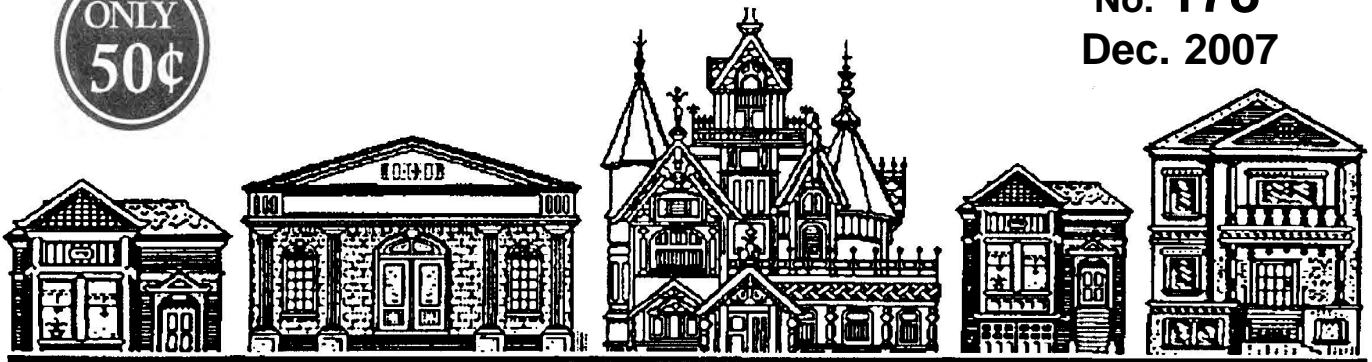


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No. 178
Dec. 2007



Old Huntsville

HISTORY AND STORIES OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY



To Stay Together

Having gained a certain amount of the old man's trust, Kendricks began explaining why he was there. Another week, he explained, the whole place would be under water.

After listening to the young man talk for almost thirty minutes, the old man summed up his situation in a few words.

"Ain't got no place to go. If I go to the poor house they will have her committed. We been together for almost seventy years and I ain't gonna let them put her in some place by herself."

Also in this issue: Murder of the Huntsville Martyrs

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To Stay Together

Will Kendricks, hidden by the thick underbrush, sat patiently watching the scene in front of him. Across the small clearing, with the Tennessee River flowing in the background, an old man dressed in faded overalls was chopping wood. Every few minutes he would glance reassuringly at the shotgun leaning against a nearby tree. A few feet from him was his wife, rocking slowly back and forth in a wooden rocker.

It could have been some rustic scene from an old Norman Rockwell painting had it not been for the length of rope tied to the woman's leg. Every few minutes she would get up and walk toward the woods, only to be brought up short by the rope.

The old man would go over and talk quietly to the woman and then, taking her by her hand, would lead her back to the rocker.

Suddenly the old man froze, looking straight at the woods where Kendricks was hiding. Grabbing his shotgun, the man began yelling loudly, ordering the unseen intruder off the land.

After firing a shot in the air as a warning, he ran to where his wife was sitting and untying the rope, hurriedly led her into the house.

"He's crazy," thought Kendricks as he fled the woods. "He's absolutely crazy!"

Walking back to the road where his truck was parked, Kendricks began thinking about the events that had led to this bizarre confrontation.

Since the beginning of time the Tennessee had been a wild untamed river stretching from the Smoky Mountains, down through northern Alabama and up to the Ohio River. While the river provided food and transportation for the early settlers, it also became a curse for people living too close to it during the flood seasons. Rising flood waters devastated farm lands and often made travel on the river impossible.

In one memorable winter in the early 1900s, the Tennessee River near Decatur, Alabama had swollen to a width of almost a mile.

As part of his New Deal, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, in the early 1930s, began construction of a series of dams throughout the entire length of the river to provide flood control and also generate a cheap source of electricity. For a region of the country in the midst of the



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greatest economic depression it had ever known, the influx of jobs provided the only hope of survival for countless people.

In 1932, even before the location of Guntersville dam was announced, the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) began making plans to purchase the lands adjacent to the river. Though many landowners vigorously fought the idea of moving, they realized they had no other choice. Either they took what the TVA offered, or their land would be taken by court action.

Much of the land was occupied by sharecroppers and arrangements were made to find other landowners who needed farm hands, with the TVA often providing trucks to move the families.

By 1935 the TVA had acquired title to enough land, and construction of Guntersville Dam was started. This was the largest construction project ever attempted in the Valley. An entire town was built to house the thousands of workers employed on the project.

The village, known as "Dam Town," was built on the north side of the present dam and consisted of nearly a hundred buildings, complete with mess hall, hospital, school and barracks. Within a few short months Dam Town had become a large community with its own stores and

police force (hired by the TVA).

The planners in Washington had planned for everything, or so they thought.

Even before Dam Town was completed the project began running into trouble. Although the landowners had been paid for their land and the sharecroppers had been relocated to other farms, no one had given thought to the old people.

In a custom dating from Medieval times in Europe, landowners normally let longtime employees remain on the land after they got too old to work. Much of the riverbank was worthless for planting so if an old couple built a shanty and took up residence, the landowners simply looked the other way.

Removing these people from land they were squatting on was proving a daunting challenge for the TVA. At first, officials visited each of the families trying to reason with them.

"We ain't got no place to go," most of the people would reply.

The TVA officials had no answer. Unless the old folks had some sort of income, or relatives to take them in, the only alternative for them was the county poorhouse.

The TVA next tried to get the local authorities involved but the sheriff, well aware of the old people's plight, refused. He pointed out to the TVA boys that

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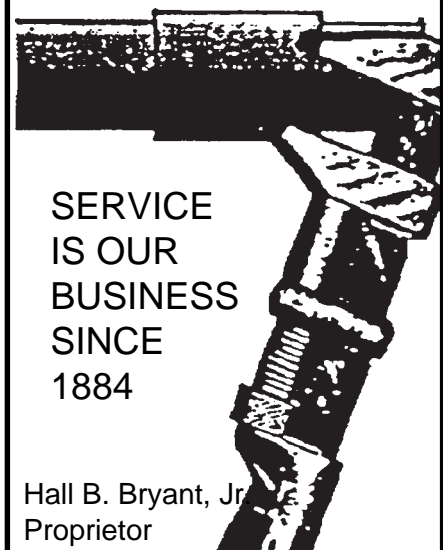
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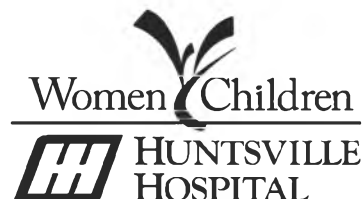
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it was "Gov'ment land," and he had no jurisdiction there.

In a few instances the TVA tried to use its own police force to forcefully evict the people. But after one case where they were met with gunfire, the ensuing negative publicity made them back off.

Next they tried to force the people to move by more peaceful means.

For many of these country people, with no way to travel to town, the rolling store was their only way to purchase supplies. The TVA police visited the rolling store owners and told them if they continued selling to the squatters they would be forbidden to sell their products at Dam Town or any of the other construction sites. Faced with the possibility of losing a major part of their income, the rolling store operators reluctantly agreed.

By 1937 only a handful of squatters remained. Progress on the dam had reached a point where it was imperative the people be moved, otherwise the whole project would be thrown behind schedule.

Will Kendricks had worked on the Norris Dam project in Tennessee and while there had established a reputation for being able to solve problems in difficult situations. In one case where a family refused to move, Kendricks was able to win the family's trust and discovered they had a brother who lived in Chi-

cago. After contacting the brother, he put the family in his car and drove them to Chicago.

Kendricks had rightfully guessed the family did not have the money for bus tickets and would not accept charity.

When Kendricks arrived in Dam Town he first asked for a list of all the families remaining. Next he asked for a list of all the employees who might know the families. By questioning the employees he was able to get a fairly good idea of the different situations and backgrounds. Most of the cases were fairly typical of what he had dealt with before-- poor elderly people who had no place to turn to. Only one name, Moses Lamm, seemed to be different.

"He's crazy!" One of the workers exclaimed after being questioned. "I was just walking through the woods when he appeared and started yelling and waving his gun!"

Immediately a chorus of voices spoke up as other workers recalled meeting the old man. "He keeps his wife tied up all the time and won't let her out of his sight," one man said. "She seems all right but she stays in the house most of the time and no one's ever talked to her."

From the little information available Kendricks determined the couple were probably in their late eighties. They had moved to the riverbank about a dozen years before and had subsisted by grow-

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ing a small garden and fishing in the river. At first the couple were friendly with their neighbors but as time went on, they cut off all contact. By the time the TVA began purchasing the land no one dared approach the old man for fear of being met with a blast from a shotgun.

Early the next morning Kendricks drove to where the trail leading to Lamm's house began. After parking his truck on the edge of the road he began slowly walking up the narrow path, not knowing what to expect.

Reaching the edge of the clearing, where he saw Lamm chopping firewood, Kendricks stopped. Not wanting to startle the old man, he called out in a loud voice: "Mr. Lamm, my name is Will Kendricks and I need to talk to you!"

Immediately the old man dropped his ax and grabbed the shotgun lying nearby. "Get out of here," he yelled. After firing a shot into the air he ran to where his wife was sitting, and after untying her, led her hurriedly inside the house.

Lamm's actions only confirmed what Kendricks had al-

ready been told. The old man was probably a mental case.

Several days later Kendricks drove to Huntsville to talk to the probate judge. After explaining the situation, Kendricks asked for advice.

"Well," the judge replied in the slow Southern drawl that seemed to be typical of Southern judges. "There ain't much we can do. We can't make the old man go to the county poor farm if he doesn't want to. And if he's able to take care of himself and hasn't actually hurt anyone we can't have him committed to a mental institution. There ain't no law against being eccentric or even tying your wife up if she don't complain!"

"It would be better," he continued, "if the woman was nuts. Then you could have her committed and the old man would probably leave of his own accord."

Kendricks returned to Dam Town and met with the project supervisors where he relayed what the judge had told him.


The news was met with a stony silence. The dam was nearing completion and in a few weeks

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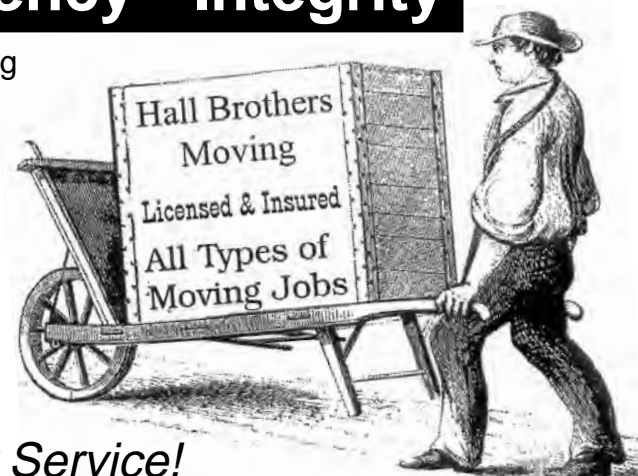
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the whole area would be flooded. "You have ten days," one of the supervisors told Kendricks. "The day after Christmas we're sending our men in there to tear the house down!"

The next morning Kendricks returned to Lamm's cabin. Again he was met with shotgun blasts in the air and loud yelling. And again he retreated to the safety of the nearby woods.

Every day Kendricks traveled to the cabin and every day was a repetition of the previous day. After about a week and with time running out, he decided on a bolder course of action. He had noticed that Lamm always fired the shotgun in the air rather than at him, so hopefully, the old man did not have any real intentions of hurting him.

Boldly and without yelling to announce his presence first, Kendricks walked into the clearing to within a few steps of where the old man was working.

Sensing Kendricks' presence, the old man whirled around to where his shotgun was lying and while screaming at the top of his lungs, fired a shot into the air.

Though scared to death Kendricks stood still, refusing to run.

Quickly the old man reloaded his shotgun and fired another shot. Kendricks remained motionless.

Realizing Kendricks was not going to run away, Lamm paused and looked at the young man

intently. "You don't scare easy, do you?"

Though petrified with fear Kendricks was determined to stand his ground. "Look," he said. "All I want is to do my job and go home for Christmas. I don't want to hurt you or anyone else."

Trying desperately to keep the conversation going, Kendricks asked for a drink of water. Reluctantly the old man led him to the porch and gave him a glass jar full of cold water.

While drinking the water and looking around, Kendricks' glance fell on the old woman sitting at the other end of the porch. The first thing that captured his attention was the



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7. *52 Weekends in the Tennessee Valley* by Charles & Daniel Frew 24.95

8. *Killingsworth Cove on Hurricane Creek* by Joe Floyd Broyles \$12.95

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length of rope tied to her wrist and the other end tied securely to the porch railing. She was rocking back and forth slowly and seemed to be cuddling a doll made from corn shucks.

Suddenly Kendricks wheeled around and looked at Lamm. "She has Alzheimer's disease doesn't she?"

Kendricks had helped care for his grandmother who suffered from Alzheimer's and he recognized the symptoms.

"She's just having a bad day." Lamm reluctantly replied. Noticing Kendricks looking at the rope he explained, "If I don't do that she might wander off while I'm doing the chores."

Slowly the reality of the situation dawned on Kendricks. It was not the old man who had mental problems, but his wife. The old man had been scaring people off the place to keep them from knowing. If the authorities had known, they would have had her committed.

Having gained a certain amount of the old man's trust, Kendricks began explaining why he was there. Another week, he explained, the whole place would be under water.

After listening to the young man talk for almost thirty minutes, the old man summed up his situation in several words.

"Ain't got no place to go. If I go to the poor house they will have her committed. We been together for almost seventy years and I ain't gonna let them put her in some place by herself."

"Please don't tell anyone," the old man begged with tears in his eyes.

Sleep was impossible for Kendricks that night as he lay in bed trying to decide what to do. He could go to town in the morning and get a judge to commit the woman and then her husband would have no reason to stay on the land. She couldn't take

care of herself and her husband wouldn't be able to after they were evicted. Another possibility was to simply say nothing and let the TVA forcibly evict them. Deep down in his heart, Kendricks knew that neither one was a real choice.

Giving up on trying to sleep, Kendricks decided to get dressed and drive back to the old couple's cabin. "There has to be another way," he kept telling himself.

As he approached the cabin the first thing he noticed was the faint sound of Christmas caroling coming from inside. Quietly he made his way to the window and looked in.

There was a small tree sitting in the middle of the table, decorated with bits of tinsel and foil. Sitting in front of the tree was the old couple holding hands and singing the Christmas carols he

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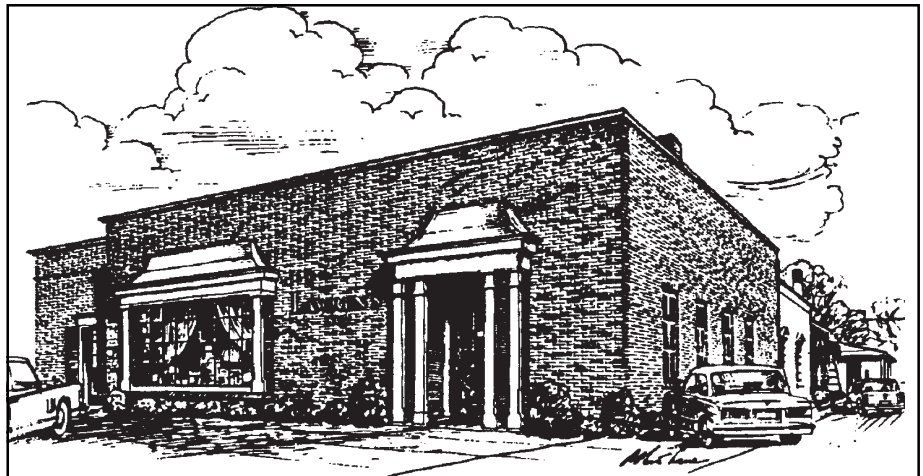


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had first heard on approaching the cabin. Every few minutes the lady would hesitate and her husband would patiently coax her on the words. Though Christmas was still several days away, remnants of wrapping paper were scattered about the table where the woman had opened her presents.

Unwilling to interrupt the peaceful scene, Kendricks left.

Early next morning as the heavy fog was still rolling across the Tennessee River, the peaceful quiet of Dam Town was interrupted by the loud ringing of a bell. "Fire!" Men shouted. "The Lamm place is on fire!"

Hurriedly getting dressed, Kendricks joined the men rushing out to the scene. By the time he arrived the fire had been extinguished, though it had completely gutted the rear of the house. After making sure the old couple had not been caught in the blaze, he began looking around the clearing for them.

They were nowhere to be found.

Although a search party was organized and spent two days in the nearby hills, no trace of the old couple was ever found.

Later that week Kendricks made one final trip to the site of the burned out cabin. While walking around the clearing his attention was drawn to a nearby rock. Lying next to it and wrapped in

cloth were several old, faded photographs of the Lamms, along with their marriage certificate from almost three quarters of a century before. Kendricks sensed that these things had been placed there on purpose, to make sure someone would find them and maybe remember who they were.

As he stood looking at the

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old photographs, he became aware of a faint and soothing sound coming from the nearby hills. The sound seemed to permeate the clearing, finding its way into every corner and dark crevice. Maybe it was just the wind, or maybe it was his imagination, but Kendricks later swore that just for a second, he heard what sounded like Christmas carols.

Years later when Will Kendricks was asked about their fate he simply replied, "They stayed together."

Heard on the Streets in 1904

- A local woman asserted that for months she had been abused and threatened by her husband. Mrs. Ethel Olsen, formerly of England, and later of Huntsville, sent a pistol bullet at her husband in a crowded street near the courthouse here late Sunday, missed him and powder-burned a passerby. She declares she fired to protect her face from a dash of

"If you ever injected truth into politics, you'd have no politics."

Will Rogers

muriatic acid which she charges her husband was preparing to cast at her. She was arrested and charged with assault with intent of murder. She tells a story of her husband's alleged cruel treatment of her and their children.

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

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News from 1904

- 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.

- John Mercer will be leaving on the first Monday in October bound for Tucson, Arizona. He advertises good wagons and teams and is willing to take up to four people as fellow travelers. No unaccompanied females.

- An argument for the good health of Huntsville speaks for itself in the little fact about the old negro who had lived here 106 years and during all that time he had not lost more than a year's time from actual labor.

- John Griffin and Jim Brown, colored, were arrested and placed in jail here by Deputy Sheriffs Pierce and Robinson on charges of gaming and public drunkenness. Deputy Pierce also found a concealed razor on the person of Brown. Griffin, it is believed, is wanted in Gadsden on a charge of murder and will be held here until officials of that place advise disposition.



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Early Huntsville Aviation

by Shelby P. Taylor

At the end of World War II there were indications that the Huntsville Airport would soon become a beehive of activity. Pennsylvania Central Airlines had begun service into Huntsville during the war, Eastern began service January 1, 1946 and they were soon joined by Waterman Airlines, an intrastate operation.

There was only one thing that dimmed this rosy picture, there were few facilities to accommodate these flights. The runways were minimum length, there were no lights or landing aids, no control tower and Penn Central had the only radio available.

The "terminal building" was a wood shack that had been hauled in from another location and placed at the end of one of the runways. It turned out that it was not unusual, especially in the winter, for flights to pass over Huntsville on account of bad weather.

Waterman Airlines was established by Waterman Steam Ship Co., to serve Mobile, Dothan, Montgomery, Birmingham, Huntsville and Muscle Shoals with one round trip a

day. They started service with a 14-passenger Lockheed but soon obtained a refurbished DC3 that carried 24 passengers instead of the usual 21 for this type of aircraft.

Because they were an intrastate airline they were not certified by any federal agency and thus were not eligible for membership in the Airline Transport Association; and so far as Eastern was concerned, Waterman did not exist.

After about a year of flying with few passengers and no airmail or air express, Waterman announced they were quitting and gave the date for their last flight. On this sad day for Waterman Airlines the Eastern north bound flight landed and after boarding the passengers they were prepared to leave with a full load, when lo and behold,

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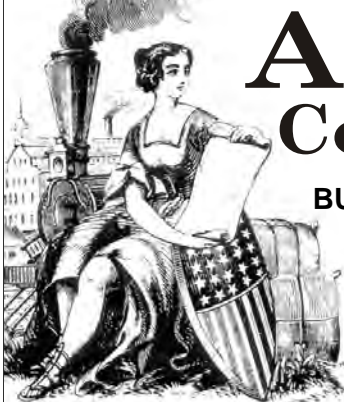
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one of the engines refused to start. What were they to do with 21 unhappy passengers? A call to Atlanta produced no help as they did not have a backup plane available.

After much hand wringing, the station manager reluctantly suggested the passengers could be put on Waterman's flight and sent back to Birmingham where they could catch connecting flights. After much discussion the Atlanta supervisors agreed this was their only solution.

So with 21 Eastern passengers and 3 of their own, Waterman Airlines took off for the first time in their short life with a full load... and someone from Eastern Airlines had to explain to Captain Rickenbacken why they gave up 21 passengers to another airline that didn't even exist.

"It isn't necessary to see a good tackle. You can hear it."
Knute Rockne/Notre Dame

A Very Historical Person

Recently a teacher at a local school was leading the students in a historical quiz. The object, she explained, was for one student to give the last name of a historical person and have the students guess the first and middle name.

The first student goes to the front of the class and after thinking carefully, submits the name "Edison."

"Thomas Alva," the class quickly responded.

Second student: "Nixon."

"Richard Milhouse," one student yelled.

Third student: "Ford."

Without a single moment's hesitation the whole class yelled "Woody Anderson."

B

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Editor of Huntsville Times Charged with Fraud

from 1918 Huntsville Mercury Newspaper

J. E. Pierce, editor of the Huntsville Daily Times, one of the most strenuous reform politicians in North Alabama and candidate for the State senate last summer, was arrested here last night on a federal warrant sworn out by federal officials charging him with obtaining money under false pretences by representing himself to be a government official. Pierce made bond in the sum of \$500.

Mr. Pierce waived a preliminary hearing before U.S. Commissioner Watts and he was bound over to the federal grand jury. The charges upon which Mr. Pierce was arrested by the federal authorities were first brought informally before a meeting of the Campaign Committee of the Fourth Liberty Loan Drive during the last week of that campaign.

The district and county chairmen, with a full attendance of various subcommittees composed of the best citizenship of the county, after hearing the charges presented against Mr. Pierce, recommended the matter be referred to the Madison County War Defense Council and the Council of Defense for investigation. At a called joint meeting of these two federal bodies, witnesses appeared and under oath gave their testimonies concerning these wholesale frauds practiced upon fifty or sixty Negro citizens of the county.

By unanimous motion of these federal boards the chairman was instructed to lay the matter before the United States District Attorney of this district for further investigation and action. At this point all local activities ended and all subsequent developments proceeded from the government.

Many prominent and well respected Negroes appeared before the War Council and claimed that Pierce enforced collection of \$30 from each of them on the grounds that it was compulsory and lev-

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ied by the Federal government. This was during the last ten days of the Fourth Liberty Loan campaign and all the witnesses declared that they were given to understand that this constituted a part of the government's bond drive.

Some stated that he declared these sums were assessed to be expended in patriotic advertising, some stated they were led to believe they were making first payments on Liberty Bonds and all declared they would not have contributed unless they had believed it was obligatory.

A few were given receipts for display advertising in return for their money, but in most cases no receipt was given.

Witnesses stated that Pierce's operations had created great consternation and resentment among the Negroes of the county.

Witnesses who appeared and were placed under oath testified that the collection of money in Pierce's advertising campaign was practically by force.

One person testified that Pierce told him the government was requiring this contribution, and that Pierce and the Huntsville Daily Times were merely acting as agents for the government.

Another witness declared that Pierce stated to him that he had to make the contribution, that he saw Mr. Pierce's brother, the United States deputy collector, in Mr. Pierce's car a short distance off, and that Pierce gave him to understand that these demands were being backed by this official. The witness further stated that he paid the money because he believed he had no other choice.

Another witness stated that Mr. Pierce said to him, "Do you know that gentleman in the car?" Pointing to his brother, the deputy collector said, "I want \$30

from you for the Fourth Liberty Bond Drive." The witness then stated that after paying the money he was given a receipt which he read as Pierce was leaving the place: that as soon as he saw on the face of the receipt that it was for patriotic advertising, he ran after Pierce in an effort to catch him so as to get his money back but could not outrun the car.

Another witness testified that Mr. Pierce stated to him that he wanted him to take out Liberty Bonds, where upon witness replied he had no money. Pierce replied that he would lend it to him if he would sign a waiver note for it: that if he didn't do so, he

(Pierce) would put him in jail. The witness stated that he believed Pierce because Pierce pointed to his brother who was waiting nearby in the car.

Two other witnesses stated that Pierce declared these were first payments on Liberty Bonds which were assessed against the witnesses and that they were compelled to pay the assessments to him.

Some twenty Negro farmers, out of the great number alleged to have been defrauded by Pierce, gave testimony substantially along the same lines.



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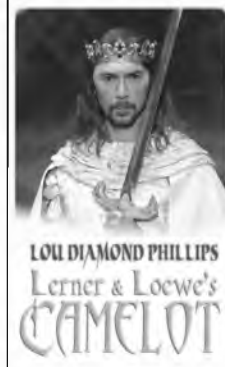
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MARK TWAIN TONIGHT

January 5

News from 1899

- Charles Hawk, a young painter of Huntsville, about 24 years old, while attempting to jump on a running freight train that was passing Dallas Mills Sunday afternoon, missed his footing and fell with his right leg under the wheels. It was so badly crushed that it had to be amputated three inches above the knee. The operation was performed by Drs. W. C. Wheeler and Felix Baldrige, and the patent today is doing as well as can be expected.

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

mained there for two days, and so far recovered as to be taken home. Mr. Hertzler is a good citizen and we rejoice to learn that he is recovering, without permanent injury.

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

- A son of Lira Elliot, of Lincoln Village, aged ten years, was ill for a year and although

having a ravenous appetite, grew emaciated.

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

- Mr. Rodger Thompson has announced he will no longer pay any bills for his wife.

He was quoted as saying, "Who ever consorts with her can now pay."

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Free Access

Without the Big Spring there would not have been a Huntsville, a fact our early citizens realized all too well. Though the owner of record was LeRoy Pope, it was always treated as community property, especially since it provided Huntsville with its water supply.

So important was the spring that in 1843 it was transferred to the city for the sum of \$1 by William W. Pope, son of the original owner. Perhaps fearing that future city governments would restrict access to the spring, or charge for use of the grounds, the deed specified that "... the mayor and aldermen, and their successors shall furnish free access at all times through the lands

herein conveyed to said spring, and hold the same for the promenades and pleasure grounds of all such peaceful persons as may choose to visit same."

The spring, and the park, remained unrestricted except for a brief time in December, 1941, when the city government, overcome by war hysteria, posted barbed wire and armed guards around the spring and the entire park to prevent poisoning by Japanese agents.

A public outcry quickly forced the city to remove the fence (the guard remained for a time) and the park has since remained free to all people at all times.

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Heard On the Street

by *Cathey Carney*



We had a famous winner for the Photo of the Month for November. **Jean Davis** is the owner of Johnson's Beauty School & Salon, which has been a Huntsville business for many years. The gorgeous young man is **Bob Baker**, of Alpha Estates, Lincoln Antiques and Renaissance Theatre. We had lots of calls identifying Bob, but only the FIRST one wins!

Congratulations to our very own **Steve Wang** and **Gevarra Teebi**, of Jazz Factory downtown, who were recently awarded the prestigious **2007 Restaurateurs of the Year** by the Alabama Restaurant Association. It's quite an honor. **Jazz Factory** has been open since 1997.

On a sad note, many were surprised and saddened to see the note on a blackboard at **Green Hills Grille** that the restaurant was closing in Huntsville. **David Wheeler**, manager, had worked at the restaurant for 13 years, and in my opinion the restaurant had some of the best food found anywhere. We'll miss it.

We were sorry to hear of the death of **Don Schmit** recently, in Chicago. Don was the Dad of

Dan Schmit, whom many of you will recall as being the weather guy on WAFF Channel 48 for years. We send our deepest sympathy to Dan, his wife **Dawn** and his mom **Phyllis**, as well as the many friends and family who will miss him. Dan and Dawn are the proud parents of twins boys **Jacob** and **Jeremy**, and baby sister **Allison**.

One of Huntsville's most enjoyable Christmas traditions is the **luminaries downtown**. This year it'll be on Dec. 8, Saturday, starting at 5pm. Thousands of candles will line the streets in **Old Town and Twickenham**, and many of the homes will be decorated. There are also selected homes that you can actually go inside on the tour, that are just beautiful and it really puts you in the Christmas mood!

Congratulations to **Angie** and **Craig Story**, who have been married now for 10 years! They celebrated in New York City, and had planned to be in the David

Letterman audience during that time, but the writer's strike cancelled that. I'm sure they had a great time anyway!

It's always good to see **Jennifer Parmenter** at Colonial Bank. She told me that her sweet brother **Justin Dugan** will be celebrating a birthday in December, as well as her neice-in-law **Anna** who turns 2 in December.

While having lunch recently at the **Palette Cafe** with **Mo Phillips** of Arbonne, we met two delightful ladies. **Theresa Wang** is owner of Lucky Bonsai & Bamboo and her daughter **Margarite** also has a business in Hampton Cove.

One of the best parties ever took place recently at the **Historic Lowry House**, in honor of **Marie Hewitt's** birthday. The theme was a 1950's sock hop, complete with band, and some of the outfits worn (think Poodle Skirt) really brought back memories for many of the attendees. The band, Cracker Jacks, played the best 50's & 60's music and got every-

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 handsome boy is known as the bridge man.



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one on their feet. Thanks to **Joe & Connie Lougheed, Jean Bergeron, Louis & Jane Tippett, LeRoy & Betty Jo Cunningham, Lloyd & Rita Garrison** and **Sharon Rauh** for putting it all together. It was a real Blast from the Past!

Another Halloween, and another visit to Mullins Restaurant by about 50 screeching witches! Hosted by **Karen Dekko**, it was a memorable breakfast event for unsuspecting diners. Some of the other "witches" were **Linda Drake, Barbara Saunders, Louise Avery** and **Vivian Kruse**.

We were very sorry to hear that **Pam Rawl's** sweet sister had died. **Evelyn Holbrook** lived in Rome, Ga. and had been sick a long time. We send deepest condolences to Pam and her husband **Collier**, and the rest of the family.

Jean Sparks recently celebrated a milestone birthday, at a great grilled lobster party in 5 Points hosted by her sweet daughter. Happy Birthday to you, Jean!

Welcome to **Jim Webb** as a new member of the **Golden K Kiwanis!** Jim is a long-time resident of Huntsville and is retired from the real estate business. The Golden K is sure a great group to belong to.

Our Copy Boy **Tom Carney** is having a December birthday. Happy birthday, sweetie!

Blackwater Hatties was rocking recently with lots of pool players and just folks there to socialize. It was great running into **Keith Hopkin**, of Steele & Asso. Century 21, that man looks younger every time we see him!

We also visited with that handsome **John Bennett**, proud husband of **Susie Nolen Bennett**. Susie was visiting with her brother **Scottie** in San Francisco and having a blast.

The **Veteran's Day Parade** was the biggest ever this year, and the weather was perfect - temps

in the mid 70's and blue sky. It was wonderful seeing the older vets, the high school and college bands, the **ROTC's, Corevette Club, Loretta Spencer** and **Glenn Watson, James Hensley, many grandparents and people with their kids** - everyone waving flags. We are all so proud of our Vets and all of the military.

If you haven't gone by to check out **Bridge Street Towne Center** yet, you've got to do that. It's just beautiful - an outdoor collection of stores and (soon-to-be) restaurants and movie theaters that you just don't see anywhere else. I love the water fountains, the gondola rides, paddle boats, etc. A real unique experience!

We met a very sweet young lady recently. **Stef Sterling** works at **Humphrey's**, and is one of their newest employees. She did a great job taking care of us the night we were there. She's from Indiana, lived in Huntsville for 20 years and just loves it here.

We were sad to hear that **Lois Miller (Malcolm's sweet wife)** had a bad fall recently. She is recuperating, and didn't know that her dear husband could be such a good nurse! We're thinking about you, Lois.

Well, be sure and get out and walk downtown - the leaves are still beautiful. Have a wonderful and safe Christmas!

Happy Holidays!

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Christmas Heirlooms

Sugar Taffy

- 3 c. granulated sugar
- 1/2 c. vinegar
- 1/2 c. water
- 1 T. butter

Boil sugar, vinegar and water to soft ball stage. Quickly stir in butter and boil til mixture becomes hard and brittle when you put a drop in cold water. Add any flavoring extract desired just before removing from the fire & mix. Pour onto a buttered plate to cool, turning the edges in as fast as they cool. When cool enough to handle, pull until white and brittle.

Chocolate Popcorn

- 1 1/2 c. sugar
- 1 rounded T. butter
- 1 square unsweetened chocolate
- 3 qrts. freshly popped corn

3 T. water

Boil sugar, butter, chocolate and water til mixture spins a long thread in cold water. Pour hot over popped corn and stir til all kernels are coated.

Cherry Dessert

(This is a very old recipe.)

- 1 c. sugar
- Butter, size of an egg
- 1 c. milk
- 3 t. baking powder
- 2 c. sifted flour

Cream sugar and butter together and add milk, baking powder and flour. Mix well. Put batter in greased pan and pour sauce over it. Bake 30 minutes at 350 degrees.

Sauce:

- 1 c. sugar
- 2 T. butter
- 2 c. cherries
- 2 c. boiling water

Chocolate Truffles

- 2 pkgs. semi-sweet chocolate chips
- 15 oz. can sweetened condensed milk
- 1 t. vanilla
- 1 c. chopped nuts

Melt chocolate chips over hot water in double boiler. When melted remove from heat and add milk or cream, vanilla and nuts. Chill til firm on a buttered plate or marble slab. Shape into small balls and roll in nuts, cocoa or coconut.

Angel Food Pudding

- 2 eggs
- 1 c. powdered sugar
- 1 T. flour
- 1 t. baking powder
- 1 c. broken walnuts
- 1 c. chopped pitted dates

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Beat together the eggs, sugar, flour and baking powder. Stir in the nuts and dates. Pour into buttered baking dish, set in a pan of boiling water and bake for 30 minutes at 325 degrees. Let chill and serve with whipped cream.

Maple Pralines

- 1 c. maple syrup
- 2 c. powdered sugar
- 1/2 c. cream or milk
- Butter, walnut size
- 1 t. vanilla
- 2 c. chopped nuts

Boil sugar, syrup, cream, and butter to a soft ball stage. Remove from fire, add vanilla and nuts and beat til creamy. Drop by teaspoonfuls onto waxed paper.

Vinegar Pie

- 1 1/2 c. sugar
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 4 T. vinegar
- 2 T. flour
- 1 T. butter
- 1 c. hot water
- Nutmeg to taste

Mix all ingredients together and pour in a fresh open pie crust. Bake in moderate oven til the center is done - a very old recipe.

Black Bottom Pie

- 1 T. cornstarch
- 1 c. sugar
- 4 eggs, separated
- 2 c. milk
- 1 pkg. semi-sweet chocolate bits
- 1 t. vanilla
- 1 T. gelatin
- 1/4 c. cold water

Combine cornstarch and 1/2 cup of the sugar. Beat the egg yolks and add slowly 2 cups of scalded milk.

Stir in sugar mixture. Cook in a double boiler, stirring til custard coats the back of a spoon. Divide custard evenly.

Add 3/4 package semi-sweet chocolate chips to 1 cup of the custard. Stir til chocolate is melted. Add 1 teaspoon vanilla and pour into the bottom of a backed 10-inch pie shell.

To the remaining custard, add the gelatin which has been softened in 1/4 cup of cold water and cooled.

Beat the egg whites, adding 1/2 cup sugar gradually til the mixture hold it shape.

Fold this into the custard-gelatin mixture and pour over chocolate layer. Chill til set and garnish with remaining 1/4 package chocolate chips.



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Hillbilly Heaven

It was a fairly small neighborhood, bordered on one side by working class Polish emigrants and outlined by the tall, coal blackened smokestacks that made up the heart of Chicago's industrial might.

The first thing you noticed as you entered the neighborhood was the music. The music seemed to come from everywhere. Every one of the cold water flats lining the streets appeared to have a radio in the window turned to a country music station and the cars clogging the streets seemed to compete with one another in who could play the music the loudest. Adding to the noise were the honky tonks and bars lining the streets.

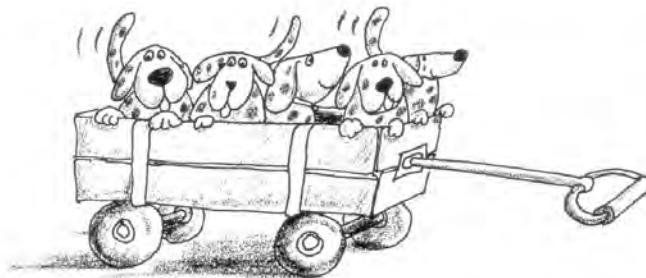
Packed in tightly among the bars and dilapidated apartment buildings were small neighborhood restaurants serving such delicacies as grits, crackling bread and black eyed peas. Occasionally, one might see a hand written notice, stuck haphazardly on a restaurant window: "Going to Huntsville on Friday. Will share gas."

A stranger didn't have to ask where he was. All he had to do was look at the car tags. Hun-

dreds, if not thousands of the tags bore the slogan "Heart of Dixie," telling the world that their owners were from Alabama.

The place was "Hillbilly Heaven," a place of dreams, hopes, and sometimes broken hearts.

The end of World War II saw one of the largest exodus from the homeland of the Southern working class since the end of the Civil War. Young men, newly discharged from the armed forces and having experienced the thrills and excitement of Lon-



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don, New York and Paris, were no longer content to return home to a life of cotton farming.

Realizing there were few jobs to be had in North Alabama, many of the men turned their sights northward to Chicago, Pittsburgh, Cincinnati and Detroit.

It was Chicago however that attracted the most people from Madison County. With the end of the war, and the growing, almost unquenchable demand for consumer goods, Chicago's manufacturing plants were experiencing an unprecedented boom.

As word of the good jobs began filtering into North Alabama, many men decided to make the move. With only a twelve hour drive separating Huntsville and Chicago, the choice between a well paying job and staying in Huntsville doing nothing became easier.

The part of Chicago drawing most of the Southern immigrants would soon become known as Hillbilly Heaven. It was a poor, working class neighborhood but the rents were cheap. Most of the brownstone buildings in this area had been built in the last century and were often in bad repair.

For many of the people who had never been out of Alabama, the cultural differences were shocking.

"I remember all the people," recalled Kenneth Gentry. "Everywhere you looked were people and they were always in a hurry. We moved into a three room flat on the sixth floor of an apartment building. One of our neighbors was a family from Hazel Green and

on the floor below us were a bunch of men from Decatur. Almost everyone worked at the same place. I remember really missing the trees, though. Chicago just didn't have any."

It was fairly easy for the newcomers to gain employment at one of the nearby plants. The Southerners had already acquired a reputation for being hard workers and were in demand. Most of the time it merely took a word from a cousin or brother-in-law who was already working there.

One of the plants was S.K. Wayne, a company manufacturing automotive tools. By 1950, over half of its work force was made up by people from Alabama, many of whom were related. One company actually had to post a notice on the bulletin board prohibiting more than 5 members of a family from taking off at the same time.

By 1951, the Southern influence had spread throughout the neighborhood. Honky Tonks with such names as the "Alabama Rose" and "The Decatur

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Bucket" began replacing the older neighborhood bars. Polish ethnic music was replaced by country ballads and restaurants that had once specialized in Polish and Italian food now began serving Southern cuisine.

Many of the men, unable to regard Chicago as "home," chose to leave their wives and children in Alabama, making the long commute every weekend. Friday afternoons would see an exodus of men from the neighborhood as they piled into cars for the trip home. Often with six or seven men in the cars, sharing the driving and gas expenses, they would drive all night, arriving in Huntsville before daylight, where each one would be let off at his home.

Saturday would be a day of catching up, and shopping with the families. Without the wages earned in Chicago, many families in Madison County would have been destitute. One survey taken in 1956 declared that 17% of rural families had members working "up north."

Sunday was a day of church, fried chicken and potato salad. Always in the back of their minds, however, was the fact they had to leave for the long trip back to Chicago in a few hours.

Normally about 5 or 6 o'clock in the evening, a car would pull to a stop in front of the houses and blow its horn. It was time to go. With a last kiss for his wife and a pat on the children's heads, it was time to leave.

The trip back would be made in silence most of the time, with the men lost in thoughts of their families and the problems they were forced to leave behind, and thinking ahead of the next trip home, next week.

Many of the men who immigrated to Chicago in search of work were young and single, and it was these that made Hillbilly Heaven notorious. With more money than they had ever dreamed of before, and nothing but good times to spend it on, the neighborhood took on a raucous, and slightly seedy look at night.

High wages and an abundance of nightspots helped to make it a mecca for country music fans. Top Southern recording artists such as Hank Will-

iams, Patsy Cline, and the Delmore brothers all made Hillbilly Heaven part of their tours.

Chicago natives who ventured into the area at night soon discovered that the violent reputation of the "Hillbillys" was not exaggerated. If a "Northerner" made a pass at one of the ladies, or insulted one of the Southerners it was considered a deadly mistake. Sometimes the Southerners themselves would become involved in fights with one another.

Lew Daniels was forced to leave Decatur suddenly when he was caught with another man's wife. Traveling to Chicago, the first place he went to was the "Rebel Star," a bar in Hillbilly Heaven notorious for its many fights. Before Daniels even



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had time to order a beer, he was recognized by the man's brother, who promptly shot him dead.

The constant traveling back and forth between Alabama and Chicago gave birth to many entrepreneurial enterprises. Workers from North Alabama soon discovered that cars rusted out from the salt spread on Chicago's streets, or rust bombs as they were more commonly known, could be purchased cheaply.

Thousands of these cars ended up in North Alabama, where it seemed as if everyone had a brother-in-law, or cousin who was skilled in applying bondo.

There were so many body shops on Sand Mountain that it became known as the "bondo capital" of the world. Many a Huntsville native can still tell stories of having purchased a sharp looking car, only to have part of it fall off when the car hit a rut in the road.

By the mid 1960s Hillbilly Heaven was but a ghost of its former self. Most of the Southerners had returned home where they were now able to find jobs. Other immigrants, this time from eastern Europe, began moving into the neighborhood bringing with them their own cultural identity.

Occasionally, one might still find a dusty Rebel flag hanging behind the bar in an old honky tonk, or even an Alabama car tag nailed to a wall, but the people who made Hillbilly Heaven the home away from home it was, have been gone for a long time.



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A Strange Family

from 1874 newspaper

One of the most sensational cases ever to appear before the court system is due to go to trial next week in Judge Ramsay's court.

Mr. Allan Dement, a 72 year old resident of Jackson County, is charged with the crime of marrying his granddaughter. According to reports, Mr. Dement returned from the war to find his home burned and family scattered to the four winds. Finally after much difficulty he was able to locate his granddaughter, who was at the time living all alone, but for her four children. She too had become separated from her family.

The couple soon set up house together and began living a life as man and wife along with her children who were his great grandchildren but were now his stepchildren, making them their mother's uncles by marriage. After the granddaughter/wife sensed signs of approaching motherhood, a quick visit before a justice of the peace was arranged.

When the child was born it became the mother's son/great uncle, the father's son/ great grandson and the half brother and great-great uncle of the other

children.

Soon, however, her eldest son (the great grandson of its stepfather and the great nephew of his half brother) began a correspondence with his aunt who was also Dement's granddaughter. The aunt/granddaughter, upon hearing the news immediately notified her great uncle who was also Dement's brother who paid a personal visit to his great nephew who was his brother's stepson.

The great nephew/stepson and brother/great uncle then notified the judge (no kin) who issued a writ for the arrest of the grandfather/husband and granddaughter/wife. The child has been placed in care of its half brother who is also his

nephew and his mother's uncle by marriage.

The trial is sure to attract a lot of relatives.

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- 2 cups sugar
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- Pinch of salt
- 1 /8 tsp. cream of tartar
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Combine all ingredients and boil to hard ball stage. Pour into a well-buttered pan and cool. Pull the taffy until it becomes white and porous. Then cut into 1" pieces. This lemon-crystal taffy, which was brittle and had just a hint of lemon, was devoured in Europe by sweet lovers.

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Everyone on the rough frontier of Texas in the mid-1830s had their own story to tell, but few were as outlandish as William Little's.

Little, when drinking with his rough-hewed friends, would tell of his home in Alabama where he had been a successful attorney and had owned vast plantation holdings with many slaves.

The frontiersmen would merely chuckle under their breaths and change the subject. They all had a past they were running from and that is what drew many of them to Texas; a chance to start over again.

There was a small grain of truth in Little's stories, however. He had been a lawyer, though one Alabama paper labeled him as "the worst barrister in the whole state."

Little's legal career came to an abrupt end when he murdered a man for making advances toward his wife. Shortly afterwards he abandoned his pregnant wife and fled to Texas.

Once in Texas, Little got caught up in the war fever that was sweeping the territory and offered his services to the small Texas army. Probably realizing he faced possible death in combat, William Little resumed using his real name.

Every man dreams of winning immortal fame and William achieved it at the Alamo. Near the old walls of the ruined mission stands a simple granite monument. The inscription reads. 'Defender of the Alamo ... William Travis.'

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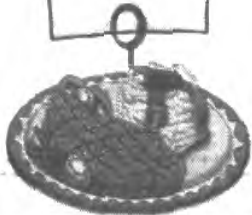
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News from 1924

- Mr. William Berry is reported to have caught a huge catfish weighing 116 pounds while running lines in the river near Ditto Landing. The fish was brought to town where it was weighed at the scales of Miller's store.

- Mrs. C. T. Greaves, of Dallas, Tx., one of the most seriously injured in the wreck of the Southern passenger train near Scottsboro last week, is still at the Huntsville infirmary, where she was taken immediately following the accident.

Mrs. Greaves is, however, reported to be doing well. She is the only one of the several brought here who have not returned to their homes.

- Two boys, Lonnie Jones, 16 and Warren Sanders, 14 will be held in Huntsville for the arrival of their parents this week. They said they lived near Scottsboro and were taken in charge by Chief Hackworth. Their parents had telephoned the chief to notify him that the boys had traveled to Huntsville, after telling them that they "wanted to see the world."

They were without money and seemed quite ready to return home after seeing enough of the world and its hardness. No doubt they will receive their rewards after reaching home.

- Announcement is made of an important called meeting of the Grace Club, to be held at the Twickenham Pharmacy at 5 o'clock Tuesday afternoon. All members are urged to be there.

- While riding his bicycle on Walker Street Sunday, Howard Larkin, a small boy, was run into and knocked from his wheel by an automobile driven by Henry Thomas.

Young Larkin was jolted but

not seriously injured.

- Messrs. James McGill and Lee Guy have perfected a new automobile light which they intend to apply for a patent for. The light will contain a revolving fan on one end and colored lights on the other, the lights being generated from a dry battery and being operated by the car. The gentlemen have tried out their light with complete success.

- Mrs. William Halsey entertained the members of the Friday Morning Card Club, at her summer home on Monte Sano. A most enjoyable way to spend the day was had.

Miss Beirne Spragins won the first prize, the consolation being cut by Mrs. M. H. May.



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The Lincoln Ball Park

by Doyle W. Ramey

In the early 1930's Mr. Phillip Peeler tapped Obie Johnson, a born organizer, with a mandate to establish a program for the Lincoln kids to get off the streets. There were 46 kids on my street alone, Barrell Street, which emptied onto Meridian, across the street from the Peeler residence. We always had a ballgame going in the middle of the street but there were so few cars that we never were in any danger.

There was one accident that involved me. I ran over one of my neighbor friends, Leoda Harbin, with my bicycle and broke her collar bone.

Obie found the ideal piece of ground about one block from his home, very convenient. A baseball diamond with bleachers and a club house with a backstop and a concession stand was built. There was also a small diamond built for the very small kids, opposite left field.

The names of the little league teams were the "Termites," "Chicken Mites," and the "Dynamites." I remember my brother getting so excited the day uniforms were going to be distributed.

I worked for Obie and became his right hand boy so I was in on everything that had to do with

the running of the park. Obie added picnic benches located behind the bleachers for the purpose of playing domino's and checkers. We also sat around on these benches and talked about the game that we were playing that day and the day previous. It was the coolest place in the park. Obie also set up a place to pitch horse shoes behind the bleachers



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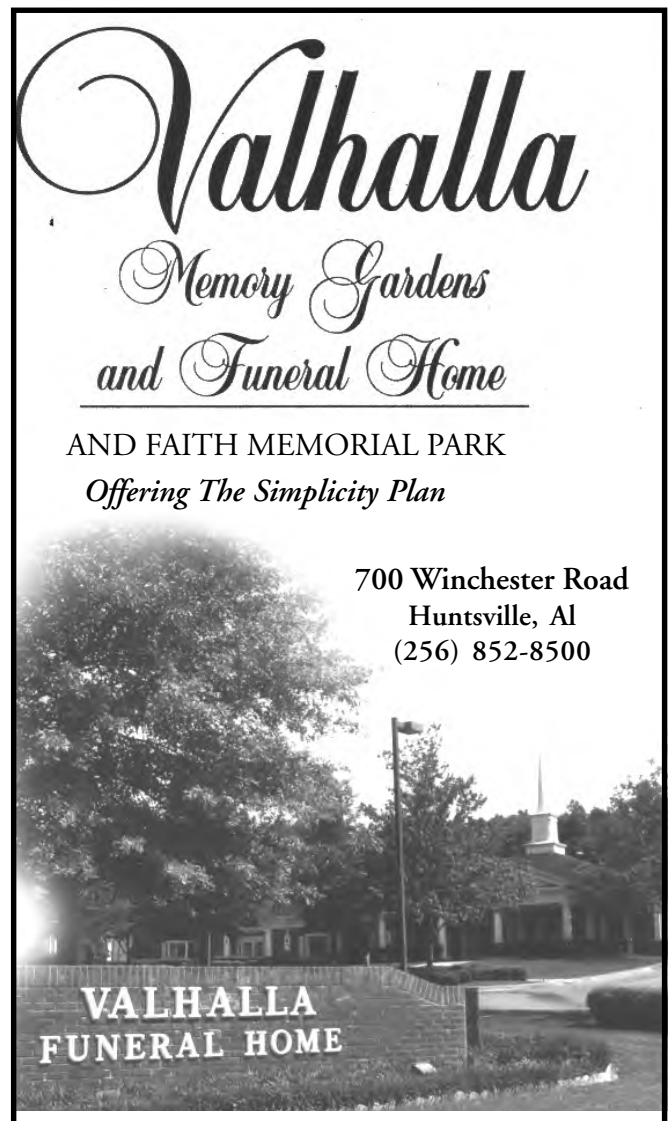


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across from first base. Obie has been credited with the founding of the Little League program which is now a nationwide organization.

Obie segmented the village into four quadrants and formed four baseball teams with the following names; the Yankees, which was my team, Cardinals, Browns and Phillies. There was a game every afternoon. On the day the Yankees played I had to hire a kid to deliver my paper route. As we entered the park, there was a double wide gate and two turn styles. There was also a small building with a ticket window which was seldom used, as they hardly ever charged anyone admission. To the left was a turret shaped building with six windows as open spaces.

My primary job was to run the concession stand. We'd open top coolers into which we filled with 8 oz. bottles of Cocoa Cola. We also offered a Nehi Grape and Orange soda. We received a delivery of cracked ice daily. As it melted it formed a slurry which held the cokes at 33 degrees F.

We also offered Planter's peanuts. It was a habit of our customers to empty a pack of peanuts into the coke.

The next innovation of the park was to bring in wrestling and

following that, night softball. The biggest draw was the night we had donkey softball, when people played on a donkey's back. This added to my workload in as much as I had to keep scores for the two softball games played at night.

Following the game I had to prepare the box scores and take them to the *Huntsville Times* for publication the next day. I also had to maintain the clubhouse. For all of this I was paid the handsome sum of \$1.00 per week. The opportunity to be in charge of something so important to my peers was its own reward.

Another one of my jobs was to take a bucket of whitewash and a paintbrush to paint the details of the forthcoming ballgame on the sidewalk. The Boston Red Sox usually played an exhibition game on the way back to Boston from spring training.

The one I remember was with the Birmingham Black Barons one Sunday afternoon to a very large crowd. Yes, Ted Williams played on the hallowed ground. Think what that meant to a kid that he was playing on a field where Ted Williams played.

One day I was finishing my sign on the sidewalk in front of the entrance to the mill when two fellows came by and wanted to



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add their touch to my masterpiece. Of course I could not allow them to guild the lily as it were since I had other signs to paint. I mounted my bike with my bucket on the handle bar and rode off into Meridian Street. One of the boys picked up a stick and threw it at me. By some strange kind of fate, the stick took a bounce and flew into my front wheel and cleaned out most of the spokes. Fortunately there was not that much traffic on Meridian Street that day or it could have been tragic.

Obie was furious. He contacted the boy's father and told him he was barred from the park until my bike was fixed. I was instructed to take my bike to the Mullins Bike Shop and have it fixed and send the bill to his dad. Following this incident, we became friends and have remained so for about 60 years. We served in the Marines and also were roommates in college.

One day Coach Williams called me over from second base and told me he wanted me to play third base that day. I reminded him that I couldn't throw a ball from third to first base in

time to retire a runner. His solution was for me to throw the ball to the pitcher and let him relay the ball to first. I had a better idea. I prayed for three games that no ball would be hit to third (i.e., grounders). And my prayers were answered in that there were no balls hit to third for three games.

Following the regular season, Mr. Peeler would host a cookout in his backyard for every one of the players. We looked forward to that event because the food was different from the pinto beans and cornbread that

we usually ate. There was also a drawing for a leather flight jacket. Also some awards were made that evening, one to Grady Harbin for most stolen bases.

The winter of 2005 I returned to Huntsville, my home town, to test the title of the Thomas Wolf novel, "You Can't Go Home Again." I found that title to be a truism.

My brother drove me north on Meridian St. and waived to his left and stated that that was where the ball park was. I noted, as did Webber, that the place that had been dear to my heart,

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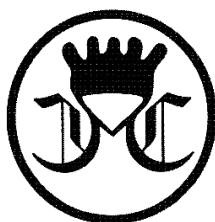


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mainly the ballpark, had been bulldozed over by money-crazy developers only interested in making huge profits on real estate. The word holy means set-apart. I looked on the Lincoln Ball Park as holy ground and should have been preserved as a park. The club house could have been turned into a small museum. Had I been there I would have tried to organize a fund drive to buy the land and maintain it as a park.

There were very good baseball players from Lincoln. Most notable was Don Mincher who played for the Oakland A's, making a crucial hit in the 1973 World Series against the Cincinnati Reds. His hit won the game and the series. He later played with the Minnesota Twins and the Washington Senators. Don played for the Senators during the time the mighty Ted Williams was the manager.

Others from Lincoln who had farm team contracts were Bart Ellis and Erskine Payne who had a tryout with the St. Louis Cardinals. We were disappointed when they returned home until we learned of the rigors of making it in to the big leagues. A big part of the problem was that they were on the road most of the time and played mostly night games. Neither had any experience playing baseball at night.

We also had others that played in the big league, like Slick McGinnis for the New York



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Yankees and Emanuel Garcia for the Chicago Cubs. During World War II, Slick was drafted while playing for the Yankees and they offered to help him get a deferment, but he decided, being a patriotic American, that he would go ahead and serve. He was injured in his back and his hand in Europe, thereby ending his baseball career.

In conclusion, the ballpark was truly a blessing to every kid in Lincoln both above the mill and below the mill. In memory of Mr. Peeler and Mr. Johnson, we say thank you. What a privilege it was to have been a part

of our ballpark, to grow in character and learn the lessons of fair play and respect the right of others.

Reminiscing with Don about our days at the park we agreed that a book could be written of the collective experiences of

those still around. I would like to make mention of a few of the outstanding players at Lincoln, Harry Hatfield and Grady Higgins, James Talley, Bill Daniels and Charlie Bishop.

"I'm not really conceited, but I'm absolutely sure that if I had never been born, people would want to know why."
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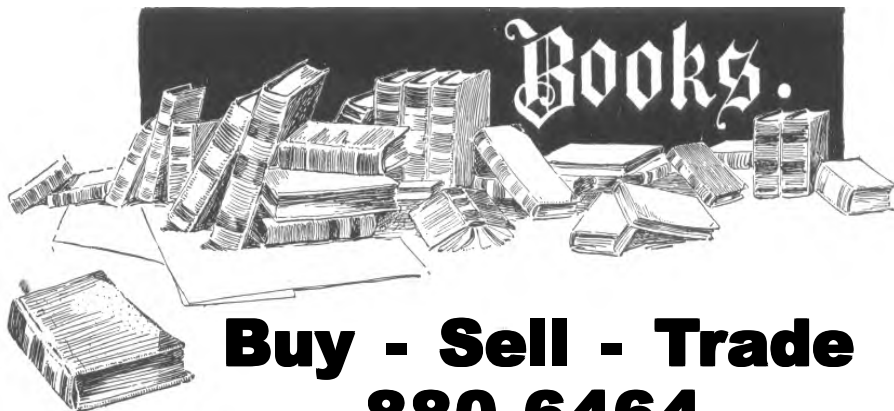
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Christmas In Huntsville

by Johnny Johnston

What does Christmas mean to most people? As a little fellow it meant at least one gift, maybe two or three if things were good with the family. Depending on how much work Dad had received lately. Early on when he was working at the Sawmill in Paint Rock Valley and then on Pratt in Huntsville, things were limited; at that time Mom took in washing and boarders to help make things a little better.

My older brother told me some 74 year old stories recently which he had never told. They all happened while in Paint Rock Valley during the 1930's when what little work was available paid practically nothing to people who were trying to feed their families. My brother had a job working in the local general store when he was 7 years old. While he was working in the store my Mother set up on the creek bank with two tubs and a rub board to take in washing for the public. Dad worked in the sawmill but all together food was extremely hard to come by let alone a warm dry place for my Dad, Mom and their four children.

The first Christmas after moving to Huntsville in 1940 was during very tough times. The depression was ending in most of the country but not at our house. None of us expected to receive any gifts. On Christmas morning I, age three, went to the front of our rented house on Blue Springs St. (now Orchard) because I had heard something. Toys, toys, toys, and there I was 3 years old and never had seen such a sight. When Dad saw what was happening he sent my older brother to find out where the toys came from and asked that they be picked up. He said something that day that I remember till this one. "Charity is not for us to get, it is for us to give." When Dad's dedication to hard work began to pay off later on he stood by what he said.

Dad was one of the first supporters of Downtown Rescue Mission. He helped to build and rebuild many Church buildings. He did well for a lot of people even letting families move in with us while they

were trying to get enough money to exist on their own. That was Christmas to Dad. Mom was always doing things for people in need. Taking care of the sick, giving what she could to the needy. That was Christmas to Mom.

My mother purchased the Buck family farm in Lacey's

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Spring upon the death of her father in 1946. That year we decided to make a fortune off that farm by selling Christmas Trees. We would cut the pines and transport them to our house on Maple St. for resale. They brought 25 or 50 cents each and we sold a lot of them. When Christmas was over we still had an awful lot of trees left.

I have had friends play Santa Claus over the years with varied results. My friend Gerald Stanley passed away this year and this is the story his family asked me to tell at his funeral. Gerald was asked to play Santa at a very formal church. He came in the front door in his Santa Costume saying "Ho, Ho, Ho, merry Christmas." Gerald had a presence about him where ever he went, loved people and always had a hug for the ladies and a word for the gentlemen. There he came down the isle, "Ho, Ho, Ho, Merry Christmas everybody!" Church rules forgotten for the night, the Children were waving to Santa and yelling what

they wanted for Christmas. "Ho, Ho, Ho, Merry Christmas" as he went down the aisle of the church. He did this several times pausing to get an effect from the church crowd and everything was going well until he got to the very front pew in the church. At that point his pants fell clear to his ankles! Thank goodness for Boxer Shorts! Did this get him down? No, he continued with the program!

Two favorite things to do during Christmas were to go look at the animation which always appeared in the Furniture Store on the corner of Clinton and Jefferson. What an exciting and interesting time. Remember this was before digitals, remotes, TV, and most any other thing. The animation was always moving with trains, cars, maybe even a smoking chimney and a lot of snow-covered homes. After a snowfall there was nothing as real as standing in the A & P parking lot looking at the rooftops on Lincoln. That was Santa land to me.

Merry Christmas to each and every one!



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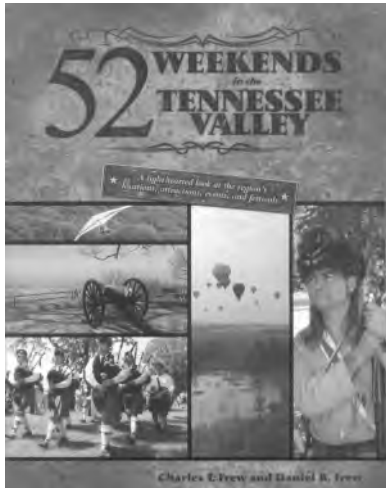
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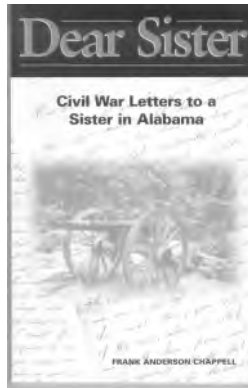
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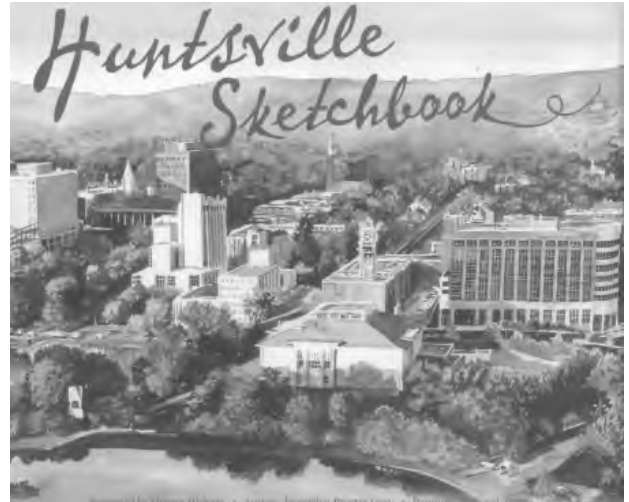
Your Christmas Headquarters



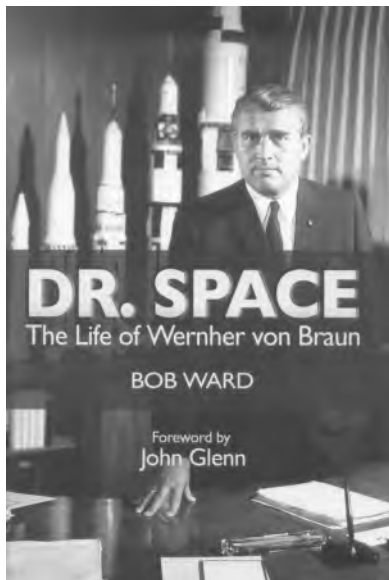
52 Weekends in the Tennessee Valley.
A lighthearted look at the region's locations, attractions and festivals. Charles T. Frew & Daniel R. Frew. \$24.95



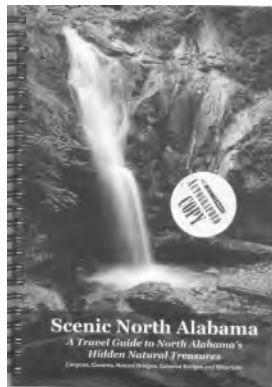
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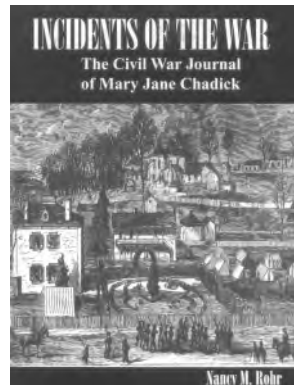
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Huntsville's artists and writers team up to bring you a delightful look at our city. By Jacquelyn Gray with a foreword by Homer Hickum - \$39.95



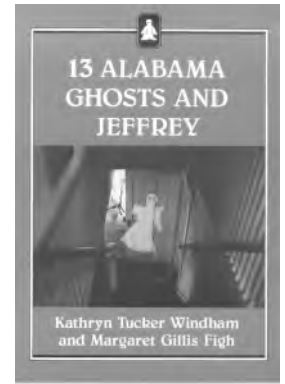
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Search for the Last Rebel Yell

In the spring of 1949, the Smithsonian Institute hired Frank Tolbert, a renowned historian, to capture on a tape recording the most spine chilling sound ever created by man ... the infamous "Rebel Yell."

Time was of the utmost importance. There were only four veterans of the Civil War, all Confederates, still living and they were all over 100 years old. Fortunately, they all lived in Texas, which appeared to make his job much easier.

The first veteran Tolbert visited was Joseph Haden Whitsett, a feisty 103 year-old.

"Can't do it," Whitsett answered. "Can't Rebel yell. I'm sorry. I tried to learn It a thousand times when I was with General Joseph Shelby's escort during the war. I never did have the right kind of voice."

Walt Williams, 107 years of age, was next on Tolbert's list. "Used to could do it," he replied. "But I haven't got the throat linings for it now. When you get a hundred seven you can't do ev-

erything you want no more."

Disappointed, Tolbert next traveled to Wichita Falls, where 104 year old Thomas E. Riddle made his home. Riddle had recently divorced his third wife and claimed to be looking for a fourth.

Unfortunately, though Riddle remembered the yell well, he just couldn't do it. "Takes a young man," he said. "And I ain't got the strength no more."

Only one name was left on Tolbert's list - Samuel Merrill Raney, 103 years of age.



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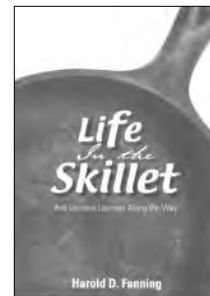
by Harold Fanning

Two wonderful inspiring books of nostalgic memories, humorous stories and lessons learned growing up in North Alabama. Based on the true-life experiences of the author, the books take a humorous look at life in Madison County. From frog giggin' to a drag racing grandpa, be prepared to take a trip down memory lane with two of the most delightful books on the market today.

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"Can you do the Rebel yell?" Tolbert asked Samuel.

Abruptly the old veteran threw back his head and started yelling, "like an opera singer hitting an almost impossibly high note, as if a mountain lion and a coyote were crying in chorus." Tolbert later remarked.

Tolbert listened in awe to the historically significant shout. He, alone, was listening to the last person left alive in the world who could do the Rebel Yell the same way it had been done during the Civil War.

When the old man had finished. Tolbert inquired about making a recording of the yell.

"Can't," the old man replied. "Ain't got no electricity."

Undaunted. Tolbert went to town in search of a battery powered tape recorder. A few days later he returned to Raney's farm and knocked on the door. A strange man opened the door.

"I'm looking for Mr. Raney." Tolbert said.

"He ain't here," the man replied. "He died."

Sweet Spicy Nuts

1 cup sugar
 1 1/2 tbl. ground cinnamon
 1 tsp. ground cloves
 1/2 tsp. salt
 1 tsp. ground ginger
 1/2 tsp. ground nutmeg
 1 egg white
 1 tbl. cold water
 1 pound pecans or other whole shelled nuts

Preheat oven to 250, grease a large jelly-roll pan. Mix together thoroughly all dry ingredients. Beat egg white with cold water until frothy but not stiff. Add spiced sugar mixture and stir well.

Add nuts; stir well to coat.

Spread nuts on pan; place in oven. Bake for 1 hour, stirring to separate every 15 to 20 minutes. Remove from oven when dry and toasty. Cool and store in an airtight container.

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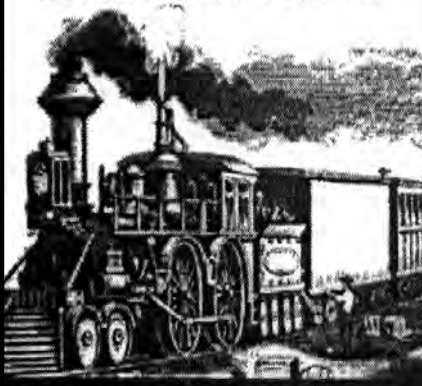
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Santa Forgot

by Malcolm Miller

The year I believe was 1961. I was working at the Post office and barbering part time at Taylor's barber shop on Governors Drive. My oldest son Tommy, now known as T.A. by his music fans, was really wanting a new bicycle for Christmas. I mentioned this to Mr. Collier the postmaster and he said that he had just what I needed.

It seems that his wife, a teacher at Lincoln school had saved enough Blue Horse writing tablet covers to win a shiny new Schwinn bicycle and I could have it for forty dollars. So then I managed to get the bicycle moved from his home on East Holmes St. into the back room of the barber shop and keep it there till Christmas Eve night.

Finally Christmas Eve arrived and it was on a Saturday night and since Christmas day

would be on Sunday both the Post office and barber shop would be closed till Tuesday. After we closed the shop I got James Taylor to take the bike to my house and we very quietly slipped it around behind my house and unloaded it in the dark.

Up to this point everything was going great, now all I had to do was wait until the kids were asleep then slip outside, get

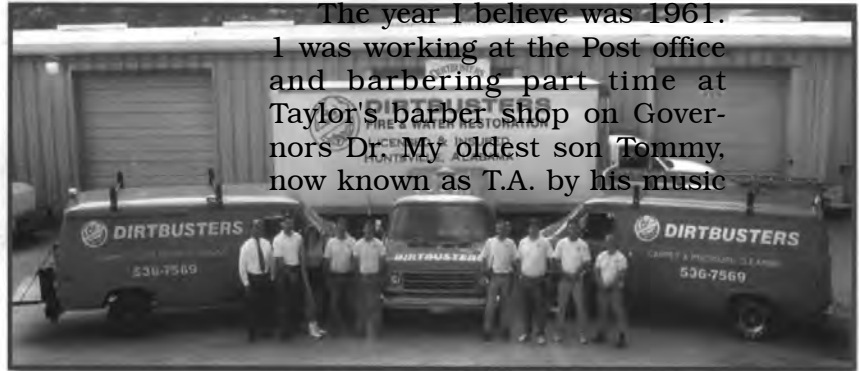
the bike and put it together. Simple, right? No, every thing was about to change dramatically. When the kids finally did get to sleep near midnight I go out with a flash light to get the bike.

Guess what? No peddles and no handlebars, they had been left in the station wagon and Taylor lived all the way across the river on Brindlee mountain in the Union Hill community and I wouldn't see him again un-



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The year I believe was 1961. I was working at the Post office and barbering part time at Taylor's barber shop on Governors Dr. My oldest son Tommy, now known as T.A. by his music

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til Tuesday, furthermore I didn't know where his house was. So off we go - my brothers Gib, Frank and I - to try to locate where he lived.

To this day I still remember the problems we encountered on that trip. Remember we started out after midnight meaning it was already Christmas day and believe me there was nothing open back then on that day. When we finally crossed the river and reached the top of the mountain it got really hairy. The fog was so thick in places you could hardly see and I really didn't know where I was going but I must have covered every road and pig trail on that mountain looking for Taylor's fifty two Ford station wagon.

I ran upon three or four couples who weren't to happy to see me on those mountain back roads and I recall pulling into one drive-way and breaking up a card game. You should have seen them running out back with their bottles of liquor. Morgan County was dry back then and I suppose they thought they were being raided.

So about three o'clock Christmas morning, my gas tank nearly empty we finally gave up the search. I slowly drove back down the mountain all the while asking myself, what will I tell Tommy when he wakes up this morning?

Finally I decided to tell him that Santa was so busy with so many toys and so many kids that he simply forgot the peddles and handle bars but I was sure he would get them to him the next Tuesday and sure enough he did.

"Our Father, who does art in heaven, Harold is his name. Amen."

Overheard in church, from a 3 year-old

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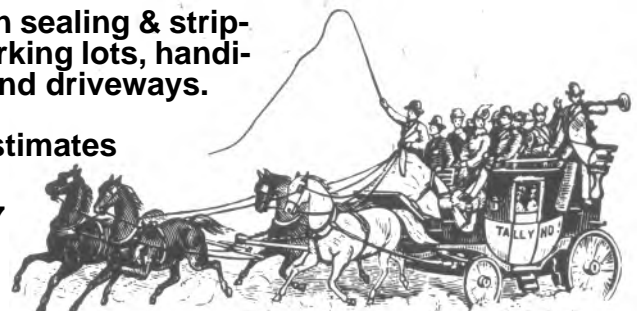
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News From the Year 1902

News From Huntsville and Around The World

Yellow Fever

Walter Reed says it is Spread by Mosquitos

Major Walter Reed and Dr. James Carroll of the United States Army Yellow Fever Commission in Cuba published a scientific report today revealing that the dreaded disease endemic to the tropics is transmitted by a species of mosquito.

Cuban physician Carlos J. Finlay had indicated to Reed, who is the President of the Yellow Fever Commission, that he believed the disease to be spread by a species of mosquito known as *Aedes Aegypti*. The commission then proved Finlay's hypothesis, but not without the tragic loss of the heroic Dr. Jesse W. Lazear, who had been bitten by an infected mosquito in the midst of his work.

In today's publication, the commission goes on to report that the mysterious causative or-

ganism, which is introduced into the bloodstream of a human being by the mosquito, is able to pass through a fine porcelain filter and is smaller than any known bacteria.

It may be a member of the class of ultramicroscopic organisms known to the scientific community as viruses.

Edison Invents Battery

Thomas A. Edison today announced the invention of a new storage battery which is lighter and longer-lived than lead-acid batteries. The prolific inventor says that the battery, composed of cells having nickel and iron in an alkaline solution, can keep the electric automobile competitive with gasoline models.

Senate Votes to Exclude Chinese

The Senate voted yesterday to extend the Chinese Exclusion Act for the second time. The law, barring all Chinese immigration to the United States for ten years, was first passed in 1882 and re-enacted a decade later. This time the bill will be in effect indefinitely.

The arguments for restrictions remain unchanged: The livelihood of American workers would be threatened by cheap Asian labor. And few Americans see any kind of accommodation possible. As one senator said in the debates, "The Chinese do not harmonize with us. Upon their admission, they become an undigested and indigestible mass."

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U.S. to Pay \$40 Million for Panama Canal

Prominent business and political interests in the United States have been arguing for years about where to build a canal in Central America. The new law stipulates that the canal should be built across the Panamanian isthmus. And it authorizes President Roosevelt to pay \$40 million for the rights to the Panama concession.

The decision to dig the canal through Panama came after some very high-level political wheeling and dealing. During the last century, the United States and Great Britain were competing to build a waterway in Nicaragua. Only last year, Britain agreed in a treaty to give up its rights, and an American commission recommended that the canal be built in Nicaragua.

At the same time, a French company that owned rights in Panama was lobbying hard for a canal there. Its representatives put pressure on the White House, and they finally convinced Roosevelt to buy them out and build in Panama.

Automobile Association Formed

Nine automobile clubs from around the nation united today in Chicago to create the American Automobile Association. Winthrop E. Scarritt is President. The group aims to improve the reliability of autos, push for better roads and lobby for uniform traffic laws. The 1,000 members hail from affluent and influential regions, from Princeton, New Jersey, to Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Railroad Speed Record Set

The Twentieth Century Limited established a new standard for railroad speed today at better than a mile a minute. The Twentieth Century Limited covered the 134 miles between Brockton and Cleveland in 131 minutes. Its time for the 113 miles between Cleveland and Toledo, Ohio, was 103 minutes, with top speeds up to 90 miles an hour. The final 244-mile stretch from Toledo to Chicago required only 228 minutes.

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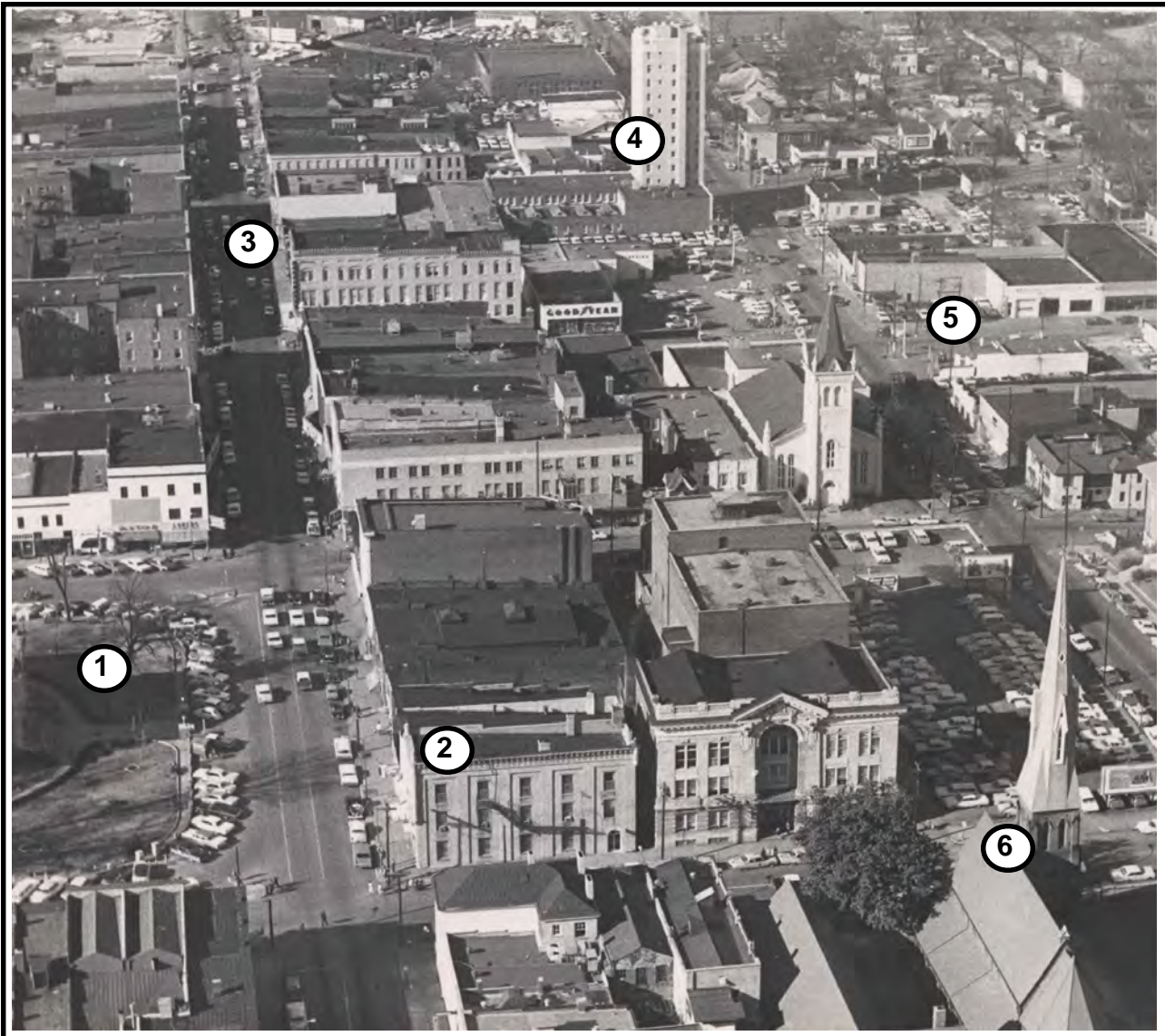
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Murder of the Huntsville Martyrs

45 Huntsville Volunteers Massacred in Texas

by Charles Rice

Everywhere people gathered, the story was the same. The talk was all about Texas. A large Mexican army under General Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna had just entered the province, determined to disarm the Texans and strip them of their political rights. True, Texas was part of the Republic of Mexico, and what happened there was really none of the United States' business. But many Americans viewed the conflict as a struggle between democracy and a corrupt military dictator.

Most Huntsvillians naturally sided with the Texans in spirit, but few felt the distant Mexican province was their concern. One local resident disagreed. His name was Peyton Short Wyatt and he promptly began recruiting volunteers to go and fight for Texas.

Not quite 31 years old, Peyton Wyatt was still single. A native of Charlotte County, Virginia, he evidently had come to Huntsville as a young man. A popular fellow, he had been made clerk of the circuit court. Military life obviously appealed to Wyatt, since he had founded the city's first gentlemen's company, the "Huntsville Guards," in 1829. The young Virginian had even been elected colonel in the Alabama militia. When it was known that Peyton Wyatt would head the company, other adventuresome Huntsville men hastened to volunteer.

Sunday morning, November 8, 1835, now numbering about 30 men, Wyatt's volunteers began their journey. "They set out in the midst of a heavy rain," reported the Huntsville Democrat, "a good omen of their willingness to bear hardships and en-

dure to the end."

The volunteers marched west down today's Holmes Avenue, escorted to the top of Russell Hill by the Huntsville Guards. "The company would no doubt have been much larger, had time been allowed for recruiting," said the Democrat. "As Texas was actually invaded, Col. W. thought it best to take up line of march forthwith - hoping to gather recruits as he proceeded - under which impression he carried with him about fifty extra stand of arms. The parting scene at Russell's Hill between the Volunteers and the Guards and especially between the latter and their old commander (Col. Wyatt) was truly affecting."

Few could have realized they were gazing upon most of

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the volunteers for the last time in this life.

The Huntsville Volunteers continued west to Decatur, where they may well have taken passage on the new Courtland, Tuscumbia and Decatur Railway, one of the earliest in the nation. Huntsville citizens eagerly followed the company's progress by the brief reports that appeared in the newspapers. Thus they learned the Huntsville men left Tuscumbia on November 13, taking passage by riverboat. From Memphis the Volunteers sailed down the Mississippi to Natchez, leaving the river to march overland across Louisiana and thence to Texas. It was a tiring trip, and Wyatt later recommended that others take the easier ocean route via New Orleans.

On December 7, 1835 the Huntsville Volunteers arrived at Nacogdoches, Texas. Peyton Wyatt wrote from there three days later. He had gained about 20 recruits along the way and had joined forces with a rifle company from Louisville, Kentucky. "I reached here at the head of seventy men, a few days ago - fifty musket men, or a company

of heavy Infantry, and twenty Riflemen, comprising a company of Light Infantry, under Capt. King from Kentucky; the whole being under my command as a battalion. Our Battalion is fast recruiting in number, and I hope, before we reach St. Antonio, will count 150 or 200 strong.

"During our whole route from Natchitoches to this place," said Wyatt, "we have been received with open arms, and treated with distinguished respect. At St. Augustine we were met at some distance from the town by the inhabitants, & escorted to our quarters, where we had the pleasure of hearing an appropriate address from Dr. Brown, a gentleman who claims his nativity from our town. Thence we proceeded to Nacogdoches, where we were re-

ceived with demonstrations of particular good will, and quartered in the house of the Chairman of the Committee of Vigilance and Safety. All of our wants have been kindly attended to by the citizens of this place. Baggage wagons and Jersey carriages for our sick procured; arms, ammunition and provisions furnished us, although in the way of arms, you know, we were pretty well supplied before we left Huntsville. In short, everything has been done for us, which could contribute to our safety and comfort.

"On last evening I had the pleasure of receiving an elegant gold watch, presented to me by Major George A. Nixon, of this place, Chairman of the

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Chris Denny, age 14

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Committee of Vigilance and Safety for Nacogdoches. At St. Augustine I was presented with a very fine horse, with full Spanish rigging, by Col. A. E. Johnson of that place." Clearly, the Texans were grateful for their help.

The Huntsville Volunteers had arrived in Texas to find the situation seemingly favorable. San Antonio had fallen to the Texas forces, and Texas troops now replaced the Mexican garrison at the old mission known as the Alamo. Furthermore, Santa Anna was having problems of his own. "One of the recent reports in Texas," Wyatt told the Huntsville Democrat, "was that Santa Anna was compelled, at the head of 2,000 men, to countermarch upon Zapatecas, which was in a state of rebellion."

The Texans realized that Santa Anna would eventually march against them, but they did not expect him for at least a month or two. In fact, prospects for military action seemed so remote that Peyton Wyatt left on furlough, sailing from Matagordas Bay in mid-February 1836.

Wyatt reached Huntsville several weeks later, and informed the local papers of the

situation. He said about 1500 American volunteers had already reached in Texas, and he had seen another 300 ready to leave at New Orleans. Oddly enough, Texas still had not declared its independence, but Wyatt felt that it would happen soon.

Peyton Wyatt fully intended to return to his company, but he was fortunate to be absent. For a cruel fate awaited the men from Huntsville, one they could never have foreseen. Unfortunately, the Huntsville Volunteers had been placed in the command of Colonel James W. Fannin, who led a mixed force of Texans and Americans. Fannin candidly admitted, "I am a better judge of my military abilities than others, and if I am qualified to command an army, I have not found it out."

The small army included two other companies from Alabama, the "Red Rovers" from Courtland and a company from Mobile. The command also contained volunteers from Georgia, as well as a handful of Polish refugees, willing to take part in any struggle for freedom.

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With Santa Anna busy elsewhere, it was decided to send Fannin's men to raid Matamoros, Mexico. General Sam Houston opposed the raid as senseless, but he was overruled. Sam Houston was on furlough leaving Colonel Fannin as the senior Texas commander. Before the expedition could even start, however, the Texans learned that Santa Anna's army was already marching against them.

Colonel Fannin moved his headquarters to Goliad, the site of a Spanish mission founded in 1749. Fannin considered uniting his command with Colonel William B. Travis at the Alamo, but decided to remain at Goliad and fortify the town. It was a blunder that would cost Texas both of the commands.

Unfortunately for Fannin, the right wing of Santa Anna's army was commanded by General Jose Urrea, a very capable officer. On February 26, 1836, Urrea's men surprised a small detachment of Texas cavalry, killing or capturing most of them.

On March 2, another detachment was nearly wiped out by Urrea's men. With Travis's command isolated and surrounded at the Alamo. Fannin's continued presence at Goliad was both unnecessary and unwise. Neverthe-

less, instead of retreating, Fannin continued to fortify his position.

Food and ammunition were in short supply, but Fannin doggedly stayed where he was. "Hoping for the best, and prepared for the worst," he wrote on February 28. "I am in a devil of a bad humor."

On March 12, a portion of the Huntsville Volunteers were sent with a detachment of Georgians to rescue a few Texan families trapped at an abandoned mission. Their task completed, the men should have returned promptly to Goliad, but the Georgia officer commanding decided to seek a fight.

He soon found more Mexican soldiers than he hoped for, and his men used up much of their ammunition in a pointless skirmish with Urrea's cavalry. To make matters worse, the Alamo had fallen on March 6, and Santa Anna's entire army was now on its way to Goliad.

With no cavalry of his own, Fannin was completely in the dark about Urrea's movements. On March 17, he at last decided to retreat. Even then, he took his time about it. The retreat, which did not begin until the morning March 19, was painfully slow.

Captain Jack Shackelford of the Red Rovers and Captain Burr Duval repeatedly urged Fannin to keep moving until he reached the



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shelter of the woods at Coletto Creek. Stubbornly, Fannin refused to listen. He halted his command in an open expanse of prairie three miles from the creek. And there Urrea's army found him and attacked.

Quickly surrounded, the Texas defenders had to fight with no water and with little ammunition. No one was more to blame than the inept Colonel Fannin.

Fannin's 300 green volunteers fought courageously throughout the afternoon against Urrea's 1,000 Mexican veterans. "It was a very sad sight to see our small circle," said a survivor.

"It had become muddy with blood. Colonel Fannin had been so badly wounded at the first or second fire as to disable him. The wounded shrieked for water which we had none to give them."

The Texans managed to kill 50 of Urrea's soldiers and wounded another 140. They lost nine of their own killed and 51 wounded. The Texans' artillery, manned in part by the Poles, played a major role in holding off the Mexican regulars. With nightfall, most of Fannin's men could have escaped in the dark. However, they refused to abandon their wounded.

On the morning of March 20, Urrea's own artillery arrived. The Mexican big guns easily out ranged the Texans' small cannon, and General Urrea soon sent a surrender demand. Colonel Fannin had little choice but to comply.

What happened next provoked a controversy that continues to this day. Fannin's men were marched back to Goliad and held

under guard. They had surrendered as prisoners of war and expected to be treated as such.

Signed by both Fannin and

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Urrea, the surrender terms specified that the officers were to be paroled and the enlisted men held as prisoners until they could depart from Mexico, not to take up arms until exchanged.

However, General Santa Anna had different plans. He had decided to execute every one of the prisoners to discourage others from coming to Texas.

"The Mexicans had always said that Santa Anna would be at La Bahia (Goliad) on the 27th, to release us," recalled a surviving officer. "Accordingly on that day, we were ordered to form all the prisoners.

We were told we were going to bring wood and water, and that Santa Anna would be there that day. We were ordered to march all the officers at the head of the file, except Col. Fannin, who lay wounded in the hospital.

"The prisoners were heavily guarded as they marched out on the Bexar road, near the burying ground, and as we were ordered to halt, we heard our companions shrieking in almost agonizing tones. 'Oh, God! Oh, God! Spare us!' And nearly simultaneously the report of musketry. It was then we knew what was to be our fate."

Some of Fannin's men broke and ran for the distant trees, but only a handful made it to safety. The rest were shot, bayoneted, or clubbed to death. A Mexican officer's wife managed to save a few by concealing them on the parapet, and the men remembered her as the "Angel of Goliad." (Her husband repaid her by deserting her.)

Almost all of the Huntsville Volunteers were among the dead. Benjamin F. Bradford, who commanded the company after Wyatt's departure, somehow managed to survive.

"Nearly the whole of my company was killed," he wrote his brother after his escape. "Of 47

men, rank and file, 43 are numbered with the slaughtered. Two privates, my 4th Sergeant and myself were all who escaped."

Ironically, Santa Anna's Goliad Massacre completely backfired. While technically he might have been justified in killing the prisoners as domestic rebels and foreign intruders, his mass murder of United States citizens enraged the American public and only increased support for the struggling Texans.

Unfortunately, it also created a false impression that Mexicans were a treacherous and violent people, which helped lead to the Mexican War ten years later.

When news of the atrocity reached the United States, meetings were held all across the country to raise volunteers to defeat the brutal tyrant. An unbelievable \$100,000 was raised in one just day in New York, while 500 volun-

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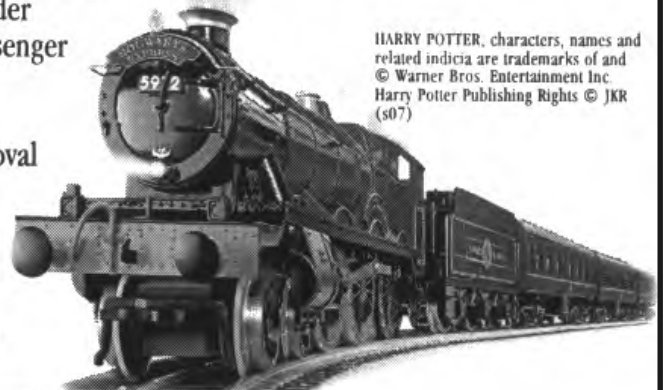
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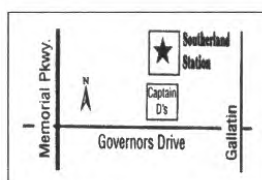
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teers assembled at Natchez.

Here in Huntsville, Captain William Robinson organized another company and invited "all persons who feel an interest in the triumph of Liberty over Despotism" to gather at the courthouse on May 2, 1836.

Though they did not yet know it, General Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna had already been taken prisoner, captured following his crushing defeat by Sam Houston at San Jacinto on April 21, 1836. The Mexican dictator was found disguised in the uniform of a humble private, fearful of being punished for his bloody deeds.

With Santa Anna's capture, the war was won. The Republic of Texas was independent and would remain so for another nine years. Then, in 1845, Texas would choose to join the United States of America.

Sadly, the part the Huntsville Volunteers played in Texas War of Independence is almost unknown today. Captain Jack Shackelford of Courtland escaped death at Goliad (spared because he was a doctor) and his martyred Red Rovers have attained at least a small degree of fame. But the other Alabamians who fought and died for Texas' freedom have been forgotten in their very own state.

Even by the time of Judge Thomas J. Taylor, who wrote his History of Madison County, Alabama just 40 years later, the fate of the Huntsville Guards had become clouded. Taylor has Peyton Wyatt raise his company "in the Spring of 1836" and march them to Texas after "the news of the bloody tragedies at the Alamo and Goliad," arriving too late to join in the fighting.

Wyatt then "came back with many of his command," instead of just the four men who actually survived!

Taylor also garbled the name

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of Peter Allen, the black fifer, calling him "Peter Daniels" and having the Goliad martyr die in some unknown spot, killed by Mexican soldiers who offered him the choice of playing the fife for their army or dying. "Peter Daniels" heroically refuses to change sides and is subsequently shot. While the circumstances of Allen's death are quite likely true, one wonders how Judge Taylor managed to get everything else so wrong!

Judge Taylor to the contrary, Peyton Wyatt did not remain long in Huntsville. On February 8, 1837, he married his 17 year old sweetheart, Miss Frances C. Routt. Soon after, he returned to Texas to stay. Wyatt received a bounty grant of 330 acres for his service, and represented Red River County in the Texas Congress in 1838.

And what about the Goliad Martyrs? It was many years before their resting place was marked. Santa Anna had the bodies stripped, stacked like cordwood, and burned in the field where they were murdered. For two months the charred remains lay exposed to the weather.

Then on June 3, 1836, Texas General Thomas Jefferson Rusk ordered the remains buried in a common grave just outside the walls of the presidio. In 1852, a Goliad survivor named Joseph Barnard erected a marker over the mass grave of his comrades. However, this simple stone soon disappeared, perhaps stolen by a morbid souvenir hunter.

Finally, more than a century after the tragedy, the State of

Texas erected an impressive memorial over the grave of the fallen heroes. It bears the names of the 300 plus victims. The list includes 43 of the Huntsville Volunteers - now honored in Texas, but forgotten in their own home town!

"I think old age is when you still have something on the ball, but you're just too tired to bounce it!"

Sam Keith

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Why Is It Named That?

by Dex Nilsson

Here are three main area roads, pointing from Huntsville northwest, northeast, and south.

Pulaski Pike

This was one of the first roads in the county, and the only road between Huntsville and Pulaski, Tennessee, from which it takes its name.

Casimir Pulaski was a Lithuanian who had served in the Polish army, met Benjamin Franklin, and volunteered his services to the American cause in the Revolutionary War. He was made a brigadier general and commanded what became known as Pulaski's Legion. Pulaski was wounded and died at Savannah, Georgia.

Winchester Road

Another one of the earliest roads, it was used by the early settlers who arrived in Madison County from Tennessee. It then connected Winchester with Madison County and Huntsville - and still does. Winchester was named in 1809 for its resident James Winchester, a former captain in the Revolutionary Army.

Whitesburg Drive

James White owned iron works and salt factories in East Tennessee. He traded salt for land and thus owned a lot of land on both sides of the Tennessee River. Salt was in demand for a variety of uses, including preservation of meats, and White eventually established a monopoly for salt - so much so that he became known as "Salt" White. By 1825, the settlement just north of Ditto's Landing had become known as Whitesburg. But the Whitesburg community was burned and destroyed by Union forces during

the Civil War and never revived.

Whitesburg Drive, between Huntsville and the Tennessee River, opened in 1834 as a toll road. It operated that way until 1895 when a state commission outlawed the charges.

Taken from Dex's book "Why Is It Named That?" which contains stories behind 250 places in Huntsville and Madison County. Copies are available at Shaver's Books in the Railroad Station Antique Mall, Harrison Brothers Hardware Store, and the Senior Center Gift Shop.



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Buckshot Bandit

by Harold D. Fanning

Our community was, by-and-large, isolated from the bigger cities like Huntsville or Fayetteville during the days when I was growing up in Lick Skillet. Because of the distance, residents mainly purchased their goods locally; this accounted for a number of local mercantile stores spread throughout the county. Trips into the larger cities were rare, but when we did go it was a huge event. Most of the time the entire family would dress in their Sunday best, pile on the truck, and away we'd go. It was usually an all day affair and one to which everybody looked forward.

Because of the vast farming industry, one of those precious commodities was the gasoline that kept all those tractors, trucks, combines, and other machinery operating. The farmers' weekly fuel supply was delivered and pumped into their personal tanks. Rarely was the

tanker truck ever seen because most deliveries were made in the wee hours of the morning, usually around 2:00 a.m. This was so the farmer could begin his day without the stress of wondering if he had enough fuel to plow his fields. Each farm would receive a bill at the end of the month for the number of gallons received. The bill was either paid monthly or at the end of harvest season with one payment. Looking back, it is almost humorous when you consider the fact that gasoline was only twenty-one cents per gallon.

Unfortunately, these huge tanks were oftentimes sources of contention for the farmer because of fuel theft. In those early days, most Southerners either worked on the farm or had a job that was agriculturally related. Of course there were a few factories, construction companies, and food chains, but even these were dependent upon the success or failure of the farming industry.

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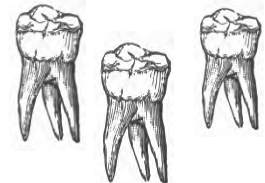
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The system worked great until there was a had weather season. Sometimes there would be months before any work could be done because of heavy rains or drought conditions. These situations created a tremendous hardship on the field workers' families whose livelihood depended upon a weekly income. Not only that, but this also created a difficult dilemma for local merchants. Many of them had no choice but to extend a credit line to families who were supposed to pay either weekly, monthly, or make arrangements to settle accounts at the end of the harvest season. If there was no income many merchants were left with nothing more than a stack of unpaid credit slips. There were many situations where these farm employees would simply pack their belongings and move on during the night without saying a word to anyone.

It was during one of these crisis seasons when the entire South experienced a long, hot, and very dry summer. There was one farmer in our community by the name of Herman who experienced a confrontation that still causes me to smile when I think about it. In those days there was no such thing as air conditioning (unless you were a Methodist; they had an air-conditioned church). No household ever locked their doors and everyone slept with open windows. The crime rate wasn't as bad as it is today, so home break-ins were almost unheard of.

Anyway, as Herman was sitting in his easy chair listening to the evening news on the radio and hoping to get a positive report concerning the weather, his twelve-year-old nephew came in and said, "Uncle Herman, there's a guy outside standing next to your fuel tanks!" To which Herman asked, "Who is it and what is he doing?" The nephew responded, "Oh nothing, he is just leaned up against the tank with a bucket sitting next to him."

Immediately Herman understood what that meant-this guy was stealing tractor fuel! So he grabbed his old double-barreled 12-gauge shotgun and instructed his nephew to show him where he had seen the man. Carefully, Herman and his nephew maneuvered to a position where they could get a good look at the guy. And sure enough, there he stood, just as calm and confident as could be, leaning against that fuel tank and smoking a cigarette (apparently he was not very intelligent).

What happened next has become legendary in the Lick Skillet community. Herman yelled to the man, "Hey, what do you think you're doing?" The guy immediately took off running down a gravel road leading away from the barn. Herman yelled again, "Stop, or I'll shoot!" Of course the man didn't

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stop (would you?) but picked up his pace. He was out of sight in no time but you could hear his feet as they hit the loose gravel as he ran. Later, the nephew related to us that Herman raised that old shotgun and aimed in the direction of that crunching gravel and began counting... 1, 2,3,4... until he got to 10, then fired that old gun that was loaded with #8 bird shot. By this time the man had gotten far enough down the road that the buckshot only stung him with no serious injury, thus the reason for Herman's delay in pulling the trigger. The nephew said you could hear a faint "Yeow-w-w-w-w!" The guy yelled from a distance, "You so-and-so and so-and-so and so-and-so... (actually, there were lots more so-and-so's) ...you shot me."

There are those rare occasions when the good guy wins and the bad guy gets what he deserves.

Sin is a harsh taskmaster.

"Life In The Skillet," by Harold Fanning, may be purchased at Shaver's Books at Railroad Station Antiques.

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Things Remembered

by David Dickson

The Christmas holiday season is here again. They came a lot slower when I was on the gift receiving end. Now with children and grandchildren it seems to be here every other month.

It does not help that you can not find the Halloween candy at the store because you are digging past Christmas items. I predict that in the near future we will have Christmas displays year round.

Does anyone remember back when the Christmas parade was at night? That was always a great thing to see as it came down the street. We were usually on Washington Street near the theatres. I remember the lamp posts being brightly shining. Santa Claus was at the end of the parade and appeared larger than life.

You could smell the popcorn and roasted peanuts coming out of the Kress' store and W.T. Grants was another good store for Christmas sights and sounds. Grants had their toys in the basement and had a good selection.

I loved to search through the Sears catalog and pick out things for Santa to bring. He must have used another catalog because he usually got my order wrong. He must have had a Top Dollar Store catalog.

Downtown Huntsville was exciting during the holidays. There was music coming out of the stores. Old friends were seeing each other for the first time since last year. How many times could you hear, "Ya'll come see us, ya hear?"

I wonder what childhood memories that my grandchildren could be writing about when they reach my age. I hope they remember that their grand dad loved them very much and they know the real reason for the holidays.

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Rex

by Austin Miller

In 1947, Mrs. Cora Shepard was our neighbor, her son E.W. loved dogs and always had about a dozen. He had moved from home but left a dog he had recently acquired with his mother. This upset Mama and Daddy because they knew he would run unattended on our property and be a pest; but more than that, they considered him dangerous.

He was an army trained dog that had been used to guard German prisoners held at Redstone Arsenal during the war. When Daddy talked to

E.W., he said don't worry he won't bother anybody. Daddy was not convinced and made up his mind to shoot the dog if he caused any trouble.

His name was Rex. I can't remember what Rex looked like except he was bigger than I was. Rex showed no affection to people, never barked, wagged his tail, chased cars or ran with other dogs. You knew that the only way to stop this dog if he attacked was by extreme force. Many people affectionately add the adjective "Old" to their dog's

name but somehow this didn't fit Rex. He was not a warm, friendly, fuzzy feeling dog.

One morning when I was in the first grade, I walked out the front door and there stood Rex. He was standing a few feet from the porch between me and the way to the school bus. I didn't know what to do because I had been warned that he was dangerous and to never get close to him. He was standing there perfectly still without making a sound.

I had always heard that a

"The older you get, the better you realize you were."

George Carlin

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dog wagging his tail was a friendly dog and not a threat. Rex was not wagging his tail. I called to Mama but she didn't hear me. Finally I took a step backward toward the porch, he didn't move. I backed up slowly to the porch steps. When I turned to go up the steps, he bounded past me and was standing on the porch at the top of the steps behind me. Since my path was blocked, all I could do was walk away from the porch back into the yard. At that point, he jumped down the porch and fell in beside me. I didn't panic and I don't remember being scared.

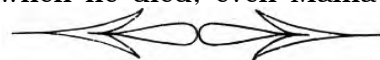
I think maybe at six years old I could sense that he was not a danger. He walked with me to the road and waited until the bus came, he was never more than a few inches away. When I got on I saw him trotting back home. That afternoon he was waiting at the road and walked me home. He took every detour that I took and stayed with me until I got home. When I got to the front porch, he trotted back to Mrs. Shepard's house.

After that, he followed the same routine everyday. Until this day, I don't know how he knew what time to meet the bus and not to come on Saturday and Sunday. Soon the other kids on the bus took notice and would yell and call to him when I got off the bus. The only time he came to our house was when he walked me to and from the bus. But any time I was in the yard playing or working, he was always in sight. If I got out of his line of vision, he would move to where he could see me. Soon he became an unobtrusive part of my life and I seldom noticed that he was around even when he walked with me to and from the bus.

One Sunday we went to visit my grandparents. When we returned the Shepards were all gathered on the front porch with

a sad look on their faces; they said that Rex had been run over and killed by a car. They said the car came off the road way up in the churchyard and purposely ran over him. E.W. said he thought he knew who did it but he never gave a name.

Rex was not a pet or a dog that could be owned. E.W. claimed him but he didn't belong to anybody. He lived off sparse table scraps but didn't bother the chickens, roam the community, bark at night, fight other dogs, chase the cows or bother people coming to our house. But as docile and unthreatening as he appeared; Rex was trained to kill and would have attacked anybody who messed with me. We had come to love Rex and were all very sad when he died, even Mama and Daddy.



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The Terrible Storm of 1920

by William Sibley

On April 20, 1920, shortly after the noon hour, a cyclone struck the Big Cove community, killing four people, injuring several others, and destroying personal property and livestock.

The storm entered the community over Huntsville Mountain on Big Cove's west side. Witnesses to the event reported seeing brightly colored garments being blown high in the air and thought that those objects were children being blown from the west side of the mountain.

The storm missed Camp Ground School only by yards. Students and teachers were eyewitnesses and could only watch helplessly as they saw homes destroyed and lives claimed by the disastrous storm, which today's citizens would call a tornado.

The first victim of the storm was Washburn "Wash" Anyan, a bachelor and one of Big Cove's most colorful citizens who lived on the west side of Old Big Cove Road. He was blown into his beehives and students and teachers could hear his mournful cries for help. He died shortly thereafter.

The storm was traveling in a northeasterly direction and traveled down Miller Lane and as the students and teachers watched in horror, they saw the storm destroy the

Elijah Donnell "Don" Drake home. Mr. Drake and his two sons, Ben Gordon and Charley, lost their lives to the storm. Charley's wife, Ruth, and their son, Worthem, were injured seriously. Don's wife, Agnes (Brown) Drake received minor injuries.

The next house to be hit on Miller Lane was that of Emmett and Melissa Pitts, who lived immediately east

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of Pickens Family Cemetery. They had small children at the time. Luckily, none of the Pitts family was injured seriously, but Leona (Mills), the Pittses' daughter, told me that she and her older brother, Bill, talked for many years about the horror they experienced while the family was in that storm.

After exiting from the Miller Lane area, the storm hit the home of Mrs. Mary Ann (Anderson) Drake, the stepmother of Don Drake. Mrs. Drake lived on King Drake Road, near the Drake Family Cemetery. Mrs. Drake did not receive life-threatening injuries but she never fully recovered from those injuries she did receive.

Immediately after the storm left Big Cove, the home of Thomas "Newt" and Fannie Cowley was turned into a temporary infirmary until medical help could arrive.

My mother, Kathryn Sadler (Sibley) and her brother, Allen, were students at Camp Ground School, but when their family awoke from their sleep on the morning of April 20, 1920, there was an eerie, unexplained feeling in the air and my grandparents decided not to send their children to school.

They remained at their home on Cove Creek and my mother told me many times that her parents were so scared that they had their children to go back to bed.

Stella Sibley, my aunt, was a senior at Camp Ground and she did attend school that day and was among the eyewitnesses to the storm. She reported that near the noon hour the day was almost as dark as nighttime and she remembered the principal,

Miss Elizabeth Monroe, was walking the hall, wringing her hands and praying. It was only after the storm hit the community that Aunt Stella and the

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other students realized that Miss Monroe knew that a terrible storm was brewing.

My mother and Aunt Stella reported that shortly after the storm passed through the community everything was extremely still and quiet.

My great-grandfather, William Alfred Sadler, my grandparents, William Henry and Charlotte (Owen) Sadler, my mother and her siblings, were standing outside their Cove Creek home and discussing the storm and worrying about the possible deaths and injuries it left behind.

Suddenly, they heard the fast running of a horse that came nearer and nearer. Riding that horse was Charles Grayson "Charlie" Moore, who was a friend and neighbor of my family. Charlie delivered the sad news of the Drakes' deaths and that of Wash Anyan. The Drakes were relatives of the Sadlers and Wash Anyan was a lifetime friend.

Wash Anyan was buried in the Anyan Family Burying Ground on Old Big Cove Road's west side, near Camp Ground School. The Drakes were buried in Camp Ground Cemetery, where there is a triple grave marker located, a reminder of the April 20, 1920 tragedy.

Farmers had planted some of their earliest crops and students and teachers at Camp Ground were preparing for their end of the year activities, which included a graduation program for the first class of seniors. On April 30, 1920, those four graduating seniors, Stella Sibley, James Allen Taylor, Virgie Taylor, and Lucille Taylor, were given a complete graduation program. All four graduates were college bound. The three girls became public school teachers and the boy became a successful Huntsville businessman.

In the 1960s, another tornado struck Big Cove and traveled

down Miller Lane, taking almost the same path as the 1920 tornado. My Sadler grandparents were living in the house that had replaced the Don Drake house and the tornado completely destroyed the replaced home.

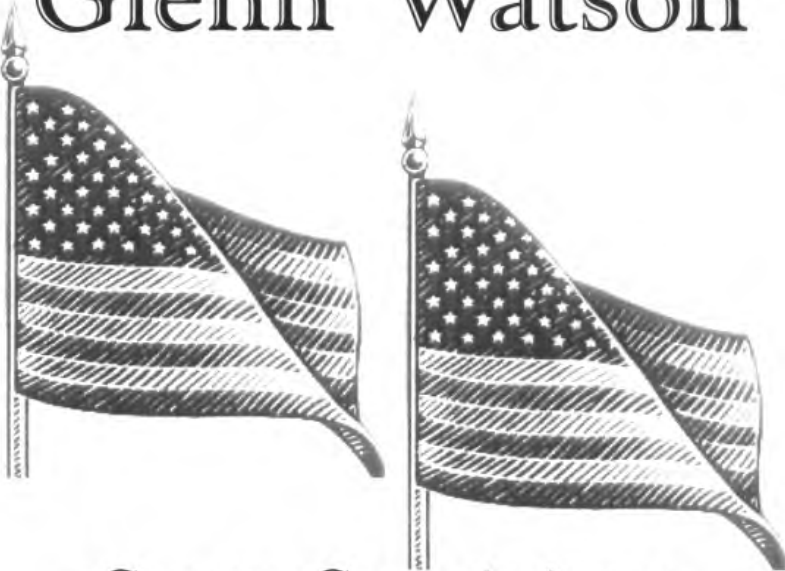
My grandparents spent some time in the hospital as a result of

that storm, but both recovered fully. Again, in the 1960s, it was our friend and neighbor, Charlie Moore, who drove to our house to report that my grandparents had been injured in a tornado.



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	7:40	Kerri Riley	Employment Law
February 4	6:30	Delaine Mountain	Tort Law
	7:40	Fred & Derek Simpson, and Barton Warren	Trial Techniques
February 11	6:30	Phil Price	DUI Law
	7:40	Carol Wallace/Connie Glass	Elder Law
February 18	6:30	Ron Sysktus	Bankruptcy Law
	7:40	Archie Lamb	Sports Law
February 25	6:30	Bill Burgess	Divorce Law
	7:40	Robert Presto	Divorce Law
March 3	6:30	Gary Conchin, Joe King and Joe Aiello	Product Liability Law
	7:40	Jim Richardson	Insurance Law
March 10	6:30	Joan Harris	Immigration Law
	7:40	George Moore	Justice in America
March 17	6:30	Tommy Siniard	Nursing Home Law
	7:40	Ed Gentle	Alabama Public Service Commission
March 24	6:30	Mike Wisner	Wills, Trusts, and Taxes
	7:40	S.A. "Bud" Watson	Trials: The Turning Point
March 31	6:30	Robert Prince	The Politics and the Law
	7:40	Charles Boyd	Social Security Law
April 7	6:30	Richard Chesnut	Real Estate Law
	7:40	Frank Caprio	Copyright and Patent Law
	8:40	Allen Brinkley	Graduation

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