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No. 183
May 2008



Old Huntsville

HISTORY AND STORIES OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY



A Personal Affair

What does a man do when he sees his fourteen year old daughter beaten by her husband? Does he turn his cheek after watching his home burned to the ground?

For a quiet unassuming man like Robert Gilliam, there was only one choice and by the time he finished, the people of Huntsville would be much wiser.

Also in this issue: The Black Widow of Hazel Green

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Domie Lewter
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A Personal Affair

His name was Robert E. Lee Gilliam but most people simply called him "Gilliam, or 'ol man Gilliam." He was aged beyond his years, a product of a hard scrabble life and trying to eke out a living on a few acres of sun baked red clay that never seemed to produce enough to keep body and soul together.

Being a truck farmer was not the life Gilliam had chosen originally. He had worked most of his life at a saw mill near Gurley until an accident left his right leg crippled. Unable to find other work, he worked as a sharecropper for a time before the landlord told him he was letting another man, an able-bodied man, take over the farm.

The next several years saw Gilliam moving from farm to farm, each one poorer than the one he had left previously until finally he ended up, in 1943, on a small tract of land near Winchester Road. The land was a virtual rock pile, overgrown with no water supply, and with a dilapidated old house that probably should have fallen down years ago.

Regardless, Gilliam, with his wife and three children, made the best out of a bad situation. Soon they had several acres cleared and were growing tomatoes, squash and other vegetables. These he peddled from door to door in an ancient pickup truck he had patched together from parts salvaged from junk yards and trash heaps. On weekends, while he worked his route, his wife and children would spend the day at the Farmers' Market selling the produce to Huntsville housewives who flocked to the stalls in search of bargains on fresh vegetables.

Gilliam's family, to use a cliché, was his pride and joy. His wife, quiet spoken and with jet black hair that belied her Indian heritage, was a perfect helpmate, spending long days toiling in the fields beside him and then going home to cook dinner with never a whisper of complaint. The youngest two children, both boys, were still too young to be of much help, but their daughter Lucy, who at fourteen was already turning into a striking young lady, helped her mother sell produce at the market. Many people, captivated by the young girl's exotic beauty and quiet charm, became regular customers.

The summer of 1946 was an



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especially hot and dry one. Almost three months had passed with no measurable rainfall and small gardens that had always produced a bountiful harvest began drying up. Gilliam had always hauled water from a nearby spring for cooking and washing but his work load was increased dramatically when he was forced to begin hauling water for the parched fields.

Every day, and often three or four times a day, he would drive his truck to the nearby spring where he filled large containers with water. Returning to his garden he would use a gourd to pour a certain amount around each thirsty and wilting plant. The work was backbreaking, and with the sun seemingly getting hotter every day, it soon became apparent that something else had to be done.

Calling his family together one afternoon, Gilliam announced a change in the family's routine. He was going to dig a well. His wife would drive the truck on the route each weekend and Lucy would work at the market by herself. The two boys would remain at home with him, helping haul dirt from the proposed well. Gilliam figured a week, maybe two, would be enough to complete the job.

Though at first the job went well, with the dry, red clay yielding easily to the pick and shovel,

a few feet down he began to encounter rock. Even the most casual observer surely realized it was going to take much longer than planned. Gilliam, however, was not a man to give up easily. Every Saturday morning he would help load the truck with produce and then return to what many people had already dubbed his "rock hole."

For Lucy, however, it was exciting times. Her mother would drop her off early at the market where she would spend the day selling produce and talking to the other people who worked there. Every day seemed like another adventure to the impressionable fourteen year old girl. Probably even more exciting were the young men who visited the market to flirt with her. Without the stern looks of her mother to warn them off, there was a constant stream of young Gallahads vying for her attention.

One of the men who noticed her was William Roberts. No one disputed the fact that Roberts was a good looking man, well dressed and with a line of blarney that could charm even the most doubtful person. It was the other things about him, though, that made people whisper. Some people claimed he had been married before, although no one was sure what had happened to Mrs. Roberts.

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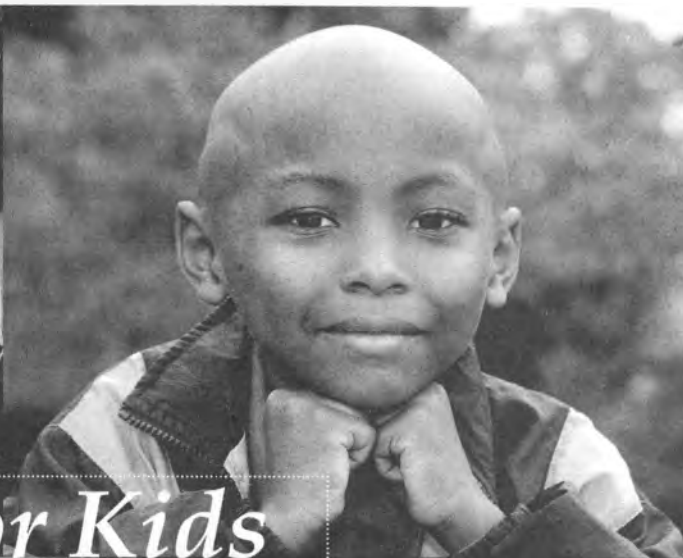


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He was also rumored to be involved in gambling and was a well-known supplier of bootleg whiskey to the G.I.'s at Huntsville Arsenal. Other people claimed he had a violent temper and was involved in many fights, some of which he resolved with the gun he always carried.

Perhaps the thing he was best known for however, was the "Clip Joint." Some time earlier he had acquired a semi-truck with a 32 foot trailer. On pay days at the Arsenal he would park the trailer close to the gates, and with the help of accomplices, would lure soldiers into the trailer where he had crooked dice tables set up. The trailer had originally been owned by C & J trucking but local wags, after noticing the faded lettering, quickly dubbed it the "Clip Joint."

Everyone was surprised when Roberts began paying attention to Lucy. Not only was she still a child, she was totally different from the hard drinking, carousing women he normally hung out with in the road houses and gambling joints.

For the first several weeks it was merely an innocent flirtation, with Roberts stopping by the produce stall to tease the young girl. Lucy had already heard of his reputation,but he was so good looking. She was also careful not to mention anything about him to her father whom she knew would not ap-

prove.

When Roberts appeared at the market one day and proposed that Lucy go for a ride with him she hesitated, explaining that she could not afford to miss any potential customers.

"How much do you make a day?" asked Roberts.

"Three or four dollars, if I'm lucky," replied Lucy.

Roberts quickly ended the conversation by laying a five dollar bill on the counter.

A pattern soon evolved. Lucy would work at the produce stand every Saturday until lunch time when Roberts would pick up her. Lucy was always insistent on being back at the market before 6:00 when her mother arrived to take her home.

Gilliam, preoccupied with digging the well and trying to support his family, had no idea of the courtship until one afternoon, about the time school let out, when Roberts and Lucy drove up.

Gilliam paused, laying the shovel aside, as he watched the couple walk toward him. He knew something was going on, Lucy was dressed in different clothes than the ones she wore to school that morning.

"Pa, we got married today."

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Gilliam, stunned by the unexpected events, stood silently as Lucy explained how Roberts had met her at school that morning and they had driven across the state line where they found a justice of the peace who had agreed to marry them.

By this time the rest of the family had gathered around Lucy wanting to hear every detail. Roberts, not caring much for the emotions of the moment, wandered over to the well Gilliam had been working on.

Gilliam, sensing the need to say something to Roberts but not knowing what, walked over to the well with him. Finally, after what seemed like an eternity, he asked, "You going to take care of her?" It was as much of a statement as it was a question.

"Get serious, old man," Roberts replied in an almost sarcastic manner. Then almost as an afterthought added, "You still working on this rock hole? The rains are going to come soon and you won't need it."

Gilliam, surprised at the sarcasm from his daughter's new husband, was at a loss for

words. After a few moments of awkward hesitation he replied, "May as well finish it, might come in handy some day."

That evening, after the couple had left, Gilliam sat on the porch smoking his pipe, thinking about the day's events. If he had his druthers, none of it would have ever happened. "But still, Lucy was almost a grown woman. Her mother was only 15 when I married her and it worked out well. Maybe that boy will take care of her and everything will be all right."

Left unsaid, but in the back of his mind, was the realization that poor people just naturally married young. With no education, no money and no hope for a future, the only thing a girl had to look forward to was getting married.

The first sign of trouble came several weeks later, on a Sunday afternoon, when Gilliam and his wife stopped by to visit Lucy at her new home. Although Roberts was supposedly making good money from his various illegal enterprises, little if any of it went home with him. Most of it went to gambling and

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drinking. The house where they resided, in Dallas Village, was actually a bootleg joint owned by someone else but the person owed Roberts money and had agreed to let the couple live in the front part rent free while he continued bootlegging in the back.

Lucy was thrilled to see her parents, even in such shabby surroundings. "This is just temporary," she explained apologetically. "We're going to get us a big house just as soon as he gets on his feet."

Even though it was almost three in the afternoon Roberts was still in bed. "He had some business to take care of last night and didn't get in until late."

Perhaps wakened by the sound of voices, Roberts staggered groggily into the room where he dropped heavily into a chair. From his looks it was apparent that he was still suffering the effects from the previous night's "business." Ignoring Gilliam, Roberts abruptly ordered Lucy to get him something to eat. When she didn't respond immediately, Roberts grabbed her arm and shoved her roughly toward the kitchen with the admonition to "make sure it's fit to eat"

Noticing Gilliam sitting in the corner of the room. Roberts explained sarcastically, "We've still got some kinks to work out but she'll learn."

With Lucy no longer helping her family, Gilliam returned to driving his produce route every

Saturday while his wife worked at the market. Still, he continued digging the well, even if only for an hour or two a week. He had struck solid rock and progress was measured in inches as he laboriously chiseled at it with a hammer and crowbar.

The family, knowing Roberts didn't care for their company, stopped visiting Lucy at her house. Instead, several times a month, she would walk the 5 or 6 miles to her parents' home where she would spend the day. When it came time to return home, Gilliam would drive her, letting her out about a block down the street. "My husband doesn't want me to take any fa-



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vors from anyone and if he sees me taking a ride from someone he might get upset."

Despite the many warning signs, Gilliam held his peace. Possibly he was hoping that time would work matters out. Most likely however, he was a product of his time, a culture where no one interfered in another person's marriage and where divorce was unspeakable. Never in the history of the Gilliam family had a couple even separated, much less divorced. Making matters even worse was the fact that most people considered a divorced woman little better than a "lady of the night."

Lucy's visits became less frequent, but when she did visit there would often be signs of bruises on her arms and neck. "Just an accident," she would explain. "I bumped into something." One hot sweltering day she showed up wearing a long sleeved flannel shirt. When her mother insisted, Lucy rolled the sleeves up revealing dark ugly bruises. There were even more bruises on her back and legs.

"It was my fault," explained Lucy while wiping tears from her eyes. "I made him upset and I shouldn't have."

Her mother called Gilliam into the room and explained what happened. After examining the bruises himself, he stood silent for a long time looking at his wife and daughter, trying in his mind to verbalize the words he had been putting off for so long.

"You don't have to go back," he finally said. "We'll go to the courthouse and get papers."

The words stunned Lucy and her mother. They both realized how hard it was for Gilliam to

accept a divorce in the family.

The decision was made by Lucy. "Things will get better, I just know they will and he's expecting me to have dinner on the table so I have to go."

That evening Gilliam worked in the well. Long after the sun had gone down he continued pounding the hard rock with a vengeance he had never known before. He was no longer crushing simple rocks, he was crushing his helplessness and despair with a cold rage for which he knew there was no outlet.

The next morning Gilliam drove into Huntsville to talk to Sheriff Blakemore. His second cousin's oldest daughter was married to the sheriff and though Gilliam didn't consider him a close friend, they had what he called a "passable" relationship.

After listening to Gilliam's

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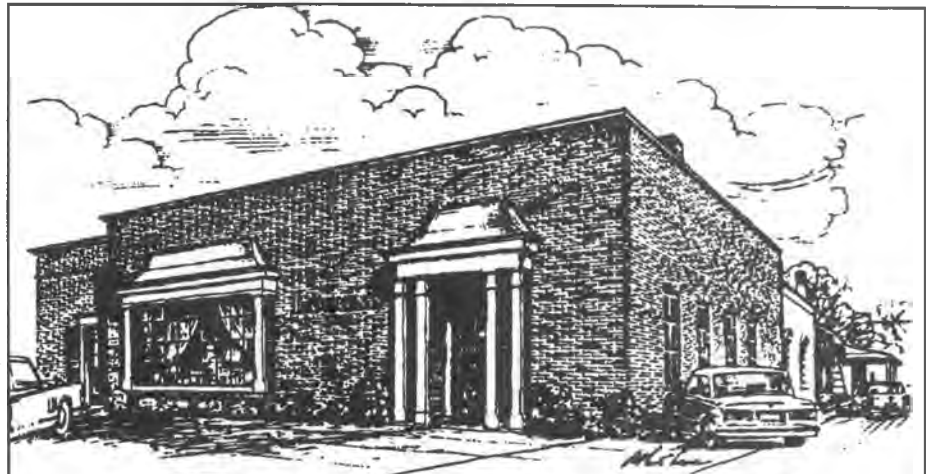
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Evan Troup, age 4

account of the bruises, the sheriff had but one question. "Will she swear out a warrant?"

"I don't think so," replied Gilliam.

"There ain't nothing I can do then. It's all up to her."

Never-the-less, that afternoon the sheriff stopped by to talk with Roberts. Though he had no legal basis for the visit, he was undoubtedly hoping a bluff, or a threat, might accomplish the same thing.

Roberts merely listened to the sheriff with thinly disguised contempt and then ordered him off the property. "You ain't got no right meddling in peoples' marriages," he shouted. "This is a private matter!"

Several days later Gilliam and his family had just sat down

at the supper table and were about to say the blessing when a neighbor stopped by to say he had seen Lucy at the hospital. He had been visiting a relative, he explained, and just as he was leaving, he saw Lucy being treated by a doctor. "I think she's got a broken arm because I saw them putting a cast on it."

Gilliam said nothing but the look of rage on his face made his intent clear. He had just reached for his coat and was about to walk out the door when his wife ordered him to sit back down first. "We are going to say the blessing first and then you can go do what you have to do."

Gilliam rushed to the hos-

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pital where the nurses told him that Lucy had been taken away by her husband. Next he drove to their house but even from a distance it was evident that it was vacant. The only other place he could think of was the "Clip Joint." He had never been there but had heard the rumors of the crooked dice games Roberts ran from the trailer.

Even from several hundred feet away Gilliam knew he was at the right place by the loud music and profanity piercing the night air. Entering the trailer he immediately saw Lucy sitting in a corner. Her arm was in a cast, and her hair hung limply across her face. On her right cheek was a bruise that was just starting to turn a dark purple. "Come on," Gilliam said. "We're going home."

Roberts had been on his knees in the back of the trailer shooting dice when he noticed the old man. Springing to his feet he ordered, "Leave her be. This is a private thing between her and me!"

Gilliam paused for a brief second, eyeing all the men in the trailer before letting his gaze rest on Roberts. "Boy, I ought to kill

you right now but I'm not going to. I'm going to take my daughter home and you can go on about whatever you do. Just don't never let me see you again."

Something about the unarmed old crippled man; something more than the barely controlled wrath in his voice caused the men in the trailer to freeze in their footsteps as they watched him escort his daughter out.

If Gilliam had hoped that would be the end of it, he was sadly mistaken. In the morning's early hours, before the sun came up, the family was awakened by the sound of an automobile and loud cursing. Gilliam quickly grabbed his overalls and started for the front door when he was startled by the sound of breaking glass, followed almost instantly by a wall of flames.

Even with all the noise and confusion of the inferno, the whole family swore they heard

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Roberts laughing as the car drove away.

Although no one was hurt in "No one, absolutely no one, crosses me and gets away with it," he boasted.

Most of the patrons, however, tried to ignore Roberts. The incidents of the past few days had disgusted them. Probably what bothered them the most, though no one would say it out loud, was the fact that they had let it happen without doing anything.


Suddenly the whole place got quiet as people focused on a solitary figure standing in the doorway, holding a shotgun leveled at Roberts. Some people said it was 'ol man Gilliam, but other people, probably wiser, said there was no resemblance.

Without saying a word, letting the motions of his gun give the orders, the figure directed Roberts outside. A backward glance insured that no one would follow.

Some people claimed to have heard a gunshot moments later. Others, perhaps wiser, insisted it was just a car backfiring.

Much later, when the bar patrons finally ventured outside, there was no sign of Gilliam or Roberts. Although some people later remembered a pool of blood in the gravel parking lot, they insisted it was from a stray dog that had been run over.

By the next morning almost everyone in Huntsville had heard of the evening's strange events. Neighbors of Gilliam, embarrassed from not going to his aid, drove by the burned out homestead. The place



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looked much the same as it had the day before with personal belongings scattered across the yard and partially burnt timbers swaying in the wind. There was no sign of Gilliam though.

The only sign that someone had been there since the day before was the well. It had been completely filled up, with a mound of dirt rounded off on top, almost like a....

Roberts was never seen again. Some people in Huntsville, perhaps a lot wiser than most, said he probably left town suddenly due to "unexpected business."

A person would almost have to be a native Huntsvillian, with roots going back many generations, to understand how people suddenly "forgot" the whole affair. Possibly they felt, as Sheriff Blakemore was later quoted saying, "It was a personal affair."

Lady Swallows Snake

From 1913 newspaper

Miss Mamie Nolan, of Holmes Ave., has been in the habit of drinking water directly from the aqueduct by putting tier mouth to the tap. She will not do it anymore, however, for she had an experience today that showed her the folly of such a course.

While she was drinking, a water snake about ten inches long passed through the faucet, and went halfway down her throat.


She could not yell, but she managed to attract attention by throwing herself down on the floor and kicking. The snake was pulled from her throat, and she fully recovered from her fright in an hour, but her throat is still sore.



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Scandal In A Small Town

When John C. and Emeline were married on Christmas Eve, 1829, no one would have predicted the unhappy and scandalous end their union would see. Emeline was many years younger than John - a prosperous and distinguished land owner - a steady man who boasted about the fact that he had come to Huntsville with his parents in 1807, the year it was founded. He was the ideal husband for the young Emeline, or so everyone thought.

Emeline was barely 15 when they married, and was lighthearted and girlish. She possessed a trim figure and an extremely romantic and imaginative mind. In this last characteristic, she and her husband were totally different.

The couple were married in Courtland and moved to Huntsville after the wedding. They began their married life in the home of his mother, about a mile or so outside of Huntsville.

They lived with John's two sisters older ladies who had never married. Both spinsters took an immediate liking to the bright and flirtatious young woman and the three soon became good friends.

When his mother died in 1831, John and Emeline moved to the brick home that stood at the corner of Greene and Randolph, where the business of John Cockerham was once located.

On August 9, 1836 the trouble really began. There was a high board fence that surrounded the home, and on that

day a handbill was dropped over it. It announced that a certain Henry Riley, "state manager of many of the principal theaters in the Union," would present an entertainment consisting of recitations, imitations and songs.

This handbill was found in the garden by Emeline's favorite Negro girl, Ann, and plans were made to attend. John, however, was not a theater-goer and chose to stay home that night and read. So Emeline, with anticipation of a good time, set off for the event with her Ann.

The entertainment was to be held on the lot directly across Lincoln street from the Jewish synagogue, diagonally across the block from her home.

Arriving at the theater, Emeline went directly to the choice seats always reserved for the ladies at the front. The first act was horribly boring to Emeline, and she fidgeted badly. But the second act was one she would remember forever.

When Henry Riley first en-



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tered the stage, Emeline was struck. Here was her ideal of a man. He began to give his imitations of "celebrated" performers. His glance fell often on Emeline, as she was sitting in the very front row and looking absolutely beautiful and flushed. Henry was quite intrigued by the young and lively girl. The packed house all seemed to be aware of the intense feeling between the girl on the front row and the handsome actor.

In a few days a note from Emeline came to Henry, brought by the servant girl. He didn't respond, as he had asked a few questions of the tavern owner and had found out that Emeline was married to quite a powerful man in the community.

Another note was delivered in two days.

"Henry, if you will come down to the theater this evening, I will go there and tell you where you may see me. Let no one know of this, not for your life. Mr. C. is in the country, I am all alone. Your Emeline."

In no time this innocent flirtation exploded into a full-blown affair. Almost everyone in town was talking about it by now, except for John. Gossip followed them where ever they went. Emeline tried to ignore it. She thought of Henry every waking moment. Even though she was acting cheerful and as if nothing bothered her, her heart felt desolate. Emeline wrote in her diary every day. She was infatuated with Henry. "My heart wanders like a drop from the ocean which cannot meet its kindred drop, like a voice which in all Nature finds no echo. Keep that ring I sent you in remembrance of me. One who loves you. Farewell. Farewell."

A few days later, Henry met Emeline

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John T. Henegar
President

again in the garden behind her home. Her yard adjoined the lot that the theater was located on and there was a fence between the two lots. She slipped out in the dark, muggy night and met Henry. They spent more time together than they had planned, talking in whispers. When they separated and Emeline ran toward the house, John stepped out the back door, anger clouding his face.

For several weeks John had ignored the whispers and gossip he had heard around him. But before he could stop, he found himself accusing Emeline of meeting someone in the dark. She remained silent, He demanded to know where she had been for so long. Once inside the house, John shook her violently and yelled all kinds of accusations at her. He demanded answers, but Emeline remained strangely quiet. John hated himself for losing complete control, but couldn't help it.

Hours later, unable to sleep, Emeline was torn between loyalty to John and love for Henry. She thought of telling John everything - they had not been getting along at all recently and she knew how unhappy he was. But she knew if she told John he would kill Henry. Her eyes finally closed in troubled sleep, her face wet with tears.

On September 19 the actor prepared to depart. His play was nearing its end when the servant

girl brought him another note. It said that Emeline's husband had missed a favorite picture of her - the one that Emeline had given to Henry on one of their favorite nights together. She had to get it back, and in the note told him not to write her again.

The last few weeks had been the happiest Emeline had ever known. Henry adored her, would recite poetry to her that he had written himself. She felt like a girl again, wonderful and without a care. When they touched it was the most delicious feeling she had ever felt. She wanted to leave everything and run away with Henry, but knew that John would never permit them to have a happy life together.

She didn't hear from Henry for some time. He was now in

Tuscumbia. Emeline missed him terribly and wrote, "Come to Huntsville to see me. I was once a bright jewel but you have robbed me of its luster."

John was hoping their life could again be what it was during the first few years of their marriage. Since August he had been anything but a happy man. When his mind was not on the severe problems he had in his business, he brooded often about the ugly and malicious rumors about his wife which had originated among the Negroes. Disturbing tales had been brought to him directly by his sisters, who by now had had a falling out with Emeline. Emeline and John's relationship had continued to improve slightly, however, even though

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she had changed and was not the happy and light-hearted girl she used to be. John noticed that she was cool to him, and spent much time looking out on the garden. She never kissed him now.

A familiar face emerged around the middle of December - that of Henry Riley. Rumors traveled rapidly - why was he here, without his theatrical company, unannounced, and without any business? Then around 2 o'clock on the afternoon of December 19, two men "minding their own business" saw Riley approaching along Randolph, from the direction of the square.

As the actor passed Emeline's home, the two men saw the blinds of a window in the second story cautiously open and a piece of paper dropped to Riley's feet. He hastily looked around him, picked up the paper and quickly walked back toward the courthouse.

The two men could not keep information of this type to themselves, so they quickly went to the office of their friend, attorney James W. McClung and told him what they had seen. McClung was a friend of John C.'s, so he immediately rushed to the land office with the story. After hearing McClung's second-hand version, John C. sat back in his chair with a tired look on his face. He said that if there was enough evidence to prove that Emeline was unfaithful, he would proceed with a divorce.

John C. and McClung found Henry Riley a few minutes later and wrestled him to the ground in front of the Bell Tavern, aided by a few curious bystanders. They managed to pry the piece of paper out of his hand and opened it when they got back to the land office. It read as follows.

"I am so much pleased to see

you here once more, but it is impossible for me to speak to you. I am still the same and ever shall be. Return home, Henry, and forget me, if you please, but if it is ever in my power to become the bride of H., with honor I will, and as soon as I can, you shall know it.

Keep my secret. Never betray me so long as you live. Write a letter this evening, and tonight, after tea, slip it through the window blinds of the porch. I will be there playing the piano. Adieu, Henry, Yours."


John was still not satisfied with this latest proof, so he summoned his very best friend, Samuel Cruse. He insisted that they should go to the tavern where Henry was staying and inquire as to whether or not Riley had any luggage with him. When the tavern keeper indicated that he did have a trunk upstairs, John and Samuel wasted no time in going upstairs and finding the trunk, over much protest from the tavern keeper.

Up until this moment, John still did not believe that Emeline had been unfaithful to him. He remembered the early days in their marriage when every day was happy. He knew it could be like that again, if he would just be patient. But upon opening the trunk and gazing at its contents, John knew there was no more hope. He felt his heart sink

within his chest, and tried to fight back tears of rage.


The trunk contained very little, just a few clothes, a hat and a large bundle wrapped in a theater program. When they opened the bundle a small miniature of Emeline fell out. There was a picture of her in there, one that John had taken the day

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after their wedding. Letters, all in Emeline's handwriting, made up most of the bundle. John did not have to read many of them to know the truth about Henry and Emeline. Samuel said later that John seemed to age twenty years in just those few minutes.

That night, after a long deliberation, John knew what he had to do. After being called into the parlor, Emeline could tell by the look on his face what was going to happen. John told her that she had to leave. Their marriage was over. When Emeline began to weep, John announced that she would be sent back to her father's home on the very next stage out, which left on December 21. She departed between 11 and 12 midnight, with no one seeing her off. John sued for divorce the following March. The trial did not come up until October, and after reviewing all of the evidence for two long days, Judge George W. Lane ruled in favor of the plaintiff.

Emeline's only comment about the decision was that she believed that John's associates

had approached him under the guise of friendship and really desired to destroy his happiness and her reputation. Saying thus, Emeline was forever driven away from the home on the corner which still stands as a monument to her ill fated romance.

"Low Self-Esteem Support group will meet Tuesday at 7pm. Be sure and use the back door."
Seen in local church bulletin

Cracklin Cornbread

2 cups stone ground yellow wheat meal mix, 1 1/2 cups milk or buttermilk, 1 egg beaten, 1/2 cup oil, 1 cup cracklins, 1/2 teaspoon onion powder, 1/4 teaspoon garlic powder, salt if desired.

Mix all together in bowl til smooth. Pour 1/4 cup oil in skillet and heat. Bake at 450 for about 25 minutes.

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The Joseph J. Bradley, Jr. Band

by Butch Crabtree

In the summer of 1925, a group of musicians in the Merrimack community met at the home of George Davis for the purpose of forming a band. Mr. John Hay, a noted band director of the time, was enlisted to direct the new band.

Most of the band members worked in the mill and many of them did not own the instrument they were to play. Band instruments being expensive, especially the larger ones, they were not able to afford them and asked the Merrimack Manufacturing Company for help in the purchase of the needed instruments. Mr. Joseph J. Bradley, Jr., agent of the mill at this time, was extremely excited about the project and gave the needed financial help to get the band organized. In acknowledgement of his assistance, the group called itself the "Joseph J. Bradley, Jr. Band."

Over the next nine years the band gained the reputation of being one of the finest bands in the area. U.S. Senator Almon, upon hearing the group, compared it favorably with many of the great musical organizations he had heard. J. Emory Pierce, editor of "The Huntsville Daily Times", tagged the group "The Million Dollar Band" and the name stuck.

The group played all over the state and performed on radio station WSM in Nashville. It was called on to perform at most important ceremonies and played for the dedication of three area bridges - Decatur, Whitesburg, and Scottsboro.

The band disbanded in 1934, having distinguished itself for the nine years of its existence.

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Heard On the Street

by *Cathey Carney*



Congratulations to **Cecil Brooks** for being the first correct caller to guess **Johnny Johnston** as the April Photo of the Month. Cecil is an old Lincoln boy too who worked at the Lincoln Supply Co. and drove a delivery truck when he was 15 years old

The Huntsville Division Alumni Association of the Thiokol Chemical Corp. that was here in Huntsville for years had their annual Spring Breakfast with good attendance. Some of those we spoke with were **Betsy & Jake Reep**, the beautiful **Sue Powers**, **Jack & Judy Godsey**, **John D. Brown**, **Dick Wall** and **Gene King**.

We met **Marion Gibson** who is an Air Force Vet and travels to school speaking about his experiences in WWII. On a recent trip to a 6th grade class Marion told the kids about rescuing abandoned pets during the war, feeding and taking care of them. The class found it fascinating, as pets are not normally thought of during a war, but they suffer trauma just as much as the humans who are affected.

While at the breakfast we

also saw **John L. Williams**, **Helen Acuff**, **David Jones** and his sweet wife **Faye**, along with **Patti** and **Don Wilson** and **Richard Click**. On our way out we were able to catch up with **Jim Lee** and his pretty wife **Ola Ann Lee**. It was quite a gathering.

We were SO proud that the city council has voted to name a bridge for **C.B. "Bill" Miller**. Bill has been building bridges in this area for over 40 years and this honor is well deserved. The bridge is just west of the Embassy Suites Hotel.

Happy Birthday to my dear friend **Cheryl Tribble**. Cheryl lives in Woodstock, GA. but has made many trips to Huntsville and just loves it here.

Glenn Watson is helping to make sure that our Big Spring Park remains as a recreational area only, and doesn't become all commercial property. A study will be done to develop

an ordinance that will dedicate identified park space for recreational use only unless voters authorize other use.

It's a wonderful place to go, especially now with the trees blooming, to take kids and grandparents and just feed the ducks.

The maintenance man at Morningside Assisted Living is **Tom Sanborn**, who recently suffered a heart attack. He's on the mend tho, and many people are pulling for him!

Since I'll soon have a hip replacement with **Dr. Louis Horn**, I had to go by the Pre-admission center in the Medical Mall. I met the nicest lady there, **Susan Jones**, who is an RN. Wish me luck!

It was great speaking with **Miriam Halsey** recently. She and sweet hubby **Will** took a trip down to Hollywood, Fl. last month to be part of a surprise birthday celebration for Miriam's sister **Roshelle Walker**

Photo of The Month

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

Call (256) 534-0502

Hint: This little girl lives in one house and plays hostess in her other one.



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who just turned 90. Roshelle's children **Eddie Walker** and **Shelley Hilton** coordinated the event, which turned out to be a huge success. People came from everywhere, including Miriam and Will's daughter **Patty Bidwell**, with husband **David**, and **Suzy Rivas**, their oldest daughter. Roshelle has belonged to the Baptist church all her life, and many of her church friends were there as well.

Matthew Tucker turned 2! The handsome son of our favorite mailman **Jeff Tucker** and wife **Kelly** is such a sweet little guy!

A very special birthday wish is being sent out by **Susan Bernard**, who is a therapist at Huntsville Hospital Therapy & Sports Center at the Medical Mall. Her brother **Mike Cravan** lives in Odenton, Md. and turned 57 in April. Susan loves him dearly and can't wait to see him again.

Rebecca Temple, owner of Rebecca's in 5 Points, is so proud of her son **Jason Temple**. He was recently promoted to Commander in the Navy and is stationed in San Antonio. He lives there with his wife **Shannon** and their two girls **Lillian** (7) and **Claire** (3). Congratulations to you, Jason!

The historic Lowry House held a free open house & tour during April and many enjoyed going through the home and hearing the story of the ghost who has been seen there. Many of these old older homes in Huntsville have had ghostly incidents, but this one is a doozy!

We had so many April birthdays. One of our favorite ladies is **Mildred Helton**, who turned 87 during the month. Her sister **Hattie Gentle** will be 93 in July. Some good genes there! **Margaret Bondar** is Mildred's sweet granddaughter

who helps take good care of her.

Congratulations to Huntsville Hospital on being named as a primary stroke center.

Kelly Martin Shaver was 98 when he died in April. He was the beloved father of **Brenda Webb**, and grandfather of **Cristi Webb**. His other four daughters, grandchildren and other family and friends will always cherish his memory.

One of **Glenda Huffstetler's** best friends in the world was **Brenda Bodeker** of Madison. Brenda was only 63 when she passed away during the month. We send our deepest sympathy to Glenda, as well as the many friends and family who will miss her dearly.

Happy Birthday to **Ruth Hursh**, **Barb Eyestone's** mom. She is a really delightful lady. Barb's husband **Ron Eyestone** has a birthday coming up in May - We love you guys!

We were so very sorry to hear that **Joe Reid**, of Reid's Hardware, had died recently. He had published a story about the love of his life, wife **Mary Gene**. We know that he is with her now.

Karen Maroon's sweet mom **Helen Miller** is turning 90 in May. Karen and her husband **Dick** will celebrate with a party with family and friends. Happy

Birthday!

Don't forget that the Farmer's Market on Cook Ave. just south of Oakwood has local, healthy produce for you.

Congratulations to **Jim Hudson** and his great team on the grand opening of his company Hudson Alpha Institute for Biotechnology. We're really proud of you!

That's all for this month!

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Mother's Day Treats by Nancy

Pineapple Casserole

2 lg. cans chunk pineapple
 1 c. sugar
 5 T. flour
 1 1/2 c. Cheddar cheese, grated
 1 c. Ritz cracker crumbs
 1 stick butter, melted

Drain your pineapple, grease a baking dish and pour in the fruit. Mix flour & sugar together, pour over pineapple. Drizzle butter over all and bake for 30 minutes at 350 degrees.

Easy Sardine Spread

1 pkg. cream cheese, softened
 1 can boneless sardines
 2 dashes Tabasco
 2 T. grated onion
 1 T. lemon juice

Drain sardines, pat to dry and mash. Mix all ingredients well and serve with crackers.

Cafe Granita

4 c. Espresso coffee, prepared
 4 T. sugar
 1 c. whipping cream
 1 T. sugar

Mix espresso & 4 table-
 spoons sugar in bowl. Chill in
 fridge then freeze until it be-
 comes slushy. Whip cream with
 sugar til stiff. When ready to
 serve, place dollop of whipped
 cream in each parfait glass, fol-
 low with espresso, then top with
 whipped cream. Serve it quick
 before it melts!

Spoon Bread

1 c. boiling water
 1/2 c. white corn meal
 1/2 c. milk
 1/2 t. salt
 1 1/2 t. baking powder
 1 T. soft butter
 2 eggs, well beaten

Pour water over real

cornmeal. Add other ingredients
 and beat well. Bake in 1 quart
 baking dish or cake pan in a
 400 degree oven til batter is just
 set. Serve bread hot from oven
 with butter and honey, or syrup.

Green Cabbage Salad

4 c. crisp, shredded cabbage
 1/2 sm. jar pimiento slices
 1/2 green pepper, diced
 1 t. celery seed
 1 t. salt
 1/4 t. black or white pepper
 3 t. Dijon mustard
 4 T. sugar
 3/4 c. garlic wine vinegar
 1 garlic clove, minced
 1/2 c. salad oil

Wash, drain and combine
 veges in a serving bowl. Put re-
 maining ingredients into a
 blender and blend til salad
 dress is thoroughly mixed. Add
 dressing to the salad just be-
 fore serving. Left over dressing

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- 1 large can pears
- 1 sml. pkg. cream cheese
- 1/2 c. finely chopped pecans
- Red food coloring

Drain the pears and pat dry. Mix small package of cream cheese with finely chopped pecans. Spread on bottom of pear halves and place them face down on a lettuce leaf on your serving dish. Color tops of pears with a little red food color, thus the name.

Sausage-Bean Chowder

- 1 lb. pork sausage, crumbled
- 2 cans cannellini beans
- 1 lg. can diced tomatoes
- 1 qt. water
- 1 lg. onion, chopped
- 1/2 green pepper, chopped
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 1/2 t. salt
- 1/2 t. garlic powder
- 1/2 t. thyme leaves
- 1/4 t. black pepper
- 1 c. diced potatoes

Cook the sausage til brown, drain on paper towel s and pat to remove excess grease. Pour fat from the pan. In a large pot, combine beans, tomatoes, on-

ion, bay leaf and seasonings. Add sausage and simmer covered for an hour. Add potatoes and green pepper and cook 15 to 30 minutes and potatoes are tender. Skim fat and serve.

Huntsville Chess Pie

- 8-inch unbaked pie crust
- 1/2 c. butter, room temp
- 1 c. sugar
- 2 eggs, separated
- 1 1/2 t. white corn meal
- 2 T. heavy cream
- 1/2 t. vanilla extract
- Dash salt

Bake pie shell in very hot oven (450 degrees) til baked but not browned. Cream butter, sugar and egg yolks together. Add cornmeal mixed with the cream and vanilla. Fold in egg whites beaten with salt til stiff. Pour into pie shell and cook at 400 degrees for 5 minutes. Reduce heat to 350 and bake 10-12 minutes longer and filling is just set. If top browns too much put a piece of foil over top and finish baking. Serve pie while warm.

This is the actual recipe from an old Huntsville restaurant that was here in the early 1900's. It was reported that people would make special trips to Huntsville for it.



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Somewhere in France

October 4, 1918
W. B. Hampton
803 East Clinton St.
Huntsville, Al

Dear Mother,

I am in receipt of your letter of August 29 and I am very glad indeed to hear from you, as it has been some time since I have received a letter.

I have just gotten back from the front trenches to rest up a little. I suppose you have seen in the paper an account of our big drive on the Somme front in which we captured the Hindenburg line, the strongest point on the Western front. We had very little trouble taking it. This Hindenburg line was a solid concrete fortification containing dugouts from fifty to a hundred feet in depth and were large enough to hold about 250 men. The fixtures within these dugouts were equal to those of any large hotel consisting of large iron bedsteads, heaters, lights, water, etc. In other words, completely furnished.

Our artillery put on a barrage and we advanced behind this barrage. The Germans ran in these dugouts and were short of time in order to get out before we were right on top of them. We captured seven thou-

sand prisoners. At least, they had counted that many at the time of this writing.

We are fighting with the Australians, the best fighters in the world They are very fine boys and they think there are none in the war equal to the American boys. When we were relieved, the Australian cavalry made an attack on the Germans and the last time we heard from them, they were still advancing and capturing prisoners by the thousands.

It sure is some fun going over the top. The way we went over the German resistance was very slight. We got all kinds of souvenirs, watches, pistols, field glasses, diamond rings, German money. One of the boys got a \$200 diamond ring. I got some money, six pistols, several watches, etc. I am enclosing a two mark bill, about fifty cents in our money.

You have seen pictures of battlefields after a battle. It is something, dead men and horses piled up over a large space of ground. We lost a lot of men. Some of my best friends from Memphis were killed, but it could not be helped.

I had my Liberty bond made out to you, and it was paid up in July, and I suppose you have gotten it by now. I have some money to send home and you can place it in the bank to my credit.

I think I will close for now, I send love to all. Write as soon

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Today, Special Olympics stands as a leader in the field of intellectual disability. Most importantly, Special Olympics has sharpened the focus on its mission as not just "nice," but critical, not just as a sports organization for people with intellectual disabilities, but also as an effective catalyst for social change.

Children and adults with intellectual disabilities who participate in Special Olympics develop improved physical fitness and motor skills, greater self confidence and a more positive self-image. They grow mentally, socially and spiritually and, through their activities, exhibit boundless courage and enthusiasm. enjoy the rewards of friendship and ultimately discover not only new abilities and talents but "their voices" as well.

To get involved, contact your local Special Olympics Program.

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The Unforgettable Count Rhoshard

by Gerald Petty

Many books have been written about Huntsville and Madison County's history, but few have ever touched upon the subject of Count Rhoshard.

Apparently, this has been a "very sensitive" subject for several "local prominent" businessmen. Hopefully enough years have elapsed, so that they too can see the humor in their folly.

No one knew exactly who he was or where he came from. Some said he was from a noble family of Austria. Some said he was from Czechoslovakia, while others believed him to be the son of a Georgia sharecropper. Whoever he was, or wherever he originated, Count Rhoshard left his mark on Alabama.

The Count first appeared in Huntsville in late May of 1924. His smooth, polished appearance and European-styled clothing drew admiring looks everywhere he went. Count Rhoshard spent his first morning in Huntsville seeing the city and making conversation along the streets and in the shops around the square. That afternoon he presented himself in the office of one of the area's most prominent businessmen.

The Count produced documents

identifying himself as an agent for the state of Alabama. He then explained to his totally impressed host that the state, while having built several bridges over the Tennessee River, had no interest in maintaining them, and wanted to turn them over to private ownership.

Count Rhoshard further explained that the State would authorize the owners to operate the bridges as toll bridges. He pointed out that even after deductions for maintenance, the

operation would be quite lucrative given the number of people who used the bridges on a daily basis. The local entrepreneur was intrigued by the idea but wanted to continue the discussions the following day.

The following day's meeting was attended by Count Rhoshard, the original businessman, and two other men with whom he had discussed the proposal. The three had formed a corporation under which to buy at least one of

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the bridges in question. The deal was made, and the Count told the men he would be back in a couple of days to collect the money and give them the deed to the bridge.

Two days later Count Rhoshard appeared before the three new bridge owners with a deed, signed by the Governor, placing the bridge in the possession of the newly formed corporation. He collected \$1,500 as the initial down payment, issued a proper receipt, and was gone.

June 1st brought some excitement to residents living around the area of the now private bridge. When they tried to cross the bridge, as they did every day, they found a toll collector who told them the trip would cost them five cents (eight cents for a two-way crossing made the same day.) After considerable cursing and name-calling, someone decided to send for the Sheriff.

The Sheriff, arriving late in the afternoon, was shown the receipt and the deed, signed by the Governor. He wasn't sure what to do, but decided to order the toll-taker off the bridge until the matter could be settled. A telegram to Montgomery, and the scam was discovered.

Several parties, armed with rope for lynching, scoured the countryside, but the Count was nowhere to be found. "I told y'all he's from Georgia," one of the

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searchers remarked.

The Count next surfaced in Birmingham. This time, instead of stalking the business district, he found a junk dealer on the outskirts of town. Once again he produced identification. This time the papers showed him to be an assistant to the Mayor.

Count Rhoshard explained that he had sought out this particular business because he needed a big and confidential job done, and knew of the good reputation of the owner. He told the junk dealer that the city was fearful that the Vulcan statue, located at the fairground, was becoming unsafe, being now twenty years old.

City officials, he said, had decided to have it removed. The Count then offered to sell the statue to the dealer for scrap if he would remove it. The wife, skeptical of her husband's big deal, went into Birmingham and sought out city officials who told her that no plan had even been discussed for the destruction of the Vulcan.

The woman hurried home to find her husband already making plans to claim his grand acquisition. Upon hearing what his wife had learned, he immediately stopped what he was doing and went in search of the man who had sold him the Vulcan.

Count Rhoshard was not about to stay around, and he was never found. News reached Alabama about eighteen months later that Count Rhoshard had been caught in Arizona trying to sell a tract of government land and sentenced to prison. The same report stated that recognizing his ability as a printer, the prison had given the Count a job in the prison print shop.

He was a model prisoner for some months and did beautiful work. One morning, the warden received in the mail a pardon for Count Rhoshard. The pardon was signed by the Governor and was accompanied by a letter in which the Governor instructed the warden to free the Count, who was to be sent on an important mission for the State.

The warden was further instructed to give the Count \$1,000 and a vehicle so he could carry out the important business the Governor had assigned him. The following day the warden called the

Governor's office to confirm the release of Count Rhoshard.

The Governor had not sent the letter. It was the work of Count Rhoshard, and the prison print shop.

Count Rhoshard was never seen again in this country. He next appeared in Paris, France where during WWII he was reported to have served as an agent for the British government.

Information for this story was taken from "The World's Greatest Con Men" by James G. Butler.

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Green King was a moonshiner. He had the reputation for making the "most potent" and the "most best" moonshine in Madison County.

Unfortunately, he liked to drink his own product. Saturdays would find him downtown around the old courthouse square, peddling his wares, and as the sun got higher, so did Green King. And every weekend he would be arrested, to spend the rest of the weekend in jail.

Finally, the judge, after tiring of seeing King in his court every Monday, asked the defendant why he persisted in drinking whiskey.

"Because, your honor," Green replied, "I don't figure the town water is safe to drink."

Pounding his gavel, the exasperated judge fined the defen-

dant two dollars and fifty cents, sentenced him to ninety-nine years, and suspended the sentence on the condition that Green would "hereafter forever drink only buttermilk whenever he came to town."

Old Huntsville Trivia

1811 - Residents of what is now Madison County passed the first Water Pollution Law, making it unlawful to pollute Indian Creek.

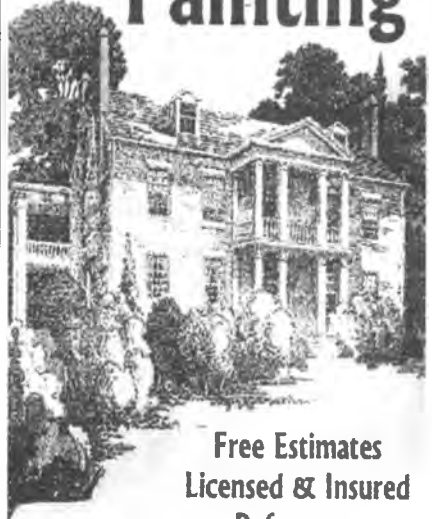
1818 - The first library in Alabama is formed in Huntsville. The library was organized and set up at John Boardman's printing office, on the East side of Madison Street.

1821 - Fifteen prisoners break out of jail. When recaptured, they complain that the jail was too cold.

1857 - Browns Grocery advertises eggs for 12 1/2 cents per dozen.



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The Black Widow

The mysterious deaths that took place in a home near Hazel Green may have been accidental, or may have been violently purposeful. The only sign left of Elizabeth's six husbands was an old hat rack upon which hung six hats - one for each. For some curious reason known only to her, she kept the hat rack in the foyer of her home, in plain view, perhaps as a morbid reminder, or maybe as a warning to the next unfortunate lover.

The ante-bellum home, recently burned to the ground, was built on the site of an Indian mound about a mile east of Hazel Green. The original log cabin was erected in 1817 in the heart of a 500-acre plantation by Alexander Jeffries, an early Madison County settler. He was an older man, who met and immediately became infatuated with the young widow.

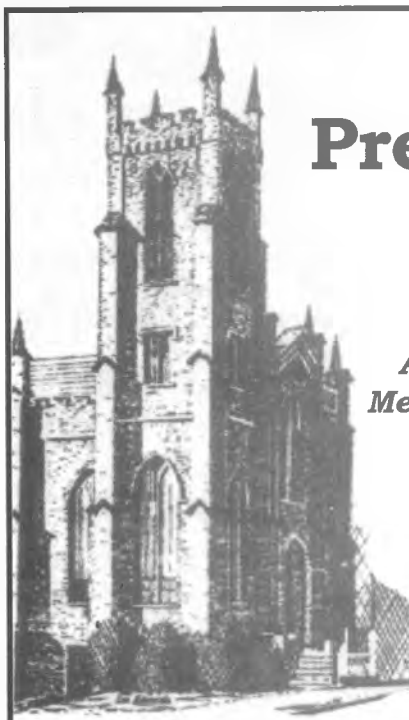
They married in 1837, and unfortunately for him, Mr. Jeffries died the same year. By this time Elizabeth had had experience in burying husbands. As a young girl she had met and married twice in short succession.

Her first husband was Mr. Gibbons. They were married for only a couple of months when he died suddenly, and mysteriously.

Shortly afterwards, she set her sights on Mr. Flannigan, whom she also married. Mr. Flannigan lasted only three months before he, too, died of unexplained circumstances. He was in his grave before the neighbors were even informed of the "tragedy".

By this time the young widow was well on her way to becoming a wealthy landowner in Madison County. Not wishing to marry beneath her new-found status in life, she decided to try her hand at politics.

Her next husband was Robert A. High, from Limestone County, who was a State Legislator for the state of Alabama. He probably spent much time away from home, as it was al-



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most two years before he, too, expired suddenly and mysteriously at their home.

Having tried politics and plantation life, Elizabeth decided to next marry a merchant.

Absalom Brown was a wealthy merchant from New Market. After spending most of his fortune on his new wife, he died as well. This came as a shock to everyone, as Mr. Brown was a very healthy and virile man. The unknown malady that he was stricken with caused his body to swell so much that it was necessary to bury him immediately after his death. None of the neighbors ever saw the body.

Not believing in long spells of mourning, Miss Elizabeth Flannigan Gibbons Jeffries High Brown roused herself out of her depression long enough to marry Willis Routt, her sixth husband. He died amazingly just like the others in a short time.

At about this same time Elizabeth, or Mrs. Routt, became involved in a controversy with a neighbor, Abner Tate, over loose livestock and other matters. Tate was completely blind to her beauty, which infuriated her, and had been observing the home and its occupants for many years. He openly charged her with murder. He backed up his suspicions with the hat rack in the parlor that was in open sight, on which hung 6 old hats - the blatant proof of Tate's accusations.

Maybe Abner Tate should have been forewarned of crossing the notorious widow, for shortly afterwards he was wounded by a shotgun blast. Though proof was lacking, gossip had it that Mrs. Routt had hired one of Tate's slaves to do him in. The slave, not having the courage to do the dirty deed himself, in turn hired another man, who allegedly pulled the trigger. Mr. Tate, shortly afterwards, sold all of his slaves.

By this time Tate was furious with his neighbor and determined to see justice done. When he went to the authorities he was informed that "nothing

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could be done unless you can find some evidence." Maybe all of her husbands did die natural deaths. Maybe the slave DID shoot you by accident. Maybe it's just all coincidence. There's nothing we can do."

Beside himself with rage, Tate was determined that his neighbor would not get away with her dastardly deeds. He began writing a book in which he described the mysterious happenings at the ante-bellum home. He wrote about how the succession of husbands made her prosperous and wealthy. He wrote about how she would treat them all with disdain, once she had captured them. He noted how the intervals between weddings and deaths became shorter and shorter, as she acquired "more experience and practice."

When the book was published, it created a scandalous sensation in Madison County. Half of the county believed she was guilty, while the other half swore to her innocence. Regardless of opinion, the book was the major topic of discussion any place that people gathered.

Needless to say, the merry widow was not a pleasant lady to be around when she heard news of the book. She immediately drove her buggy into Huntsville where she consulted an attorney and brought charges

against Abner Tate for defamation of character.

When the case finally came to trial late that fall, the courtroom was packed. The courtroom became a battleground, with plaintiff and defendant hurling insult after insult at each other. Accusations followed from each of the attorneys, while the judge rapped repeatedly for order.

The judge, after listening to as much as he could stand, continued the case, hoping both parties would calm down enough to be rational.

After a short while Mrs. Routt dropped the charges. Even today, the debate goes on in Madison County. Why did she drop the charges? Was it because she was tired of constantly being the topic of gossip, or was she worried about some new information that Tate's attorney had recently uncovered?

Shortly afterwards Mrs. Routt and her son moved to Mississippi. She never again returned to Madison County. No one knows why she moved, but the day of her departure, witnesses swear that they saw her in a carpenter's shop, getting a seventh peg added to her hatrack.

Guilty or innocent, she has entered our history as the Black Widow of Hazel Green.

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Echos from the Great Rebellion

by John Crow

By now I'm sure that most readers have either heard of or seen the acclaimed PBS documentary on the American Civil War by Ken Burns.

I believe that the primary success of this series was its use of actual period photographs and writings from the participants. The words intimately echo down to today's generations and give us a sense of the pathos and fire of that agonizing time. What follows are *some additional* but perhaps lesser known quotes from that period. While a divided nation held its breath, negotiations for a peaceful surrender of Fort Sumter ended as Union Major Robert Anderson refused the Confederate terms. As he escorted the Confederate emissary Colonel James Chestnut and his party back to the boat, he shook hands with each one of them and said, "If we never meet in this world again, God grant that we may meet in the next."

A peculiarly American expression was used by the soldiers of both North and South

to describe the first time they experienced the savagery of combat.

In more peaceful times the farm boys that would attend the traveling circus would always come back and speak in utter

awe of "seeing the elephant." Thus to experience battle for the first time was to "see the elephant."

The first major battle of the war in the East was at Bull Run (Manassas), Virginia. As the



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battle raged, the Union commander Irwin McDowell, upon seeing part of the Confederate Army retire up the slope of Henry House Hill jubilantly shouted, "Victory! Victory! The day is ours!" A little premature perhaps, as the battle ended in complete disaster for the Union Army.

Another tragic premature statement was made by Union General John Sedgwick outside the Confederate defenses around Cold Harbor, Virginia. "They couldn't hit an elephant at this distance!" The poor General then fell dead, shot through the head by a Confederate sharpshooter.

On the first day of the terrible battle of Shiloh, the bulk of Grant's army was shattered by the fierce onslaught of the Confederate Army. Thousands of stragglers huddled under the bluffs of Pittsburgh's Landing on the Tennessee River.

In desperation the Union officers tried to rally their men. The following exchange was recorded.

"Men, for God's sake, for your country's sake, for your own sake, come up here, form a line and make one more stand." (Capt. D. Putman, USV)

"That man talks well, don't he?" (Unidentified private's reply to Captain Putman)

Major General Bedford Forrest's (CSA) Cavalry Corps was the scourge of the Union Army in the West. A superior Union force under Maj. Gen. Samuel Sturgis was dispatched from Memphis, Tennessee to finish Forrest once and for all. He met up with Forrest at Brice's Crossroads, Mississippi.

"For God's sake, General, don't let us give it up so!" (Union Col. Edward Bouton)

"Dammit, Sir, if Mr. Forrest will let me alone, I will let him alone!" (General Samuel Sturgis)

Needless to say, Sturgis was soundly thrashed and sent packing back to Memphis.

Speaking of "Git thar fustest with the mostest" Forrest, most historians agree, had an interesting way of manipulating the King's English. The following is an excerpt from a letter written to a friend in Memphis in 1862.

".. I had a small brush with the enemy on yesterday I succeeded in gaining their rear and got in their entrenchments 8 miles from Hamburg and 5 behind Farmington and burned a portion of their camp at that place they was not looking for me and I taken them by surprise they run like Suns of Biches."

When the Union Army occupied Huntsville, Alabama they quickly dispatched search parties to the home of Leroy Pope

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Walker on Adams Avenue and McClung Street. As Confederate Secretary of War, it was Walker who gave the order to fire on Fort Sumter. The Federal soldiers were rather zealous in their search to capture such a prize and a friend who had to endure one of the search parties reported: "I remember distinctly seeing them look into preserve jars and cut-glass decanters, until my mother's temper no longer could be repressed. "You don't expect to find General Walker in that brandy bottle, do you?" she asked."

There were fierce little pockets of independence in Tennessee and North Alabama. Good folk that were for neither side but just wanted to be left alone. One such old lady stood defiantly on the porch of her shack as a Federal forage party approached. "Are you Union or Secesh?" the cavalrman inquired. "I'm Baptist," the woman proudly retorted.

(Overheard during Political Science class at University of Alabama in Huntsville.) "Can any one of you tell me who did the most in the 19th. century to raise the working class?" One of the class members replied, "Yes! The inventor of the alarm clock!"

A Loud Noise


A customer had stopped in one of Huntsville's local beverage shops in order to purchase some wine.

Being rather a talkative person, the customer inquired of the cashier, "What would you do if a person started away, forgetting his change?"

Replied the cashier, very sincerely, "Why, that's easy. I would tap sharply on the counter with a dollar bill!"



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The Great Earthquake

On August 6, 1961 at exactly 1:20 in the afternoon, a radio station in Birmingham interrupted its programming to broadcast news of an earthquake.

The amount of damage was not known yet but there were reports of windows rattling and dishes being knocked off the shelves all across North Alabama. Within a few minutes other radio stations began broadcasting the same news and civil defense sirens began blaring in Gadsden and Anniston.

Robert Snider, a reporter for the Gadsden newspaper, was on his way to Birmingham when he heard the news. Immediately, he stopped at the next phone and

called the radio station that had first broadcast the report.

The radio announcer repeated the information released over the air.

Playing a hunch, Mr. Snider next called the Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville. "Yes," said the space flight official, "There was a test firing of the Saturn today. It took place at 1:00 p.m. this afternoon."

There had never been an earthquake. The earth tremors that had been reported were the test firing of the Saturn Rocket, the most powerful engine in the world.

Even today, there are still people who remember the powerful "earthquake" of 1961.

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A good example of minority rule is a baby in the house.

Robin Williams, mother of four children

Old Huntsville

1806 -The United States signs treaty with the Chicasaw Indians. The tribe agrees to give up their claim to land in Madison County for the sum of \$2,000 each year for 4 years, a grist mill, and "a machine to clean cotton."

1808 - First distillery in Alabama begins operations next to the Big Spring.

1809 - James McGuire and Elizabeth Thornby become the first couple to get married in Huntsville.

1810 - A "horse path" is carved from the wilderness connecting Brownsboro and Huntsville.

1812 - Madison County boasts a population of 1,378 families. Of these, 823 own land.

1816 - LeRoy Pope deeds land to city for a cemetery.

1818 - Huntsville is be-

coming an affluent society with 20 well-known families having an accumulated wealth of \$6 million

1819 - William Rufus King is a delegate to the Alabama State Convention held here in Huntsville. In 1852 he is elected Vice President of the United States.

1819 - Huntsville fire engine company is incorporated.

1820 - Chief Mad Wolf, a Creek Indian, visits Huntsville with his braves. Among their pur-

chases was listed \$2,000 worth of blankets.

1828 - Madison County builds its first poorhouse. The first poorhouse superintendant was John Powers.

1836 - Creek Indians from all across North Alabama are gathered at Guntersville for the long march west.

1849 - A local doctor advertises a cure for deafness for only 50 cents. It was also good for sore muscles.

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The Deacon

Taken from 1893 newspaper

Deacon Johnson is a great temperance man, and sets a good example of total abstinence to all his church-going neighbors.

Not long ago he employed a carpenter to make some alterations in his parlor. In repairing the corner near the fireplace it was necessary to remove the wainscoting, when, lo! a discovery was made that astonished everyone. A brace of decanters, a tumbler and a pitcher were costily reposing there, as if they had stayed there from the beginning. The deacon was quickly summoned from prayer, and as he beheld the bottles, he ex-

claimed, "Well, I declare! That is curious, sure enough. It must be the same that old Bains left when he left this home for greener pastures, thirty years ago!"

"Perhaps he did," offered one of the carpenters, "but, Deacon, the ice in that pitcher must have been froze mighty hard to last all these years!"



The trouble with law is lawyers.

Rick Jones, serving six months



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Strange News from North Alabama

- In a Decatur courtroom, the two defendants sat listening as the prosecutor asked the victim in a loud voice, "Are the two men who robbed you in this courtroom today?" The whole court looked on in amazement as the two defendants slowly raised their hands.

- Mr. Tift of Scotsboro said you can't miss something you've never had. What Mr. Tift "never had" was a first name. He explained that his father disliked his own first name, Alanson, and decided to permit his son to choose his own first name. "I grew up without a first name, and have never felt like appro-

riating one," Tift said. "However, I've gotten along just as well without one."

- In the late 1950s, NASA realized that they needed a way for astronauts to write in space, and that gravity-fed pens wouldn't work in zero gravity. A task force of engineers developed a pressurized pen that would work in space. All the research and the initial run of

60 pens, cost just over a million (1960) dollars. The Russians realized they had the same problem. They solved it by giving their cosmonauts pencils.

- Howard Dell, of Cullman purchased a pistol to commit suicide with. When the gun misfired he sued the manufacturers using the argument that the defective gun deprived him of his rights.

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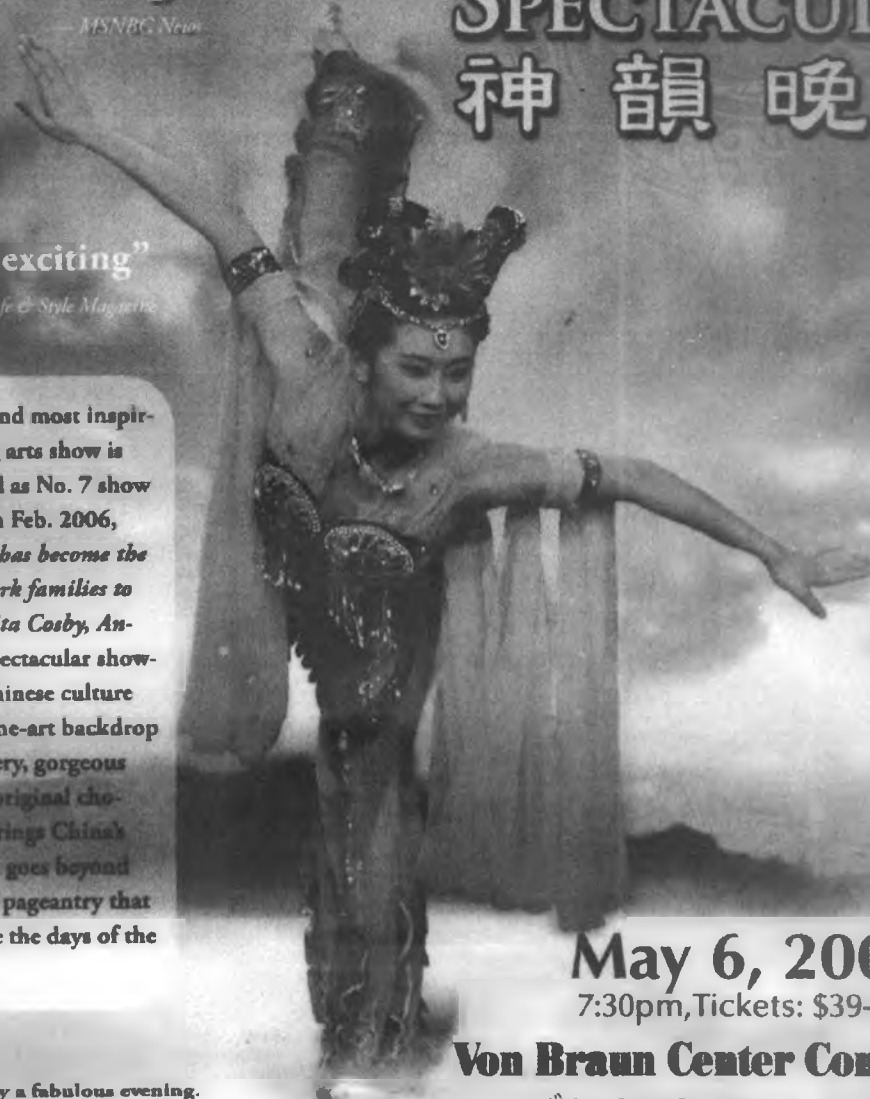
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The world's largest and most inspiring Chinese performing arts show is coming to Huntsville! Rated as No. 7 show from the top by *Billboard* in Feb. 2006, the "incredible Spectacular has become the number one way for New York families to celebrate the New Year." (*Rita Cosby, Anchor, MSNBC News*) The Spectacular showcases the true traditional Chinese culture through stunning state-of-the-art backdrop projection of dynamic scenery, gorgeous ancient Chinese costumes, original choreographies and music. It brings China's splendid history to life, and goes beyond entertainment to a realm of pageantry that the world has not seen since the days of the great emperors.



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Early Days at Redstone

by John L. McDaniel

I paused on the top of Monte Sano mountain on the afternoon of February 24, 1942 to look down on the beehive of activity that I was about to enter. There appeared to be a great deal of activity to which there was very little order. I stopped at the Yarbrough Hotel to inquire about a room and found that there were no vacancies. The same situation was found at the Twickenham Hotel and the Russel Erskine Hotel. I was told that the workers could find a bed on Clinton Street. I found a bed for one dollar a night at a large building that was full of triple decker bunks. I was counseled to watch my wallet when I went to sleep since there were a lot of strangers in town. This was particularly important to me since I had \$21 in my wallet. Having

selected my bunk, I drove down Clinton Street, past the creamery, to the filling station and barber shop. Here Mr. Malone, the barber, gave me a quick update on Huntsville. The Central Cafe was a good place to eat, if you could afford the price, and the bootlegger was located at a motel on the Athens Highway. Having this essential information, I inquired as to how I could get to the Arsenal.

At the mention of the Arsenal, Mr. Malone refused to talk since, according to him, it was a great secret as to the location of the Arsenal. I decided that I would follow the traffic; if the place was secret, someone could stop me - this happened.

On February 26, 1942 I became the 344th person hired at Huntsville Arsenal. My job was to work in a plant that manufactured mustard gas.

To do this work, it would be necessary for me to wear clothes impregnated with a substance to prevent the mustard gas fumes from coming in con-

tact with the skin. The long-johns underwear were thick with the substance, as were the socks, coveralls, shoes, and hat. I have scars today on my wrists where I was careless in joining the underwear sleeves and the gloves. A gas mask completed the uniform. Sensitive skin was not a particular advantage, since the showers used kerosene to remove any mustard gas or vapor contamination from the body.

Six mustard manufacturing plants were constructed at Huntsville Arsenal.

Two chlorine plants, each generating 45 tons of liquid chlorine every 24 hours for use in making mustard gas, were located nearby. Each mustard manufacturing plant consisted of a sulfur monochloride building, a building which generated ethylene from pure grain alcohol, and a mustard reactor building.

I received my training in the manufacture and loading of mustard gas at Edgewood Arsenal in Maryland. This training

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consisted of working with individuals who had kept the plant in standby for many years. I was assigned to the midnight shift and received at least one shift training on each of the major operations. All work was done with a gas mask on; this caused a severe problem around daylight each morning, as the whiskers grew out along the edge of the mask. It became very easy to identify a mustard worker when seen on the street, from the distinct imprint of the gas mask on his face. I kept telling myself there were worse places to be than on a mustard reactor at Edgewood Arsenal - Hell came to mind.

The per diem during my stay at Edgewood Arsenal was \$6 a day. After paying for room and board, there was very little money left to spend for personal items or at the bootleggers. It is an old story that one way of keeping people out of trouble is to deny them the means for getting into it. During this period, personnel who could not afford to buy a Freedom Bond could buy Freedom Stamps until the value of the stamps was sufficient to trade for a bond. I was fortunate to have accumulated nine dollars worth of Freedom Stamps prior to my trip. I traded in these stamps for money to use

for food and other essentials

So, after three months of training, I was qualified to manufacture mustard gas and to supervise others in the operation. Evidence of my qualifications was obvious; eye irritations that reduced my vision to a fraction of normal, throat irritations that produced dry cough that kept me awake at night, and large blisters or second degree burns on each wrist. I am at this point doing very little broken field running, since my goal is to get through the line in one piece. I had started my new career very cheerful and confident, but now in only a few months I had become very sober and quiet. Things were not turning out as I had expected.

Upon returning to Huntsville Arsenal, I was made the foreman of an operation using the filling line, that had previously been used for filling 105-MM shells, to fill M47A2 bombs. This setup was very poor.

With fatigue and forgetfulness often present, it was not long until some operators tried to drop two charges into one bomb. This dumped several gallons of mustard gas on the floor and thoroughly contaminated the conveyer rolls and adjacent equipment. Since the equipment and concrete floors were very difficult to decontaminate, the

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situation went from bad to worse despite all the safety devices we installed on the equipment.

Consequently, the entire operation became contaminated to the point that it was always "hot." Many employees suffered from severe cases of eye and throat irritations. Due to the three=shift, seven-days-a-week operation, many of the number had to be hospitalized for general debility and eye and respiratory irritation.

This operation resulted in the beginning of my contacts with Brigadier General Rollo C. Ditto, the command of Huntsville Arsenal. I recall him as being easy-going and gregarious with an uncomplicated, pragmatic management style. He asked me if there was anything right about what I was doing. Before I could answer him, he told me to eliminate all the things that were right about the operation and work on what I had left. He asked me if I had any education and I told him I had a college degree. He peered at me closely through the fogged glasses of his gas mask, turned, and walked briskly away. I decided that his actions gave me the authority to close my line for cleanup -this I did.

Following the experiences in the mustard loading and filling plants, it was discovered that the bottom parts of both my lungs were badly scarred.

I was given a job in charge of the refrigeration for all the chemical operations on the Arsenal. The new job would keep

me out in the open more; however, at the same time, it would subject me to different types of chemical poisons.

One of the most interesting operations was the production of colored smoke grenades. The dye used in the grenades colored the workers' clothing and stained the skin. It was not uncommon to see people of rainbow hues walking around Huntsville. Due to the health

hazard associated with working in colored smoke, the workers were paid one grade higher. Fires were numerous, as many as 11 in two hours being recorded when yellow grenades were being made.

During these early days, I had learned some very valuable lessons in broken field running from a culture made up of hard-working, hard-drinking, and hard-living people. The Hunts-

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ville Arsenal reached its peak of 3,707 employees in May 1944, with 90% civilians and 10% military.

Of the work force, 9% were unskilled, 48% semi-skilled, 18% skilled, and 25% administrative or graded employees. A representative sample recorded in September 1944 showed 26% white female, 11% colored female, 52% white male, and 11% colored male. For a long time, the Arsenal maintained a working ratio of white and colored employees almost equal to the population ratio.

My first experience in recruiting was in hiring a secretary for my operation. A very healthy looking lady from Union Grove showed up about 9:00 a.m. for the interview. I asked her why she was late and she told me that when she went out to milk the cows one of them was delivering a calf and she had to help the cow along.

Her previous experience consisted of picking cotton, working at a saw mill, and doing general housework for her parents. I inquired of her about her qualifications to be a secretary, and she told me that she learned how to type in high school and had kept books for a used car dealer in Arab. Arab is a small town around thirty miles south of Huntsville. These qualifications seemed more than adequate for my requirements, so I hired her. The first person I ever hired turned out to be one of the best people I ever hired, and she remained with me until I left for the Navy.

Her creative writing ability was called to task one night when an operator from the mustard plant showed up in the office. He was obviously in some slight pain and periodically pulled at his sex organs. He told me that he failed to secure his pant legs properly around

his ankles, and the mustard fumes had caused his sex organs to turn red. This was complicated by the fact that he had been married only one week. I asked my secretary to write a letter for me to sign to his new bride explaining the situation:
"Dear Mrs. Jones:

Do not expect sexual intercourse for a few days. Your husband got mustard gas on the private parts of his body."

A wide variety of techniques was tried in an effort to improve the morale of the mismanaged personnel. An innovation of the post exchange was the cultivation

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of a truck garden - the products from which were used in the cafeteria. Another venture was a pig raising project. The post exchange owned ninety hogs, fed mostly by swill from kitchens. The pigs were to provide pork for the cafeterias. A farmer was employed to care for the hogs and tend to the "victory garden." Operative during 1943 and the spring of 1944, the farm was discontinued in May 1944 as being too costly. The loss on it amounted to \$576.13.

Upon my return from the Navy to Huntsville Arsenal, I sought out the personnel office and found that it was located in the basement of Building 111, the headquarters. I was told that the Arsenal was being closed down, and that I was no longer needed.

However, after some discussion, I was given a job as a supervisor in a demilitarization operation. The job here was to remove the poison gases and the high explosives from the shells and bombs, and recover what-

ever materials, such as magnesium, that was available. This operation lasted until March 17, 1949, when the Arsenal was put up for sale.

During 1948, the Office Chief of Ordnance decided to designate an arsenal to research and development in the field of rocketry. On June 1, 1949, the Ordnance Department reactivated Redstone Arsenal to carry out this mission. This Department reactivated Redstone Arsenal to carry out this mission. The Redstone Arsenal also took over the real estate of the deactivated Huntsville Arsenal, giving the new arsenal a combined area of 40,000 acres.

With the arrival of a complement of officers and 120 former German Scientists from Fort Bliss, Texas, in April 1940, to join the approximately 1,200 personnel already on board, Redstone Arsenal entered the missile era.

A sharp tongue and a dull mind are often found in the same head.

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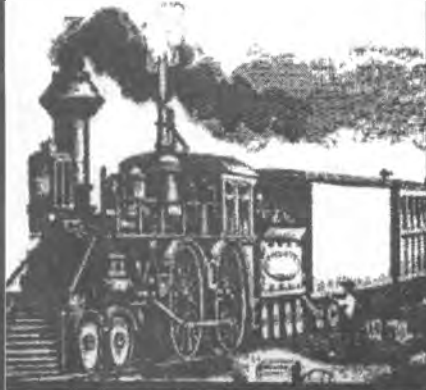
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This unique means of rail-roading began back in 1893 after the N.C. and St. L purchased the Tennessee and Coosa railroad which ended its line at Guntersville. The N.C. and St. L line ran south from Elora, Tenn. to Hobbs Island. This left 22 miles of water between the two lines.

Rather than relocate many miles of track across several mountains in this Tennessee Valley area, and span the Tennessee River with a bridge, the N.C. and St. L's riverboat railroad was begun.

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In 1957 the railroad ceased operation of the riverboat.

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from 1902 Huntsville publication

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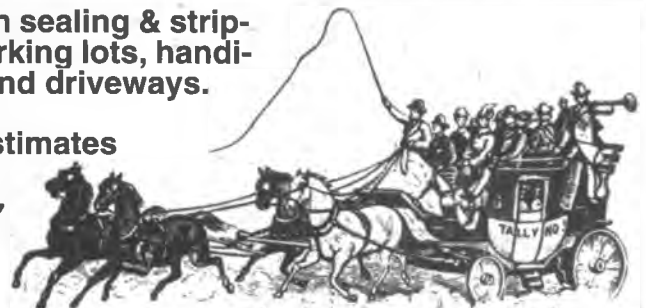
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News From the Year 1900

News From Huntsville and Around The World

McKinley Elected President

President William McKinley has been re-elected, along with his vice-presidential running mate, Governor Theodore Roosevelt of New York, leader of the famed Rough Riders during the recent Spanish-American War. Republicans also swept the congressional elections, winning increased majorities in both the Senate and the House of Representatives.

The election marked the second defeat for presidential office for William Jennings Bryan of Nebraska, who lost to McKinley four years ago. His running mate on the Democratic ticket this year was Adlai Stevenson of Illinois. And nearly 100,000 votes were cast for Eugene Debs, the Socialist candidate.

As election returns poured in yesterday, the president's hometown of Canton, Ohio, reverberated with cheers. As mid-

night approached supporters marched to the McKinley home while bands played and rockets sent streaks through the darkened sky. Appearing on the porch of his house, the president greeted the cheering throngs by saying: "Fellow citizens, I thank you for the great compliment of this call on this inclement night, and at this late hour."

News of the election returns was received by Governor Roosevelt at his home on Sagamore Hill in Oyster Bay, New York. Returns from the various states were relayed to him by messengers from the local telegraph office in the railroad station, three miles away. After reading early returns, the governor commented: "Isn't that fine. It shows what the American people are. It shows that they want the good times to continue." The office of vice presi-

dent has been vacant since the death of Garret Hobart last year.

U.S. reaches 76 million

The official population of the United States for 1900 stands at 76,295,220. Some 74,627,907 inhabit the 45 states. The remaining 1,667,313 include persons abroad in the service of the nation and residents of the seven territories: Alaska, Arizona, Dist. of Columbia, Hawaii, the Indian Territory, New Mexico and Oklahoma. Based on tax returns, the count does not include 145,282 Indians who live

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in the Indian Territory and pay no taxes.

The figure marks a gain of 13,225,464, or about 20%, over the 1890 census of 63,069,756. The 1900 count was computed with the latest tabulating machines. These eliminate the prior custom of the rough count and produce a more accurate, cheaper, quicker census.

Bostwick Sets Two Auto Speed Records

Albert C. Bostwick set speed records today for five and ten miles on the Guttenberg, New Jersey, track with his new French automobile.

His gasoline-run racer, which is quite different from any machine manufactured in the United States, sped five miles in 7:43.2 and ten miles in 15:09.2.

His noisy motorcar was helped when the electric vehicle of A.L. Richter blew a battery fuse while leading. The pre-race parade of these new-fangled machines excited spectators, who appear to be thrilled by this dangerous but exciting sport.

Big Screens Coming

Moving pictures have been around since Thomas Edison and George Eastman designed their celluloid strips back in 1889, and over the last decade, millions of people have seen picture shows, but only individually and through some exertion. They have to turn the cranks on private viewing appliances to watch short films on small square screens. Projecting pictures on big screens in theaters is on the way.

\$25,000 Ransom Paid

The 15-year-old son of Omaha millionaire Edward A. Cudahy, head of the Cudahy Packing Company, was released unharmed after Cudahy paid the \$25,000 ransom in gold demanded by kidnapers.

Thus ended two days of drama which saw Omaha's entire police and detective forces and private detective agencies scour the city to locate the young man, Edward. The kidnapers remain at large.

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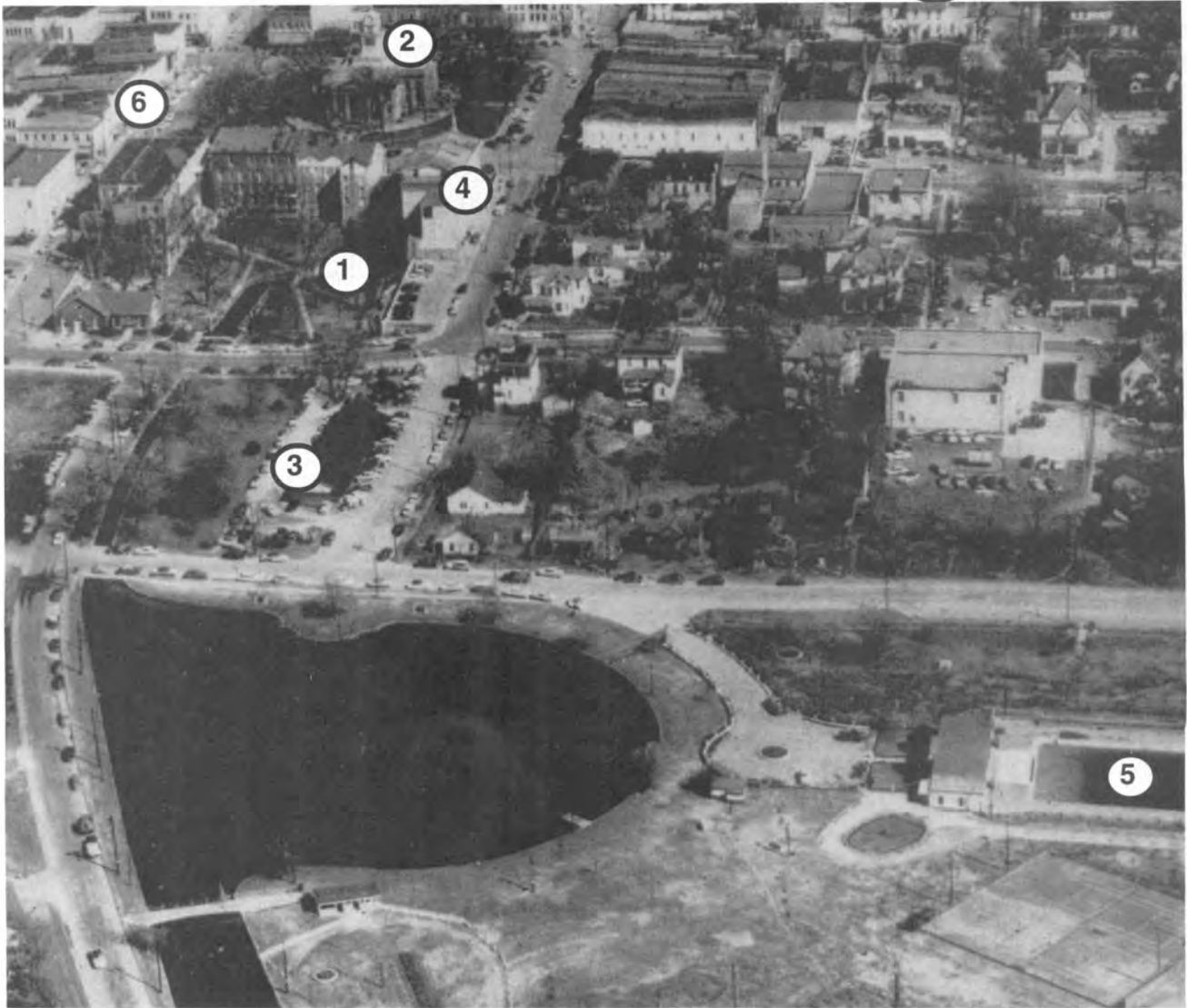
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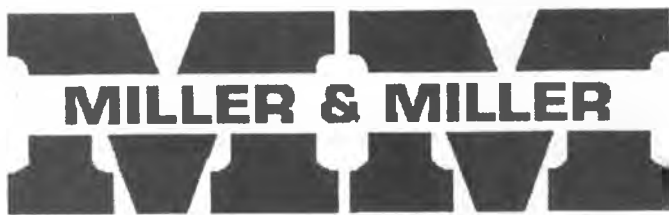


Big Spring, circa 1955

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2 - Courthouse

3 - Farmers Market
4 - Bank Bldg.

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6 - Clinton Ave.



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For Better or Worse

By Malcolm Miller

In the fall of nineteen fifty-five I went to work as a letter carrier for the Huntsville Post Office and after almost ten years working in the General Shoe Factory (later Genesco) with hard work and almost poverty pay, the post office was a real change for the better.

I worked as a substitute carrier for over a year delivering mail and parcels to what then was greater Huntsville. I think at one time or another I delivered mail on every street.

Finally I was assigned my very own route and it made work much easier because I would be walking the same long streets every day and going up on the same porches, meeting the same people and incidentally the same dogs knowing which were friendly, both people and dogs, and which were not. I had one cocker spaniel that met me at the beginning of my route and followed me all day every day.

There were several special people on my route that I still remember till this day. There was Mrs. Fisk, an invalid, who lived on Humes Avenue. She told me to just open the front door and hand her the mail. There was Louis and Lillian Jennings also on Humes and on McCullough Avenue there was Marie Osborne, a lady I went to school with at Hazel Green, also on McCullough I met Herman and Lessie Hunt, two of the finest people I ever knew. When you deliver mail on those long neighborhood streets it sure is good to have a place to stop for a cool drink of water and use the bath room. I could always count on Lessie Hunt to provide this assistance with a friendly smile.

Herman worked at the Huntsville Fire Department when I first started delivering their mail but he soon started working for the post office delivering mail also, and I dare say

Herman Hunt was the hardest working man I have ever seen. He was assigned a route in Dallas village joining my route and at that time if you were carrying a mail bag you could ride the city busses free. Herman would rush around his route as fast as he could and when he finished at the corner of Oakwood and Andrew Jackson Way, if it wasn't time for a bus, Herman would walk all the way back to the post office at the corner of Holmes and Jefferson streets.

Unfortunately as the Hunts were raising fine children and enjoying life, tragedy struck. Lessie was

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hit with a stroke that left her wheel chair bound; this crippled her body but not her spirit. Even years later when I visited her she greeted me with a smile and a hug. When Lessie became disabled that's when Herman proved that he had married her literally for better or worse. All these many years later he devoted his life to taking care of her every need and never once complaining that I know of.

Recently Herman reached the point where he could no longer take care of Lessie so they moved in with their daughter where she could help out with her, but Herman is still living

up to those wedding vows that he made many many years ago, for better or worse, till death do us part.

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I Keep My Promises!

The Penny in the Parking Meter

by Bob Cochran

My family moved to Huntsville from Birmingham in September, 1956, when my dad got a job at the Army Missile Command at Redstone Arsenal. Because the population of Huntsville was booming at that time, we lived in an apartment on Harrison Avenue for several years.

After finishing fifth and sixth grade at Blossomwood School, I attended the old Huntsville Junior High on Randolph Street. Sometime in early 1958, I discovered the fun of collecting coins. At first, I just went through my folks' change, and they let me keep Lincoln pennies I needed to put in the holes in a couple of coin albums I bought at the old Grand newsstand by the Twickenham Hotel.

I later became a charter member of the Rocket City Coin Club, and the members told me how I could buy a \$50 bag of loose pennies at the bank, go through them and replace the ones I wanted, roll the coins and trade them back in. Even with all these opportunities, I was still lacking a few of the "rare" coins - one of them being the 1914D ("D" for the Denver mint, where the coin had been made).

In the fall of 1959 I was attempting to make the Huntsville Junior High football team. Of course, we practiced after school. I don't remember the reason now, but my mother had told me that, instead of me walking the 6 or 8 blocks



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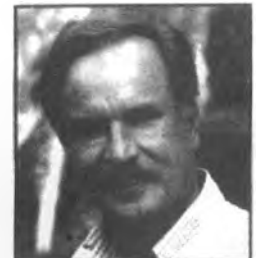
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home, she would pick me up in front of the City Drug Store on the Square about 5:30. So after practice, I walked up to the Square, bought a 3-scoop ice cream cone, and waited for her. I must have been early, or she was (as usual) late, but after I finished the cone, she still hadn't arrived.

The parking meters around the Square at that time had a little window in them, and the last coin that had been put in the meter was visible in the window. Just to pass the time, I started walking up the East Side Square, glancing in the windows at the coins. I hadn't even made it to the old Goldsmith Bank Building on the corner when fortune smiled on me for the first time that day!

There in the parking meter window was a 1914-D Lincoln Cent! The chance of such a coin being there was infinitesimal, but what luck I had that the front of the coin, showing the date and mint mark, was showing, instead of the back of the coin - which, on all of the Billions of Lincoln Cents minted up to that time (1958) were Exactly The Same!

After I caught my breath, I had to think how I was going to get my hands on that coin! My mother pulled up a few minutes later, and I told her what had happened. She told me that I should remember which meter it was in, and that we could contact the Police Department the next day to see when it would be emptied.

Then, I could ask whomever at the Police Department if I could go through the coins from

the parking meters, pick out the one I wanted, and buy it.

I didn't want to hear any of that. I went into the City Drug Store and asked the man behind the counter if he knew when the meters were emptied. That's when fate smiled upon me for the second time that day!

The man may have been Tom Dark, I don't remember. He thought for a moment and told me that the meters would probably be emptied that day! He said that the policeman usually came by about 6 p.m. I went back outside and told my mother that I wanted to wait, and at the same time made sure I had some money in my pocket - in case the policeman wanted a "finder's fee."

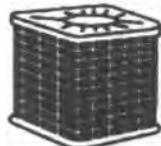
She said "OK," and headed

home. I sat on the curb by that parking meter, determined to stay as long as it took to get that coin. About a half-hour had passed by when I saw a police-

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man riding a motorcycle with a white box coming around the Courthouse.

I saw him park the motorcycle over on the south side of the Square, about in front of the Harrison Brothers Hardware Store.

My first reaction was to run over to him and tell him what I wanted, but I decided to wait - kinda "be cool," y'know. He emptied all the meters on the South Side Square, and then started walking over towards where I was sitting on the curb. The events that took place next were almost anticlimactic as far as the story goes, but I can remember them like it happened five minutes ago.

He said "Hello, what'cha doin'?" Even though it was a warm day, I was shivering with excitement. I told him that I was a coin collector, and that there was a penny in the meter that I really would like to buy from the City for my collection.

I suppose my answer caught him off guard, because he had a puzzled look on his face. He said, "Fine, but which one do you want - I've got hundreds here!" I pointed at the parking meter in front of me and said, "I want that one, the penny in the window."

He had a special key in his hand, more like a wrench. He inserted the tool into the meter, turned it a couple of times, and then took the bottom part off. He dumped the contents into my hand, probably no more that 25 or 30 coins. I nervously looked through about two-thirds of them before I found my prize. "This is the one," I said. I handed him back the others, dug into the pocket of my jeans and handed him a penny to replace it.

I've always hoped I was polite enough that day to thank him, and I'm sure I did - over my shoulder as I headed home. We lived in a second floor apartment, and I'm sure I was hollering all the way up the

stairs. This whole trip couldn't have taken five minutes! My mother was in the kitchen, but she stuck her head around the corner to look down the stairs as I was coming up. "Did you get it?" she asked. "Yeah, I did!" "And it only cost me another penny," I yelled back.

When I showed it to her, she said that it was "real nice." I'm sure she was happy for me, but to her it was just another penny.

I had the fun I expected the next day, showing my prize to my friends and some other coin collectors at school. After a while, my interest in the 1914-D waned slightly, as I concentrated on the other dates and mint marks that I needed to complete my set. I eventually completed the set, but I did have to buy one coin, a 1909-S with the designer's initials ("VDB," for Victor David Brenner) on the back. It's the only coin rarer than the 1914 D.

I wound up selling my collection of Lincoln Cents in late 1968, so I could pay the tuition for my last year at Auburn. I later sold the 1914-D for \$50; quite a healthy profit, even in 1969.

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Bridgit Hundley

Tips from Liz

- Use brown shoe polish mixed with floor wax to fill in faded spots.
- Apply a coat of wax to your dustpan and watch the dirt slide easily into the garbage.
- If you store your mops and brooms off the floor, they last longer.
- Don't put perfume on your neck before putting on real pearls. It will mar the finish on the pearls. That goes for hairspray, also.
- If you wash a faded pair of jeans with a new pair, the color will come back to the faded pair.
- To tell if your toilet tank leaks, add a few drops of green or blue food coloring to the tank. Don't flush for an hour - if color seeps into the toilet bowl, you might have to replace the ball.
- Dab your favorite perfume or scented oil onto the light bulbs, then turn on. The room will be full of the scent.
- Remove rust from your tub with a mixture of borax and lemon juice.
- Use real wineⁿ for cooking and marinating - try to avoid the commercial cooking wines because they have too much salt and too little flavor.
- Your pie crust will not brown properly in a shiny pan - use glass or a pan with a dull finish.
- If you don't have a rolling pin, fill an old wine bottle with cold water and re-cork it.
- Dab lemon juice on your face and watch blemishes disappear in a few days.
- If your postage stamps get wet and are stuck together, put them in the freezer for a day - the stamps will come apart and their glue will still be usable.

- If you have a queen size bed and need sheets, buy full size for the flat sheet and queen size for the fitted. You need the fitted sheet to fit exactly, but the top sheet will be plenty large without hanging down to the floor. And it's cheaper.

The trouble with being a grouch is you have to make new friends every

George Sharp

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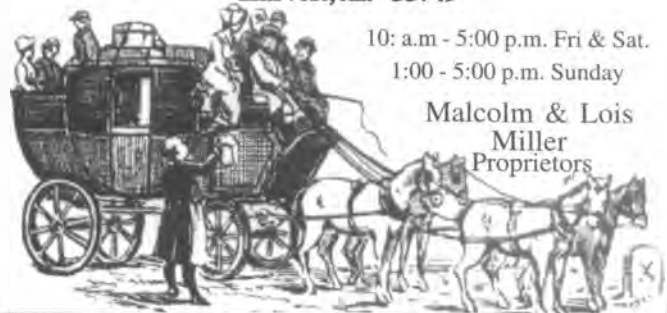
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The Last Gathering

The Grants first moved to Jackson County, Alabama, around 1834, settling on 200 acres of land granted to Thomas Grant for his service in the War of 1812.

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

Word was sent to all the children and grandchildren of the upcoming burial. The next day saw the whole family gathered at the cemetery to pay their last respects. Five young men dressed in Confederate gray stood on one side of the casket and the four Union men stood on the other side. When the time came to lower the casket, all nine young men helped, and when it was done, they looked at one another across the grave. Slowly and almost awkwardly, they reached across the still open grave and shook hands with one another.

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

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

The family never got together again.

One of life's mysteries is how a one pound box of candy can make a woman gain five pounds.

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