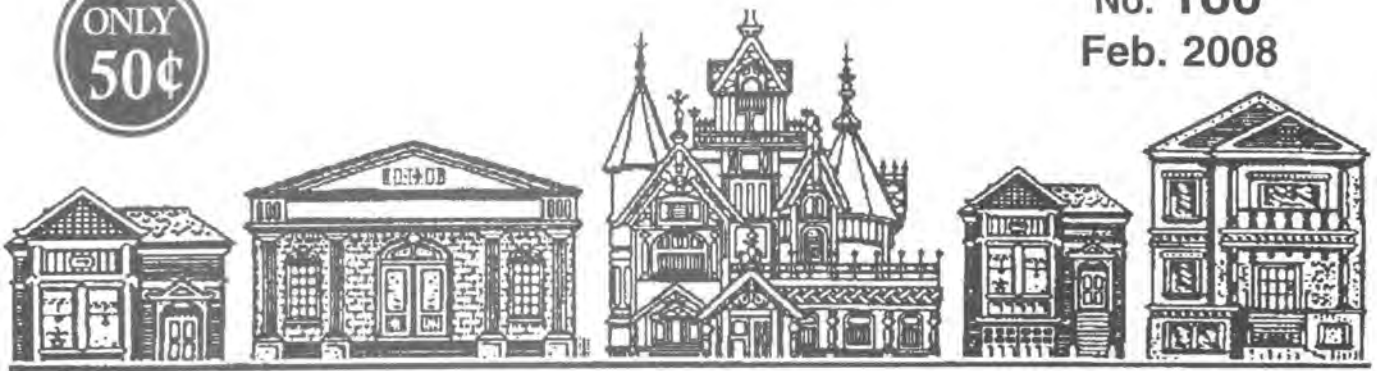


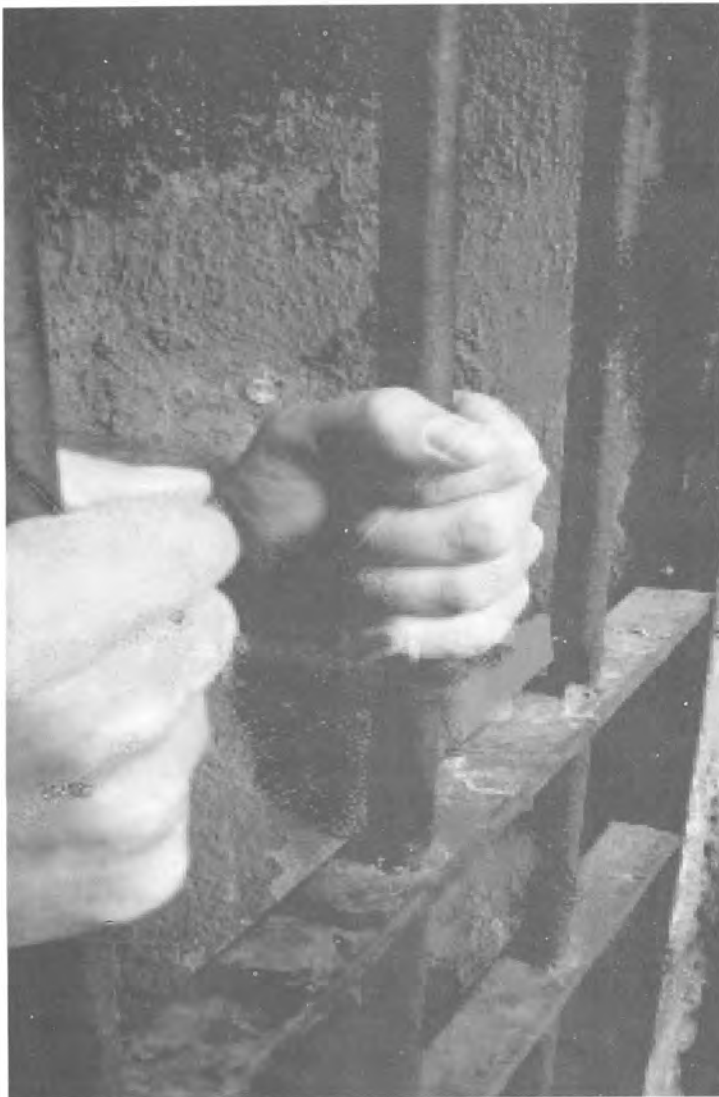
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The Story of Orby Hethcoat

Every day was spent waiting - waiting for visitors, waiting for mail, but mostly just waiting to die.

A guard described it aptly when he said, "A person on death row doesn't have any friends. If he ever did, they forget about him when he walks through those gates. People just don't want that burden."

Despite Orby's pleadings, the family refused to give up. There was still hope for an appeal but justice was not cheap. Every mail delivery brought bills from lawyers for more money. The family, never well off, tried to meet every request hoping against hope that it might save their kin.

Also in this issue: **Remembering Joe Bradley School**

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The Story of Orby Hethcoat

Many older people say the spring of 1937 was the most beautiful they could remember. The mild temperatures, the crystal blue skies and the vivid hues of the early flowers all seemed to be harbingers of good fortune for the citizens of Huntsville. Even the dark storm clouds that formed daily over the Tennessee River, before moving north toward the city limits, appeared to disintegrate before reaching populated areas.

For James Hethcoat it was an especially good time. The Depression, which he had struggled against for years, was finally starting to recede and business in his photography shop on 9th Avenue was flourishing. His wife and five children were all in good health, his grandchildren visited him almost daily and Orby, his eldest son, had finally returned home.

Hethcoat smiled as he thought about his son. Orby was a free spirit who never seemed able to settle down and stay in one place. The family always teased him, saying he never saw a road without wanting to follow it. "But," Hethcoat thought to himself, "the boy al-

ways comes home and that is the most important thing."

His thoughts were interrupted when Sheriff Frank Hereford entered the shop. Hethcoat and Hereford had been friends for years and his first thought was maybe the Sheriff had some photography work for him. He had done occasional work for the Sheriff photographing crime scenes and evidence.

The look on the Sheriff's face, however, showed the visit was much more serious.

"James," the sheriff said, "I'm sorry, but I have to pick up your son Orby."

Hethcoat looked at the sheriff for a long moment before replying. He knew his son and was sure it was nothing serious. Whatever it was, they would take care of it.

"What did he do?"

"James, I have a warrant for Orby for first degree murder. They say he killed a woman up in New Jersey."

Orby Hethcoat grew up in West Huntsville, the oldest son of a deeply religious family whose values were centered around church and family. While still in his mid-teens he quit school and went to work at Merrimac Mills. At about the same time someone gave him an old beat-up guitar which soon became his prized possession.



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Orby was a natural musician and although he couldn't read music, he could play almost anything after hearing it for the first time. Within a few years he left the mill behind and started playing in local honky-tonks. With his easygoing manner and wavy black hair he became a popular feature in the clubs around town.

Almost everyone who knew Orby Hethcoat liked him. One person later described him as an "independent soul." "You couldn't help but like the boy. He was always laughing and cutting up. Just don't wait supper on him - he might show up and he might not."

Orby's biggest weakness, however, revolved around the ladies. While still a teenager he married a woman several years older than him. When that didn't work out, he soon met and married Pearl Lochart, who was also older than him. This marriage too was doomed to failure. Pearl wanted her new husband to settle down and provide a home, something that Orby, still a youth, was unable to do.

With two failed marriages behind him, Orby was heartbroken. There was nothing left in Huntsville for him and like thousands of other young men with broken hearts, he decided to follow the open roads to see where they would lead.

Orby spent the next few years wandering from town to town picking up odd jobs and living from day to day. He played in bars in Texas and Louisiana, washed dishes in Arkansas and likely followed the harvests in the midwest.

Occasionally, without any notice, Orby would return home for a few days where he would regale the family with tales of his travels. His nieces and nephews would gather around him, enthralled, as he told of visiting strange places and meeting famous people. Just as their attention would begin to lag, he would reach into his bag and pull out another exotic souvenir which would lead to another equally entertaining story. His visits never lasted long: almost as suddenly as he appeared, he would be gone in search of another dream in yet another far away town.

In 1936 his travels carried him to Trenton, New Jersey where he played with the Tommy Dorsey Band for a short while. When that job ended, he got a job as a musician in another club in Trenton. It was there that he met

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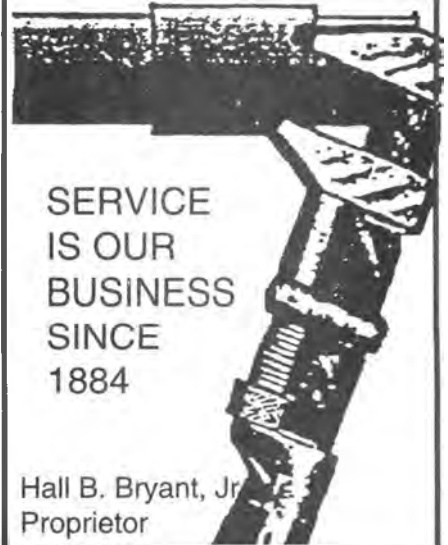
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Emily Coats, the only daughter of the wealthy and influential Coats family who had made fortunes in the textile business.

Emily was strikingly beautiful, with a slender figure and long blonde hair and like so many other wealthy debutantes, she was tempted by the wild and often promiscuous atmosphere of nightclubs.

Within weeks of meeting, the couple began living together in a small upstairs apartment over a watch shop. For Orby, the relationship seemed to be everything he had been searching for. Unfortunately, Emily seemed more into good times than lasting romance, especially when Orby had to work until the early hours of the morning, leaving her at home alone.

One night, several months after they had moved in together, Orby took off early from work. When he arrived home, Emily was gone. Just as he started to look for a note, he heard laughter coming from the stairwell leading to the apartment. Curious, he went to see where it was coming from. Emily and a man, both obviously intoxicated, were wrapped in an embrace and showering kisses on each other.

Harsh words were exchanged. The stranger lost his footing and fell backwards onto Emily who stumbled and fell down the stairs. One look at her crumpled body was enough to confirm that she was dead from a broken neck. The stranger dis-

appeared, leaving Orby alone with Emily's lifeless body.

In retrospect it is easy to say or imagine what Orby should have done next. Call for help, call the police or call an ambulance. In reality he did none of these. Instead, after hastily gathering his few belongings, Orby fled the scene, not stopping until he was back in Huntsville surrounded by the protective shield of his family.

Three weeks later the F. B. I. issued a warrant for his arrest and he was picked up.

That afternoon, Mr. Hethcoat visited his son in the Huntsville jail where Orby told of the circumstances leading to Emily's death. "It was an accident," he pled. "I never tried to hurt anyone."

When visiting hours were over Mr. Hethcoat started to leave. Sheriff Hereford stopped him in the hallway and led him into an office. "James, I'm sorry about this. Is there anything I can do for you or the family?"

"Sheriff, it was an accident. I don't see how they can do this to him for something that was just an accident."

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Sheriff Hereford looked pained. "James, there's more to it than that. They found her body buried in the basement. That wasn't an accident."

That evening all the Hethcoat sisters, brothers, nieces and nephews gathered together hoping somehow to make sense of the terrible tragedy that had befallen one of their own. The whole range of emotions filled the small room with everyone handling their grief in their own way.

Some wanted to know why or how, others were worried about what neighbors and friends would think. A nephew asked what they were supposed to say when people said their Uncle was a murderer.

Mrs. Hethcoat, who had remained silent until this point, spoke up sharply. "You will tell people that he is your Uncle and that you love him. And that, but for the grace of God, it could happen to anyone."

Orby was returned to Trenton, New Jersey to await trial. The family had tried to hire an attorney in Huntsville to represent him but he had refused, saying that

when all the facts were investigated, he would be found innocent. He also knew what an attorney would cost and knew his family didn't have the money. Unknown to Orby, the family hired James Boscarell, a well know attorney in Trenton to represent him.

Orby later wrote "...I turned my attention to Boscarell. He was not appointed by the court and I did not send for him. The first thing I knew, he just walked in and grabbed the case..."

The trial was almost a foregone conclusion. While most people understood how an accident could happen, there was no explanation for Emily's body being buried in the basement. Orby, despite his attorneys advice, simply refused to talk about it, or explain it.

After a short trial Orby was sentenced to be put to death at the

New Jersey State Prison.

"...I worked every trick I could to get a life sentence, but I didn't have a chance. The fact that a man makes a mistake is no reason to burn him."

Orby's new home was cell 12

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on Death Row, a seven by eight foot cell that predated the Civil War. A guard's desk sat directly in front of the cell allowing a guard to watch him 24 hours a day. Breakfast, mostly oatmeal, was at 6:30, a sandwich for lunch at 11:30 and supper at 5:00. The rest of the day was spent waiting - waiting for visitors, waiting for mail, but mostly just waiting to die.

A guard described it aptly when he said, "A person on death row doesn't have any friends. If he ever did, they forget about him when he walks through those gates. People just don't want that burden."

Orby's mother and father wrote constantly, beseeching him to let them visit but he always refused. He begged them to forget about him, saying it would be easier for all of them.

Despite Orby's pleadings, the family refused to give up. There was still hope for an appeal but justice was not cheap. Every mail delivery brought bills from lawyers for more money. The family, never well off, tried to meet every request hoping against hope that it might save their kin.

First to go was the family's life savings, then a small farm near Hazel Green, then a vacant lot in West Huntsville. Money was borrowed from banks, then friends, but it was never enough. There was always another brief to be filed or someone else to be hired.

By January 1938 all appeals were exhausted and a date was

set. The night before the execution the warden visited Orby to explain the procedure that would be followed and to see if there were any last requests.

Orby seemed calm about his fate. He ordered a bowl of turnip greens and corn bread for his last meal.

Just as the warden turned to leave, Orby asked if he could have a guitar. The warden started to protest, but seeing the look of on Orby's face, nodded to the guard that it would be all right.

Prison is a noisy place. That's the first thing people notice when they visit. Doors slamming, men cursing, the sound of men being marched to and fro. The noise is constant and insidious, 24 hours



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a day. Guards remembered the night before the scheduled execution as being strangely different.

As Orby began playing the guitar and singing the songs he had grown up with, the prison grew still as guards and prisoners alike strained to hear the rich baritone voice coming from the cell on death row. At first he did the songs he had played in bars and honkytonks and the old fashioned blues he remembered from working as a laborer in the fields. As the night crept on into the early hours of the morning his music took a different flavor as he began recalling the religious songs he had sung so many times in church with his family. Prisoners and guards alike listened to "The Old Rugged Cross" and cried when he sang "Amazing Grace."

Sometime during the night he asked for a pencil and paper.

"Dear parents There is about fourteen hours left for me. I have given up all hope that anything can be done for me in relation to my case....Reverend Paxton will give you a last message from me."

In Huntsville. Orby's family had given up hope. There were no more letters to write and no more phone calls to make. The only thing left was the waiting.

The case had been well publicized here and as the final day grew to a close, curious thrill seekers began driving by the parent's house hoping to catch a glimpse of the murderer's family.

Other people gathered across the street. Well-intended neighbors and friends stopped by with food and offered their sympathy. The preacher called to offer his prayers and support.

In Trenton, a prison barber shaved the top of Orby's head. The warden stopped by to tell him the Governor had refused to sign a last minute reprieve.

"Dear Mother and Dad ... I have just five hours left now, but don't think of how I am going. I am not afraid of that. I want you to forgive me for breaking your hearts ... we will meet in another world at some future time ... There is not much for me to tell you right now ... Give my love to everyone and say that I went out like a man, unafraid. And now, this is the last letter. I love you more than I have ever known. Orby."

As the final hours crept by Orby's brothers, sisters, nieces and nephews gathered at his parent's house. A soft, chilling, rain had driven the thrill seekers away but it also added to the gloom of the evening. Feeble attempts at conversation drifted off into silence. The only sound was the Lord's Prayer which Mrs. Hethcoat kept repeating over

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Mr. Hethcoat sat in a chair, away in a corner by himself, not saying a word but with silent tears running down his face.

Everyone kept looking at a large wall clock as it slowly ticked off the minutes and seconds. Finally the hands reached 8 o'clock and began chiming the hours.

As the realization of what was happening hundreds of miles away began to seep in, they looked at one another trying to understand how and why. But there were no answers.

Mr. Hethcoat rose from his chair and turned off the overhead light, leaving only a small lamp to illuminate the sorrow. "It's over," he said, tears flowing down his cheeks. "May God rest his soul."

As he left the room Mrs. Hethcoat gathered her remaining children together and led them in a final prayer for her first born.

Three days later the family received a final note from Reverend Paxton.

"My dear brother and sister, I stayed with him until the end... He did all he could to make peace with God, he repented of his sins, confessed all, and went bravely to meet death ... The warden said he would hold the remains until Tuesday... Yours in God, W. J. Paxton."

It is not known if Orby

Hethcoat ever explained why Emily's body was buried in the basement.

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- Take your clothes to the Electric Pressing Parlor - old ones made good as new. Jefferson street - telephone 66.

- "The Merry Widow" the musical sensation of all nations - Mr. Henry W. Savage's splendid production with music by Frank Lehr. Prices \$.50, \$.75, \$1.00, \$1.50 and \$2.00. Seat sale opens Monday Jan. 23, at Humphrey's Drug Store.

- Maymie Lee Nunnally, aged 30 months, died last night at the home of her parents in Dallas Village. Funeral tomorrow morning by Rev. Martin and interment in Maple Hill Cemetery.

- Mr. And Mrs. W. W. Newman left yesterday on a business and pleasure trip to their silver mines

in Canada.

- Miss Willie Harris is reported to be quite ill at her home on Adams Avenue.

- E. R. B. Martin and J. K. Mahan, millionaire natural oil operators of Pittsburg, PA and who have options on more than 20,000 acres of oil lands in Madison County, left this afternoon for their home after spending a few days here in the interest of their probable local operations. Within a very short time they expect to simultaneously start the drilling of 5 to 10 wells near Huntsville.

- Yesterday Luther Chambers was fined \$25 for beating his wife. Chambers said he could prove by his wife that it was his first offense. A sweet-faced little woman walked out of the crowd to take the witness stand. "Is that little woman your wife?" When Chambers responded that indeed she was, the Judge immediately raised the fine to \$500. Chambers is still in jail.

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Aged Groom Finds Young Love

from 1891 newspaper

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

He remained true in his feeling, however, and when his present bride was a little girl became much attached to her. In appearance so much like her mother, the old gentleman found in her childish affection a solace for the loss of her mother's love. As the girl grew to womanhood the old gentleman became a wealthy man, and when he sought the hand of Miss Donnan a short time ago found the mother a ready helper in the match.

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

This is the first marriage for both Mr. Ring and his bride and they are reported to be looking forward to settling down and having children.



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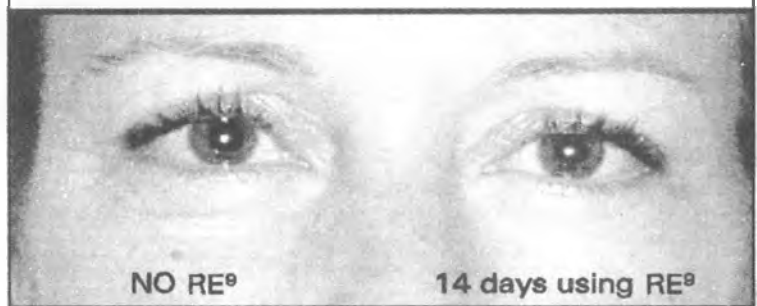
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Cotton Picking Time

by Austin Miller

Until the early sixties, during September and October, it was a common sight in rural Madison County to see men, women and children of all ages picking cotton. Picking cotton by hand may not be the worst job there is but it ranks high on the list.

The hours were from daylight until dark with only one short break for lunch, sometimes bologna and crackers under a cotton wagon. There were two forms of posture required. To reach the bolls that grew on stalks about waist high, you had to stand bent forward or crawl on your knees. Stooping and pulling a heavy sack all day put a tremendous strain on your back. Crawling was much easier on the back but, even with kneepads, your knees quickly became sore and bruised. The bolls (a little smaller than an egg when they are green) open in four, sometimes five sections. The cotton in each section of the boll is called a lock. Picking required pulling the locks out of the sections that come to a sharp point at the end of the boll.

The hulls scratched your hands and stuck your fingers sometimes under the fingernails. Poison from the early

morning dew inflamed the nicks and scratches and made sore places. It was impossible to avoid occasionally sticking one of the sharp points of a boll into an already raw spot. Pickers soon learned the hard way to watch out for stinging worms. These were fuzzy little worms that blended in with the cotton leaves. They were about an inch long and contact with the skin made a painful welt.

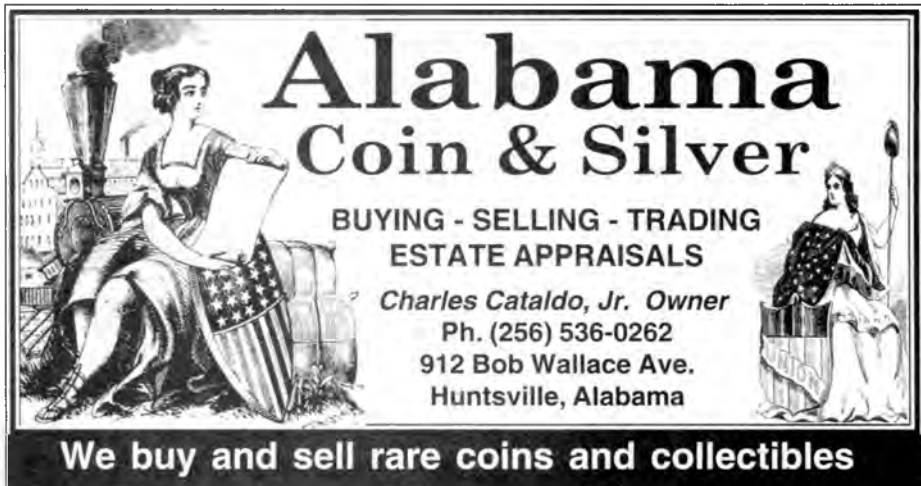
We usually started picking in late August during the hottest part of the year. This was the worst time, the leaves were usually still green and a lot of the cotton was not open, which meant it had to be picked again later. The hot sun bearing down on your back and the high humidity of late summer was a perfect recipe for misery.

When the sack got full, you

had to take it to the wagon to get it weighed and emptied. This required carrying a cumbersome nine-foot, 50 or 60 pound sack of cotton for up to a quarter of a mile on your shoulder. Then it had to be weighed and emptied. I often had the responsibility of emptying all the sacks.

It was hard work and not a welcome diversion from the routine of picking. Some would pack cotton in the sacks so tightly that it took a very vigorous effort to shake it loose. But the worst thing to me was the boredom of doing the same routine thing without diversion all fall, six days a week from day light until dark.

As the fall wore on you got better conditioned to the heat, the long hours and the work. Also, the temperature usually cooled by October, the days got



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shorter and the humidity dropped. This made it all much more bearable. The best part of the day was about dark when the air got heavier and the smell of the cotton permeated the fields. Sound seemed to carry and you could sometimes hear hunters firing shotguns in the distance as well as tractors going to the Ryland gin.

One of our fields was about a quarter of a mile from Flint River and on clear days when the temperature dropped as the sun went down, a hazy bluish mist seemed to hang above the river bottom. When the sun finally set, Daddy took the cotton to the gin, put it in a line behind dozens of bales to be ginned and came back home for supper. While he did this Mama milked the cow and put the meal on the table. After eating, he and I would go back to the gin to make sure we didn't lose our place in line.

Despite working since sunup, I had plenty of energy to

play tag with other boys on the ginned bales. To play, you had to be sure-footed. A fall or miscalculation of distance while running and jumping from one bale to the next in semi-darkness could have resulted in serious injury. Hundreds of boys did this over the years and I never knew of anybody that got hurt. Cotton farming was not easy and it kept us tough and in excellent physical condition.

Picking was not the only hard work associated with cotton. It had to be chopped three or four times. The first chopping was to thin the stalks with a hoe when they were about an inch tall. The next chopping was to thin again and cut out the grass. The other choppings were to rid the field of any grass missed by plowing, this required most of the summer.

I can't think of any positive aspects of picking cotton but I am always interested in the cotton grown on our home place at Ryland. Now that I am removed



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from the toils of farming, I can enjoy all the seasons of the crop. I love to see the deep orange/red color of the land when it is freshly turned in the spring.

I particularly like to walk the field late in the day during mid summer when the cotton is about a foot high and the leaves have folded. The leaves droop just before dark in the growing season and give the appearance that the plants are asleep. It is also pretty when it blooms and you can see the white/pink tints of color scattered across the top of the stalks sometimes mixed in with blue morning glory blooms.

The prettiest time is in October when the fields are white. It is also a bitter sweet time; it takes me back to my youth when our family worked so hard for so little. I enjoy seeing the open cotton bolls, but it makes me remember the time long past when I along with my father, mother and brother had to spend all fall picking cotton.

Coca Cola Faces Drug Charges

Chattanooga TN. - the hearing of testimony for the defense in the government case against "twenty barrels and forty kegs of Coca-Cola" in which the drink is declared to contain Caffeine, a dangerous drug, and was made under unsanitary conditions in violation of pure food laws, began this morning.

Judge John S. Candler, whose law firm organized the Coca Cola Co., testified the drink contained a substance known as "merchandise no".

from 1911 newspaper



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A Successful Man

A few years after the Civil War, Thomas Townsend, by any definition, was a successful man. He owned a palatial home on Adams Street, had a large plantation near Hazel Green, was a successful attorney and had been elected as a Huntsville city alderman.

None of this would have been unusual except for the fact that Townsend was an ex-slave in an era when racism controlled every facet of the community's social, business and political life.

And he was also related to many of the most prominent white families in Huntsville.

Townsend's father, Samuel Townsend, was one of the wealthiest and largest planters in North Alabama. He owned a total of eight plantations, seven of which were in Madison County and the 8th in Jackson County. The main plantation where he lived consisted of over 1,700 acres near Hazel Green and was worked by hundreds of slaves.

Townsend was a hard, shrewd businessman who was known to spend hours poring over ledgers trying to squeeze an extra dollar's profit out of a cotton crop. He reportedly did not drink, smoke or indulge in any other of the numerous vices common to the wealthy elite of that era.

The only weakness he had was Hannah - a tall, dusty and slender slave who worked as his housekeeper and shared his bed at night.

Hannah was reputed to be the daughter of a Huntsville attorney whose illicit affair was discovered when his wife's serving girl became pregnant. The wife, after questioning the servant, discovered her husband was the father.

Fearing a scandal, the wife or-

dered her husband to send the slave to New Orleans to be sold. Instead, the attorney sold his pregnant mistress to Samuel Townsend where he continued to visit her.

After Hannah was born she lived in the "big house" with her mother who became Townsend's housekeeper.

Townsend evidently was intrigued by the young girl. He insured that she was taught proper manners, dressed properly and was even taught to read and write.

At a very young age (some accounts say that she was only 13 years old) Hannah was taken by Townsend as his mistress.

Hannah took a keen interest in everything that transpired on the plantation. Townsend was often gone weeks at a time on busi-

ness and he began delegating much of supervision of the plantation to his mistress.

Strangely, given the climate of the times, Townsend made no particular effort to hide his relationship. Even when she began to bear him children, nine in all, they all lived in the "big house" as a "normal" family.

When Thomas, the eldest son, was born, Townsend doted on him the same way any loving father would. Thomas often accompanied his father on trips into Huntsville where he was undoubtedly the subject of much speculation and gossip.

Many people were infuriated that Townsend had hired a tutor to educate his son. This was a violation of Alabama law forbidding slaves from having an education.

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Huntsville was a small town and although almost every one realized who Thomas' grandfather and father were, in the eyes of the law he was still a slave.

When Samuel Townsend died in 1855, his will stated that his entire estate was to be liquidated with the proceeds going to his children and mistress. He also made provisions for Hannah and the children to be taken North and freed. Under a law passed in 1834, slaves who were freed by their master could not remain in the state of Alabama.

Thomas and his siblings were sent to Wilberforce, Ohio where they were enrolled in a private boarding school.

The will created a furor in Madison County. While most people were inclined to look the other way at people's private affairs, the idea of leaving an estate valued in the hundreds of thou-

sands of dollars to "a negro wench and her picaninnies" was appalling to many of Townsend's former friends.

Repeated efforts were made to have the will declared invalid but they all failed. Townsend had anticipated the efforts and, before his death, had hired some of the best attorneys in the state

to draw up an iron-clad will.

Finally, a much simpler strategy was created to deprive the family of their inheritance.

The administrators of the estate simply took their time in liquidating it. Part of the land was sold to friends on credit. Other parts were leased, with the rent going back to the estate where the

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administrators and attorneys lined their pockets.

Between 1855 and 1860 the family had received less than \$7,000 out of an estate that was valued at almost \$250,000.

Meanwhile, Thomas, the eldest son, had completed his education in Ohio and was devoting almost all of his time attempting to claim his inheritance.

The Civil War brought a temporary end to the settlement, when it was declared illegal to transfer money or property to anyone at war with the Confederacy.

In 1866 Thomas finally gained control of the estate but was immediately confronted with new problems. Much of the property had been sold on credit but, in a country ravaged by the Civil War, there was little money for anyone to pay bills with. Thomas decided to return to Huntsville to try and put the family's affairs in order.

Although Thomas probably thought his visit would be short, he almost immediately became

involved in community affairs. He became a teacher for one of the first Black schools organized in Huntsville and was instrumental in starting several programs designed to aid the ex-slaves in their new-found freedom.

In 1868 the estate was finally settled. Thomas received less than \$4,000 after the money was divided and attorneys fees paid.

Undaunted, Thomas rented the Wade plantation, part of the original Townsend estate, and began farming. Many of the Blacks working on the farm were

undoubtedly the same people he grew up with as slaves.

As the plantation began once again to prosper, Thomas became even more active in community affairs.

Respected by both the black and white communities, Thomas Townsend became a bridge across the racial barriers. When the government began issuing pensions for the black soldiers, Thomas became a claims attorney and worked with several white attorneys, helping to secure pensions for many of the black

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veterans.

In 1880 Thomas Townsend was elected as a city alderman, the first black to ever hold the position. He carried both the black and white sections of Huntsville.

As hard as it may be to believe, he was appointed to a committee overseeing the public schools even though blacks were forbidden to attend. He later served on the advisory board for the fire department and worked as a writer for the Huntsville Gazette.

When he died in 1916 he was eulogized by all the Huntsville newspapers.

As a tribute to a man who was born into slavery and became one of Huntsville's most respected citizens, the city voted unanimously to name a street after him. Townsend Street is located between Madison and Franklin Streets near Huntsville Hospital.

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Heard On the Street

by *Cathey Carney*



Congratulations to **Maria Sanderson** of Guntersville for the first correct guess of last month's Photo of the Month. The beautiful little girl was **Barbara Chapman**, owner of Durham Advertising. Maria is a homemaker and just loves reading history!

Tanya Elder, formerly from Birmingham and now working as a Family Services lawyer here in Huntsville, wants to say a special hello to her sweet grandmother **Velma Stern**, who lives in Pensacola, Fl.

Happy Birthday to **Sam Zelman**! We're not saying exactly how old Sam will be in February, but let's just say it ends in 0 and is between 70 and 90.

Lisa Rossetti of Madison was so happy this past Christmas, as she was able to spend it with her handsome son **Josh Rossetti**, who is in the Navy. It was the first time he was able to come home for Christmas in 4 years.

Dr. Ralph De Jarnatte, Jr. and his wife **Lisa** told us that their daughter **Michelle Leigh De Jarnatte** will be getting married in March. The lucky groom-to-be is **Timothy Harris**. Congratulations to the family!

We spoke with **Margaret Duffey** recently and found that she had broken her arm in 3 places! She was looking great as always and her cast was color-coordinated!

Emmett Boylan, Jr. lived most recently at Redstone Village and was 87 years old when he died in his sleep. Emmett had a smile and a hug for everyone and was one of the nicest men we've ever met. We send our deepest condolences to the family and many friends of Emmett, and especially to his dear friend, **Phyllis Hardenburgh**.

While dropping off some dry cleaning at **Sanders Cleaners** recently, I met the nicest guy. His name was **Wayne McElya**, and he just loves the history of North Alabama.

Congratulations to **D. W. (Dub) Williams** on his retirement from Wes Barber shop in 5 Points, where he began working in 1994. He's had recent surgery and we're all sending him best wishes for a

good recovery. One of his good friends is **Betty Williams Gordon**, and she thinks the world of him.

David Chu works at the Membership Desk at Costco, and recently when I had some business to transact he was very professional & helpful. His dear wife **Carla** is sure proud of him!

Cindy Heironymi is owner of "No Place Like Home," and we enjoyed catching up with her a while ago. That woman never ages! Her husband **Ken** works at Huntsville Hospital in the Bio Med department.

Chuck McCubbins, with Landmark Realty, stopped by the other day to say hello. His wife **Diane** really misses living in Old Town, but we think they'll be back one day soon.

We were so sorry to hear of the death of **Rosalind Switzer** at 89, who lived in Ithaca, NY. Her son **Glenn Switzer** lives here in Huntsville, and told us that his

Photo of The Month

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

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Hint: When this young lad graduated from a New York high school in 1934, he had no idea he would become a colonel and end up in Huntsville.



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mom had the best sense of humor. She was a beautiful lady who will be missed by all who remember her.

Kinley Eittreim's sweet wife **Ann** has been under the weather lately, and we want to send our best wishes to her.

Mark and **Cordy Fortson** were thrilled recently when their oldest daughter **Danielle** had her second child. The baby boy's name is **Ezra Walker**, parents are **Aubrey** and **Danielle Walker** of Woodville. Congratulations to you all!

Chuck Owens turned 91 in January, and didn't want to let the day go by without a party. He celebrated with sweet wife **Annelie**, friends and family with a Champagne dinner celebration at the **Redstone Village** dining room, with champagne for the whole room! Happy Birthday, Dad!

Steve & Michelle Trentham are expecting their first baby in June - Steve is the son of **Ed and Ann Trentham** of southeast Huntsville, and his sister **Susan** who lives in Tucson. Michelle's sweet mom **Ann Smith** works at the Church street branch of Colonial Bank. The baby will be the first grandchild for the Trenthams and they are very excited.

Speaking of Colonial Bank, we recently enjoyed meeting **Cindy Morrison** who has been in banking nearly 15 years. She is really proud of 20 year-old daughter **Canina**, who attends Calhoun and works at Lowe's in Madison. Other children are **Christopher**, age 17 and **Kathryn**, who's 12.

We are so proud of **Stefanie Troup** who recently volunteered at the **Children's Advocacy** as part of the **SCAN** program - which educates the kids in grades 3, 5 & 7 about child abuse, home safety and neglect. The SCAN program is excellent and many volunteers make it successful.

We were really happy to hear

that **Greg Mattix** is now at **Propst Drug Store** - as many of you remember, he was manager for the CVS Drug Store on Andrew Jackson before they closed last year. Greg has many customers and friends who will be very glad to know where he now works.

Happy Birthday to **Dr. Sam Citrano, Sr.** who has been a dentist here now for 52 years! His son, **Sam, Jr.**, is also a dentist downtown. Sam Sr.'s dad first settled in Huntsville in 1910. It sounds like a good story there!

We were so sorry to hear that **Malcolm Miller's** brother had died, at age 94. **James C. "Gib" Miller** was very well known in the area and loved by all who knew him. Speaking of **Malcolm** and **Lois**, **Lois** is recovering from a very bad fall and her dear husband is taking great care of her.

Mickey Plaxco is someone we've known for many years, and we were so sorry to hear that his Dad **Joe Plaxco** had died at the age of 83. We send our deepest condolences to Mickey as well as his family and Joe's many friends.

Marie Melochick had a January birthday. Marie lives at Redstone Village and has good friends there. Happy Birthday!

Charles Sanders contacted us recently from south Florida. He lived in Huntsville for years and still has many friends here. He

has some good memories including working at **Zesto's** in Five Points, a restaurant many people still remember.

We want to send best wishes to our friend **Robert Martin**, who lives at Morningside Assisted Living in Madison.

Well, just try to stay warm this month, check on your older friends who are alone, and don't regret any of this good rain we're finally getting!

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Spiced Winter Fruit

Large cans each of:

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- pear halves
- peach slices
- pineapple chunks

Large jar chunky applesauce

- 1/2 t. cinnamon
- 1/4 t. nutmeg
- 2 T. butter
- 1/2 c. sherry

Drain all fruit and layer the first 4 fruits in order in a casserole dish. Cook applesauce and spices in small pan for 5 minutes uncovered. Add sherry and pour over the fruit. Dot with butter. Bake at 325 for an hour.

Cinnamon Bars

- 1 c. butter
- 1 c. sugar
- 1 egg, separated
- 1 t. vanilla
- 1 1/2 t. cinnamon

- 1/8 t. salt
- 2 c. chopped pecans

Cream all ingredients together except for the egg white. Spread the dough on a large cookie sheet or pizza pan. Cover dough with unbeaten egg white. Spread 2 cups of chopped pecans on top, pressing lightly. Bake for 15 minutes at 325 degrees. Cut into bars while still warm.

Toffee Dream

- 1 pkg. brownie mix
- 2 sml. pkgs. instant chocolate pudding
- 2 c. milk
- 6 Heath Bars, crushed
- 8 oz. Cool Whip

Prepare brownies in a 9x13" pan. Prepare pudding with the milk, layer over brownies. Sprinkle 3/4 of the candy bars over the top, then spread with Cool Whip, rest of candy on top, refrigerate 4 hours or overnight.

Cream Cheese Squares

- 1 box yellow cake mix
- 1 stick butter, melted
- 1 egg
- 8 oz. cream cheese, softened
- 1/2 box powdered sugar
- 1/2 c. flour
- 2 eggs
- 1 t. almond extract

Lightly mix cake mix, butter and egg; press into a greased 9x13" pan. Mix remaining ingredients with a mixer and pour onto the dough. Bake at 350 degrees for 30 minutes and top is golden. When cool, cut into small squares.

Walnut Pudding

- 2 eggs
 - 1 c. powdered sugar
 - 1 T. plain flour
 - 1 t. baking powder
 - 1 c. broken walnuts
 - 1 c. dates, pitted
- Beat eggs, sugar flour and

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baking powder together thoroughly. Stir in walnuts and dates. Pour batter into a buttered baking dish and set in a pan of boiling water. Bake for 30 minutes at 350 degrees. Let chill and serve with homemade whipped cream.

Candied Pecans

- 1 c. brown sugar
- 1/2 c. sugar
- 1/2 c. sour cream
- 1 t. vanilla extract
- 1/2 t. cinnamon
- 2 1/2 c. pecans

In a heavy saucepan combine the sugars and sour cream. Cook to soft ball stage, or your candy thermometer registers 234 degrees. Remove from heat and add your vanilla, beat well til mixture starts to get thick.

Add pecans and stir very quickly. Spread on shallow pan that you've covered with waxed paper.

Annie Weber's Nut Cake

- 1 box yellow cake mix
 - 1 pkg. vanilla pudding mix
 - 4 eggs
 - 1/2 c. vegetable oil
 - 1 c. rum
 - 1 c. ground pecans
- Mix all well and pour batter

into a greased, decorative Bundt pan. Bake in 325-degree oven for an hour. Remove from oven and while still warm, sprinkle with powdered sugar. Serve with whipped cream.

Owens Sweet Potato Pie

- 4 medium sweet potatoes, cooked and mashed
- 2 eggs
- 1/2 c. brown sugar
- Small can evaporated milk
- 1/2 c. butter
- 1 1/2 t. cinnamon
- 1/2 t. each of ground nutmeg and ground ginger
- Pinch ground cloves
- Dash salt
- 2 9-inch pie shells

Mix all ingredients, preheat your oven to 400 degrees. Pour the sweet potato mixture into the pie shells, place in oven. Bake for about 45 minutes and pie is set in middle (it doesn't shake).

Great with whipped cream or just by itself!

Hot Kettle Corn

Heat 3 tablespoons oil in a saucepan, add 1/2 cup popcorn kernels and 3 tablespoons sugar. Cover and shake til popped. Sprinkle with cinnamon.



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Huntsville in the 30's

By Elwanda Henley Hallman

Four months ago I moved back to Huntsville after sixty-three years in Birmingham. Huntsville is a very changed city, an unusually beautiful city, and every day brings back memories of friends and family and of a very simple life back many years ago.

One place I wanted to visit was the Huntsville Library because it meant so much to me in my early life. I remember Miss Frances Jones, whom we children loved dearly in the old library. I can still remember checking out books and reading, walking the long walk home to Pratt Avenue, and reading "Heidi" as I walked. Huntsville had a bad polio outbreak back then and Mama wouldn't let us go anywhere except to walk to the library and get books.

I like to go to School Street and remember the blocks we walked to get to East Clinton Elementary School. I used to love the wild violets that grew along the side of the streets there.

We went to Junior high school a few blocks from the old Huntsville High school. I remember one day being called to the office. They said I had a

telephone call but it turned out they got the names mixed up and the call was for another girl. It scared me though because I had never spoken on a phone before, in my life.

Huntsville High school had some great teachers, my two favorites were Miss Annie Mertz and Miss Annie Dix. Most of us walked to school in those days and it got pretty cold walking in the winter. I still remember more than 60 years later how motherly and kind Miss Dix was to a cold and wet 15 year-old girl.

Miss Annie Mertz was very strict but she was always fair, always had integrity and it made such an impression on me. Through my life I kept a journal and wrote down the names of people who had an impact on my life, like these two ladies, even though they probably never realized it.

I remember one day in the mid afternoon, years ago, the world suddenly turned dark. That was the day a destructive tornado went through Paint Rock Valley. Many were injured and many homes were destroyed.

One day we all heard the ru-

mor that the court house in Huntsville was sitting on a lake. All the children were convinced that the entire city would cave in. It's funny what stays with

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you, after all these years.

Our special times were very simple. Mama loved to walk up the mountain with us kids (she had 5) to Fagan's Hollow. There used to be a Toll Gate on upper Wells Avenue. My Daddy would take us fishing and nearly every Sunday we'd all go to Big Spring Park.

On many of those Sundays, we'd witness baptizing of people in the Spring. I didn't realized the importance of it at the time, all I remembered was how pretty the girls looked who got baptized, with their beautiful colored hair bows.

Before Christmas we'd go on a community bus to our Mayor's celebration with the Senior citizens followed by a ride through the botanical gardens. The decorations were so beautiful and I remembered how Daddy drove us around when there weren't so many as there are now. Coca Cola was always decorated, and a huge star could be seen shining up on Monte Sano.

I still expect to see Dunnivant's where people bought more stylish clothes back then, and I remember Kress and Belk Hudson stores downtown.

Of course I remember when we had to kiss our brothers and sweethearts and husbands good-bye as they went off to war. I still remember one woman saying, scornfully, "Some of them cry like theirs is the only one leaving!" I couldn't believe she would say that.

I cried the day our country dropped the atomic bomb over Hiroshima. My friends thought I was being unpa-

triotic. Today I still hate wars of any kind. I pray for the leaders and the men and women who go to war and put their lives on the line for us.

I remember the glorious day the soldiers came home. My sister's husband was killed, we missed him so much. My brother came home and married a girl we all loved. My husband came home and we were so thankful to just be together again. Jobs weren't easy to find back then, but we all made it somehow.

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Curly Putman, Master Song Writer

By Malcolm Miller

Some time back I gave Jerry Brazier, owner of Jerry and Bill's Barber shop where I worked for many years, a box of barber tools and parts that I had accumulated over the years since I was no longer able to cut hair. A few weeks later when I went to his shop he said that I had given him something I might want to keep. When I saw it I did indeed want it. It was a very old letter in pretty bad condition but when I saw Tree publishing Company letterhead I knew it was from my good friend Curly Putman, ironically the date on the letter was June 2, 1964.

In the letter Curly said he couldn't use the songs I had sent but to send him some more, but most importantly he said that he was still trying to write that big hit. You see up till this time Curly had been struggling, however lo and behold a few months later he wrote "Green, Green Grass of Home" and the rest as they say is history. It was first recorded by Johnny Darryl then Porter Wagner, Jerry Lee Lewis and finally the biggest hit by Tom Jones. On January 8th I had a long talk with Curly and he said this particular song had been recorded five hundred times and in every known language.

This was only the beginning for this tall somewhat shy man from Paint Rock Valley. His songs were recorded by many many of the legends of country music. He wrote Dolly Parton's first hit "Dumb Blond", Tammy Wynette's "Divorce", T.G.Shepperd's "Do you Want to go to Heaven", David Houston and Tammy Wynette's "My Elusive Dream." The list goes on and on, however the greatest of all was a song by George Jones that was named the number two country song of all time, "He Stopped Loving Her Today", co-written with Bobby Braddock.

Life wasn't always easy for Curly, when he got

out of high school at Princeton he joined the Navy, and after his hitch in the Navy he met and fell in love with a pretty lass Miss Bernice Wilson, and like many couples back then they went to Iuka, Mississippi and got married. Another musician buddy of mine, Lamarr Cox, and his wife Laneva drove them there.

The first time I ever saw Curly he was traveling with a member of the Grand Ole Opry, I believe it was Bradley Kincaid, later on he joined Slim Lay and Hap Wilson's band along with the late and great guitar picker Maurice Ramsey and Lamarr "Bug Fuzz" Cox. Carolyn Gossett was the

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girl singer for the band.

Curly really worked hard trying to support his family, by now they had two sons. He had several jobs, shoe salesman, storm door and fence salesman and a stint working in Slim Lay's record shop. I even tried to get him a job with the Huntsville Fire Department by talking to a city councilman I knew, all to no avail.

As I look back over the many years I have known Curly, I truly believe that all these jobs and hard times only proves that Curly Putman was a man destined for greatness. Now Curly can look out over his sprawling twenty-five acre estate near Lebanon, Tennessee with pride because he overcame many obstacles and finally reached the top rung of the ladder of success.

And friends, the best could be yet to come, for he told me that at age seventy-seven he has started writing again. With him writing, we may hear some real country music over the airways again.

I, for one, am certainly ready for it.

Orton's Circus and Menagerie

This celebrated company have put up their big tent on the open lot on Randolph street, preparatory to next week's performance. Mr. Orton intends to give an entertainment for the special pleasure of ladies and children, on Tuesday p.m., April 3rd, at a low rate - children only 10 or 15 cents - preliminary to the grand show advertised in our columns for Wednesday, April 4.

from 1918 newspaper

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The Legend of Monte Say No

In the early 1800s, according to legend, a beautiful Cherokee maiden named Monte lived in the mountains overlooking Huntsville. Two men, one an Indian and the other a white settler, were both pursuing Monte for her affections.

Things came to a head one day when the settler was visiting the Indian encampment and discovered that his rival had proposed marriage.

Distraught at losing the object of his affections, the settler shouted in a loud anguished voice, "Monte, say no!"

The words echoed throughout the mountains and the valleys below and from that day on the mountain was called Monte Sano.

Although the story makes for a colorful legend, it never happened. The story was a product of romantic and wishful fiction.

Huntsville, in its early days, was a community surrounded by marshes, pools of stagnant water and open cess-pools. Every summer it became a breeding ground for malaria. In an effort to escape the pestilence, many settlers fled the "demon valley" to the mountains during the hot summer months.

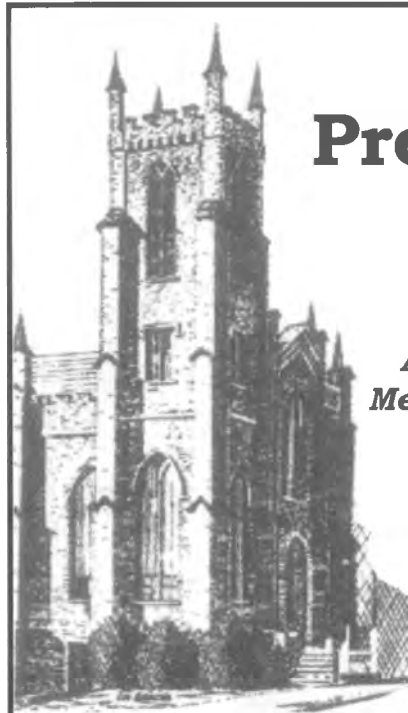
The settlers did not really understand why but the mountains seemed to provide a refuge against the disease.

A local doctor by the name of Thomas Fearn noticed the medical phenomena and named the mountain "Monte Sano."

The words are Italian for "Mountain of Health".

"If you worry, you didn't pray. If you pray, don't worry."

Jeremy Johns, Scottsboro



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Disappointed, Sam Sherrill returned to work where he donned his apron and began flipping hamburgers the same way he had been doing everyday for years. His business, the Nu Way Restaurant, was renowned for the small, square, five-cent hamburgers it served. It had become a virtual fixture on the North Side Square in Huntsville, with people waiting in line everyday.

Though Sam put aside any ideas of expanding his restaurant, his son Glenn did not give up as easily. In 1932 Glenn moved to Chattanooga and opened a small restaurant with a partner, serving the same hamburgers his father had served.

Within a few years the restaurant had become so successful that the partners began opening up others across the country.

Neither man had any idea at the time that they were founding a business that would eventually become one of the largest fast food businesses in the South—the Krystal Restaurants.

The Grand-Shine Dry Cleaners

One of Huntsville’s unique attractions in the late 1940s was, believe it or not, a dry cleaning establishment. Owned by a Mr. Johnson, the Grand-Shine Dry Cleaners offered on the spot dry cleaning and pressing for the individual with a busy schedule.

Unfortunately, many of his clients were farmers who only owned one suit and it was the one they wore to town to do their shopping. Many of these farmers wanted to have their suit cleaned while in town, but not having another change of clothes, were forced to hide in the restroom while the employees hastily dry cleaned the suit.

In an effort to rectify the problem, Mr. Johnson acquired a large barrel which he placed in the front lobby of his establishment. The front of the barrel was fitted with a hinged door allowing customers to enter, where they could remove their clothes and wait for them to be cleaned.

The price was 50 cents a suit, or 65 cents if you used the barrel.

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Hermit who Claimed to be John Hunt's Grandson Dies in Athens

From 1916 newspaper

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Sam Pierson, Athens

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A Letter from Maysville

Maysville, Ala. Dec. 16, 1864

Dear Sir,

Your letter from Dr. Clopton is at hand. We are delighted to hear from you as we so seldom get any knowledge of you. The condition of things around us is somewhat changed, but we are in daily dread of a raid. The Yankees are at Paint Rock. Twenty odd were captured by General Meade yesterday and passed through last night. Roddy and others are after the balance of them and we will hear from them today or tomorrow.

Well, we are all used up as to fencing, etc., as I wrote you, and years will pass before the destruction will be repaired. Many vacant houses were torn down to make tools, etc. Mr. Stewart's store, Bill Hall's old exchange, Masonic hall, all torn to pieces. Some parts remain, but ruined. Mr. Jones' store and Wortham's gutted. Your office remains as it was with the exception of the things - medicines, table, etc., all of which is gone except for a few bottles. I got most of your papers, among which is Mr. O'Neal's note for property - which I got from a Yankee doctor, for they occupied it as an office. It was then turned into a saddle maker's shop, then into a pesthouse (for small-

pox).

Since that time it has not been disturbed - only the removing of the two front sash which are lost, as also all the Jack O'Neal residence, where not a trace is left to tell where it stood except one load of joist, which I paid a man \$5 to haul home and is now in the smokehouse.



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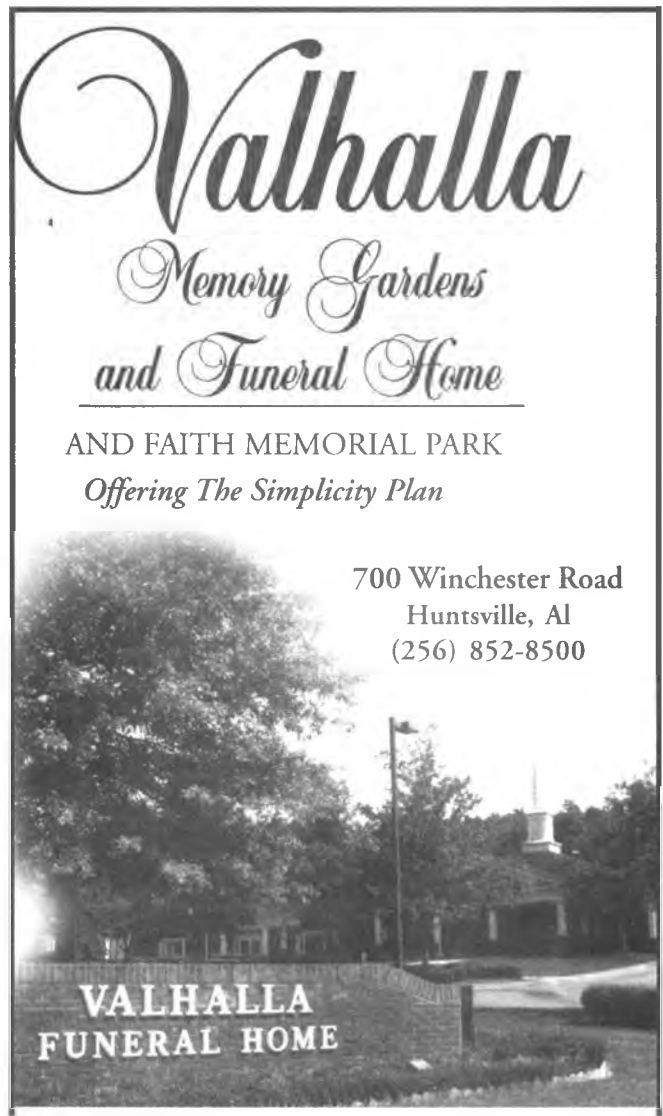
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Nearly all the citizens are gone, negroes and whites, and the present conscript act will leave not more than eight or ten men in the place, such as Mr. Burns, Pitts, Wortham, etc.

There is scarcely a single negro here that was here when you left. Some few of the Daniel plantation negroes are here in great confusion since the retreat of the army and should any of your darkies come here they will find a change of population and a ruined town.

I will give you an idea of that retreat caused by a flank movement of General Hood. The soldiers amounted to about 8,000 and baggage wagons beyond number. Refugees and contraband, astonishing in number slowly moved with the caval-

cade.

It began to pass here at 8 a.m. and continued until 4 p.m. So hasty was the move among the contraband that they emptied their featherbeds and cotton on the road until, even now, the track of the caravan could be followed by feathers and cotton.

The day they passed led to many astonishing sights but the distressing feature is that women gave birth to children during the flight and quite unnaturally left them to perish. One case occurred near this place. A yankee soldier picked up the infant, wrapped it up and tried to give it away as he passed along.

Several cases of the kind are reported to have taken place on the banks of the Paint Rock. At Stevenson, 'tis said that they are dying by multitudes since the cold weather set in. Other chil-



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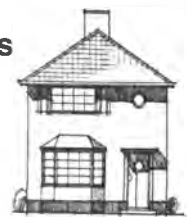
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dren were left behind and most pitiful, running about looking for their mothers who had left them to their fate.

At or near Paint Rock many of them (refugees) were cut off by our calvary and for several days others were passing in small numbers, deploring their lot, returning to their former homes.

As to our own condition, we have lived in constant dread surrounded and subjugated by our foes. We have lost by the yankees many things, but we have not been used like others who were plundered of all they had; in flour, meal and meat, bed clothes, etc., but even now, though we have a respite, we dread a raid.

A few almost worthless horses, a little stock and a few pigs are still left. Our house was once ransacked from top to basement by a set of the worst men I have ever seen, but were dispersed by two surgeons who providently stepped in while they were depredating, and so we lost but little.

I got twenty men to guard

the town that night, had two at my house. But for them we would have been ruined, burned out, as was threatened.

As to supplies, we have always had bread and meat and even some of the luxuries. Thomas has sent us coffee and sugar, cheese, bacon and salt. These have kept us together with what I could do with my own scanty money.

My cow, or rather yours, died last winter. This put us on short rations. As to milk and butter, we have done without until a few weeks ago. Mrs. Howard, who went

to live at the college in Huntsville, loaned her cow to us. She has now returned and will take her home again.

Mrs. Kelley loaned me her cow and calf but the yankees took the calf before we got them in our possession and we left the cow, not bringing her home.

We raised nothing but what we got from the orchard and garden, which was plundered of all its fruit before they were ripe. It would amuse you and distress you to see how they stole from the orchard, and how obsequious we all were, fearing

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to say a word.

We are now hiding our scanty food, fearing we shall lose what little we have left, for so much depends on the success of the companies now doing battle at Paint Rock. Cannon was heard booming yesterday, but to what result we don't know.

Our home affairs go on very quietly. Mattie is not quite so taciturn as formerly, has become domesticated, can wash a little, iron, cook, milk, make fires, feed chickens, bring in wood and nurse the baby as though she was used to it. Her health monthly is inexpressibly better than formerly, although she fell into her old condition and was alarmingly sick until she heard of a certain herb whose vulgar or classical name I do not know.

I eat two meals a day and sleep about six hours in twenty-four, rather restless, and lay awake many hours these long nights. I chop all my own wood and work hard during the working season, have not preached for many months except for a funeral sermon for Mrs. Debois six or eight months ago.

I keep no horse, so I go nowhere from home; indeed I am afraid to go anywhere - robbers are spread over the country and yankees hitherto on every road.

(Signed) Dr. Madden



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Tips from Liz

* Store your nuts in the fridge or freezer, they will not go rancid this way.

* If your kids' shoelaces always come undone, dry dampening them with water before you tie them.

* Remove paper that is glued onto wood surfaces by rubbing on some olive oil.

* When you wake up in the middle of the night with a leg cramp, immediately flex your foot upwards towards your head.

* If you are going to be out with no way of brushing your teeth, carry some mint teabags with you to nibble on - they will make your breath smell sweet.

* Raw chicken breasts are easier to cut up if you freeze them, begin to thaw them out and use sharp scissors instead of a knife.

* Shoe polish can make an excellent finish for wooden frames - it adds color as well as a water-proof shine. It works on scars you have on wooden floors, too!

* An extra bread box can hold all the tools you'll need to take care of any household repair.

* Position a section of old inner tube on your garage wall so that when you open the car door it doesn't hit anything hard.

* Put a cup of ground coffee in a cheesecloth bag and store in your car to make it smell great all the time.

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Passing of a Hero

by Austin Miller

James Curtis Miller, Sr. passed away January 1, 2008 at the age of ninety four. He was known as J.C. or Mr. Miller except for family and people from Ryland who called him Gib. He had six brothers, one of whom was my father. Uncle Gib was born in Huntsville at what is now the corner of Owens Drive and McClung Avenue, the current site of Mountain View Baptist Church. When he was seven, the family moved to Ryland where they lived on six different tenant farms before he joined the army in 1936 at the age of twenty three.

The army during the thirties was all spit and polish, discipline was strict and punishment for breaking the rules was severe and swift. The pay was twenty-one dollars a month and rank came slow, if ever. Soldiers were lucky to advance to the rank of private first class in three years. But Uncle Gib thrived, became an outstanding soldier and got promoted ahead of many others who had been in the army much longer. It is important to note that he was an expert shot with a rifle or pistol. He was so good that, one year he represented the entire U.S. Army in a pistol match at Camp Perry, Ohio.

By World War II, he had advanced to the rank of Staff Sergeant. In 1941, he met the love of his life, Bertha Martin, while stationed at Fort Benning, Georgia. They were married in North Augusta, South Carolina in August 1942. The marriage lasted 65 years and they had two fine sons, Howard and Jimmy.

On June 4, 1944, he went ashore with the eighth infantry, for reasons unknown to me, he was taken from the 4th Division and assigned

to the eighth Division for the invasion. This meant he went ahead of the 4th and was one of the first ashore at Utah beach. He went at daylight and jumped off the landing craft weighted down with heavy equipment in water up to his neck.

He told the story of a shorter man who jumped off when he did and disappeared under the water never to come back up. Drowning was only part of the

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worry; he landed under a hail of enemy fire. Somehow he made it ashore and got off the beach. He fought back and forth in the infamous hedge row country for about six weeks.

In July, at St. Louis, he got hit by shrapnel from a German 88 and almost paid the ultimate price. His best friend was killed by the shell that hit him. He spent the next year in hospitals in Europe and the United States.

His wounds were so severe that he was discharged from the army on disability. He got a civilian job but was not happy. He soon tried to get back in the army to no avail.

Finally, he contacted General Barton who commanded the 4th Division in World War II. The general intervened on his behalf and they took him back. After that he became a top sergeant and soon attained the rank of Chief Warrant Officer.

He went to war again in Korea and made several clandestine trips to South East Asia in the late fifties. In 1960, He retired

with 23 years of service. After leaving the army he worked at Fort Gordon until he retired again in 1978 at the age of 65.

He and Aunt Bertha then moved back to Alabama. They had many happy years in Huntsville where he greatly enjoyed family and gardening on his land at Ryland.

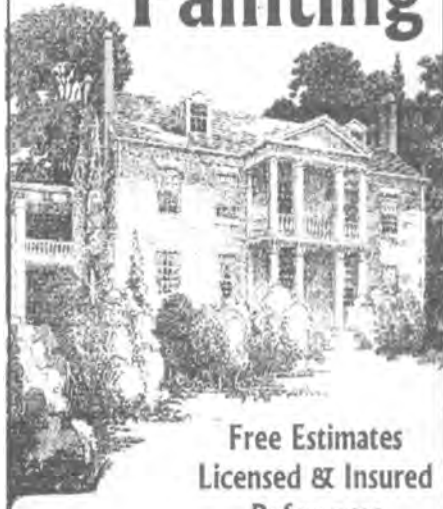
His burial was on a clear January day. His grave is next to the rock wall along McClung Avenue where he and his parents and older brothers walked regularly nearly a century ago.

The twenty volleys of the military salute echoed loudly across the 100 acres that make up Maple Hill Cemetery. The haunting sound of taps cut through the cool still winter air and no doubt could be heard at the old family home location at the corner of Owens and McClung where he was born in 1913.

He had come full circle back to where he began, and what a circle it was.



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News from 1894

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- John L. Rison, Druggist, handles mail orders promptly. We carry drugs pure and fresh, toilet articles, flavoring extracts of all kinds, Syringes, Face powders, Patent Medicines, Difficult prescriptions carefully compounded. Located on Bank Row

- One of the most entertaining of the "oldest inhabitants" of Decatur, Ala. is Capt. J. M. Todd, now 88 years of age, who steamboated on the Tennessee river from 1832 to 1875.

- Mr. W. W. Wilson brought a 15-month old pig and a bale of cotton to Huntsville to the market today. Each weighed in at 450 pounds. The cotton brought \$19.05 and the pig, \$22.50. Mr. Wilson says the cotton cost him twice as much to raise and market as did the pig.

- Capt. Jos. Glover closed a trade Tuesday with Mrs. J. P. Williams, of Scottsboro, by which he becomes the purchaser of the Boyd place next door to Capt. Rieves in Guntersville. The dwell-

ing and a large yard and garden were sold at nine hundred dollars.

- An Athens boy, who experienced great difficulty in swallowing, had an operation performed on his throat which brought to light a large pearl. It is thought he swallowed it in an oyster.

- Do not pay \$1 when you can buy our J & C Corset for 50 cents. Modeled after the best French strip corsets, in white, drab and ecru with silk flossing. A. R. Campbell & Sons, Huntsville, Ala.

- "I take pleasure in stating in the public that Sam M. York of Union Grove, Ala. has cured a cancer of twenty years standing for me. I have never known him to fail curing cancers." Jesse. F. Miller, Marshall, Ala.

- An item appeared in the Democrat recently which should have read as follows: Mrs. Haskins has the largest and nicest plants in town." In making up the form the "I" dropped out in the word plants, and the mistake was not noticed until the paper was printed. The whole town was in an uproar and when the lady's husband read the item he armed himself with a shotgun and started for the printing office but the editor saw him coming and escaped through a back window.

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Uncle Perce Ellett

by William Sibley

One of the kindest men who ever lived was Percy Clay "Uncle Perce" Ellett of Big Cove, who died in 1960, at the age of 71.

It was while Uncle Perce was driving a school bus for decades, running the Big Cove School route, that children began calling Mr. Ellett, "Uncle Perce." Uncle Perce and his wife, Myrtle, had no children, but hundreds of children loved the couple as if they were their parents.

Citizens of Big Cove always said, "Uncle Perce goes to bed with the chickens and gets out of bed before the chickens do." That statement was made because Uncle Perce would go to bed about 6 P.M. each day and arise the next morning at 2:30 A.M.

This writer learned many things from Uncle Perce and many things about Uncle Perce. Uncle Perce was a beekeeper and always enjoyed going to two grocery stores in southern Big Cove near his home. Those stores were Jim Montgomery's Grocery and Marshall Byrd's Grocery. The late Milas "Bo" Buford told this writer that he had seen Uncle Perce at those stores many times and they would always talk for awhile and Uncle Perce would say, "Well, I've got to get home to Miss Myrtle."

A member of a very prominent family of Big Cove told this writer that he rode Uncle Perce's bus in the early 1930s and that he did not like school in his early grades. Each morning, it took the pushing of the boy's mother and the pulling of Uncle Perce to get him on the bus for several days.

During the years that Uncle

Perce drove the Big Cove bus, he also clerked in Leonard Taylor's General Merchandise Store, but Uncle Perce never went to the store until he had done all the necessary chores at the school.

It would be impossible to list nearly all of the fond memories that people have of Uncle Perce

or to list the things he did to make school children happy, but a few things will be listed below.

In the early 1940s, a fifth-sixth grade teacher took her class to Haden Miller's thicket, located north of Big Cove School. Getting to that location required the crossing of a wide ditch. Uncle Perce ac-

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panied the group to the picnic and personally assisted each student individually in crossing that ditch.

Uncle Perce taught us pupils how to make several things, such as Jacob's Ladder, made with a string. He also taught us how to make figures out of popcot blooms by peeling away parts of the bloom. We made figures that resembled a boy and girl eating cantaloupe. Also, one lesson was in peeling the bloom in a complicated way and creating figures representing the multitude, the loaves, and the fishes that are in a Biblical story. Many times Uncle Perce performed magic shows for the student assembly.

As first graders, we were always happy when we learned to spell simple words, but one day Uncle Perce told us that he was going to teach us to spell geography. One can only imagine how a first grader would feel if he could learn to spell a four-syllable word. Uncle Perce said, "Remember this sentence: "George Ellett's

old goose ran a pig home yesterday." We knew George Ellett. He was Uncle Perce's nephew. Uncle Perce said to remember the first letter of each word and we could spell the word correctly. I don't suppose that any of us have ever mis-spelled that word since the first grade.

During the middle and late 1940s, maybe into the early 1950s, Clyde Connally was principal of Big Cove. During the 1940s Uncle Perce was doing some of the school chores, chopping kindling for the large coal-burning heaters of Big Cove School. A sharp splinter flew wildly, going straight up into Uncle Perce's eyeball, causing him to lose vision in that eye. Mr. Connally took Uncle Perce to the emergency room of a local hospital and left his students in the care of Mrs. Tressye Maples, teacher of grades 4 and 5. Mr. Connally's pupils were in grades 7, 8, and 9. Mr. Connally's room and Mrs. Maples's room were separated by folding doors. Mrs. Maples successfully looked after five grades until Uncle Perce and Mr. Connally returned to school.

Uncle Perce did not drive his

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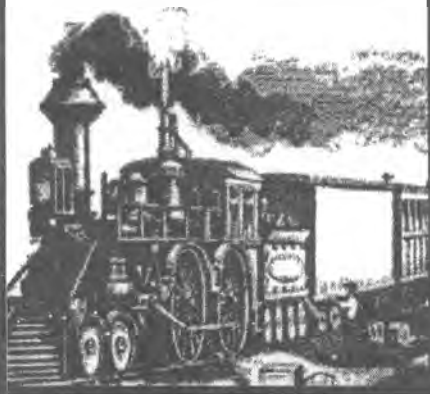
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bus for the remainder of that school year, but he was back on the job at the beginning of the next school year. The first thing Uncle Perce did was to get a coal scuttle and pick up broken glass off the campus. Many of the school children went barefooted, especially in warm weather and Uncle Perce thought about those kids' safety.

Uncle Perce did not like black cats. Our family had a black cat that would follow us to the bus stop and Uncle Perce told us several times, "I wish you would get rid of that black cat." He thought black cats brought bad luck.

One morning as our bus was going east on Caldwell Lane, Inis Lyle's black cat dashed across the road in front of the bus. Uncle Perce became very uneasy and immediately turned his hat around and marked an "x" on the front windshield, to ward off bad luck.

The next stop was at the home of Jewell and Lena Mae Cobb, and Uncle Perce told all of the pupils to turn around in our seats. Jimmie Lou Andrews (Newman) saw that Uncle Perce was uneasy and she led us in unison as we all turned around and sat back down in our seats.

During his years as bus driver, Uncle Perce drove us to ball games, the annual 4-H Club calf shows in Huntsville and other events. He always encouraged all pupils to do their best in academ-

ics and athletics. He told us about the years when he was a student at Vann School (also known as Vann's Hillside School) in southern Big Cove.

One of Uncle Perce's fondest memories was his playing on a baseball team from the Vann School area. That team walked across Green Mountain and soundly defeated a team in the Farley area. Uncle Perce hit a bases-loaded triple that day.

When Uncle Perce was no longer able to drive his bus, school officials let him ride the bus daily. He always sat on the front seat and spoke to every child as each child got on the bus. He had done that for decades.

This writer hears from many former Big Cove residents from

many places, and they always want to know about Uncle Perce. A flagpole was erected at Big Cove School in Uncle Perce's memory and a yearbook was dedicated to Uncle Perce in his lifetime.

Uncle Perce is buried in Neal's Chapel Cemetery in southern Big Cove. As people pass by Uncle Perce's tombstone, they always recall, "He was one of the best men who ever lived."

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A Case of Self Defense

from 1883 newspaper

On Friday last, March 23, the defendant killed a negro man, Jerry Patton, in the Big Cove in this county.

On Monday last, he came to Huntsville and surrendered himself to Sheriff Cooper. Yesterday, he was brought before Hon. Wm. Richardson for investigation of the facts.

The testimony showed that defendant had been employed by Miss Wade to take charge of her farm, and had a contract with Jerry to work a portion of the land on shares. Jerry been working a certain horse, but was taken sick and the horse was assigned to another hand. Jerry, hearing this, got up and demanded the horse.

Defendant told him that he could not get the horse then, but might have a mule instead for a day or two. Jerry swore he would have the horse or die. Jerry, then, called defendant a d-d rascal, seized a hoe and rushed at him and defendant warded it off his head with his left arm.

Jerry, drawing his pocket knife, struck at defendant, cutting a slit about four inches long just above the left pocket of defendant's vest and a slit in his

cotton shirt, but not penetrating his undershirt. In this perilous position, defendant drew his Wesson pistol and shot Jerry who died in about 20 minutes.

Defendant showed marks of Jerry's grip on his throat the blow of the hoe on his wrist, and his cut

vest and shirt.

These facts developing a clear case of self-defense and justifiable homicide, Judge Richardson promptly discharged defendant saying that he did not feel warranted in sending the case to the Grand Jury.

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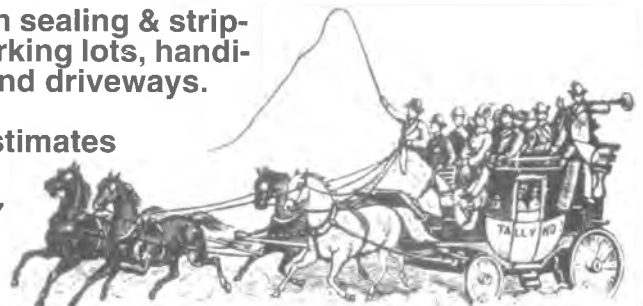
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News From the Year 1931

News From Huntsville and Around The World

Alabama charges Negro Youths with Rape

They have come to be called the Scottsboro Boys - nine Negro youths, all teenagers but one. They were arrested in Scottsboro, Alabama, on the complaint of some young white men, who said that the Negroes had driven them off a freight train in Chattanooga, Tennessee, six days ago.

When the Negroes were arrested in Scottsboro, two young white women, Ruby Bates and Victoria Price, were also found on the train. They were cotton mill workers from Huntsville, Alabama, going to Memphis to look for work, they said. One had recently been jailed for adultery. Both claimed to have been raped by the Negroes. They were sent to doctors, neither of whom found any evidence of rape.

Still, local newspapers were

outraged. One headline called the Negroes "Black Fiends." A mob soon formed outside the jail, demanding that the Negroes be lynched. A trial was quickly arranged. Heywood Patterson, 19, was tried first. It took the jury all of 25 minutes to find him guilty. The sentence was death.

Will Rogers Refuses Degree

Will Rogers declined a Doctorate of Humanity and Letters from Oklahoma City University. Rogers defends his decision. "What are you trying to do," he reasons, "make a joke out of college degrees? They are in bad enough repute as it is, without handing 'em around to comedians." However, Rogers said he might possibly accept a D.A. (Doctor of Applesauce).

Unemployment Soars During Depression

With unemployment continuing to soar, President Hoover has urged Congress to provide up to \$150 million for public works to create jobs.

The president of the American Federation of Labor has estimated that about 4.8 million Americans are now unemployed, an increase of 360,000 in just the past month.

In his message to Congress, however, the president put the nation's jobless rate much lower, at about 2.5 million. While voicing concern, he said that the United States is much better off than the rest of the world. Despite the statistics, experts claim the economy is sound.

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Al Capone in Prison

"Scarface" Al Capone, the dapper lord of crime, was sentenced today to 11 years in prison for tax evasion. The heavy sentence, imposed in a federal court in Chicago, stunned the city's most notorious gangland chieftain. It was the stiffest sentence ever imposed in the nation's history for evading income taxes.

In addition to the long term in prison, Capone was fined \$50,000 and ordered to pay prosecution costs as well as \$137,328 in back taxes.

It was perhaps poetic justice that taxes, not his other alleged crimes such as murder or racketeering, proved to be Capone's downfall. Since moving to Chicago from Brooklyn, New York just 11 years ago, he had worked his way up in the rackets from a poorly paid liquor hustler to the wealthy chief of the city's gangsters, a man who fancied silk shirts, expensive flashy suits and diamond belt buckles.

It is widely believed, but never proven, that he instigated such gang-war killings as the St. Valentine's Day massacre in

which members of the rival "Bugs" Moran gang were mowed down by machine guns last year.

Empire State Building Is World's Tallest

The Empire State Building, the world's tallest structure, was formally opened today in ceremonies that included President Hoover and former Governor Alfred E. Smith of New York, head of the firm that erected the building. The Empire State, with 86 floors of office space topped by a mooring mast for passenger dirigibles, towers 1,245 feet above Fifth Avenue and 34th Street in New York. Experts say this is the maximum height for any structure.

The President in Washington pushed a button turning on the building's lights at 11:30 a.m., just minutes after a ribbon was cut to open the doors.

Completion of the structure is being hailed as a gesture of confidence in the midst of depression. The Empire State is expected to boost air transport by enabling dirigible passengers to debark in the center of the city.

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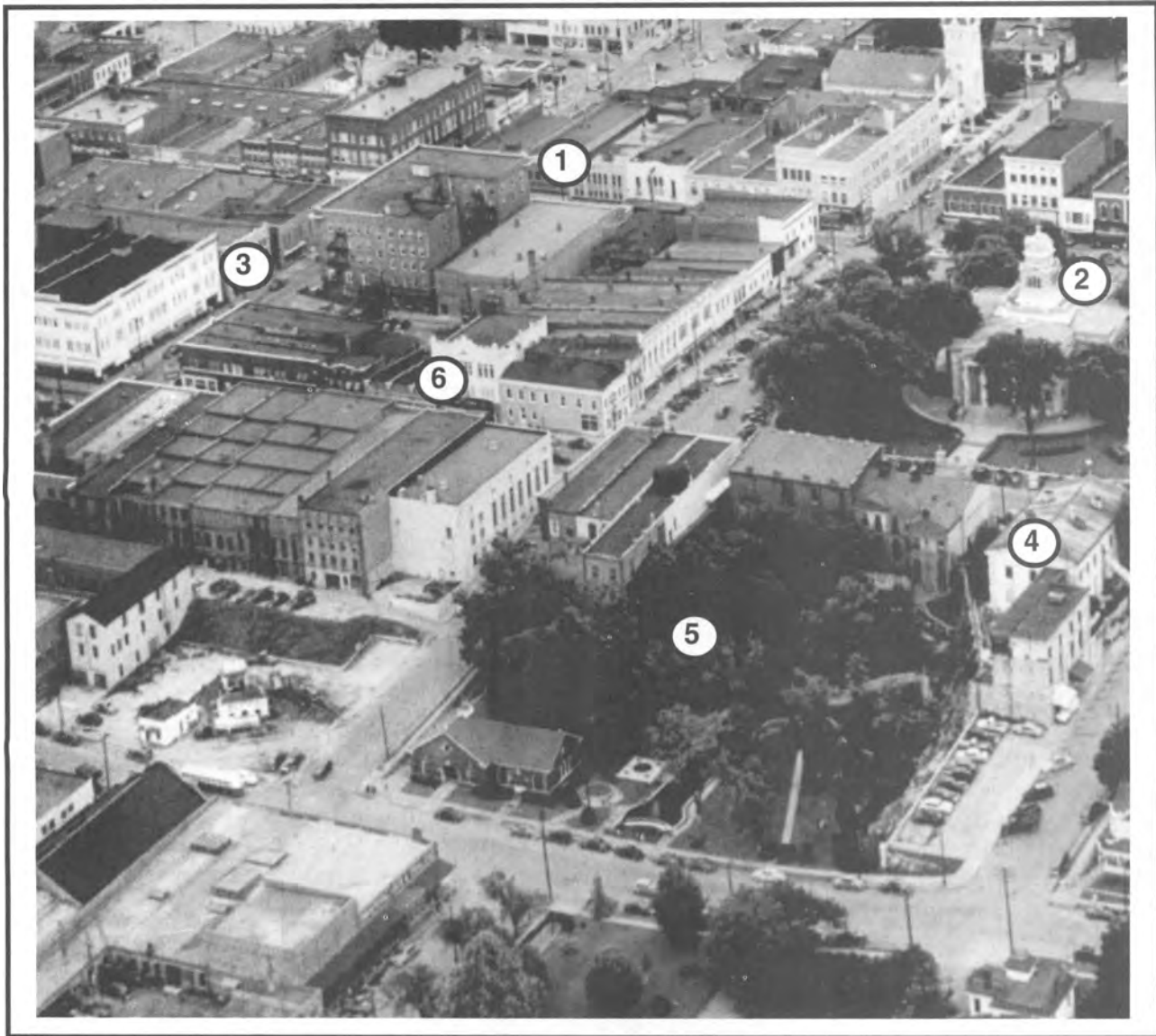
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Memories

By **Herman H. Hunt**

I was born in Elon, Alabama in 1919. Most people don't know where that is - it is between Hobbs Island and Bugg Chapel. The population was 100 people or less. Frank Colburne had a grocery store and Charles Watson was the County Commissioner with the shed at Elon. Bush Cemetery at Elon is where my people are buried.

I have some really good memories of those days. My Uncle Erskine told everyone that Guntersville dam was going to burst. My cousin crawled under the floor and attached a wire to the radio. He said, "Attention, folks, the Dam has broken, head for the mountain." It caused quite a stir, but wasn't true.

We had a sink hole on our land. Someone placed a dummy in the hole with shoes sticking straight out. Nearly everyone in Elon went down there to look at the "body." Uncle Erskine said, "You ladies stand back." He pulled at the shoes and found out that it was just a joke.

I remember our school bus had to have the front wheel jacked up to be cranked and Mr. Ikard carrying his daughter to school in a covered wagon.

I went to the Yellow Bank 2-room schoolhouse at Yellow Bank next to Bugg Chapel.

My teachers were Clara Payne and Lucille Rice. They both boarded at Walter Brannum's across from the school. Back then, you couldn't be married and teach. Mr. Hill, our principal, oftentimes had to use a boat to Yellow Bank school when the water would flood and get over the road.

New Hope played Bugg Chapel in baseball. They sent Bugg Chapel a box of cigars,

saying "How dead is Bugg Chapel!" They sent New Hope a box saying how crooked New Hope was.

I saw the St. Louis Cardinals World Champions play at what is now Big Spring in the early 30's. They loaned us Dizzy

Dean, but we still lost really bad. Gabby Street was the St. Louis manager. He called my father a "Jay Bird" one day and that resulted in a big fight between the two.



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Remembering Joe Bradley School

by Wayne Ray

Located across the street from the restored Merrimack Hall on Triana Blvd. once stood a very stately two story brick building. The building was built in 1919 by the Merrimack Manufacturing Company as a school and named after its managing agent, Joseph J. Bradley, Sr. By most accounts Mr. Bradley was considered a friend of the mill workers and community. He was responsible for establishing a hospital in the village along with other quality of life items.

Mr. Cecil Fann was the first principal from 1919 to 1921. He was instrumental in adding additional grades to the school. Before the passing of the child labor act, most children were expected to work after the 5th or 6th grade. Also, village children had to pay a \$50.00 non-residence fee to attend area junior and senior high schools. Mr. Fann and others persuaded the Merrimack Company to gradually increase the grades to allow village children to go beyond the 6th grade. The company later deeded the school over to the Madison County Board of Education and later as the city limits grew, it became a city school.

In 1962 Ridgcrest Elementary was opened and all of the elementary classes from Bradley moved there. Joe Bradley became a Junior High School until its closing. Mr. E. R. Dubose served as the principal from 1921 to its closing in 1967. A new addition was added to the rear of the building in the 60's giving it more classroom space. In the 70's the old building was demol-

ished. Although there is nothing remaining from the original building, the late addition still stands.

Most of my pre-college education was spent in private schools, but I had the honor to attend Joe Bradley from 1963-1965 in the 8th and 9th grades. I say I had the honor because I attended with some people I'll never forget. I also experienced some life changing events at Joe Bradley.

At the time Joe Bradley seemed like a huge complex. I remember its hardwood floors that actually were bucking up in places along the long hallway. With today's safety rules and regulations, I'm sure the school would have been shut down. I don't recall anyone tripping and falling on the floors. I remember having Algebra I on the first floor. The room was the first one on the right side of the building.

My teacher, Mr. Winston, was extremely tall and wore very thick glasses. He was the first math teacher I had that made sense of the complex world of math. A year after I left Joe Bradley, Mr. Winston was found dead in

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his tiny apartment near the old Butler High School. Apparently, he died from a heart attack during his sleep. I wish now that I could have told him how easy he made Algebra I for me. He seemed old, but now I'm sure that he was in his late 20s.

My first crush on a teacher was Mrs. Barton, my 8th grade History teacher. She was young and beautiful and drove a 1963 Chevy Impala. I was in her class that historical day on November 22, 1963. After the announcement was made over the intercom that President Kennedy has been shot, I saw Mrs. Barton cry.

I remember some great friends I had at Joe Bradley. Friends like Kenneth Reynolds. I was a new kid in the 8th grade, and Kenneth and I bonded immediately. In fact, he and I got a paddling from the coach for talking during class. As I recall, he called us up to his desk, took his paddle out, and gave us a few licks.

In those days, punishment was swift and sure. You didn't get multiple warnings or need a

phone call home to get permission to paddle. I don't think we ever did that again. Today, we can only have our students "sign the board" for talking. We also have to justify

why we give a student a conduct mark. What a change!

Kenneth went on to Butler but we stayed in touch a few years more. His parents bought a new



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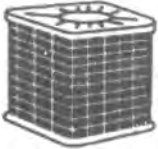


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1966 Mustang that he would occasionally get to drive. He would come by my house on Hillsboro Rd. and we would go shop at Bud's Men's Wear located on Jordan Lane next to the Ben Franklin store.

I was also friends with Roy Casey who is now a salesman at Ray Pearman's. When we moved to Memphis, I would return to buy a car from Roy since he was the most honest car salesman I knew. My mother-in-law, Geneva Baeder, decided to buy herself a new car in 1980. I naturally went to see Roy. It was Roy who continued to help her out after we moved away. She would call me about a car issue and since I was over 200 miles away, I could call upon Roy for help. He would call her and sometimes go by on his own time to check things out.

A very strong memory comes from my days at Joe Bradley. Several years ago I was visiting the Vietnam Wall in Washington, DC. I had heard about someone I knew from Joe Bradley was listed as a MIA. I carefully looked through the published directory near the wall and located his name. Walking to the correct panel I located his

name, Prentice Wayne Hicks. Who knew that in five short years he would be on patrol in Vietnam and become a MIA. Accounts state that Wayne was wounded in combat and was being evacuated. During the evacuation his unit encountered another fight and Wayne was separated from the unit. A search and rescue effort after the battle found only the stretcher that carried Wayne. I remember Wayne as one of the best athletes at Joe Bradley. I remember that he wore his letter jacket and most of the girls were crazy about him. I'm sure there were other heroes from Bradley that went to Vietnam, but Wayne paid the ultimate sacrifice for the freedoms we enjoy.

Besides Mrs. Barton, I also had a crush on what I thought was the most beautiful girl in school. Her name was Rita Coffey. She actually said something to me one day in class and I'm sure I made a fool of myself. Anyway, she never knew that I had such high regards for her. I also remember another girl from

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one of my classes. I guess her name stuck with me because it was so unusual. Her name was Kristi Krister. I seems like she rode one of the green Army school buses to school from the Arsenal. Another girl I remember was Gloria McCullough. Gloria and I attended the same church at Huntsville Park. We were baptized on the same day at the age of 13.

I took band under Mr. Goodman. He came to Bradley part time from Butler High.

He drove a red 58 or 59 Triumph. I tried to play the drums, but he later switched me over to the tuba. You had to walk up the massive staircase to the band room. We couldn't play on real drums, so we practiced on wooden blocks with a rubber pad mounted on top. We did have real drumsticks to play with.

I also remember Biology class upstairs with Mr. Dortch. Since the old building was not air conditioned, the windows were open during the hot months of school. I was in Biology the day I heard sirens coming down Triana. The closer they got, the more I became convinced that the police was coming for me.

You see, a few weeks prior I had borrowed a friend's Honda 50. It didn't have a tag on it, so one of Huntsville's finest stopped me and gave me a ticket. Since I was at the ripe old age of 14, I was sure that I would be arrested for committing such a serious offense. I went to town the next day and paid the \$10.00 fine. The police department

was located in one of the old historical houses downtown. I think at one time it had served as a funeral home.

Most kids walked to Joe Bradley, including myself and my cousins Lee and Glenn Benson. I joined the elite force of the school patrol boys. I thought I was with the FBI getting to wear a badge and stop traffic! We had student patrol officers who inspected us every morning. Our patrol belts had to be clean and our badges

shiny. Those kinds of events just don't happen in most schools today.

A lot of the older guys rode motorcycles to school. The official parking lot for bikes was in the lot on the right side of school. I remember bikes like the Honda Scrambler and Dream 150. There may have been one Harley 125, but the Japanese bikes ruled. I rode a big Allstate Moped and never dared to drive it on the lot. Boys like Bill Johnson, who worked

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at the Honda shop, would have laughed at my ride and word may have gotten back to Rita Coffey.

Just like most boys at Bradley, I had a paper route. We would meet at the paper shack located in a small shed on Drake Ave. in the village. Having a paper route gave me spending money and also connected me with some of the coolest guys around. Guys like Eddie Cooker who had a black Honda 90. I think Eddie ran for a local political office in Huntsville awhile back. The one lone Harley belonged to a guy with the last name of Berry. It was a two-toned Harley 125, but to me it was cooler than a police bike.

Parents in those days stuck with their words. I remember one guy whose last name was Ford. He had a new Honda Super 50. It was red and I would have done anything to own it. Anyway, he had gotten into some trouble at home and his parents made him sell it. It seems like he had to sell it because of bad grades. I had classes with the Cheatham girl whose dad owned the Honda dealership on Clinton Ave. It wasn't Honda cars since they hadn't made it to the U. S. yet. I still remember the painted sign in the window saying that a new Honda 50 was \$289.00!

My experiences have stayed with me for a lifetime. I would love to walk through the halls of Joe Bradley again, but my memories make it come alive

Cats are smarter than dogs. You sure won't get eight cats to pull a sled through snow.

A Bad Excuse

from 1913 newspaper

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

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

Don't take your gun to town

Two men, John Battles and James Davis, are residing in the Huntsville jail after a failed burglary of Masters Store. The men attempted to gain entrance by breaking a window. As Battles climbed through the opening a pistol fell from his pocket and discharged, wounding Davis in the leg. Davis then pulled his own pistol and shot Battles, also in the leg. The gun shots quickly attracted a crowd and the bandits were apprehended. They are currently sharing the same cell.

from 1891 newspaper

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A Yankee Confederate

Of all the Civil War veterans who called Huntsville home, Maj. S. F. Sweinhart must have been the most unusual.

Major Sweinhart was a member of an Ohio volunteer regiment and had participated in some of the bloodiest fighting of the war. While stationed in Alabama, he was captivated by the warm climate and the natural beauty of the Tennessee Valley.

When the war was finally over and the soldiers had stacked arms for the last time, Major Sweinhart moved to Huntsville, determined to make it his home. Feelings were running high at the end of the war, so it is not surprising that he was greeted with scowls and bitterness.

"Damn Yankee," the Huntsville natives would say as they passed him on the streets. "Damn Rebels," the Major would mutter under his breath, while looking straight

ahead.

But time has a way of healing all wounds and as the Major grew into old age, he began taking his place on the old courthouse bench, reliving and re-fighting the battles of his youth. An old Yankee officer and old Confederate veterans, with nothing in common except the blood spilled on battlefields years before.

Slowly the town began to accept the old soldier and the scowls he used to encounter on the streets turned to smiles. Sweinhart became involved in community affairs and became active in veterans affairs. Of course the only other veterans in Huntsville were ex-Confederates.

In 1927 Major S. F.

Sweinhart was awarded the highest accolade ever given to a Yankee by Confederate veterans. The story can best be told by a newspaper article of the day.

"Maj. Sweinhart was invited this week to attend a dinner given by the Daughters of the Confederacy to members of the Egbert

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Jones Camp of Confederate Veterans at the home of Robert A. Moore, acting Adjutant for the Third Brigade, Alabama Division. He was welcomed with hand clasps and smiles." After dinner, the old veterans invited him to attend their business meeting.

When discussions lagged a little, Maj. Sweinhart, who had remained in a corner deep in thought, rose and stood at attention. "Men," he said, with a shake in his voice, "I've lived down here so long I feel like I belong here." His voice quivered again as he added, "And by golly, I want to belong to you." The Confederate veterans gave a hearty cheer, and one of them proposed Maj. Sweinhart for membership. The proposal was accepted immediately and "the major" was accepted as a member of the camp by unanimous vote.

"He now belongs to the Egbert Jones Camp of Confederate veterans and is believed to be the only Union soldier in the country who has experienced such a transformation."

When Major Sweinhart died, an honor guard consisting of Confederate veterans stood guard during the funeral ceremony.

His body is buried in Maple Hill Cemetery, next to the other veterans he had grown to love.

REWARD

A \$10 reward will be paid to anyone recovering the horse belonging to my husband F. Lowry. It was lost Saturday night somewhere in the town limits while he was in a state of intoxication.
from 1901 newspaper

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News from 1893

• A local leader of the Scottsboro Temperance Society was unable to attend the meeting last week. He had been arrested for public intoxication.

• The city of Guntersville has a ladies' society called the "Sisters of Silence." It has two members, and they are both deaf and dumb.

• A farmer near Hazle Green is advertising for a wife. The last four did not work out.

• A fight broke out at Maple Hill Cemetery when it was discovered that the deceased was wearing a new suit which the widow had stolen from her brother.

• The local editor of the Florence paper fell asleep while crossing the river in a ferry boat the other day, and when he awoke he owed the company \$13.70, at \$.10 a trip.

• A very wealthy farmer of Decatur has this Notice pasted up in his field: "If any man's or woman's cows or oxens gits in these here otes, his or her tail will be cut off as the case may be."

• A Huntsville minister was dismissed when it was discovered that he did not believe the warning against the wages of sin did not apply to him.

• A father near New Market is preparing to send his daughter to Nashville in search of a husband.

All the eligible local beaus are cousins.

• A home near Gurley was destroyed when its owner used dynamite to get rid of a family of rats.

• John Depree is once again a guest of the city lock up, this time charged with bathing in the Big Spring in his natural state.

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There are brand new homes selling for as little as \$120,000. These are not inexpensive homes either. These are 4 bedrooms, 2 baths, 2 car garage with appliances, security system and in-ground irrigation systems. The homes I refer to are built between 2005 and 2008 and are built to the Miami-Dade hurricane code. For not much more you can have a pool.

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If you are a fisherman, it is a fisherman's paradise. You are minutes from Boca Grande, the Tarpon Capital of the world. Also the beaches of Sanibel, Venice, Ft. Myers, Captiva and many more are close by. Lake Okeechobee is 60 miles away and a day trip for bass fishermen.

I am an old Huntsville resident, born in Huntsville Hospital (when it was a small brick building), graduated from Huntsville High School and still have many family members and friends that live in the area. I will exchange e-mails with MLS listings with pictures for you to review. Also, I will mail you maps and information on this area. I welcome the opportunity to talk with you and help you with your dream home.

Average Winter Temps are 83 (Nov.), 78 (Dec.), 77 (Jan.), 76 (Feb.) and 82 (Mar.)



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When life was simple...



These Dallas Mill employees probably did not have much reason to smile when they posed for a photo in 1907. A law passed that year limited the work hours of youngsters, ages 12, 13 and 14, to sixty hours per week. That same year the Colored Infirmary opened on Oak Avenue and all saloons in Huntsville were ordered to close. The city also passed a tax on dogs and hired it's first dog catcher to enforce the ruling.

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

"Old Tyme Friendly Service"



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Open 8 AM - 10PM - 7 days a week
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