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# Old Huntsville

HISTORY AND STORIES OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY



## An Innocent Man

Claudia Perkins stood on the front porch with her daughters and watched in shock as her husband was led off in handcuffs. She later said she felt as if she was living in some kind of a horrible nightmare.

She knew beyond a shadow of doubt that her husband was innocent; she had been with him all evening. Her children had also told the deputy that their father had been home all night but no one seemed to listen, or care.

Also in this issue: Dallas Mill Village Memories

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*Domie Lewter*  
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# An Innocent Man

The skies seemed to reflect the gloom of many people struggling through the depression in 1935. Huge storm clouds were swirling over Madison County and lightning danced from one thunderhead to another. People everywhere rushed to finish their chores and get home before the rain began. Suddenly, just as the whistle at Lincoln Mills began blowing for the evening shift, the heavens opened up. Torrential rains, whipped by cyclonic winds, began pounding everything in its path. Trees bent in the wind and roads became small rivers as the storm unleashed its fury.

It was a good night, everyone agreed, to stay home.

A few miles north of Huntsville, on Winchester Road, Bill and Claudia Perkins were sitting in the front room of their small home listening to a radio program broadcast from Chicago. Their two daughters, aged nine and eleven, were playing in another room. Several times, as the noise of the storm increased,

Bill leaned forward to turn the sound up. Glancing at the dying embers in the fireplace he berated himself for not bringing in another load of wood before the storm hit.

Reluctantly he got up and put on his coat before going outside in the rain. A few minutes later he returned with a load of fire wood, his clothes soaking wet. After tending the fire he went into the bedroom and changed, leaving his wet clothes on a chair.

The radio program ended several hours later, at nine o'clock, and the family was preparing for bed when there was a loud insistent knocking at the front door. It was Ben Giles, Sheriff of Madison County.

By the look on the sheriff's face the couple knew it was not a social visit. "Bill, where have you been tonight?"

With no reason to be alarmed, Bill replied that he had been home all night since getting off from work at five o'clock. He had not left the house all night. The same question was asked of Claudia and she confirmed what Bill said.

While they were talking a deputy went into the bedroom, returning a few minutes later with a wet shirt and pair of pants. "I thought you said you had not left the house all night,"



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he asked.

Bill explained about going outside in the rain to get firewood but the deputy seemed not to hear. Suddenly feeling alarmed at the strange questioning, Bill began demanding to know what it was all about.

Sheriff Giles looked at him for a long moment, as if trying to decide something, before finally replying. "Son, you're under arrest for armed robbery. Ol' Man Tipton was robbed about an hour ago and we have two witnesses who identified you."

Claudia Perkins stood on the front porch with her daughters and watched in shock as her husband was led off in handcuffs. She later said she felt as if she was living in some kind of a horrible nightmare. She knew beyond a shadow of doubt that her husband was innocent; she had been with him all evening. Her children had also told the deputy that their father had been home all night but no one seemed to listen, or care.

At first light the next morning Claudia walked to a neighbor's home and begged him to take her to town to try to find out what was happening. The news was even more disheartening than the night before. Mr. Tipton, a rent collector for the mills, had been robbed as he was making his rounds. A person who

lived across the street from where the robbery occurred, and who worked at the mill, had given a statement that he saw Bill running away from the scene with a pistol in his hand. Another person who also worked at the mill said he was walking down the street and saw Bill waiting in the shadows at exactly the place where the robbery occurred a few minutes later.

Claudia spent the rest of the day going from one office to another trying to find someone who would listen to her story. Repeatedly she was told that the evidence was overwhelming. At one point she was even warned that she could be prosecuted for lying to authorities and insisting she had been with her husband all evening.

The neighbor who had given her a ride had stayed with her all day as she beseeched authorities to listen to her. On the way home that afternoon he was strangely silent. Finally after clearing his throat several times he blurted out what he had been thinking all day.

"Mrs. Perkins, I know what you are trying to do. I might do

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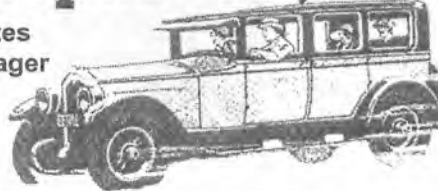
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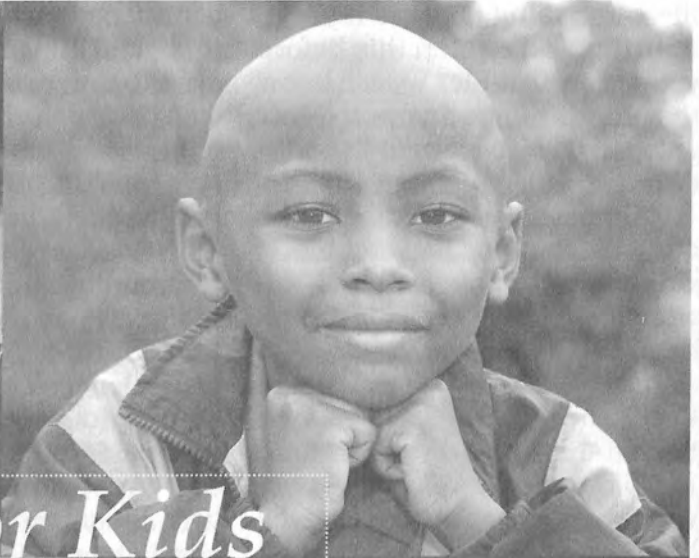
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the same thing if it was my kin, but you need to stop this before you get in trouble. We all know that he did it and you are just going to have to learn to live with it."

Almost as an afterthought he added, "That boy has bad blood running all through him. It's a wonder he ain't been in prison before."

Claudia bit her tongue to keep from saying what was on her mind. When they pulled up in front of her home she got out without saying a word, not even bothering to close the car door.

It was true, she thought, that Bill had been in trouble before; but never for anything serious. He had a hair trigger temper and would fight anyone he thought was insulting him. Several months earlier he had been fired from the Mill when he got into a fight with one of the foremen. The mill pressed charges and Bill was locked up for several days but eventually the charges were dropped. He had also been arrested several times for public intoxication but had been released after paying a twenty five dollar fine.

Claudia had actually separated from Bill at one point; taking the children and moving back to her parents' home in Fayetteville. She knew the fights and the drinking were Bill's fault and had loudly told him so on more than one occasion.

But ..... this was different. She knew there was no question that

her husband was innocent of the robbery. Bill would have had to drive to town, rob Mr. Tipton and then drive back home in the three or four minutes he was out of her sight getting firewood. It was impossible. There was no way.

News travels fast in a small community. The next day brought a steady parade of family and friends stopping by to offer their condolences, and most likely hoping to pick up some juicy gossip. Claudia told her story over and over again, as did her two daughters, but no one really listened. One of her cousins, a large overweight woman known for her holier-than-thou attitude, began harping at her about leaving Bill. Another person, a neighbor whom Claudia had tried to sell Bill's car to in order to hire a lawyer, told everyone who would listen that he had always predicted that Bill would end up in prison.

Claudia's oldest daughter, Betty, tried to tell everyone that she was with her father that night but no one was interested. Almost sixty years later she could still vividly recall that day. "When no one would listen to me I started crying and screaming that my father was innocent. I told them that they didn't know

**"The senate just sits and waits til they find out what the President wants, so they know how to vote against him."**

*Will Rogers*

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what they were talking about.”

“I still remember one woman who kept watching me like I had a contagious disease. She leaned over to another woman and said, “It ain’t right what they are making these children do.”

Unable to post bail, Bill Perkins remained in jail until his trial. That only served to intensify the gossip.

Human nature can be cruel. While people will swear undying friendship and loyalty, few can resist the temptation of listening to, or repeating, gossip. As Bill Perkins sat in jail, his whole life became fodder for the rumor mills. Stories were told about his grandfather who had been locked up one time for bootlegging, and of a cousin who had been divorced two times.

People began to tell stories about Claudia; about how she must be a loose woman to live with a man like her husband. Parents warned their children about playing with her daughters, saying they came from bad blood.

The trial itself only lasted a few hours. A witness took the stand and testified he saw Bill

Perkins running away from the scene with a gun in his hand. He described the gun as being a nickel-plated revolver. Bill’s lawyer never asked the witness how he could identify Bill, or a gun, from almost a hundred feet away at night during a drenching thunderstorm. The next witness testified about seeing Bill near the scene. He described Bill as wearing a floppy hat that covered almost half of his face. Although there were no lights and a violent thunderstorm was raging, the witness still insisted he recognized Bill from almost half a block away.

Bill’s lawyer never asked how that was possible.

Claudia and her oldest daughter, Betty, both took the stand and told their stories. Betty remembered a juror shaking his head the whole time she was on the stand. The jurors had already made up their minds.

Bill Perkins was sentenced to three years in Kilby Penitentiary.

“Mama almost lost her mind,” remembered Betty. “Some times she would cry all day long. Other

times she would go out next to the wood pile and just stand there screaming. The bad thing was there wasn’t nothing I could say or do to help her. I felt the same way she did. It was like the whole world was ganging up on us.”

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"After the first few months Mama changed. She wouldn't go around people anymore. All she would do was sit at the kitchen table every night with all those papers in front of her. There was a cold hard look about her that I had never seen before."

"We moved to town and Mama got a job working at the mill. Every spare minute was spent working on her papers and talking to people at the courthouse. One judge she talked to told her to not worry, that "three years would go by in a hurry."

"We didn't have any money but Mama kept talking to lawyers anyway, trying to get them to take the case. One lawyer actually read all the records and told Mama there would be no trouble getting it overturned .... but he needed two thousand dollars up front. He said justice might be blind, but it wasn't cheap.

Bill Perkins spent almost two and a half years in the penitentiary before being released. The homecoming was bitter-sweet. The family was together but would have to start all over again. His car had been sold to pay the lawyers. Most of their furniture had been repossessed. Adding insult to injury, the mill in-

formed Claudia that if Bill stayed with her she would have to move out of the mill home she was renting. "We don't want people like him living here," they said.

"Daddy tried hard," remembered Betty. "He knocked on about every door in Huntsville trying to get a job but when they found out who he was they wouldn't hire him. His cousin finally loaned him the money to buy an old truck and he spent weeks working on it trying to get it to run. Later on he started hauling timber from sawmills out in the country. It didn't pay hardly nothing but Daddy made up for it by working seven days a week, morning to night."

Suddenly, about six months

"When I'm feeling down, I like to whistle. It makes the neighbor's dog run to the end of his chain and gag himself."

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after Bill got out of prison, it seemed as if a miracle was about to happen. A Huntsville policeman, who was married to Claudia's cousin, stopped by the house one day with astonishing news. A man had been arrested for armed robbery and while being questioned had confessed to the crime Bill was convicted of. For the first time in three years there was something to really celebrate.

"We all loved ice cream," said Betty, "and after Daddy heard the news he went out and bought two gallons of it. We sat on the front porch and ate every bit of it with Daddy just sitting there grinning the whole time."

Strangely, although another person had confessed to the armed robbery Bill was convicted of, the authorities did nothing. It was decided to just let matters stay the way they were. Reopening the case would have forced the jurors and prosecutor at Bill's trial to admit they made a mistake, something prosecutors in Alabama rarely, if ever, do. Besides, they probably thought, Bill Perkins is out of prison and it's over with.

An attorney speaking on behalf of the persecutor's office and off the record, told Claudia and Bill that his case would never be reopened. "There's just too many things involved that you don't understand," said the attorney. "We know you got a raw deal but I have the word of certain people that if you apply for a pardon, they will go along with it."

"That means they would forgive me for the crime, even though I didn't do it," said Bill

"Yes, basically that's what it means."

Bill's face had grown beet red. "You tell them to take that pardon and .....! I ain't committed no crime and I ain't going to ask forgiveness for something I didn't do!"

Life should have become easier for the couple, but it didn't. Bill Perkins wore the label of a jail bird and regardless of what happened no one would change their minds. Once started, gossip and rumors take on lives of their own.

One day while hauling a load of timber from New Market, Bill's truck broke down. It was pouring rain with the temperature hovering around the freezing mark. Reluctantly, Bill decided to hitch a ride into town to get a tow truck. Car after car slowly passed, with some of them almost coming to a

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Frank Leahy / Notre Dame

full stop before recognizing him and speeding away. Finally, after standing in the cold rain for almost an hour, he got a lift from a complete stranger.

"I remember Daddy coming home that day," said Betty. "He stood in front of the fireplace for the better part of an hour without ever saying a word. Finally he looked at me and told me to go get Mama and my sister. When we were all gathered in the front room Daddy announced we were moving to Chicago. He would go first, get a job and find a place for us to live. Then he would send us the money for bus tickets."

"I ain't living no place where they treat a man worse than a mongrel dog!"

"The next day Daddy left," continued Betty. That was the last time we ever saw him. Two

days later a deputy knocked on the door and told us that Daddy had died in a car wreck near Evanston, Indiana."

"Mama didn't have the money to have Daddy's body shipped home so they buried him in a pauper's grave."

As news of Bill's death spread people began stopping by

Claudia's house to offer their condolences. In a sick sort of way, many of the condolences were coupled with "..... It's probably the best thing. Now he is out of your life for good!"

"Mama sat there in a chair not saying anything, just listening to people talk about her husband. Finally Mama got up and went

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into the bedroom. When she came back she was holding my father's old shotgun."

In a voice barely above a whisper Claudia ordered everyone out of her house.

"It was almost funny to watch that bunch of hypocrites fighting one another to get out the front door," remembered Betty. "After that people pretty much left us alone but it didn't help Mama. She had been through so much that she was just drained inside. Four years later, on my 21st birthday, Mama died. That same summer I visited my father's grave in Indiana. I had never been there before but the grave was easy to find. Mama had ordered a tombstone for it."

**William Perkins**  
**1894 - 1938**  
*Here lies an innocent man from Huntsville, Alabama.*



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# Flogging of a White Man Near Hazel Green

*from 1923 newspaper*

Something of a sensation was created yesterday morning when it was brought to the attention of the district attorney that Jesse Warren, living in the Hazel Green neighborhood, had been severely flogged by a number of men who, following the beating, warned Warren to leave the section of the country where he lived. Also that Mrs. Warren had been warned to leave the neighborhood.

The story was brought to Huntsville by the father of the man flogged, who said his son had been called from the home of his sister-in-law, where he and Mrs. Warren and their two children were visiting, and taken in charge by a band of thirty or more men, robed in white and with faces masked. According to the story told by the father, young Warren was forcibly carried a short distance, where he was severely beaten. Later he was taken to the Huntsville-Fayetteville Pike, where another beating was administered and Warren headed north and was told to leave.

The beaten man is said to be about 30 years old. No arrests have been made but an investigation is said to be under way. No cause was assigned by the elder Warren for the flogging of his son.



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# Madison County High School Class of 1960

by Austin Miller

Recently I attended my Madison County High School (Gurley) class reunion. I had not seen most of my classmates since we graduated in 1960. But with the exception of a couple of snap misidentifications that provided considerable levity at my expense, I knew most everybody at first sight and could call their name. As the evening progressed and I adjusted to forty seven years of change, the group began to look almost as familiar to me as they did in 1960. In the days since the reunion, my mind has been drawn back to the way things were in 1960.

At that time Gurley was a country school and we were country kids. Most of us were poor and there were very few boys or girls in the class that didn't have to pick and chop cotton. To enable students to help with the crops, we had split

sessions. School let out the last of May so we could chop cotton, started again the middle of July and ran until the first of September.

During picking time school was out from September until the middle of October. When we started back in July after chopping time, it was hot weather with no air conditioning but nobody noticed. After working outside five or six weeks in the hot sun, any place under a shade seemed cool, even a hot classroom.

All the boys belonged to the Future Farmers of America (FFA) and the girls belonged to the Future Homemakers of America. One of the perks of this was that we got to attend the 4-H calf show in Huntsville each spring. Well groomed cattle, mostly Hereford bulls, from

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all over the county were brought to town for show and circled around the court house for judging. Most of us didn't pay much attention to the calf show but enjoyed a day in town away from school.

Gurley won the county basket ball championship in 1960 under Coach Olen Nelson. I had the privilege of sitting next to him at the reunion. He was highly respected by the students as a teacher and coach. I have recently enjoyed becoming reacquainted with him as a fellow member of Holmes Street United Methodist Church.

At least five of our class members have died. One was Larry Howell who was killed in 1974, immediately after the big April tornado in a car accident. Larry was a forward on the 1960 championship basketball team and made all county. We also lost Jimmy Allison who was a guard on the team. I am not certain but I believe he too made all county. When he died

he was an owner and president of Allison Candy Company in Paint Rock. I am told that Faye Sharp and Charlene Smith died of cancer. Although he didn't graduate with us, Snake Lee was a classmate until our senior year. Snake quit in the spring before graduation to join the Army. He was home on leave after basic training during graduation and attended in uniform. Seeing all his former class mates receive diplomas must have been hard for him to witness. Snake died about two years ago.

When we were in high school, television was coming into its own. Westerns were the rave. We cut our teeth on Gunsmoke, Bonanza, The Virginian, Wagon Train and many

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others that are now less known. They all had one common theme, you could tell which one was the good guy and the good guy always won.

In those days the televisions were black and white and that's the way we saw the world. We didn't talk about sex or use foul language in mixed company. The most serious discipline problem at Madison County High in 1960 was playing hooky. I remember a few fights and had one or two myself but they sprung from instant anger and were settled with fists or a teacher and soon forgotten.

Drug use by students was unheard of. It was also unheard of for the sheriff to come to the school to deal with discipline problems. Knives, shotgun and rifles were part of our lives and culture. We carried pocket knives to school, some even had switchblades, but they were never considered as a way to settle disputes.

The primer form of punishment for misbehaving in class or not doing homework was a paddling. More serious violations such as playing hooky resulted in a week's suspension from school. I have to admit that I played hooky several times but was never caught. Others were not so lucky. Some say the reason I didn't get caught is because I was so shy and quiet that nobody missed me. We lived in a totally segregated world and it never occurred to us that this would ever change.

The last war was Korea and we were only a few years removed from World War II and the great depression. We were not part of the so-called greatest generation but we were directly influenced by those who were. We trusted the government to do the right thing and metaphorically speaking believed our country wore a white hat like the heroes in the western movies. Nuclear war with the Soviet Union and communism was the big threat. We were issued dog tags in the event the unthinkable happened. I still have mine. We all thought Huntsville might be high on the hit list because of Redstone. The danger may have been real but it did not affect our daily lives. We had the optimism of youth and confidence that our military would prevent this from happening.

We didn't know it at the time, but at graduation we were seeing the end of an era. Before 1960 there were already signs of change. In our class rooms, we could hear

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the boom of rockets being tested at Redstone. Sometimes the blast was so loud the windows rattled.

The Supreme Court had ruled that separate but equal education in public schools was unconstitutional (Brown vs. Board of Education). As a result President Eisenhower had sent troops to Arkansas to help integrate Little Rock High School. Military advisors were already being sent to a small unheard-of country half way around the world.

Before the decade was over everything would be different. Some of us went to a terrible war in South East Asia. Man walked on the moon and the country went through a civil rights and cultural revolution. The tragedy of Vietnam shook our confidence in government and the way we viewed our country. The space program transformed Huntsville from a cotton town to a high tech city bringing in thousands of new people from all over the country. The growth brought opportunities that helped lift many in the class of 1960 out of poverty. That was a good thing.

Members of the Madison County High School class of 1960 are among the fading ranks of the few privileged to grow up in the fifties. Everything has changed since then and we are different too.

We may have lost the innocence we enjoyed in the fifties, but our long ago days at Gurley High and the way we lived then will be part of our core as long as we live.

I don't believe I would like to relive my high school years but I would like to fix a few things. If I had it to do over, I would be a better student, a better classmate and a better friend.

Sorrow looks back, worry looks around, and faith looks up.

# Mayor and Editor in Fist Fight

Huntsville - Huntsville Mayor. R.E. Smith, and J. Emory Pierce, editor of the local newspaper, were involved in an altercation yesterday after meeting on the streets and exchanging insults.

The Mayor had taken exception to certain articles recently printed in the newspaper, and

after meeting Emory on the sidewalks in front of the courthouse, took the opportunity to voice his displeasure.

One witness claimed the mayor made certain remarks about Emory's ancestry, whereas the editor promptly begin thrashing him with a walking cane.

The pugilists were separated by onlookers before either could inflict serious injury.

The mayor fined himself ten dollars in city court the next morning for losing his temper and Emory has publicly announced he will support another candidate in the next election.

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# The Law in 1860

Bathing in the Big Spring branch within less than 300 yards below the dam, between the hours of 4 a.m. and 10 p.m., constituted another misdemeanor. A person was permitted to burn out a stove pipe or chimney flue only when the roof was wet from rain or covered with snow.

A fine of from \$5 to \$10 was assessed upon any individual who carried an unguarded candle or lamp into a stable, or who kept ashes in barrels, boxes or wooden vessels of any kind.

All persons attending a fire, and not a member of any company, were required to assist the firemen, if called upon, or pay a fine of \$10.

The community bell, a vital factor in the life of the community back in those days, was rung by the police every two hours.

This was one of their standing duties, and could not be overlooked under penalty.

Sunday was the day of rest in Huntsville of 1860. To insure this, an ordinance was inserted in the code to notify residents that "no person shall in this city do or exercise any worldly labor on that day under a penalty of \$5 for each offense."

All businesses except hotels, boarding houses and apothecaries were required to close on Sundays. Barbers could keep their shop open until noon.

A fine of \$1 was assessed upon any person who bought goods or commodities of any sort on Sunday. An exception was made in the case of sickness or necessity.

"Bawdy houses or houses of ill fame" were banned. The ordinance further read that "all public prostitutes, or such persons as lead a notoriously lewd and lascivious course of life, and all persons not being lawfully married, who shall cohabit, or live together as man and wife, shall pay a fine of not less than \$25."

Billiard saloons, Jenny Linds, bagatelles and other table devices were required to be closed at midnight under \$20 penalty. So were saloons and ten pin alleys.

Whoever galloped or ran a horse or any other animal used for the saddle or gear within the city limits, except in case of emergency judged by the mayor, had to forfeit \$1 for each offense.

A tax of .50 cents per head was levied annually on dogs.



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# Why Is It Named That?

by Dex Nilsson

In 1810 the original plat of Huntsville consisted of 20 blocks, laid out in a 4 by 5 grid - from Holmes Street to Williams Street, and from Gallatin Street to Lincoln Street. The streets were named for patriots of the day - the city hadn't existed long enough to name them for community leaders or favorite sons. But in 1825, two streets were added, and one of them was named for a local man.

### Adams Street

From 1821 to 1825, Henry Adams was editor of the local Alabama Republican newspaper and Planters Magazine. But there is no indication that the street was named for him. Instead it is more likely named for John Quincy Adams, who became U.S. President that same year.

John Quincy was son of

Abigail and John Adams, the second U.S. President. He graduated from Harvard, got elected to the U.S. Congress. In 1817, President Monroe named him Secretary of State, and he negotiated the cessation of Florida from Spain. After his Presidency, he returned to the House of Representatives and served for 17 years, until he had a stroke and died in the Speaker's Room in 1848.

Adams Street might be best known among older Huntsvillians for the huge oak tree that once stood right in its middle.

It was cut down in 1956, considered a hazard to automobile traffic. It had 201 rings, meaning it had started to grow in 1755, long before the city - even the country - was formed.

### McClung Avenue

The avenue that runs on the south side of Maple Hill Cemetery was named for James White McClung. He was educated in Tennessee and North Carolina. As soon as he received his law degree, he settled in Huntsville. At various times

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from 1822 to 1844, he was a member of the Alabama Legislature, and from 1835 to 1838 he was Speaker of the House. Then from 1845 to his death in 1849, McClung served in the Alabama Senate. This apparently was the first Huntsville street named for a local person.

*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.*

**"Be careful reading the fine print of a contract. There's no way you're going to like it."**

**Jimmy Deason**

## News from 1875

- Our friend Henry Ford, who has a most elegant little saloon on the North East Corner of the Square, invites all his friends of the old 4th Alabama, and everyone else, to call and test the quality of his cooling drinks. Henry was a good soldier, and therefore a good judge of fine liquor.

- The public is invited to try Volta's Electro Belts and Bands, available at all drug stores. All nervous disorders, chronic diseases of the chest, head, liver, stomach, kidneys and blood, aches and pains, nervous and general debility are quickly cured by wearing the electric belt.

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# Heard On the Street

by *Cathey Carney*



Congratulations to **Donna Gurley**, who was the first caller to identify our December Photo of the Month. Donna works at the Owens Cross Roads post office. The handsome boy in the photo was Mr. **C. B. "Bill" Miller**, premiere bridge builder whose company has built nearly all the bridges in North Alabama.

We were so sorry to hear of the death of **Annetta B. Martinson**, at age 93. She was one of the sweetest ladies we ever knew, and had written for "Old Huntsville" in the past. We send our deepest sympathy to her sons **Doug** and **Pat**, their families and many friends who will miss her so much.

It was great hearing from **Elizabeth Jackson**, who used to live here and worked at the Keller Motor Co. Her boss back then was **Billy Don Mitchell**. She said it was a sad day when production of the Keller Auto came to an end. She also told us that an ancestor of a prominent Huntsville native founded the city of Plano, Tx. where she now lives.

Happy Birthday to **Audra Wilson**, who has one of the

worst possible days to have a birthday, December 27. We're thinking about you, Audra!

Happy Birthday to that handsome **Randy Villines**, who recently purchased a very fancy sports car!

**John Henegar** had a Christmas party recently at Lee Ann's Place, off Church street. There were lots of people there and the food was great. But the highlight was seeing the legendary **Tony Mason** perform again. The older he gets the better he sounds. Many people miss his performances and would like to see him on a regular basis.

We were very sorry to hear of the death of **Ret. Col. Bill Gojsza**. He was a 38-year Army man who won countless awards and medals. He loved to cook Hungarian dishes for his family. We send our condolences to his wife **Sonia**, daughters **Eugenia Jones**, **Susan Gallagher** and **Carol Lenas**, and the rest of their family and many friends.

It was good to see **Rusty Dinwiddie** recently, dining at Thai Garden. He was looking good! Thai Garden has the best Thai food in North Alabama, and once you try them, you are addicted!

Happy Birthday to that sweet daughter of **John Bzdell - Heather Bzdell!**

We heard recently from **Billy O'Neal** of Gurley, Al. His late brother, **John M. O'Neal** of Paint Rock, was one of the nicest men we ever met and just a joy to be around. We sure do miss him.

We were so saddened to learn of the death of **Willis Eyestone**, the father of **Ron Eyestone**. He had been living at Morningside Assisted Living for the past couple of years, after moving here from Florida. We send condenses to Ron and his family in the loss of his dad.

As you have recently read, the **Historic Lowry House** may be haunted, and this really came to light recently. During the 50's themed birthday party for **Marie**

## Photo of The Month

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**Hewett**, the alarm went off for no good reason, about halfway through the party. Then, towards the end of the night, some crystal glasses that were decorating a fireplace mantle were hurled to the ground and shattered, with the nearest person about 15 feet away. There was no breeze, nothing that could have caused it. The mystery continues!

**Chuck and Kathi Frew** are proud grandparents of a baby boy named **Alexander Dyer**. His parents are **Janice and Andy Dyer** who live in Auburn. Janice, whose parents are **Chuck and Kathi**, got her Masters degree in Auburn. Grandpa Chuck, a Roll Tide fan, is already beginning the process of enrolling the boy at the University of Alabama, but the parents are saying he may be a War Eagle student! Chuck is the author of "52 Weekends in the Tennessee Valley."

It was a real honor to be able to send hundreds of past issues of "Old Huntsville" magazine to our **Alabama soldiers in Iraq**. **John Terry**, with the Army Reserve, took care of the shipping and I know the men and women protecting us here will appreciate them.

At a huge party on Monte Sano recently, there were so many people you couldn't move. Some of the folks we saw there were **Glenn Watson, Glen and Judy Nayman, Bill Miller, Kellye McCormick, Patricia Keefer, John Ehinger** and his lovely wife, **Mike Gillespie** and **Ginny, Louie & Jane Tippett** and **Lynda Hall**. The food was awesome, some of it from The Ledges and Old Heidelberg, and everyone had a great time.

**Madelyn Grace Thompson** was just tiny when she was born a month early, but she's doing great and her parents are so proud. Mom and Dad are **Dawn & Chris Thompson** of Madison. Madelyn's aunt, **Melissa**

**Robley**, works at Dr. Whitworth's dental office in Madison, as does Dawn. Melissa's husband is **Ryan Robley**, and works at LabCorp.

Huntsville has got to be the most generous city in the U.S. In memory of our policeman **W. Eric Freeman**, our residents came out in droves to donate to the family and to do thoughtful things for our police & firefighters in general. We send our deepest sympathy to Eric's family and to the many, many friends and co-workers of Officer Freeman. He will never be forgotten.

Many of our readers like to go to auctions to find that special treasure, specially after Christmas. We heard about one that we won't miss. It's happening on Jan. 20 on Meridian Street, at **Alpha Estate Sales** and is a huge winter estate sale. Ought to be interesting.

It was great to visit with our buddy **Gale Nichols** recently. She is great fun to be around.

Our thoughts are with **Eddress Burke**, who has been in the hospital lately but continues to improve. Her husband **Martin** and Eddress currently reside at Redstone Village. We love you, Eddress.

Looks like **Loretta Spencer** won't have any competition in the upcoming election. No one else has thrown their hat into the ring yet.

Speaking of Loretta, and how

she likes to work with her **Green Team** to keep our city so beautiful: downtown was just so pretty over the holiday season, with the lights and decorations.

Have a safe and Happy New year, and be sure to pick up the phone to call or visit that relative or friend who is alone and probably could use some company.

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# RECIPES

## Staying Warm

### Cheddar Curry Spread

- 3 oz. shredded Cheddar cheese
- 3 T. chopped black olives
- 1/2 c. finely chopped green onion
- 1/2 c. mayonnaise
- 1/2 t. curry powder
- Party rye bread

Mix all except for the bread and put in fridge overnight. Spread on party rye bread, bake in 400 degree oven for 5 minutes and garnish with parsley or sliced black olives.

### Chipped Beef Dip

- 1 c. chopped pecans
- 2-4 t. melted butter
- 8-oz. pkg. cream cheese, softened
- 1/4 c. milk
- 2 1/2 oz. dried beef, minced
- 1/2 t. garlic powder
- 1 8-oz. carton sour cream
- 4 t. minced onion

Saute pecans in butter til lightly browned, drain on paper towels and set aside. Combine remaining ingredients, mix well. Spoon into greased 1 1/2 quart baking dish. Top with the pecans and bake at 35 degrees for 20 minutes. Serve hot with assorted crackers or Bugles.

### Lemon-Spiked Broccoli

- 1 lb. fresh broccoli
- 1/2 c. chopped green onions
- 1 T. plus 1 t. fresh lemon juice
- 1/4 c. butter
- 1/4 c. chopped celery
- 1/4 t. grated lemon rind

Cut tough ends off the broccoli, wash well and steam for about 7 minutes. Melt butter in a small saucepan, add the onions and celery. Cook til tender and stir in the lemon juice.

Place broccoli in a butter-greased serving dish. Pour the onion mixture over the broccoli and sprinkle with lemon rind.

### Hot Cabbage & Potatoes

- 1 large slice cooked ham
- 4 medium potatoes
- 1/2 head cabbage, chopped
- Salt and pepper to taste

Cut ham into large pieces and boil in water til it appears to have oil on it. Peel potatoes, quarter them and add this to the ham/water mixture. When the potatoes are almost cooked, add in the chopped cabbage. Do not overcook the cabbage. Add salt and pepper to taste.

### Cajun Catfish

Mix equal amounts of hot sauce and mustard. Dip catfish filets in the mixture, then dredge in yellow cornmeal. Fry in hot oil til brown.

### Potatoes in Cream Wine

4 red potatoes, sliced and cooked

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2 T. melted butter  
 1 large sliced onion  
 2/3 c. milk  
 1 c. shredded mozzarella cheese  
 1/2 cup white wine  
 Saute potatoes in butter for 10 minutes. Add remaining ingredients except for the wine. Cook for 5 more minutes, add the wine, heat and serve.

## Grandma's Sunday Casserole

Boil 4 potatoes and whip them with butter. Chop a couple of green onions and mix in. Add 3 tablespoons sour cream. Whip 2 eggs with fork and add. Add two cups grated Cheddar cheese.

Put in buttered casserole, sprinkle garlic and black pepper on top, bake at 350 for 45 minutes. Can be frozen.

## White Chicken Chili

4 chicken breasts, cooked & cubed  
 2 cans great northern beans, drained  
 1 can Rotel sauce  
 1 can chicken broth  
 1 medium onion, chopped & sauteed in butter  
 2 t. minced garlic

1/2 t. thyme  
 Mozzarella cheese, shredded  
 In a saucepan, mix all ingredients except cheese. Heat to boiling, reduce and simmer for 20 minutes. Top with mozzarella cheese and sour cream dollop.

## Brown Bread Pudding

1 c. brown bread pieces  
 2 c. milk  
 3 eggs  
 2 T. real maple sugar  
 2 egg whites  
 1 T. sugar  
 2 T. whipping cream

Soak bread pieces in half a cup of the milk for about half an hour. Make a custard of the rest of the milk, eggs, and maple sugar by just cooking them together over medium heat til thickened.

Pour it hot over the bread. Beat egg whites with a tablespoon of the sugar and the cream. Fold into the custard, then bake at 350 degrees for 30 minutes.

## Vanilla Cafe

Prepare pot of hot coffee. Drop in 1 teaspoon of real vanilla extract and let sit for 15 minutes. Add 1 jigger of Bailey's Irish Cream Liquor to each cup, top with whipped cream & serve.



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# The Vengeance of Captain Slick

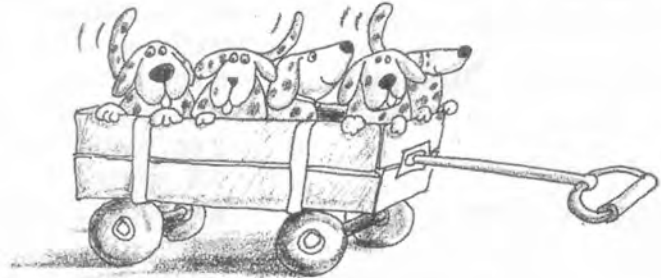
by John Crow

One of the first priorities in the settling of any region has been the establishment of law and order. The Muscle Shoals area was certainly no exception. North Alabama was actually part of the American Wild West during the early part of the 19th Century and as such attracted a variety of malcontents and ne'er do-wells. In these years before the territorial government had established even a small degree of authority over the sparsely settled region, the burden of protecting the peace fell directly on the townspeople themselves.

Judge Thomas Jones Taylor of Huntsville described the situation. "For the enforcement of law," wrote Taylor, "there was in every community an organization known as 'Captain Slick's Company' (I have been unable to ascertain where the name originated) who were the conservators of the peace. Whenever a man became notorious as a counterfeiter or a horse thief, he received a notice signed by 'Captain Slick' to leave the country in a certain number of days. This order was usually promptly obeyed, because one knew from experience that if found in the territory af-

ter the time stipulated, he would first receive thirty-nine lashes on his bare back well laid on, and in case he still proved reluctant, he would probably have both ears cropped and a brand applied to his cheek or the palm of his hand."

As Judge Taylor noted, no one is certain just how or where the expression "Captain Slick" originated. Perhaps it had a historical origin, as did "Judge Lynch" and "Lynch Law," which are said to derive from a Virginia justice of the peace during the American



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Revolution who dispensed swift judgement to pro-English Tories. Just as likely, however, it is nothing more than crude frontier humor.

Counterfeiting was a particular plague on the early American frontier. Unlike today, many state and private banks of that time issued their own paper currency. Furthermore, many less familiar foreign coins - mostly Spanish and French-were still in circulation. Counterfeiters who duplicated this money could easily bring financial ruin on a struggling young community.

"Captain Slick's Company" is known to have broken up a "gang of rogues and counterfeiters" who operated from a cave at Coles Spring in eastern Madison County, Alabama. Without doubt, there must have been many more such incidents that went unrecorded.

"Captain Slick's Company" brought justice to a miscreant who robbed John Edie's store. Edie had been dismayed one day to find his cash drawer entirely cleaned out. Every stranger in town was closely watched, but no one seemed to have suddenly come into any large unexplained amount of money.

Finally, "Captain Slick" decided to devote some attention to Edie's handsome young clerk. The none too gentle methods of the "Captain" soon persuaded the clerk to confess. The thief obligingly led his interrogators to the money's hiding place beneath the steps of the Presbyterian Church.

As a local writer described it, the "Captain's Company" then "bestowed

on him their benedictions and gave him a coat of feathers, and sent him out into the world to seek his fortune."

It was rough justice, but those were rough times to live in.

**"After an 85-year, \$75 billion study - scientists state that diet & exercise are key to weight loss."**

*Headline in 2029*

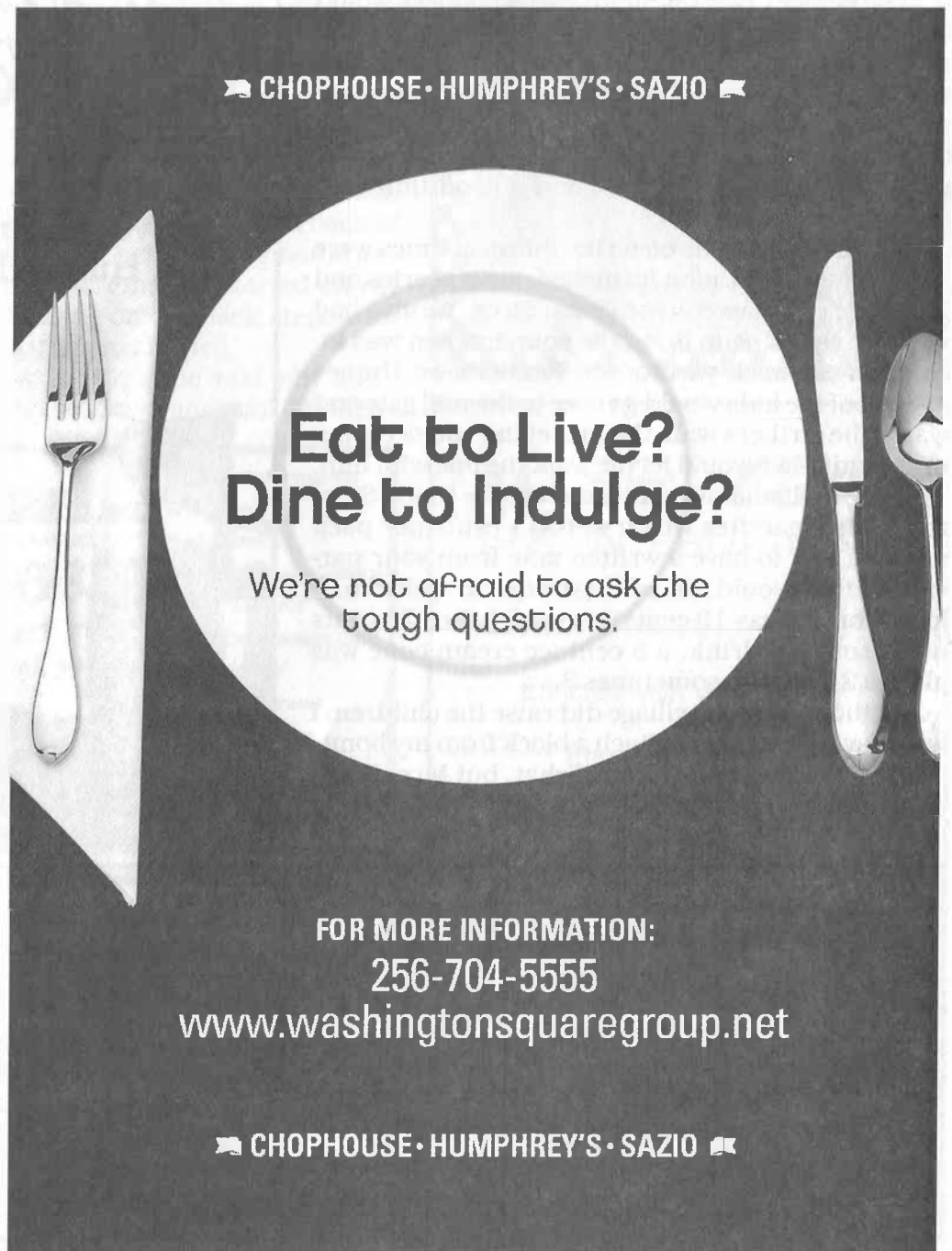
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# My Huntsville

by Rudolph V. Strickland

I was born in Dallas Mill Village on March 21, 1933. Went to school at Rison through the 3rd grade. My first grade teacher was Miss Esslinger who taught at Rison for many years. The mill village was a wonderful place to live and I have many fond memories of that area. On Sunday every one went to church at 5th. Street Baptist which is now Andrew Jackson Way Baptist. The men would wear overalls to church, some would wear khaki pants and shirt, the women would wear a print dress and apron and some would wear a bonnet. My, how times have changed.

I remember how on Sunday afternoon we would all go to Dallas Baseball park to watch a game that usually would be against either Merrimack or Lincoln Mill village team. Late on Sunday afternoon people would set on the front porch or go walking through the village, they would stop and talk maybe play a game of horse shoes, and a good time was had by all.

When the mill was on strike things at times were a little tough, the Union furnished our groceries and they were purchased at the Union Store. We also had what we called soup lines, the soup kitchen was located in the back yard of Mr. Frazier's on Humes Ave. All of the kids would go over to the mill gate and watch the strikers walk the picket line, on occasion my grandfather would let me walk the line with him.

My grandfather would send me to the Union Store to get his cigarettes which were 11 cents per pack and you had to have a written note from your parents as they would not sell cigarettes to children. A loaf of bread was 10 cents, six pack cokes 25 cents or 5 cents per drink, a 5 cent ice cream cone was always 2 daps and sometimes 3.

In those days the village did raise the children. I was playing with Butch Finch a block from my home, I did something I don't know what, but Mrs. Finch gave me a spanking and took me home, told mama and I got another spanking!

One of my first jobs was working for Mr. Gordon Allison on the ice truck. No one owned a refrigerator, we all had ice boxes, we would carry the ice into the house, put it in the box and get the money from the top of box; good days & honest people. My chores or night work as it was called consisted of splitting the kindling and bringing in the coal for the morning wood cook stove and the fire place. One day we had a big snow - there was about 6 inches on the ground and still snowing. I thought, Papa will not care if I skip tonight's work since so much snow is on the ground. I'm here to tell you I was sure wrong about that.

Papa was on the second shift and got off at

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10: 00PM and got home in about ten minutes, as we lived across the street from the mill. About 10:15 a big hand reached down, picked me up and said, boy put your clothes on, you got to get in the night work. As I was splitting wood I said Papa why didn't you do this, you were already up? His response - it was not my job. I think this was one the greatest lesson that I ever learned, as my Papa would say when you got a job to do, Do it! And do it right.

I must tell the story of my first whipping by my grandfather who raised me. Two of my playmates and myself decided to have a club in my backyard in a building we called the garage. We decided that we needed a game so we slipped into the Dallas YMCA and stole a checker board. We felt like we had better take it back as we might get caught and we did feel guilty about stealing it. As we were afraid to carry the checker board into the front door we decided to throw it into the window where the bowling lanes were.

When we threw the board in the window men were bowling and they began to shout and we thought that was funny, so we started throwing tin cans, rocks or anything we could find into the window. Finally Mr. Myhand, YMCA manager, came out he saw me and I knew that I was in trouble. I climbed up one of the silver maples in back of the Y and waited as long as I could before going home as I knew Mr. Myhand had told Papa. Finally I started on my way home and saw Papa standing on the back steps with his belt in his hand swinging it against his leg.

I said don't whip me now Papa and he said why not! I said I'm hot. Papa said OK son set down and cool off, then I

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am going to warm you up again. And he did. This was another lesson that I learned - if you break the rules, you get punished. I have lived by that rule all of my life.

Our family moved to West Huntsville when I started the 4th grade, Mama took me to Dunnnavants to buy me a suit for my first day in a new school. I begged her not to make me wear that suit as I knew it would be trouble; sure enough, first day Pee Wee Harbin wanted to fight, I told him not today that if I went home and that suit was dirty Mama would give me a whipping and we agreed to fight the next day which we did for about 30 minutes behind J. C. Brown's store.

Pee Wee and I laughed about that for many years until his death. All schools had a bully and Pee Wee was that bully. The old West Huntsville was located on 9th Ave., It was a two story stucco building with a two room stucco building behind it. In the two room building was the 5th grade. Each room had a warm morning heater and the boys as designated by the teacher had to make a fire each morning and get in the coal and wood for the next day.

There was no indoor toilet fixtures as we had two outhouses, one for the girls and one for the boys. It was really a hoot at recess to see all the boys head to the outhouse to smoke, at times it looked like the building was on fire with so much smoke coming out of it.

I had several jobs during my youth such as tasseling corn, picking up potatoes, picking apples and peaches, delivering groceries and setting up pins at the bowling alley in the Times building. The best job that I had was usher at the Center Theater, Mr. Thomas who owned the center gave me a suit to work in.

When I was about 14 years old a friend of mine taught me to play the guitar. We formed a band, got

a spot on radio WBHP for 30 minutes on Saturday morning, band members were Leon Cross, Robert Suns, Jeannie Griggs, and Rudolph V. Strickland. We eventually played at all three stations at that time in Huntsville - WFUN and WHBS.

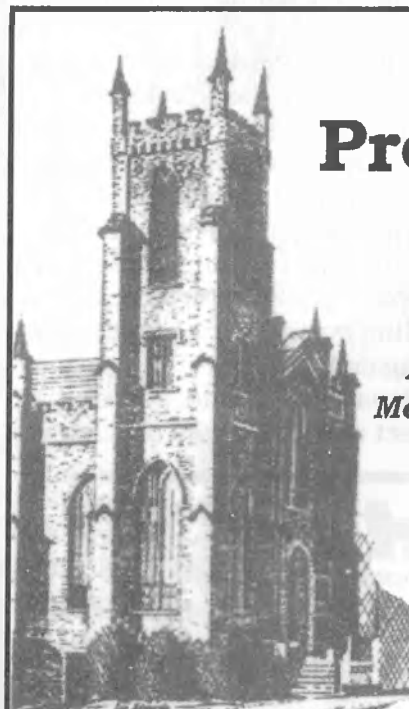
I used to play at the Labor Temple Hall (the Snuff Dippers Ball) on Saturday nights with Monte Crowder. Life was good in Huntsville in those

days, things were simple and there was a lot of love within the family.

Meal time in the home was 7:00 AM, 12: 00 noon and 5: 00 PM. Those were the times for family gatherings and a time for talking about our problems and accomplishments. Just a few thoughts about yesteryear.

**"I don't make jokes. I just watch the government and report the facts."**

*Will Rogers*



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*Allissa, age 6*

## Heard on the Street in 1885

- A Huntsville washer woman was arrested Thursday on a warrant from Judge Richardson for larceny. It is charged that she received clothes to wash, and sold them instead of returning them.

- There is a new manufacturing enterprise locating in our city. It is a cigar factory, to be located on Franklin Street, below the post office. The proprietor, J. B. Dierke, of Cincinnati, wisely decided on Huntsville after surveying several other cities. He informs us that he will use only the finest of goods, and his work will be handmade. So we will be seeing cigars made of only purest of tobacco, without the use of cabbage leaves, old rusty pieces of nails and leather.

- Stolen last Thursday night from Thomas Gore near Huntland, Tennessee, a black horse mule. A reward of ten dollars will be paid for the return of the mule and ten dollars for the apprehension of the thief. The lucky man can address this newspaper or Thomas Gore in Huntland.

- Gas Cooking Stoves - Best of stoves for use by families, hotels and restaurants, supplied with directions for use, gas at

reduced prices when used for cooking or bath rooms. See J. W. Murdock.

- In front of Charley Cummings' grocery store, corner Holmes and Washington, we notice a very neat invention, known as the "Patent Well windlass." Mr. Cummings has the county right for its sale.

- The air of quiet which prevails around the Mayor's office proves that we have either the finest police in the world, or we live in the most law abiding city on the continent. If any other city of our population can say as much, we would like to hear from it.

- Captain A. B. Jones and family have removed from Monte Sano to the city, in order to make preparations for the opening of the next session of the Huntsville Female College, of which Capt. Jones is the President.

- Mr. and Mrs. De Young, formerly of Pulaski, Tennessee and now living in New Market, had a little son Robbie bitten by a rattlesnake about eleven o'clock Sunday morning, while walking on the Chapman place, near the Barracks. The snake hung its fangs in the boy's heel, and as the boy ran he jerked the snake several feet. An older brother witnessed the whole thing and went and killed the snake.

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# Mule Thief

from 1910 newspaper

Tom Webb, a youth about eighteen years old, was brought to Huntsville on Monday last, charged with stealing a mule. In an interview with the fellow it was discovered that he went to the stable of Kennon Steger, who lives a few miles from Huntsville, stole a mule and then started for Lincoln County, Tennessee.

On the way he met Bill Goolsby and swapped the mule for a mare. He rode the mare to his grandfather's on Cold Water Creek. Goolsby and one other man had followed him and took the mare from him.

Webb then left Lincoln and went to his father's who lives in the Northeastern part of Madison County, where he was arrested and returned to Huntsville. Webb says that Goolsby and Parkinson, after taking the mare from him, went on their way towards Petersburg, in Lincoln county, to join some friends who he says are thieves, that live in what is known as "California Hollow," a few miles from Petersburg.

He says there is a regular "nest" of horse thieves who steal mules and horses and run them towards McMinnville. They tried to get Webb to go into business with them but he declined.

Tom Webb is a hard-look-

ing case, and as strongly marked with the villain as it is possible for one of his young years to be. He looks as though he had never been washed. His clothes are stiff with grease and dirt, and his skin as filthy as his clothes.

# Musical Parrot

from 1881 newspaper

Mr. Henry McGhee, of the McGhee house of this city, has a parrot, which, to its rare talking qualities, unites the accomplishments of singing and laughing. It sings a stanza or two of "In the sweet bye and bye."

Mr. J. Anderson Burrow, at the same House, has a young blue jay, which sings like, and quite as well as, a young mocking bird.

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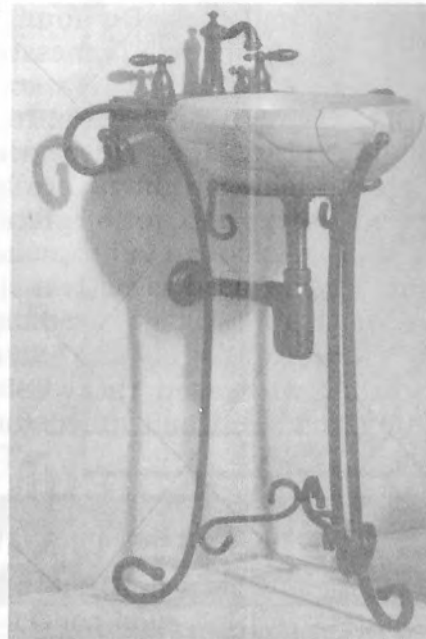


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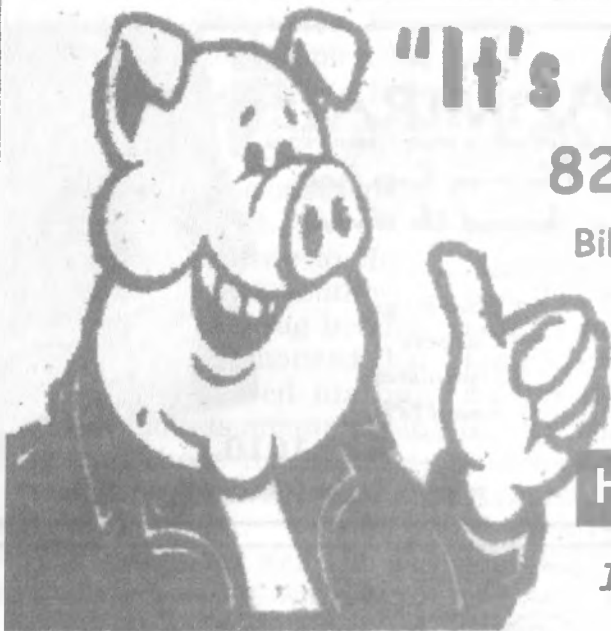
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# First Grade Adventure at Big Cove School

by William Sibley

It was the winter season of 1946-47 and I was in the first grade at Big Cove School. We were a small school and a feeder school to Madison County High School at Gurley.

On a very cold wintry day, a snow began falling shortly after midday and was accumulating rapidly. Pupils began to start talking about being sure that they would have "snow cream" that day when they would get home. Most of the pupils referred to the snow cream as ice cream.

In the meantime, the sky got darker and darker, and the snow began to fall in unusually large flakes, and although I was a first grader, I knew we were going to have a snowstorm.

School dismissed early and parents began to slip and slide down Big Cove's rural roads and Highway 241 (presently 431), coming to school to pick up their children.

Two buses served Big Cove's school population. Percy Clay "Uncle Perce" Ellett served those pupils who lived in southern Big Cove and those who lived on southern Highway 431, Little Cove Road, Caldwell Lane, and King Drake Road. John Hucks was the driver of the bus that served Big Cove's pupils from northern Big Cove, including the Dug Hill Road area and also those Big Cove

pupils who were students at Madison County High School.

Soon after school was dismissed, Uncle Perce delivered his first load of pupils home safely and returned to school to await the arrival of the Gurley bus. Mr. Hucks was absent that memorable day and his bus was driven



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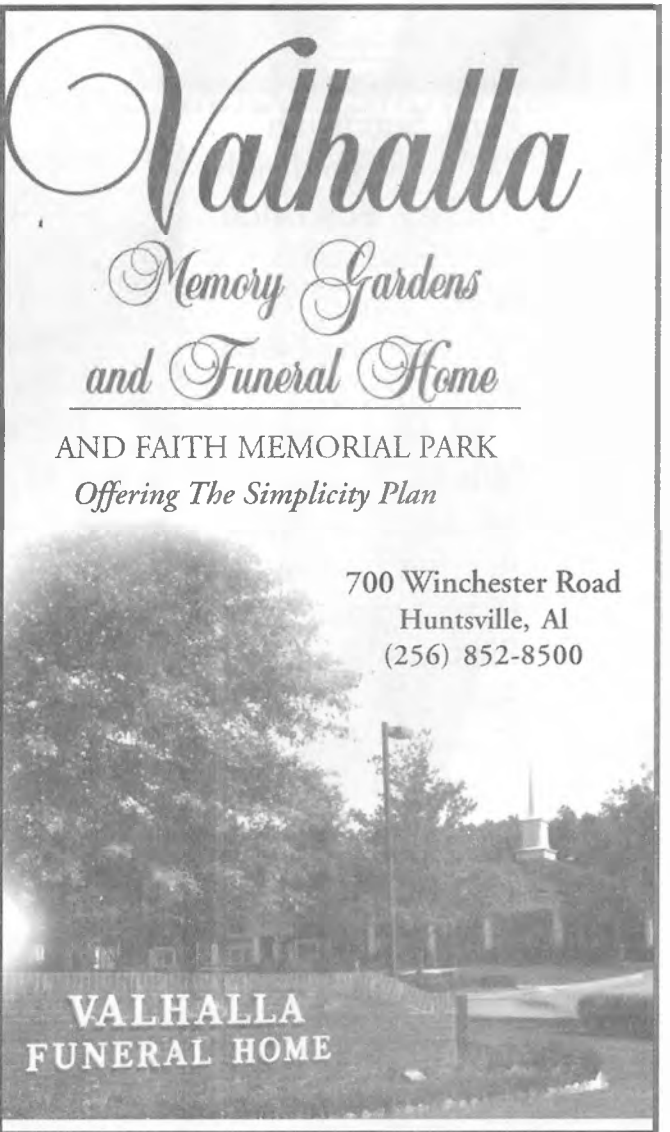


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**VALHALLA**  
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by high school student Thomas Elbert Brooks, Jr.

Big Cove only had four teachers and all of them were from the Owens Cross Roads-Cave Spring area. They were Miss Lola Moon, Mrs. Magnolia (Maples) Carpenter, Mrs. Tressye (Carpenter) Maples, and the principal, Mr. Clyde Connally. All of those teachers were loaded into one car and were waiting for the buses to depart before they left.

Uncle Perce drove to Highway 241 and turned south with the teachers following behind. The teachers had noticed that Thomas had moved his bus slightly as he was attempting to leave and those teachers assumed that all was well and never looked back.

Things were not well with us. We quickly mired down several inches in the snow and mud and were unable to move.

In the meantime, more parents came to pick up their children. Among those parents were Oscar and Mariah (Parker) Birdsong, who came to pick up their twins, Billy and Bobby. Mr. and Mrs. Birdsong attempted to pull the bus free of the mud, using their flatbed truck, but they only succeeded in throwing mud on the front windshield.

There was very little highway

traffic but a few passersby did stop and offer some advice about what Thomas should do. One of those people said to Thomas that if he should get the bus unstuck, he in no way, should drive the bus because the highway was "as slick as glass." Betty Sue Miller, one of the students still on the bus, repeated that message for those who had not heard the man.

After several more parents picked up their children, only thirteen of us remained on the bus. Those students were William, Bobby, James, Ann, and Raye Sibley, Idella Crim, Earline Hucks, Betty Sue and Shirley Miller, Charlie, Delores and Norine Mills, and the driver, Thomas Brooks, Jr.

After realizing that we were going to be at the scene for quite awhile, Thomas handled the situation better than any adult could have done. First, Thomas told us to go to the school building and put more coal into the heaters until help could arrive. We promptly did as directed. We began playing school, with Norine, Raye, and Betty Sue, rotating as teachers. Things were going very well until someone noticed that Idella was crying softly. Someone remarked, "No wonder she is crying, because she is a new student and lives on



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top of Dug Hill." Norine talked to Idella, assuring her that things would get better soon, and Idella quit crying and began to enjoy playing school again.

Two Big Cove citizens who were Huntsville businessmen, Leon Moore, Sr. and Thomas Elbert Brooks, Sr., came to the scene. Mr. Moore pulled the bus free of the snow and mud, using one of his huge coal trucks. Mr. Brooks took his son, Thomas, and all of the other pupils home except for my siblings and me, who were taken home by Robert Cowley, who as I recall, was a school trustee at the time. In the meantime, the bus remained parked at the school for several days.

There were no telephones in Big Cove at the time and very little traffic on the roads, so

none of the families of the stranded pupils knew of our situation until we got home. As we arrived home after 8 o'clock, I saw my mother and my sister, Sherry and my brother, Earl Carter, standing anxiously in the doorway.

School was out for several days until the snow melted. Many of our schoolmates did not know of our adventure until we returned to school and many of them indicated to us that they were disappointed that they had not been a part of that adventure.

## Bride's Salad

1 pkg. lime gelatin  
1 c. crushed pineapple  
1 c. cheddar cheese,  
grated

1 c. toasted pecans,  
chopped

3/4 c. real mayonnaise

Prepare gelatin and when partially congealed, add the pineapple, cheese, nuts and mayonnaise. Mix well. Pour into molds, chill in fridge to firm, top with whipped cream to serve.

**"Love is a little old man and a little old woman still being friends after they really know each other."**

*Hannah Troup, 7*

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# News from 1881

- Wm. H. Halsey, who has been delving in the gold mines of Colorado for several months, came back last week, and expects to return, believing his prospects are fair for a good profit in the future. We hope he will realize a bonanza.

- Messrs. Chas. J. Mastin, Jas. H. Ewing, and J. M. Ammerman have gone to enter fine racing horses in the State Fair.

- Rev. Stuart McQueen, a recently ordained Deacon of the Protestant Episcopal Church, has been appointed by Rt. Rev. Bishop Wilmer to missionary work in the Tennessee Valley. His residence, and when in Huntsville his headquarters, is at the home of Mr. W. H. Donegan.

- William H. McAnally was wedded to Miss Emily Newman this past week. The bridegroom bears an excellent reputation for sobriety, industry, and integrity, and the bride is one of the most amiable and lovely of Huntsville's fair daughters. After a short bridal tour, they returned to this city. We wish them the choicest blessings of kind Heaven.

- That affable and handsome young man, David N. Teague, is now behind the counters of the popular dry goods emporium of M. M. Newman & Co., ready to serve anxious customers.



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# Beverages from 1891

**Egg Nog** - beat the yolks of 12 eggs very light, stir in as much white sugar as will dissolve, pour in gradually one glass of brandy to cook the egg, one glass of old whisky, one grated nutmeg and 3 pints of rich milk. Beat the whites to a froth and stir in last.

**Milk Punch** - one pint of milk made sweet with sugar, a wine-glassful of brandy or rum, well stirred together; grate a little nutmeg over the top of the glasses. Serve with a straw in each glass.

**Alabama Punch** - Grate the yellow rind of four lemons and 2 oranges upon 2 pounds of loaf sugar. Squeeze the juice of the lemons and oranges; cover it and let it stand until next day. Strain it through a sieve, mix with the sugar; add a bottle of champagne

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# Old Huntsville Trivia

**1808** - Madison County is formed. There are 2,555 people living in the county at this time.

**1817** - The first church in Huntsville is built. No records exist as to what denomination it was.

**1817** - Physicians gather at Talbots Inn on the east side of the square in Huntsville to discuss a terrible outbreak of smallpox. Among measures discussed was a proposal to place armed guards on roads leading into town to prohibit strangers from bring the disease to Huntsville.

**1821** - The first mail robbery in Madison County occurs when the carrier to Bennett's store is robbed. Among the items stolen were the carrier's shoes.

**1861** - Vigilante committees are formed to help protect Huntsville in war-time.

**1874** - Six newspapers are being printed in Huntsville at the same time.

**1876** - New rates are posted for city supplied water. The rates were \$1 for a family of less than 3, and \$8 for a family of 3 to 8.

**1905** - The citizens of Gurley are determined there will be no saloons in their fair town. They raised the license for operating a saloon to \$10,000.

**1910** - Citizens are outraged at the high speed of automobiles on the city's streets. The city fathers passed an ordnance limiting speed limits to three miles an hour.

**1919** - The last County Fair is held downtown on the Courthouse square. The same year the Tennessee Valley Fair Asso. purchased land of their own on Church Street.

**1929** - More than 10,000 people gather at the "Punch Bowl" in the Big Spring to watch local favorite Sammy Baker take on Tommy Jordan in a prize fight. The event was sponsored by the local American Legion who had their headquarters in a house on Franklin Street.

**1931** - Huntsville gets its first airport when a 150-acre field is cleared of brush and rocks. It was located west of Alabama Street between Bob Wallace and Thornton Avenue.

**1937** - The first State liquor store opens on Jefferson Street in the Hutcheons Building. Two year old Red Brook straight bourbon whiskey sells for \$1.30 a quart.

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# The Golden Spike Celebration

by Bob Baudendistel


Throughout the history of Huntsville, there have always been countless reasons to celebrate. One particularly unique event came about well over a century ago as people gathered near the Huntsville Depot to celebrate the arrival of our city's second railroad. During the years following the end of the civil war, Huntsville was slowly rebuilding with the area cotton crop continuing to drive the economy.

With the steady economic growth, however, came the need for more transportation. Local business leaders and industrial entrepreneurs agreed that a second railroad was needed to improve the city's position with

more competitive rates on railway shipping. Many attempts were made at obtaining a second railroad with the target area being southern middle Tennessee. None of the early efforts succeeded until the Nashville, Chattanooga, and St. Louis (NC & StL) Railway announced in 1886 that it would extend a branch of its former Winchester and Alabama (W&A) division from Elora to Huntsville. Construction efforts proceeded under the supervision of NC & StL civil engineer Mr. Hunter McDonald. All legal matters including the acquisition of the necessary rights-of-way were handled through the local law office of Mr. Oscar Hundley.

In a headline reading "Linked At Last!", The Huntsville Weekly Mercury newspaper dated November 28, 1887 reported that "although Monday was a cold day, yet it did not deter the beauty, wealth, and chivalry of our goodly city from assembling at the depot to witness the imposing ceremonies

fraught with so much of interest to our community. On the arrival of the first [NC&StL] passenger train, the crowd assembled in and near the vicinity of the depot, where Hunter



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

McDonald, the engineer who constructed and built the road, had a place reserved in the line wherein the last spike was to be driven." Huntsville Mayor Ed Mastin delivered an eloquent speech followed by Oscar Hundley who praised the citizens of Huntsville for their efforts. Then came the moment that everyone had been waiting for when Miss Susie Chadwick, one of the area's Southern Belles, drove the golden spike in "Honor to whom honor is due." Next came the cheering from the crowds that was matched by the blowing of the train and nearby factory whistles.

Today, much of the historic NC&StL branch leading from Elora to Huntsville has been lost with the exception of approximately five miles owned at operated by the North Alabama Railroad Museum at Chase.

Back at the former NC&StL junction with the M&C just west of the Huntsville Depot and across Church Street, there is still a short segment of the original NC&StL track which is currently used by Norfolk Southern to store maintenance equipment.

This exact switch and side track are both directly adjacent to the wooden privacy fence and depot patio of Lee Ann's

Restaurant, a popular place to enjoy great food and live music.

One evening when I and several friends were gathered together on the depot patio listening to a local band, a Norfolk Southern freight train with over 100 cars rolled by and obviously got the better part of my attention.

As the band later played the legendary Johnny Cash song "Folsom Prison Blues", I couldn't help thinking about what a neat coincidence it is to have so many happy people out celebrating life together in our great city today and in virtually the same spot where our ancestors gathered to celebrate the driving of the golden spike 120 years ago with the arrival of Huntsville's second railroad.

### News From 1909

- Mr. Calvin Rice, one of Huntsville's worthy citizens, got his leg badly mashed while unloading some lumber at the Dallas Mills.

- The city council has decided to remove the hydrants from the southeast and southwest corner of the square. We think this is a bad move, instead of moving any, the city should have more of them. Public hydrants are a necessity.

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# Dallas Village Memories

**Billy D. Hardin**

The memories that I have are centered around the YMCA and Mr. H. E. "Hub" Myhand. Most of all of our activities involved the "Y." In the summers we played baseball at the Dallas Park, now the Optimist Park; and during the winter months, we played basketball and indoor softball in the Dallas YMCA gymnasium.

Hub Myhand was the Director of the Y and his wife was the village nurse. Mrs. Myhand had an office or clinic in the Y. Both Myhands were paid by the owners of the cotton mill. Hub and those that we could get involved in sports as coaches were the babysitters for the village. One of the things that is vivid in my memory was our practices of slipping into the ballpark in the morning when the park was closed.

I guess we just couldn't wait for Hub to open the park in the afternoon or it could have been that this was all that we had to do. To get in, we had to scale the

wall. We always climbed the wall on the east end of the grandstand opposite Hub's house.

His house was located at the corner of Oakwood and 5th Street (Andrew Jackson Way).

Since I was too young to play on the team, my job was to sit in

the grandstand and watch for Hub. If he came out of the house towards the park, I would let everyone know and we would hurriedly vacate the park.

**Minnie Primm Curry**

There was always something to

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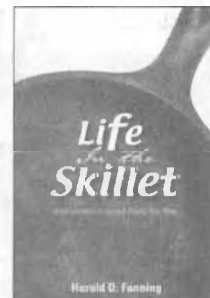
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do. We skated, played marbles and played ball in the cow pasture or in the street. At night we would meet in front of Roger Certain's house; we would tell ghost stories and play games.

We had parties on Friday nights at different houses. Dink Walker and Q. T. Cates who lived on North Dallas would come by my house and we would go and get Herman Chisholm, Lucy Mae Fisher, Dot Falkenberry and on to the party. Mildred (Midge) Reese had a lot of them at her house and Mrs. Reese had cookies, etc. We played games, one I remember was spin the bottle. There were some parties that this bunch wasn't invited to, so we would crash the party and go anyway just for the fun of it

Seems like the years were flying by. I remember some of us were at the Big Spring Park when the Pearl Harbor was bombed. It made a difference in our school and village. A lot of the boys left school and went into service. Others were called up. We missed all of them very much and

wrote to some of them. It was a happy time when the war was over and also a sad time because a lot of our classmates didn't come back.

**Helen Acuff**

My memories of Dallas Village and Rison School were some of the happiest times of my childhood.

We (my cousins and neighbors) did interesting fishing on the bank of the "big ditch." We caught tadpoles and minnows, putting them in tin cans. They died in a few hours after being placed in ditch water, but we really did enjoy fishing.

Another event that was interesting to me was the weekly payroll. Dallas Mill paid their employees each Friday in cash. Mr. Routt (the constable) rode in the back of a flatbed truck carrying a shotgun and escorted the bags of money into the mill office. The Paymaster would take the money and pay the workers. All of the workers had a numbered token and received their pay by returning the token back to the Paymaster.

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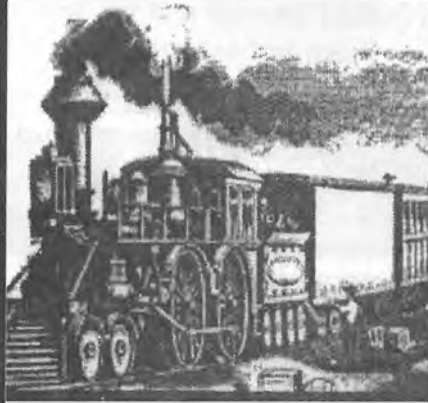
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history was that the mill became unionized. The workers were trying to obtain a contract and when the mill officials would not or could not agree with them, they would strike. Some periods the mill was closed for 8 to 9 months. That was some of the hard financial times. We would get food furnished by the Union or if not eligible would work cleaning house for others, doing odd jobs to make some money to put food on the table. We were all thin people, no one had to diet. The government set up programs called Workers Project Administration (WPA) and others that our parents worked on during these lean periods. Christmastime was not very memorable. No candy and no toys. But, someone gave us a hen and we had dinner and trimmings on Christmas Day.

When school started we exchanged books with kids who had finished the year ahead of us. The school did not change school text books often so that you were able to get "second-hand" books. We spent a lot of time erasing notes from books we were exchanging so we could get more value for the book.

**Jerry Knowles**

Some of the things that we did were fun at the time, but to look back now I can see how dangerous they were.

Larry Gray lived by the railroad tracks north of Oakwood Avenue. We would wait in his backyard till the freight train came by heading north. We would run along side of the train and grab onto the ladder and ride up to Normal by A&M University and

drop off and walk back.

There was a cemetery by the railroad track, and we would hide behind the grave stones and throw rocks at the boys over in Lincoln Village.

About every Sunday, some of us boys would climb the dummy line up the mountain and take vines and swing out over cliffs; that was fun at the time.

When the Nehi Bottling Company opened at the corner of

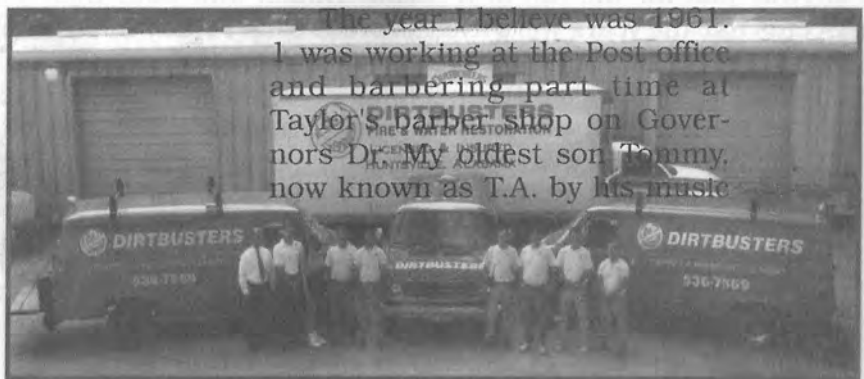


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Halsey and Fifth Street (Andrew Jackson Way now) they were giving a free drink to everyone. They would check your tongue to see if you had already received one, some of us boys would run home and wash our tongues and go back for another drink.

Every Saturday night I would get a dime from my Dad and go to the YMCA to the movies. I would pay a nickel to get in, and would buy five Dumb Dumbs with the other nickel.

**Geradine M. Walker**

Some of my memories of growing up on Halsey Avenue and living in the Village include:

- Going to the YMCA on Saturday night for the movies and weekly serials.

- Running down to the Union Store for penny candy and a nickel ice cream cone.

- Going to Rison School and Mr. Fain holding chapel. Some of the teachers were Miss Esslinger, Miss Womack, Mrs. Pullen, and Miss Smithy. I remember the banana popsicles that were sold at recess. They were banana cream with hunks of bananas in them.

- Mr. Wallace, the janitor, and ringing the school bell.

- Getting our yearly shots from Mrs. Myhand and getting a Red Cross pin.

- Buying our school books at Burkett's and T.T. Terry's.

- Once, they let us bring so

many tin cans to get in the Lyric Theater. This was during the war days.

- Also fun was meeting the ice truck to get the chips of ice.

- My sister and I getting a permanent at McKay's Beauty Shop once a year.

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# News From the Year 1935

## News From Huntsville and Around The World

### Alabama Old Age Pensions to be Paid

Commissioner Collins of the Alabama Public Welfare department announced today that his office will be paying old age pensions starting on January 1st of next year, but stated that he believed that not more than 12,000 to 15,000 of the state's 105,000 persons over the age of 65 would be eligible for payment. He also cautioned people against expecting a windfall, as he said that most pensions paid will not be over the amount of \$15.00 per month.

The state pension act has set \$30.00 as the maximum pension, but Collins said that money is tight and his department will have to work on a basis of cash available rather than need, spreading its money as far as it will go over the most needy cases.

A \$77,000 surplus in the

Confederate pension fund on October 1st would be a great help to the welfare department, but it is unsure if those funds can legally be used for old-age pensions.

Collins also cautioned that each applicant for a state old-age pension must be able to prove that he or she has no adult children who can offer support or care for them.

### Help Wanted

The Tennessee Valley Authority is hiring laborers for the Guntersville dam project. Room and board furnished at reasonable costs, Starting salary at 35 cents an hour.

Also experienced cook capable of preparing 2000 meals per day.

Apply at construction site.

### Poor House Closed

In a surprise move by the Welfare Board yesterday, the County Poor House located at the end of Hermitage was abolished.

Spokesman Lawrence Goldsmith explained that with the Welfare Department now taking care of the indigent there is no longer a need for an Alms House. By the end of the year the poor house is expected to be empty as new homes are found by the present occupants. Alabama currently has 63 poor houses. Many of the residents are veterans.

The recently passed bill authorizing state pensions should help alleviate the sufferings of the people affected.

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# Alabama and Auburn will Clash Again

Governor Bibb Graves has asked a special American Legion committee to negotiate the resumption of the University of Alabama versus Auburn games. He expressed hope that a post season football game could be arranged for the Christmas or New Year's season.

Horace Wilkinson, chairman of Legion's special committee, said they expect to confer with authorities of the colleges by the latter part of this week. "We're going to try to accomplish something," he said.

The colleges last played against each other in a game in 1906.

## Young Roosevelt Investigated after Raucous Party

Concord, Mass. It was a matter of dispute today whether or not John Roosevelt, youngest son of the President, was in an automobile which struck a hedge, hurl-

ing a young girl to the ground after a raucous party.

Chief of Police William G. Ryan said that Roosevelt, a student at Harvard, was indeed in the automobile that was involved in the early-morning accident, which followed the debutante party of Miss Leslie Laughlin the night before.

Based on his investigation, the girl was riding on the running board of the car when it struck the hedge in front of the Concord Country Club.

Another participant of the raucous party, identified as one of the Kennedy brothers, reportedly fled the scene when informed there would be an investigation.

The investigation was ordered by the town selectmen after receiving reports that the party was quite noisy and had lasted into the early hours of Sunday morning, which is in violation of the state Sabbath laws.

"Absolutely wrong," said young Roosevelt when he was told of the Chief's statement.

Three of the four Roosevelt brothers have been involved in a series of motor accidents since their father became president.

We would hope that our president could control his family as well as the country.

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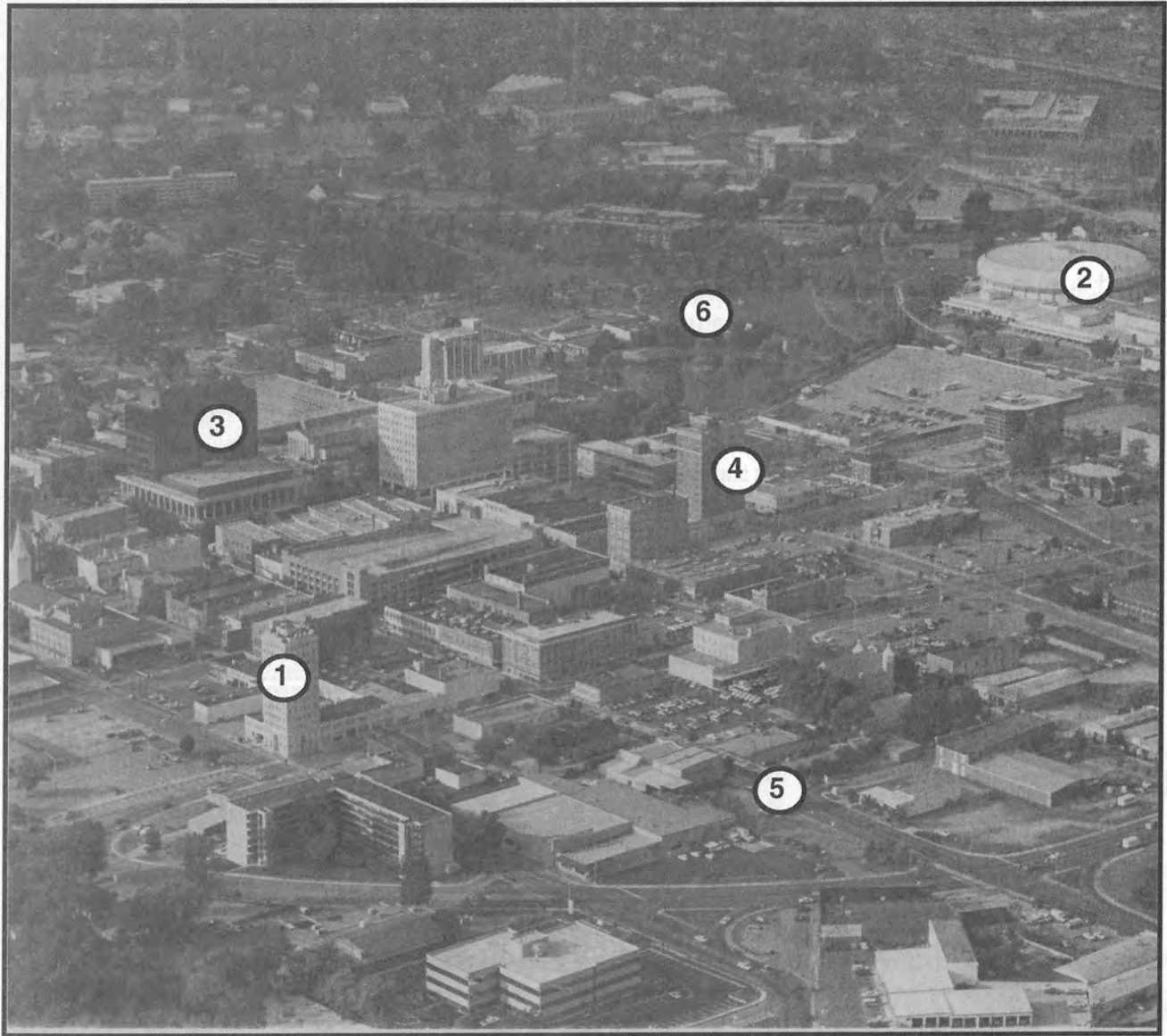
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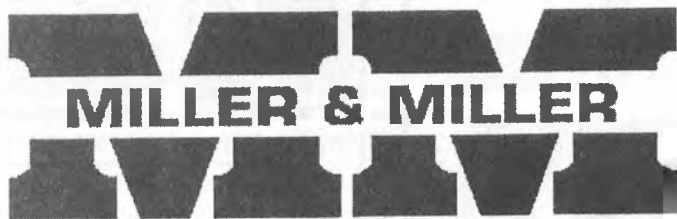


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# Getting By During the Civil War

by Marshall Wilson  
(written in 1907)

Gen. Mitchell's troops swept the valley clean, and we had little food left. Alabama had never been a cattle country, but depended for meat mainly upon the sheep and hog. The grain was loaded and sent away to the army.

The horses and mules were seized on but ours were left, as we thought, but one morning we woke up to find that about 25 of our Negroes, most men and well-grown boys, had slipped away in the night, taking with them every horse and mule in the stables.

This was a staggering blow, but we soon saw there was some comfort in the loss of slaves. It had become serious problem to provide their food and clothing. The slaves remaining on the place recognized the responsibility, too. There was no more thought of planting cotton; the energies of everyone on the place were bent on one purpose of getting food and clothes. My father at this time organized all his forces - everybody was put to work, even the small children. The women were cutting, sewing, and knitting from early morning till late bedtime. The Negro women were spinning and weaving and some helping in the fields, the old men and little boys were cultivating the fields with hoes. A large crop of cow-peas was planted for food.

My father got some medical books to read and he learned to make some of the simple medicines. He went from place to place to

see the sick and prescribe for them as though he were a physician. You know that in those days blisters were thought to be indispensable for inflammations, pneumonia, etc. There were no drugstores to furnish supplies - we could not even buy a mustard plaster. My father had been experimenting with plants, trying to find a blistering agent. One day it was reported to him that the lightning bugs were eating all the leaves from the potato plants. We were growing potatoes on a large scale because it was a food that could be easily concealed in case of a raid. He found that some rows, at least were swarming with a bug that looked like the firefly, and he ordered the boys to

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knock them into the water. This was done, but some of the boys reported that their hands blistered. Then these bugs were gathered up, dried, pulverized, mixed with lard, and the mixture proved a fine blistering agent and was sent far and wide for this purpose. The bugs had never appeared before and never came again. Long afterward, we learned that they were the real Spanish fly.

My father also learned to make various colored dyes from roots and bark; cultivated indigo and learned to ferment the plant to get the blue dye. He also found out how to make cheese and taught the blacksmith how to make wrought nails.

Singularly enough, one of the most precious of articles at this time was common salt. Now salt was needed to season food, but it was absolutely necessary to preserve meat, and the plantation depended for its meat supply on salt pork. On the plantations there were large smoke-houses where, winter after winter, many slaughtered porkers would be salted down and much salt wasted on the dirt floors, so this floor was dug up to the depth of two feet and the earth leached with water and the water evaporated off. We got bushels and bushels of salt this way.

There was no soda, but we made a substitute for the lye of wood ashes. Parched rye was used as a substitute for coffee-it tasted something like the modern postum. For sugar, we cultivated the sor-

ghum cane and made many barrels of molasses, and when this molasses was all out of the barrel, we usually found a few pounds of sugar. Our writing paper gave out very early

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and at first we tore out the blank leaves from father's old ledgers, and when these were exhausted, we moistened the wallpaper on the walls, tore it off in strips and used the blank side. Sometimes letters went off, decorated on one side with a picture of George Washington crossing the Delaware, or with a wreath of roses. There were no pencils, but we learned to make very good ink from oak balls and copperas, and any boy with a pocket knife could make a perfectly good pen from a goose quill.

There was but one copy of Webster's Blue Back Spelling Book in the community, but the whole school used it by making out a schedule of time when each could have the book. I remember once walking five miles and back to get the book for an hour to learn the next day's lesson.

My own tasks in this new economy were varied and were shared for the most part by my little Negro playmate. (We were about seven years old.) We went back and forth to carry leather to the shoemakers and then to bring the shoes home (there were some forty people on the place to shoe). It seemed to me the shoemaker

was always drunk when we called, and never had the work done. Then we were sent all around the neighborhood to exchange garden seed; to borrow a tool or lend one; to carry news or gather it, and to do errands generally. I think our gala days came when we were put to melting up tallow and molding it into

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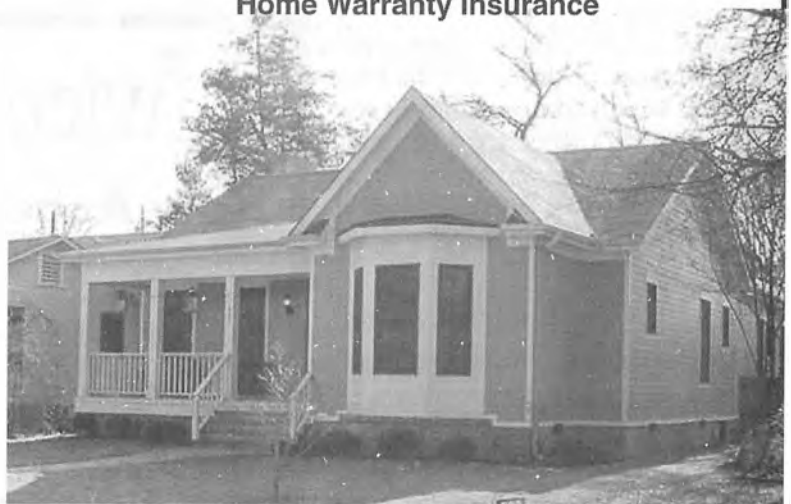
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candles, or to bringing up pails of lye for the soap kettle and keeping the fire going. I believe we were fairly happy, but even we children had our anxious moments and talked of what we would do if the Yankees came upon us while away from home.

The war wore wearily on - reverses in arms now alternated with victory; we were becoming poorer and poorer. Still we had no thought of giving up and worked all the harder. I remember working all day for days scraping lint from old linen tablecloths and sheets and tearing off bandages to be sent to the nearest hospital. During these years, every yard of cloth was used for clothing, bedding, for table; in fact, every yard required for the forty people on the place, as well as for blankets and clothing for many soldiers, was spun and woven on the place, and in these four years we didn't spend five dollars for anything. There was nothing to buy.

I have seen my mother working whole days, working and sizing the thread for the looms. About this time I learned the art of plating straw in several different patterns and mother sewed the braid into straw hats which we bleached with sulphur, and we used for hat bands strips of black silk torn from old worn-out dresses. I could not possibly make anyone understand the isolation in which communities lived. The railroads were torn up, the

steamboats burned; the roads mostly impassable.

One day we had a merry surprise over the arrival of a stately old lady who lived five miles away. All of her horses and mules had been taken; she wanted to visit us but couldn't walk the five miles. Old Ben, her carriage driver, was called in and asked if he could hitch two yoke of oxen to her carriage. He said he would try; so about noon we heard loud cries of "Gee! Wah! Come! Get up!", and then we saw Mrs. Harris' big carriage slowly coming up the hill while she was leaning out the window, waving gaily.

But most of the times were terribly serious. There was far more weeping than laughter. Women sometimes grew white-headed worrying for news of their sons. By this time, there were no mails, no newspapers.

The only news we got filtered in as rumors caught from carriers bearing dispatches. We often hear a rumor of a great battle, and then wait days and weeks in suspense before knowing anything.

Sometimes, if the front were not too far away, my brothers would send their servant, George, on horseback with their letters and some gathered up from their friends.

We were always on the lookout for George, though he came only a few times a year; and then we dreaded to ask him questions, or to open the letters.

Every time there would be heavy tidings for some of the neighbors and my father would go as comforter to the house of mourning to read over and over his son's letters telling how this boy or that had died fighting for his country.

**"Elections are a good deal like marriages. There's no accounting for anyone's tastes. Every time we see a bridegroom, we wonder why she ever picked him, and it's the same with public officials."**

*Will Rogers*

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By the time the Civil War began, Thomas Grant had nine grandsons. Five of them enlisted in the Confederate army, while the other four became Union soldiers. All of them served in North Alabama, within a few miles of where they grew up. In 1864, while cutting wood, Thomas Grant suffered a fatal heart attack.

Word was sent to all the children and grandchildren of the upcoming burial. The next day saw the whole family gathered at the cemetery to pay their last respects. Five young men dressed in Confederate gray stood on one side of the casket and the four Union men stood on the other side.

When the time came to lower the casket, all nine young men helped, and when it was done, they looked at one another across the grave. Slowly and almost awkwardly, they reached across the still open grave and shook hands with one another.

Almost seventy-five years later, Mrs. E. Stiles still remembered the tears on her uncles' faces that day. She said it was almost as if they were saying their last good-byes before they got back on their horses to return to the war.

Out of the nine grandsons, four were killed in battle, one was captured and died in a Federal prison, and two others were wounded.

The family never got together again.



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In the mid-50s Grady was booking entertainment at the old Coliseum on University Drive. He was always being besieged by entertainers, all wanting a chance to perform.

One young man kept calling constantly, until finally Grady agreed to give him a chance.

On the night of the performance, the young man showed up with his band. The car had guitars tied on top, drums sticking out of the truck and most of their dirty laundry in the back seat.

Grady wasn't too impressed with the boy. The young man had long, greasy, black hair, a pale complexion and wore clothes that even a blind man wouldn't buy.

But Grady, being the nice guy that he was, told the boy to go

ahead and get on stage. There were less than 100 people in the audience that night and Grady carefully watched their reactions to this young unknown.

The audience was restless, not at all impressed by the new singing sensation.

Meeting the young man backstage, Grady, who was always known for his honesty, had a talk with the young performer. "Son," he said, "I been watching those people out there, and your stuff ain't gonna work. You might ought to get that truck-driving job back."

The young man didn't take

Grady's advice, though, and a few months later recorded his first hit - and Elvis Presley never drove another truck again.

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# The Daily Huntsville Confederate

Printed in Marietta, Georgia by the editor, J. Withers Clay

The following is taken from a recently discovered issue of *The Daily Huntsville Confederate* newspaper dated September 1, 1863. This issue was purchased at the recently held Civil War Show in Nashville, Tennessee, December 1, 2007. J. Withers Clay, editor, had moved the newspaper from Huntsville when it was occupied by the Yankee's to Chattanooga. This article was written by Clay just after retreating from Chattanooga to Marietta because of enemy forces pushing towards Chattanooga;

**Thursday, Sept. 1, 1863**

"From Huntsville:

A citizen of Huntsville, who left there last Thursday, says, no Yankees were there. Several citizens, who left there on the 22<sup>nd</sup>, represented no Yankees nearer than the vicinity of Brownsboro Station, on the Memphis and Charleston Railroad, where a regiment or two were posted on the Deposit Road, which leads to a point on the Tennessee River, known as Fort Deposit, about five miles below Guntersville. When preparing to move from Chattanooga, we

learned that squads of the enemy, varying in number from five to thirty, were stationed every few miles on the dirt roads leading from New Market towards Guntersville, as well as on the railroad. They were supposed to be placed at courier stands on the dirt roads. We hear that the cars have run down from Stevenson as

far as Brownsboro, but that the bridge at Brownsboro, which the Yankee's destroyed on their first occupation of Huntsville, had not been rebuilt.

Before leaving Chattanooga, we announced the reported killing of Pres. Dodson, of Jackson county, by a band of traitors under the lead of one Capt. Latham, of Jackson county, who had been a Lieutenant in Col. Coltart's (50th. Ala.) regiment, and deserted after the battle of

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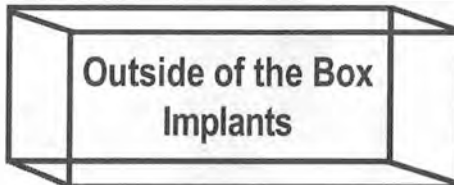
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Murfreesboro', and wrote to Col. Coltart that he had concluded to join the Yankee's. Since then, we have been informed by Capt. Gurley, who had just returned from Madison county, that the person killed was not Pres. Dodson, but Kibble T. Daniel, a respectable citizen of Madison.

He was at his plantation on Paint Rock River, in Jackson county, and hearing that a column of the enemy was moving down the valley, he rode up with a friend to ascertain the truth of the report, was shot in the breast by one of two traitors in ambush. He attempted to pursue and return the fire, but fell, with pistol in hand, and soon expired. He was a true and staunch Southerner, and his death is deeply to be lamented.

Capt. Gurley, also, informed us, that the Yankee's discovered John B. Hancock who lived near Maysville, Madison county, in his melon patch, with a shot gun, arrested him and charged him with bushwhacking. He assured them he was only guarding his melons from the depre-dations of boys and negroes in his neighborhood, and that his gun was loaded with squirrel shot. Notwithstanding they drew the charge and ascertained that it contained none but squirrel shot they took him off 4 miles from home and shot him several times, murdering him. He was a quiet, un-offensive citizen.

The Yankees have made three

trips to Huntsville, July 13th and 24th, and August 11th.

The first time, with two or three brigades, of all arms; the second, with two or three hundred cavalry, and the third, with three to seven thousand mounted infantry. They took few negroes on their second and third trips, and they were confined to able-bodied men. Numbers of women and children flocked to them on their 2nd visit, but they were rejected.

On their third trip, they carried off Thouston Lumpkin, Ge. W. Kennard, John Spence, and Thurber of Huntsville, and Archie Carey, son of A. A. Carey, a dentist, residing in Madison county, but they released all but Kennard, before getting to Winchester. The last four had been in our army, we believe. Lumpkin is said to have offered a Yankee five dollars to tell him who had taken the oath, which brought about a dis-

pute, when Lumpkin remarked: "I know why you d----d Yankees have been stealing our negro men. It is to improve the breed of Yanks." He was arrested and made to drive a wagon to Winchester.

Robert W. Coltart, the mayor, was put in the guard house with a long list of charges preferred against him. Among them was the charge that he had been very cruel to the Yankee sick left in Huntsville, when it was evacuated last year.

Coltart showed them the card published by the Yankee Surgeon, Goodwin, in the Huntsville papers, acknowledging the kindness of the people to his sick. They released Coltart, telling him he might stay with his family that night but must report himself the next morning. The next morning, they had left with the other inmates of the guardhouse, above mentioned, and he, thus, escaped.

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On their first visit, Armistead Pope, a well known and trusted servant belonging to Daniel B. Turner, stole eight hundred dollars in gold, buried by his master in the garden, and, taking his children, went off with the Yankees. Turner had a severe stroke of paralysis on one side, the first week in August, but is reported better.

We regret to learn that a daughter of Theo. Lacy, Cashier of the Northern Bank, has died. Our informant thinks it was the one named Sue Gee. We also regret a sad accident that befell the family of Mr. John Patton on Sunday afternoon, Aug. 3rd. They were returning from the cemetery in a school carryall, driven by one of his little sons, and the breech band broke, as they descended the hill in front of Mr. Norvell's home, causing the horse to run away. All sprung, or attempted to spring, from the carryall. Mrs. Patton received a severe gash in the forehead, slightly fracturing the skull, the smallest boy a severe cut in the forehead, the smallest girl, a cut on the back of the head, and little Dee was killed, her neck and one elbow being broken, skull fractured, and other terrible injuries received.

## A Traveling Man

A Limestone County man, who rounded out seventy five years of his life without ever going more than twenty miles from his birthplace, was one day answering the questions of a distinguished Northern visitor. The old native gave the man just the details the latter was seeking.

"And I suppose you have always lived around here," said the man from the Northern states.

"Oh, no," replied the native. "I was born two miles from here!" *taken from 1895 newspaper*

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# Civil War Letters

Huntsville Ala. July 19

Dear Beloved Wife,

I take this present opportunity or writing a few lines to let you know that I enjoy very good health and hope these few lines may find you the same. I have had two letters from you since we left Murfreesboro, but I have had no chance to answer but one about a week after I got it and about two hours after I sent it I got the other one of the 28th June. Col. Parmour is dismissed from service [illegible]. We have been on the march nearly every day since we left Murfreesboro the 24th June, and it rained about two thirds of the time, but it was warm so we did not mind it and was not as bad as if it had been dry and dusty.

Now I will tell you about our march. First we went to Bradyville and from there to Manchester, from there to Tullahoma where we expected to have a big battle but the Rebs thought old Rosey would be too much for them and they ran like sheep across the mountains and across the Tennessee River. You will see by the map that Huntsville is about ten miles north of the River close to the line of Alabama and Tennessee. The other day we went to Pulaski and there were about fifty Rebels there and we took 21 of

them prisoners, among them was a Chief Quartermaster of Gen. Cheatan's Division.

Now I will tell you a little about our marching. We have not drawn any rations, for the roads were bad that our teams could not keep up with rations. So we would go to the secesh and get flour, meal, hams, bacon, sugar, molasses, honey, butter, eggs, and potatoes and everything we wanted that we could get our hands on. Day before yester-

day we came to a place where they had about 100 lbs. sugar a barrel of molasses and a barrel about two thirds full of strained honey and we took two wooden pails and filled them and took about half their sugar. Pretty soon more soldiers came along and took all the sugar and honey and all the meal we wanted. You better believe we lived well. Yesterday we went out and brought another supply and found some of the nicest peaches you ever saw and our mess brought

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about half bushel. Now I will tell you what we had for supper. Pancakes and honey, boiled potatoes and ham and boiled eggs. That's the way we live. Our teams came up and we drew some crackers and sugar and coffee and now the report is that we will leave here day after tomorrow but where we do not know. The boys are all in good health and fine spirits. They all feel confident that the rebellion is nearly at an end.

This is Saturday evening and we are going to have inspection of arms and dress parade, so I will have to get ready.

Your Husband, George

Woodville, Ala. Aug. 4, 1862

Dear Wife,

It is with pleasure that I take this opportunity of writing to you a few lines to let you know that I am reasonable well and hope these few lines may find you all in good health and lively spirits.

I rec'd two letters from you last Saturday which gave me much pleasure and answered them the same day, and the Chaplain is going today so I thought I would writes a few lines by him and send you \$15.00 which I would rather you have than for me to keep it here. I will then have six dollars left providing I should need it, if I should get sick or something happens for we do not know when we will get paid again.

There is an awful excitement in camp this morning on account of having got 4 of Co. G's men shot while on picket yesterday by the rebel bushwhackers and our men went out and caught 5 of them and one of the wounded men knew them when they found him and they (the rebels) are now getting examined and our men say that they must be hung or shot before they leave this camp and they went out and burnt a widow's house where they found a keg of powder and now there is another house burning in sight of camp and we will burn every house within five miles if they do not stop their depre-dations.

Yesterday Capt. Gaylord came back to us again. He is quite hearty and rugged and he treated the boys with cigars and a jug of good whiskey. We had a fine shower of rain yesterday and this morning it is warm and sultry. I have not much more to write this time. I cannot find Hank and I will have to hurry so as to get it ready for Warner is going on the first train. No more at present but remain as ever your true and affectionate Husband.

George Kryder

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# Need for Speed

by Harold Fanning

*The following is taken from "Life In The Skillet" and may be purchased at Shaver's Books.*

My mother's sister married a guy who was a lifelong resident of Lick Skillet. His father operated a convenience store approximately one mile from the main drag in downtown Skillet. I've got to admit that life changed for our family after that marriage took place. His love for speed, coupled with a deep desire to race motorcycles and automobiles, convinced my grandfather that his newly acquired son in-law had a secret, subconscious desire to commit suicide. I just always believed he was nuts and let it go at that.

This guy always seemed to find humor in the most unlikely places. He also seemed to have a talent for convincing me to participate in some questionable and hair-brained projects he'd concocted. Like the day he asked me to steer an old 1959 Studabaker Hawk automobile that he'd traded for.

The car had no engine or transmission and had to be towed by another vehicle. Unfortunately, the means by which he chose to accomplish this task was a 20-foot log chain and a 1956 Chevy pickup truck that had been modified with a 400 hp engine. To say that this was overkill is an under-

statement to say the least. After convincing me that I had nothing to worry about, we commenced towing that old Studabaker from Lick Skillet to his brother's service station in Huntsville where he had plans of installing a huge 472 cubic-inch Cadillac engine in that old Studabaker Hawk. Things went fairly well for the first couple of miles, but when we got to the

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intersection of Charity Lane and Highway 231 that modified pickup with that 4(X) hp engine (as well as a lack of good common sense) took over. It wasn't long before we were clipping along at a good 80 miles per hour. I was yelling, stepping on the brake, and wanting to cry but was either too proud or too stupid to do so. When my uncle would come upon a slower automobile and necessitated a lane change he would simply hang his arm out the window and point left. If we needed to cross back into the right lane he would hold up his arm and point over the cab of the truck, gesturing for me to follow him back over.

For some unknown reason as we were easily moving from 80 mph to 95 mph, I couldn't help but remember a story that I had heard years earlier. It was the story of a kid on a bicycle who had wandered far from home and realized he was too tired to pedal the return trip. Wondering what to do, he finally had a brilliant idea. He walked over to a parked car and asked a man if he wouldn't mind if he tied his bicycle to the back bumper of the Cadillac with a rope. The man thought for a moment and finally agreed, but gave him one warning. "If I get too fast, just blow the horn located on your handlebars and I'll slow down." Off they went with things going as planned. It wasn't long before the man in the car got into a race with another vehicle and completely forgot about the kid on the bicycle that was tied to his rear bumper. Soon they passed a

road sign with a policeman hidden behind it with a radar gun. The policeman was so shocked by what he saw that he got on his police radio and said, "Sarge, you're not going to believe this, but there's two cars racing and headed your way." The police sergeant responded, "What's so unusual about that?" The policemen responded, "Be-

cause if you think they're going fast, wait until you see that kid on the bicycle behind them blowing his horn, wanting to pass!"

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# News from 1901

- Deputy Collector Root made a raid near Arab in Cullman county and captured a sixty gallon copper still, 1,000 gallons of beer and four or five gallons of whiskey. Harry Hill was arrested while at work in the establishment and was taken to Gadsden where he was tried before Commissioner Pickard and placed in jail in default of \$500 bond.

- Farmers from Bell Factory district report a very heavy hail and rain storm day before yesterday. Hail fell in small chunks and cut the corn and other vegetation badly.

Crops in some sections were badly washed out of the ground. For several moments it looked like a cyclone, with the people being badly frightened and a few injuries resulting.

- An excursion train of six coaches filled with negroes and two of white people came up from Memphis yesterday afternoon and will return this evening at 6 o'clock. A large number of Huntsville people who are now living in Memphis came up to visit friends.

At a very late hour last night crowds of the 500 negro excursionists were still walking the streets, weary and foot sore and unable to find a place to sleep

the night.

- The Delp property at the corner of Washington and Clinton Streets, one of the most valuable building sites in the city, has been purchased from Delp-Ware heirs by the Struve Brothers and will be improved at once.

The frame buildings standing

on the lot will be sold and taken away and the brick store will be torn away.

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# When life was simple...



The Madison County courthouse was a scene of great excitement in 1910 when Oscar Greene attempted to file suit against his wife for not living up to the marriage contract; namely not cooking. Not everyone was amused and authorities declined to hear the case. That same year Miss Grace Walker convinced the city fathers to change the name of the Huntsville spring to Big Spring. Our fair city had grown to the almost unbelievable population of 7,611.

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