in with him and he would give him one and it should not cost him anything. So the boy went with him. And he took out his bayonet and stabbed him 6 times but they came to his assistance, and took him and found a hole dug in the smokehouse where he intended

to bury someone.

**Huntsville, April 14th**

We captured 6000 stand of arms in Huntsville and 5 pieces of artillery, all concealed in a cellar for the use of the citizens in case they were victorious at Corinth.

**Huntsville, April 15**

Marched out 4 1/2 miles and stationed our guards upon a large plantation owned by an old bachelor, a hard looking old crockling he was. He owned 100 negroes on that plantation and 2 others with 200 negroes on one of them and 50 on the other. The negroes brought us pies, cornbread, eggs, milk etc.

**Huntsville, April 17th**

Provo station courthouse Huntsville. We of the provos guard had a gay old time. I captured one horse, the charger of a secesh colonel, a splendid animal he is. I also captured a secesh spy and searched him and put him in the lockup.

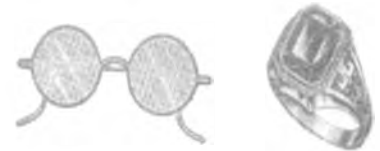
**Huntsville, April 21st**

After dinner and still it rains. A spy examined today. No more prisoners permitted to take the oath. Bought one 1/2 gallon coffeepot for 75 cts. A right nice piece. Fresh beef for dinner and ham at breakfast and

no telling what we will have for supper. Something very nice of course.

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**Huntsville, April 23rd**

Up at 1 1/2 past 4 a. m. Bought one fish weighing 3 lbs for one dollar & twenty-five cents. Bought one book at Huntsville, a book of poems, & payed five dollars for it. Orders to march were received for Stephenson Al.

**Stephenson, April 29th**

We left Huntsville at about 11 o'clock a.m. and arrived at Paintrock at 4 p.m. and there the bridge had been burned and let our train run into the River then we had to walk from thence, to this place a distance of 8 miles along the railroad and right through the swamp. We quartered in a new house. Nothing of importance happened through the night.

**Stephenson, April 30th**

Damp and disagreeable but more pleasant now. The boys all out foraging. We have no rations on account of the bridges having been burned. Chickens, pigs, bread, butter, eggs, etc... all brought in, but not without the loss of some blood. A dispatch received to return to Huntsville.

**Huntsville, May 1st**

We left Stephenson at 8 1/2 o'clock last night and walked out to the river. A distance of 8 miles against 11 o'clock and when we arrived there the train was in waiting for us.

We are quartered in the depot hotel. My quarters is the ticket office.

**Huntsville, May 5th**

Rained all night last night . 24 men ordered under arrest and put in the guardhouse by Gen. Mitchell for going into a house

during the rain. He says he will send them home in disgrace. Col. Norton & Niebling both swear that if he sends those boys home the 21st Regt. will go with them.

**Huntsville, May 6th**

The cars with all the mail was burned. And just where the capt. had been was found bones of a man burned and a part of a sword. His ccompany was coming back with the Division train. We have just returned from the funeral of old Mr. McKinsey of co. G. He died with erysipelas. Capt. Albans

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& Capt. Vantine's co's escorted us to the funeral. We buried him in the honors men firing 24 shots over his last resting place. We laid him in the cemetery in Huntsville. The wounded are coming in constantly. The hospitals are full.

**Huntsville, May 7th**

More wounded have arrived. J.C. Calhoun's house taken for a hospital. The most splendidly furnished house I ever saw.

**Huntsville, May 8th**

More prisoners. 8 soldiers brought in badly wounded. 300 cavalry sent out as scouts. Nothing of importance occurred during the day and evening.

**Athens May 10th**

We left camp at 10 p. m. and arrived at Athens at 5 a.m. No guards detailed but quarters in the fairground. An attack expected today. General Turchin ordered his men to do their own will for 3 hours. Said he, I do not command this brigade for that time. The boys made a general pitch in, and just more than raked the town. It was in a sad state when we arrived there, not a store or house but was the quarters of some band of soldiers. Too bad is it not?

**Athens AL. May 11th**

I was detailed for picket duty. I took post at 7 p.m. And was not relieved until 1 p.m. of the 11th. Nothing of importance occurred until about 1/2 past 11 a. m. when a heavy firing of musketry & riflery attracted our attention. We have not learned yet what it was; but our cavalry went out in that direction. We had orders to leave at 1 p.m. for Huntsville and had to comply: Therefore we could not ascertain the cause of the firing.

**Huntsville, May 11**

We left Athens Al. yesterday for Huntsville, Al. at 1 1/2 p.m. where we arrived at 5 p.m. We had a very pleasant ride. We are ordered to be ready to march at a minute's warning. The mail came in today the first for some time. The last, all having been captured or burned by the rebels.

**Huntsville, May 12th**

J.R. Porter & William Bensinger went out of our co. as spies and were taken above Chattanooga. I have not seen a negro since I have come out but loves their master and are much better treated than they would treat themselves. Wherever there is a plantation you might see a town of negro houses. And in many instances they are frame and in some brick. They are all comfortable. Some are anxious to be free but I do not believe they would

stay in the north 2 years if they were free. Saturday afternoons they dress up and pay their addresses to their lady loves. They make a big spread on Sabbath day.

**Huntsville, May 16th**

H.B. Apper in the guard house for stealing paper from a citizens boy.

Walter Burns of Co B & one of Co F had their rifles tied across their shoulders and sit on a high bench for falling on sleep on post while on duty as a sentinel.

2 men one from Co B & one from Co G was put on

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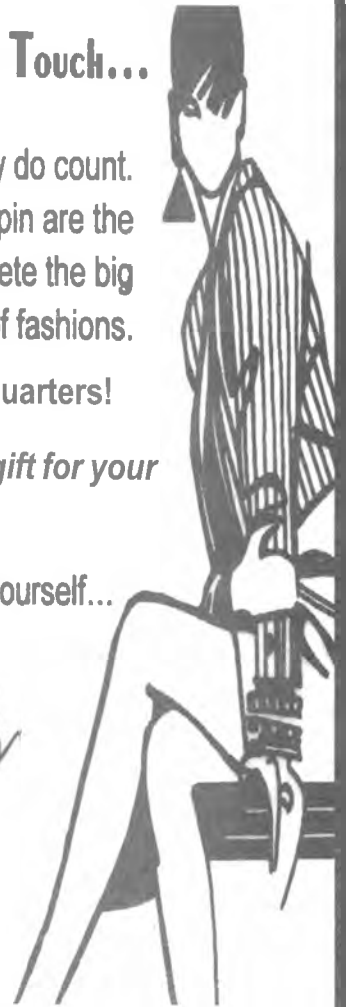
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double duty by Lieut. Lamb for firing their pieces in quarters.

Abram Kortright of Co. B was caused to carry a large pole 4 hours for remaining out of camp 1/2 hour over time. The boys all swear vengeance on Lamb. John Helt, Jacob Krouse, John Mull, William Edwards, George Montgomery all of Co B, on double duty by Burt Lamb.

**Huntsville, May 17th**

Nothing of importance occurred through the day. Dress parade at 6 PM. Retreat at twilight, taps 8 PM and lights out and all quiet at 8 1/2 PM.

**Huntsville, May 18th**

Sabbath morning clear calm & beautiful. Inspection 10 AM. One pass given to 4 men to attend church in Huntsville,

Nothing of note occurred today. Rained all afternoon. 10 men detailed to conduct another train to & from Shelbyville, Tenn.

**Huntsville, May 20th**

Very rainy until 9 AM when it ceased and the sun shown out and the day was fair. We were post on old J.C. Calhouns property. They had any amount of milch cows and the boys did not lack for milk, onions, lettuce & etc & etc. We were relieved at 5 AM of the 21st by the 2nd Ohio boys. We arrived at camp at 6 AM.

**Huntsville, May 21st**

Guards detailed, officer of the day Capt Alban of Co F, Officer of the guard Lieut Bumpus of Co I. Co G has no guards to day. Co I detailed as pickets. Wet pouring today. Capt Cusac and the train have not arrived yet. Considerable uneasiness as to their safety has, and is being felt in regard to their safety.

**May 22n, 1862**

Capt Walker & Col Norton relieved from arrest and their swords returned unto them. Guards detailed, officer of the day Capt Canfield of Co K, officer of

guard Lieut Chaney of Co E, Capt. Walker officer in charge, from Co G 15 privates one sergt. Lieut Monroe, of Co F very sick. Nothing further occurred worth noting.

**Huntsville, May 23rd**

Wet & pouring all day. 60 or 70 prisoners exchanged with the Col of the 42 Geo.

**Huntsville, May 26th**

Officer in charge Capt Walker Co B, 21st O. V, officer of the day Capt Ewing of Co D, officer of the guard Lieut Wiley of Co C, Lieut Porter of Co G officer of picket guard and relieved me. The rest is being fitted out with new clothes. I have just returned to tent after hearing a splendid sermon preached by Mr Gaddis, Chaplain of the 2nd O. V. The text was well handled. He preached a very appropriate & practice sermon. When he speaks he cries

aloud and spares not.

Declares the whole council of God whether sinners will hear or whether they will forbear, rightly dividing the word of truth.

He preaches to officers as well as privates. The day and night passed off quietly.

**Huntsville, May 26th**

Orders were received to march to Athens, Al with 2 days rations and one cooked. Tents are being struck and all possible preparations are being made to leave the most beautiful camp we have yet occupied.

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## Man marries Daughter of Old Girlfriend

*From 1891 newspaper*

The marriage of John Ring, aged 70, of Jackson County and Miss Mary Donnan, aged 20, of Decatur, is somewhat romantic. An old friend of the aged groom says that Ring was at one time in love with Miss Donnan's mother, but on account of his then comparative poverty was forced to see her wooed and won by her present husband.

He remained true in his feeling, however, and when his present bride was a little girl became much attached to her. In appearance so much like her mother, the old gentleman found in her childish affection a solace for the loss of her mother's love.

As the girl grew to womanhood the old gentleman became a wealthy man, and when he sought the hand of Miss Donnan a short time ago found the mother a ready helper in the match.

The groom has just purchased a fine farm near Birmingham and will enjoy his last days in the sunlight of the smiles of his young bride.

## Mayor Fines Himself

*from 1912 newspaper*

Huntsville Mayor R. E. Smith, who engaged in a fight with J. E. Pierce, editor of The Huntsville Times, sat on his own case in the police court this morning. The case of Pierce was called first, and the defendant was discharged although he entered a plea of guilty. The mayor next called his own case and entered a fine of \$10 against himself because of the fact that he was the aggressor in the affray.

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## Old Huntsville Trivia

**1880** - City editor Frank Coleman is involved in a gunfight with two federal marshals. Thirteen shots were fired but no one was hit.

**1882** - Huntsville hires its first black policemen, Joe Scales and Robert Brandon. Madison County also had the only black legislator in Alabama that year, W. P. Williams.

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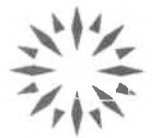
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# A Horrible Accident

*from 1870 newspaper*

We have heard of a very disturbing story near Scottsboro. It took place during a "House-raising." As is customary on such occasions, chickens had been killed by chopping off their heads. Two little sons of the owner of the house to be raised saw the chickens thus guillotined and during the day repeated this operation.

It was just at a time when the men were lifting a heavy log onto its place. The father, who was holding one end of the log, casting his eyes toward the little fellows, saw that one of them had an ax raised to sever the neck of his brother, much like what they had seen happen to the chickens. The father let go of the log to save his boy, and it fell, killing six men, two instantly, the others living only a few hours. The ax fell before the father could reach the scene, severing the neck of one of his sons. Thus seven persons were hurled into eternity in a twinkling.



# No Minors in Pool Halls

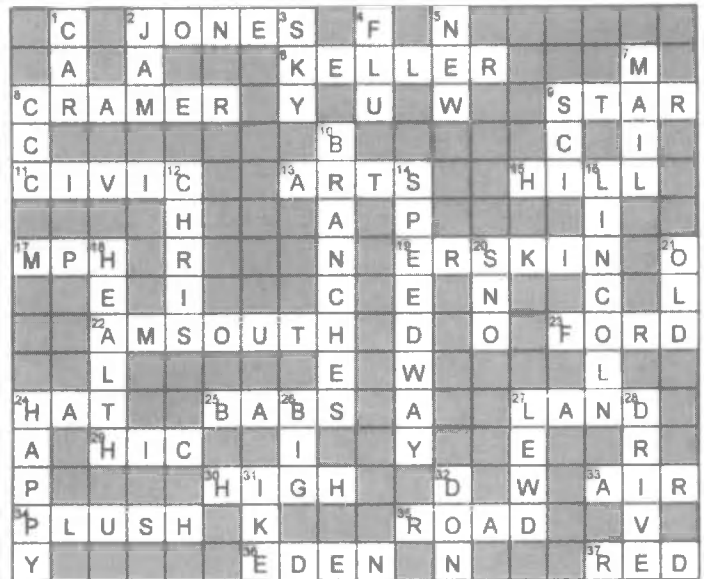
*from 1907 newspaper*

Children will not be allowed in the pool rooms in Huntsville. Mayor Smith has given instructions to the police on the enforcement of the city laws and minors will not be allowed to enter pool rooms in this city. Proprietors will be required to remove their curtains so that people can see in as they pass along the street. It is expected the ruling will be modified to allow certain minors to continue shining shoes.

# For Sale

Plenty of men's clothes, shotgun, dogs and other assorted husband belongings. Said husband has departed from this county and is not expected to return.

*from 1901 newspaper*



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# Abe Pizitz and Poppa

by Jim Latham

Hazel Battle was the Madam of a bordello in downtown Huntsville. It, as well as several others, were located on part of what is now the South Hall of the Von Braun Civic Center. They were all forced to vacate when Redstone Arsenal was opened.

Abe Pizitz ran a dry goods store on Jefferson Street. Abe supplied Hazel Battle with towels, sheets and garments for her ladies.

Abe's father, an Orthodox Jew from Russia, came to visit him. He wore a black suit, black hat and had a long beard.

When Hazel called Abe to deliver 2 dozen thick towels Abe

had to take his Poppa along as he had no place to leave him. Abe delivered the towels and returned to the car, but Poppa was gone! Abe could not find him anywhere. He then went back into the house where he found Poppa sitting with one of ladies of the house, in a lively conversation.

In Yiddish Abe said, "Poppa, do you know where you are?"

In Yiddish, Poppa replied, "You go on, Son, I know what I am doing!"



## Bad Weather

In 1877 Huntsville suffered some of the worst weather in it's history. The temperature got to 14 degrees below zero, with a 15 inch snow on the ground. Icebergs were reported floating in the Tennessee River.

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# Memories of Monte Sano

by Newman Ward

Bess, my wife, and I were out riding one early Sunday morning many, many years ago and decided to go out Pratt, across Monte Sano, and back by Governor's Way. While on Monte Sano, we made our way to the Monte Sano Hotel - we had heard so much about it and were very curious about what it actually looked like.

After much calling we aroused the caretaker, who was not too crazy about showing unannounced visitors through the hotel. But after much cajoling, and a bribe of 25 cents, he let us look around.

He showed us "Memphis Row," and told us that so many people came from Memphis every year that they occupied an entire wing. This must have been before 1937 because after that I worked Sundays at the Post Office. Of course, the Hotel had been closed for some time by then, but was still standing, vacant, with only the caretaker to keep it company. It was sort of sad, actually, such a beautiful building.

I don't remember its being open during my lifetime. It was situated on the edge of the mountain with a breathtaking view of Huntsville. We mostly looked through the windows at the empty rooms.

I remember that Charlie Crute, the owner of the Lyric and Grand Theaters, had a house near the hotel. I also remember Ernest Coe who had a hollowed-out tree log that he usually slept in. I believe this was back in the 1930s. I don't know what happened to him.



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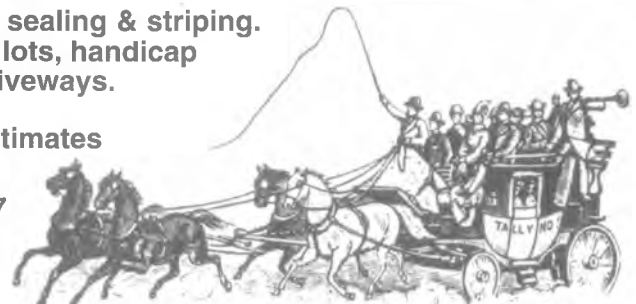


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# The Calhoun House

by Stefanie Troup

In 1833 Judge William Smith hired William and Thomas Brandon to build a house for him. This home would become one of the largest in the southeast, spreading over 12,000 square feet, and housing one of the most extensive art collections in the state.

The initial purchase to begin the building of the home was an order of one million bricks. Construction began and progressed slowly because Judge Smith was not easily pleased. The building went on for seven years. In 1840 Judge Smith died, never seeing the completion of the house. His grandson-in-law, Meredith Calhoun, as executor of the Judge's will, supervised the completion of the house.

The house faced Eustis St. and included a five-foot brick wall surrounding the entire block of what is now Lincoln, Eustis, Randolph, and Greene Streets. The 12,000 square foot house sitting within the brick wall was formidable and imposing with three stories, seven windows across the facade, and a gleaming copper roof.

Meredith Calhoun, his wife Mary, their three boys, and the Judge's widow and Mary's grandmother, Margaret Smith,

lived in the house. In 1842, Margaret died, and shortly afterwards the Calhoun's eldest son, Willie, experienced a crippling spinal injury. But possibly the most tragic event for the Calhoun family during these years

was the death of their middle son, John, at the age of four.

Grief-stricken, the Calhouns decided to travel abroad to seek medical care for their son Willie in France, but it was hinted that Mrs. Calhoun herself was so dis-

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**"Castro dies at 108; Cuban cigars can now be imported legally, but President Chelsea Clinton has banned all smoking in the U.S."**

*Headline in year 2029*

traught and ill that she required medical care as well.

While the Calhouns lived in Europe, the palatial house stood empty for years and was maintained by a staff of servants. The interior was filled with the Calhouns' art collection that they had amassed during their travels. It was considered by many to be the largest and finest private collection in the South at the time.

During the years that the great house stood empty, a friend and neighbor of the Calhouns, Mary Lewis, commented that the house "...looks sad...flourishing with mellowness over its sad history."

The house was very attractive to occupying troops during the civil war. Unruly prisoners were kept in the underground kitchen behind barred windows. Other parts of the house were used as a hospital and the rooms were crowded with beds, not only for battle wounds, but for the many soldiers who were stricken with measles. In 1867 the house served as military headquarters.

The house was rented in 1874 and used as a dance studio, and in 1876 it became the offices of the U.S. Circuit Court for the Northern District of Alabama.

The most illustrious event in the Calhoun House's history was the trial of Frank James in 1884 for a payroll robbery three years earlier. Huge crowds came from far and wide to witness the trial or just to be near the excitement. James was quite a celebrity and when he was acquitted, the sympathetic crowds cheered.

The house, the remaining art collection, and the entire block were sold to Milton Humes in 1887.

From 1895 - 1898 the Calhoun House served as the lo-

cation for a boy's school, the Huntsville Academy.

In 1807 a fire struck the house, and the burned out building remained an empty eyesore close to the heart of downtown Huntsville, until 1909 when it was sold to L.C. Sugg for \$10,800. This is the house that cost Judge Smith over \$75,000

to build in the 1830's.

In May of 1911 after another fire, the Calhoun House was demolished. Today there is nothing to remind one of it's past glories and drama except for the historic marker at the location, which describes the trial of Frank James that took place there.

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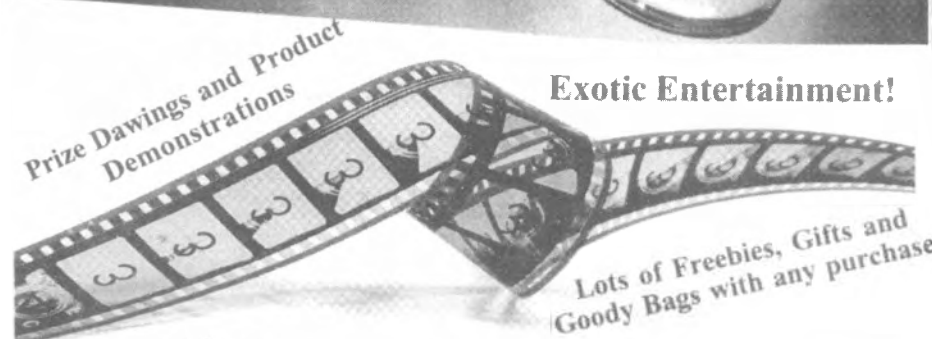
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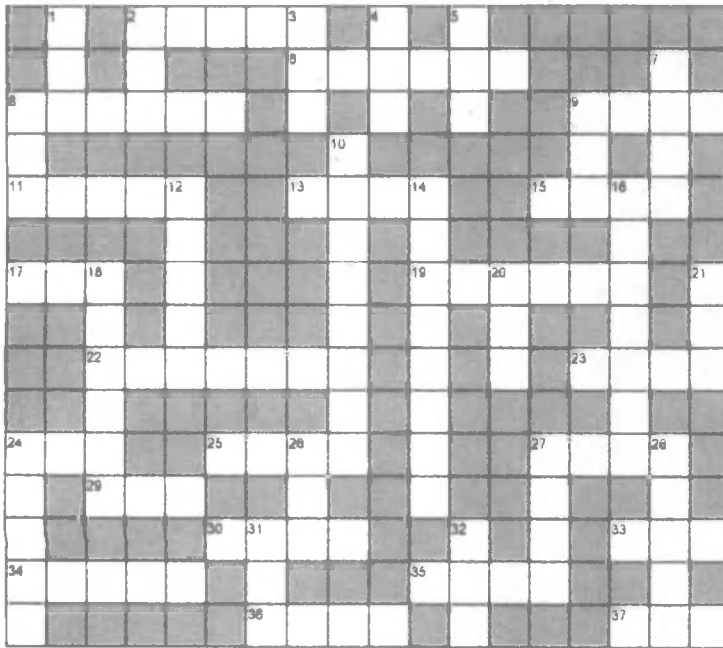
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# Old Huntsville Crossword

created by Bob Spencer



Answers on page 52

## Across

2. G.W. \_\_\_\_\_, Consulting Engineers, Est. 1886
6. Name of automobile manufactured on Redstone Arsenal, 1947
8. Bud \_\_\_\_\_, Long-time 5th district Congressman
9. Five Points \_\_\_\_\_ Market opened in 1944
11. The Von Braun \_\_\_\_\_ Center was dedicated, 1975
13. Panoply Of The \_\_\_\_\_, opened 1982
15. Maple \_\_\_\_\_ Cemetery in east Huntsville
17. Huntsville's Automobile Speed Limit in 1909 was 12 \_\_\_\_\_
19. Russel \_\_\_\_\_ Hotel officially opened in 1930
22. \_\_\_\_\_ Held ground-breaking ceremonies for new facility at Church and Clinton Sts., 1989
23. Frank \_\_\_\_\_, President Huntsville City Council, 1930-1948
24. The "TOP \_\_\_\_\_ LOUNGE", favorite gathering place for rocket scientists and engineers closed, 1989
25. \_\_\_\_\_ Roper received the Humanitarian Award, 1992
27. The Huntsville \_\_\_\_\_ Trust preserves more than 600 acres on Monte Sano
29. \_\_\_\_\_ Building, Early Office building for Space Contractors
30. Huntsville \_\_\_\_\_ School opened, 1927
33. The Bon-\_\_\_\_\_ Motel and Restaurant opened, 1951
34. The \_\_\_\_\_ Horse night club, destroyed by fire, 1973
35. Rideout \_\_\_\_\_ renamed Research Park Blvd. 2001
36. "\_\_\_\_\_ OF THE SOUTH" a chronology of Huntsville, 1805-2005
37. Huntsville's "\_\_\_\_\_ - Light" district was shutdown Jan. 1, 1914

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Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

## Down

1. First Street \_\_\_\_\_ in service, 1901
2. Big Spring Music Celebration
3. Huntsville's slogan is "The \_\_\_\_\_ Is Not The Limit"
4. The Spanish \_\_\_\_\_ outbreak killed 393 people in Huntsville, 1918
5. 109 German Scientists and their families became U. S. Citizens on "\_\_\_\_\_ Citizens Day" in Huntsville, 1955
7. Free \_\_\_\_\_ delivery service began in Huntsville in 1892
8. A new \_\_\_\_\_ camp was assigned to build a park on Monte Sano, 1935
9. \_\_\_\_\_-Quest, an interactive museum in Huntsville
10. The Huntsville/Madison Co. Library has 8 \_\_\_\_\_, 2006
12. \_\_\_\_\_ Spurlock, Huntsville Police Chief, 1963
14. Huntsville \_\_\_\_\_, auto race track in S. Huntsville
16. \_\_\_\_\_ Mill became the HIC Building
18. Monte Sano is Italian for "Mountain of \_\_\_\_\_"
20. Grand opening of \_\_\_\_\_-White Hamburgers, 1954
21. \_\_\_\_\_ Town. One of Huntsville's Historic Districts
24. Huntsville established official city slogan "\_\_\_\_\_, Hustling, Huntsville", 1922
26. \_\_\_\_\_ Brothers Supermarket opened, 1952
27. Law of 1889 prohibited women of \_\_\_\_\_ character from riding horses in downtown Huntsville
28. Whitesburg \_\_\_\_\_ - In Theatre opened, 1949
31. President "\_\_\_\_\_" Eisenhower Dedicated MSFC, 1960
32. \_\_\_\_\_ Mincher, local ball player, started with Washington Senators, 1960



# Lewter's Hardware Store



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

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

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

**A Hardware Store....  
The Way You Remember Them**

*Domie Lewter*  
*Mac Lewter*

**222 Washington St - 539-5777**

# When life was simple...



In 1950 the Huntsville High School cheerleaders got a chance to show off when they marched in Huntsville's first Christmas parade. There were 3,138 students attending school within the city limits in 1950, and Huntsville had a population of only 16,437.

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

**"Old Tyme Friendly Service"**



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