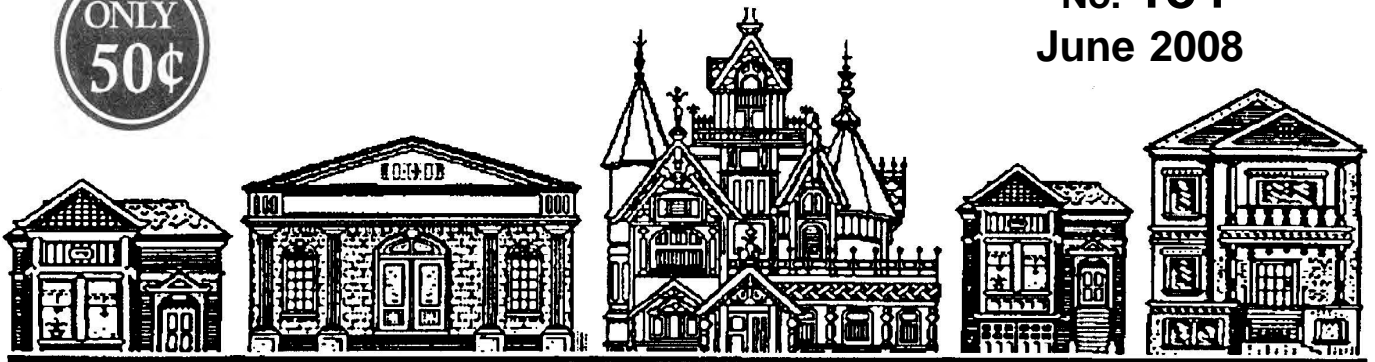


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## The Civil War in Huntsville

Huntsville would soon learn that their native son had given the order to begin what would be known by some as the "Second American Revolution." When Fort Sumter surrendered two days later, Leroy Pope Walker confidently predicted that the Stars and Bars would fly over the Capitol dome in Washington by the first of May.

What he did not know was that the war would soon come to Huntsville, with a vengeance.

Also in this issue: The Trial of Frank Gurley

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# The Civil War

by Jack Harwell

Like most of the country, Huntsville was asleep when America went to war with itself. The shots that started the bloodiest war in the nation's history were fired on Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbor at 4:30 on the morning of April 12, 1861. It was about thirty minutes earlier in Huntsville (there were no standard time zones then).

The attack on Fort Sumter came 113 days after South Carolina had declared itself independent from the rest of the United States and ninety-one days after Alabama had joined in the rising tide of secession. A secession convention had begun at Montgomery on January 7, and it had been clear from the beginning that the overwhelming sentiment was for withdrawal from the union. It was just as clear that the representatives from Huntsville and northern Alabama did not share this sentiment. They were known as "cooperationists" because they favored acting in con-

cert with the other Southern states and postponing secession. Three of their leaders - Nicholas Davis, Jeremiah Clemens, and David P. Lewis - were Huntsville men. All three would go over to the Union side before the war was over.

Some in Huntsville were uneasy over secession and the sight of the Stars and Stripes being hauled down from public buildings. They were mollified somewhat by the appointment of one of their own, Leroy Pope Walker, to Jefferson Davis's cabinet on February 21. Davis's desire to foster southern unity led him to appoint one cabinet member from each seceding state; Walker had been named Secretary of War.

The 44-year-old Walker was an interesting choice for a high post in the Confederate government. He was a fervent secessionist but also favored cooperation. He had served as a judge and a legislator but by the time of his appointment had returned to his home town to practice law.

Walker brought little experience but plenty of energy to his new job in Montgomery. He worked almost unceasingly to insure that Southern troops were properly outfitted and supplied. He also petitioned the



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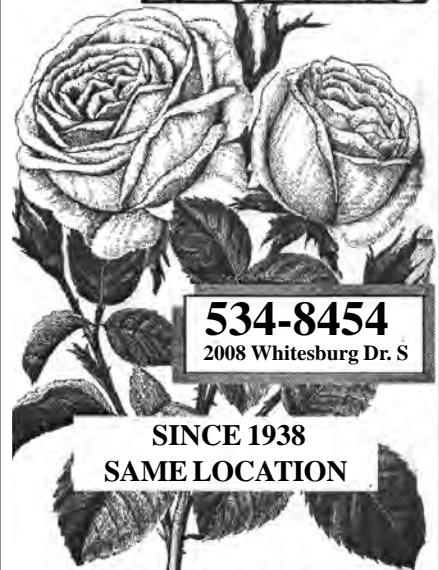
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other seceding states to provide troops to garrison the Confederacy's coastal fortifications, realizing early on that this was the weakest point in the South's defenses. Walker's frenzied activities would lead him to resign his cabinet post for health reasons after just seven months.

By April 1861, Walker's attention was focused on the two Southern coastal forts still in Union hands, Fort Sumter in South Carolina and Fort Pickens in Florida. Abraham Lincoln had announced his intention to send ships to re-supply Fort Sumter, and P. G. T. Beauregard, commander of Confederate troops in Charleston, was determined that the fort be surrendered before that happened. On April 10, Leroy Pope Walker directed Beauregard to demand the fort's surrender. When that failed, the next day the Secretary of War authorized Beauregard to "reduce the fort as your judgment decides to be most practicable."

The shooting began before dawn the next day. Huntsville would soon learn that their native son had given the order to begin what would be known by some as the "Second American Revolution." When Fort Sumter surrendered two days later, Leroy Pope Walker confidently predicted that the Stars and

Bars would fly over the Capitol dome in Washington by the first of May.

News of the fall of Sumter electrified both North and South. Northerners were indignant at being fired on by the rebels; Southerners were delighted at the idea of humbling the government of Abraham Lincoln, whom they considered responsible for the current situation. There was an immediate rush to arms on both sides. The Confederate Congress had already authorized Jefferson Davis to raise an army of 100,000. Abraham Lincoln called for 75,000 volunteers and offered command to the officer considered by many to be the finest in the army - Col. Robert E. Lee. Lee reluctantly declined.

The men of Huntsville were not slow in taking up arms. A local militia company, the Madison Rifles, had been formed in 1855. Membership in the Madison Rifles had been considered a sign of social status at first. The company captain was John Coltart, a wealthy business man and son of a former mayor. Coltart's brother Robert was first sergeant. After Alabama seceded and war seemed imminent, the Rifles offered their services to Governor Andrew Moore; they were one of the first units in the state to do so. Two days before leaving for Mobile on

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March 28, the company was presented with its colors, sewn by the local ladies, and were treated to a "splendid oyster supper" where they heard a send-off speech given by former governor Clement C. Clay.

As the Madison Rifles were preparing to leave for their post, another militia unit, the Huntsville Guards, was formed. They were led by Egbert J. Jones, a native of Limestone County and veteran of the Mexican War. Standing six feet five inches, Jones was nearly a foot taller than most men of his day. But it was not just his stature that brought him the respect of his men. Jones had the manner of a gentleman as well as a dignity that some mistook for a coldness of nature. This may have been brought about by the death of his wife after less than a year of marriage. He was a lawyer by profession, practicing at first in Athens but moving to Huntsville a few years before the war.

The Huntsville Guards left for the war on April 29, 1861. They were joined by another Huntsville company called the North Alabamians. The two units traveled to Dalton, Georgia, where they were assigned to the newly formed 4th Alabama Infantry. Three months later, at Bull Run, the 4th would cover itself with glory as the Confederates drove the overconfident federal troops back toward Washington. Toward the end of the battle, the Huntsville men were

being led by General Bernard Bee as he made his famous declaration, "There stands Jackson like a stone wall," giving Thomas J. Jackson the nickname he would wear forever after.

But it was a bloody day for the 4th Alabama Infantry, who suffered 36 killed, 147 wounded, and three unaccounted for. Among the losses was Egbert Jones. Shot in the leg as he examined his wounded horse, he lingered for six weeks before succumbing to infection. His body was returned to Huntsville, where he was given a splendid funeral, said at the time to be the largest in the city's history.

Jones was buried in Maple Hill cemetery next to his wife. His unit would serve gallantly throughout the war as part of Lee's Army of Northern Virginia, but for the men of the 4th Alabama, war would never again seem glorious. Meanwhile, the Madison Rifles had been sent to Mobile, where they boarded a packet bound for Fort Morgan, at the entrance to Mobile Bay. There they joined the 1st Alabama Regiment and, on April 8, set out for Pensacola, where they set up camp within sight of Fort Pickens, still occupied by federal troops.

At Pensacola the regiment became the 7th Alabama Infantry; the Madison Rifles formed Company D. For the next six months they would remain, in the words of Sergeant A. R. Wiggs, "directly under the guns of Fort Pickens, which grins at us most

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horribly."

The 7th Alabama finally went into action on October 9, when a raiding party was sent to attack the Union camp on Santa Rosa Island. John Coltart led one of the three attacking columns. It was not much of a battle; two of the Huntsville soldiers were killed and the Confederates succeeded only in burning the Federals' camp. But it was a minor victory for the Madison Rifles. It was also the only fighting they would ever do. Two months later, the regiment was sent to Tennessee, and then to Bowling Green, Kentucky. They continued to serve until the unit was disbanded on March 31, 1862, just a week before the great battle at Shiloh.

Back in Huntsville, the home front was giving its best to the cause. Because the South was industrially inferior to the North, the manufacturing of war material was an ongoing problem. Early in 1861, the Episcopal, Methodist, Presbyterian and Cumberland Presbyterian churches removed the bells from their steeples and donated them to the war effort. The bells were sent to Holly Springs, Missis-

sippi, where they were melted down, cast into cannon, and sent back to Huntsville. They were thereafter known as the "Bell Battery of Huntsville."

But donated scrap iron could not win the war alone. For that, industry was needed, such as foundries to produce the guns and cannons needed by the army. In fact, one such firm was already in business in Huntsville. The Madison Iron Works had, before the war, produced such consumer items as cookware, farm machinery, and fencing. But in the summer of 1861 the company geared up for war production. Its first military products were three 6-pound guns. Before long, cannons and gun carriages were rolling out of the factory, located a block from the train depot.

Gun production at

the Madison Iron Works ended in early 1862. Whether this was because of the death of one of the company's owners, John

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Young, in December 1861 or because of the Federal occupation of the city in April is unclear. But Huntsville had done its part to keep the fighting men supplied with the tools of their trade.

The war situation began to look less rosy in early 1862. On February 16, General Simon Bolivar Buckner had surrendered Fort Donelson, near Dover, Tennessee. Ulysses Grant had sent Buckner the message that would make him famous: "No terms except unconditional and immediate surrender can be accepted." The fall of Fort Donelson means the Union now controlled the two main waterways in Tennessee - the Cumberland and Tennessee Rivers - and the news caused rejoicing in Washington.

On April 6, Southern troops under Albert Sidney Johnston caught Grant's Federals unawares at Shiloh. By nightfall the Union troops had been forced back three miles, but the loss of Johnston on the first day of the battle and Northern reinforcements on the second meant the Southerners had to retreat to Corinth, Mississippi. There, some of them boarded eastbound trains. They would arrive in Huntsville just in time to be met and taken captive by troops of the 3rd Division of the Army of the Ohio, led by Brigadier General O. M. Mitchel,

Ormsby MacKnight Mitchel was a man of many interests. Born in Kentucky in 1809, his

first job was as a clerk. At age 16 he received an appointment to West Point, and after graduation in 1829 he served as assistant professor of mathematics for three years. He was admitted to the bar, but in 1836 became professor of mathematics and natural philosophy at Cincinnati College.

But his passion was astronomy. He founded the Cincinnati Observatory with donated funds he had solicited himself, and in 1845 became its director. The observatory was equipped with a 12-inch refractor telescope which Mitchel had purchased in Munich. He also published the first magazine devoted to astronomy. In 1859 he became su-



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perintendent of the Dudley Observatory in Albany, New York. Each winter, Mitchel hit the lecture circuit, travelling by train, steamship, and stagecoach to Boston, New York, Philadelphia and other major cities around the country. He talked about planets orbiting other stars and other astronomical facts and was known for his ability to explain such things clearly. Although he was college educated, much of his knowledge of astronomy was self-taught. At least one modern astronomer has compared him to Carl Sagan.

O.M. Mitchel probably was America's best-known astronomer in 1861. But it was because he responded to his patriotic leanings and re-joined the army that year that his name would become linked in history with the city of Huntsville. Alabama.

The war had not yet come to Huntsville as spring arrived in 1862, but the feeling was growing that it was getting closer. The clearest sign appeared in early April, as trains pulled into town with sick and wounded soldiers, the casualties of Shiloh.

But war was nearer than anyone in town knew. On April 8, O. M. Mitchell and his Ohio troops had set out from Shelbyville, Tennessee, bound for Huntsville. It was an exhausting march through the worst weather imaginable, and the men had reached Meridianville before they were allowed to make camp.

Mitchel's men arrived in Huntsville at 6:00 a.m. on April 11. The town was taken almost completely by surprise; there had been rumors of approaching Yankees, but most people did not take them seriously. A Memphis & Charleston train had just arrived at the depot from the west, carrying a large number of soldiers on leave as well as men who had been

wounded at Shiloh. While the Union soldiers were surrounding the coaches, a second train which had arrived earlier managed to escape as the engineer took advantage of the confusion, threw the throttle wide open and sped away. Pursuing Union cavalrymen fired on the locomotive, killing the fireman, a black man. The Confederate soldiers, now prisoners of war, were marched into the depot.

Almost exactly a year earlier, the citizens of Huntsville had slept peacefully while the war began at Fort Sumter. Now many of them were sleeping just as peacefully, awakening to find that their town was occupied by the enemy. For Huntsville, the war had become frighteningly real.

Much of what we know about life in Huntsville during the war

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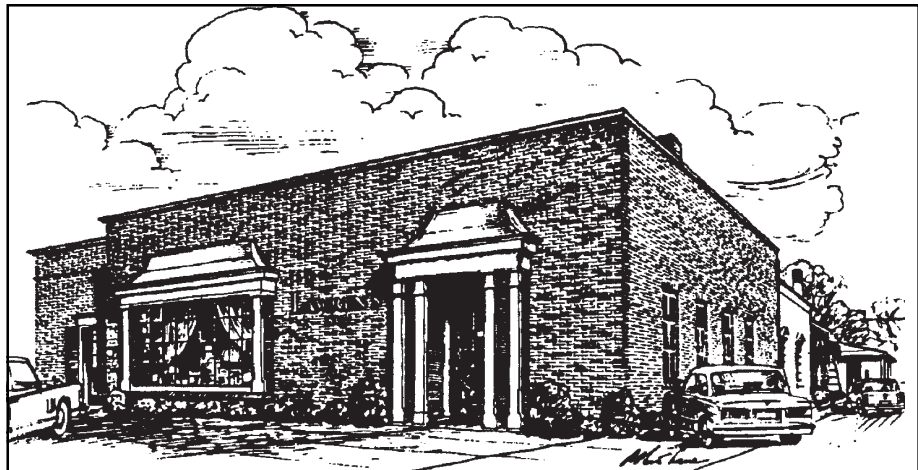


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comes from the diary of Mary Jane Chadick, wife of the local Cumberland Presbyterian minister. She was born and raised in the north but in the early 1840s her family moved to Lebanon, Tennessee. It was there that she met and married William Davidson Chadick. In the 1850s Chadick was sent to Huntsville and made minister of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church at Lincoln and Randolph Streets. When war came Chadick enlisted as a chaplain, but later he served in the infantry. Mrs. Chadick remained in Huntsville throughout the war, faithfully chronicling her experiences in her journal.

When the Union troops entered the town on April 11, 1862, Mrs. Chadick and her friends went to the depot to tend to the sick and wounded Southern troops. Mitchel had ordered them kept on the train, even though some of them hadn't eaten in days. During that summer, Mrs. Chadick would use her diary to chronicle life under the heavy-handed rule of O. M.

Mitchel.

During the four months that Mitchel served as de facto military governor of Huntsville he proved himself manifestly unsuited for administrative work, whatever his academic credentials may have been. He seemed to regard himself as more conquering hero than leader.

Mitchel's quick success in taking control of Huntsville won him a promotion to major general, but the new rank seemed only to have made him even more petty.

"General Mitchel complained that the ladies of Huntsville have given his officers the "cold shoulder" by not having received



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them into their social circle!" wrote Mrs. Chadick. Two of his officers, but not Mitchel himself, were invited to a picnic by local Unionists. The vain Mitchel had them both arrested.

When Southern guerillas began damaging railroad property and shooting at Union soldiers, Mitchel responded by arresting twelve prominent citizens of Huntsville, more to show them indignity than for any crimes they had committed. But when the men signed a statement condemning guerilla warfare, Mitchel seemed satisfied and released them.

But at least Huntsville had escaped the fate of Athens. That city had been occupied on April 20 by one of Mitchel's brigade commanders, Russian-born John Basil Turchin. When a passing Louisiana cavalry regiment frightened off some Ohio soldiers and the local people had jeered the retreating Yankees, Turchin decided to punish the Southerners for their impertinence. He assembled his men in downtown Athens and told them, "Men, I shut mine eyes for one hour," and returned to his hotel. The Union men

then ransacked the town, looting homes and businesses, and raping some black women. Turchin was court-martialed and drummed out of the army, but Abraham Lincoln overruled the dismissal and promoted him to brigadier general.

On July 1, 1862, O. M. Mitchel's reign in Huntsville came to an end when he was recalled to Washington. One of the reasons cited for his recall was failure to control his men. That charge was made by Mitchel's superior, Don Carlos Buell, a man whom Mitchel heartily detested.

Certainly no one in Huntsville was sorry to see Mitchel leave. Nor could anyone find tears to shed when Mitchel died of yellow fever in South Carolina four months later. The Huntsville Daily Confederate reported on November 12 the death of "his detestable lowness, Maj. Gen. O. M. Mitchel. No man ever had more winning

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ways to excite people's hatred than he. We have no space to do justice to his vices - virtues he showed none, in his dealings with the people of North Alabama."

Mitchel's place in Huntsville was taken by General Lovell H. Rousseau, a native of Kentucky. Although he was a strict disciplinarian, he was still considered an improvement over Mitchel - although almost anyone would have been.

On August 31, 1862, Mary Jane Chadick was awakened before dawn by the sound of voices, running feet, and wagons. "Sprang out of bed and looked through the shutters to see what it meant," she wrote, "when, lo and behold, it was the Lincoln army making their anxiously wished-for exit from Huntsville."

The Union army was indeed abandoning Huntsville, and in no small hurry. The citizens of the town were delighted, although their mood was dimmed somewhat by a series of large fires that accompanied the federal retreat. The Yankees were burning what food they could not carry with them to keep it from the people of Huntsville. Later that same day, Southern troops reentered the city, led by Captain Frank B. Gurley.

The handsome young Frank Gurley was a native of the town that had been named for his family. He had enlisted at Maysville three months after the fall of Fort Sumter, and was sent to Memphis where he joined the cavalry battalion of Nathan Bedford Forrest. Gurley became separated from Forrest while recovering from illness in April 1862, and formed his own unit, which became known as the "immortal seven." He spent the summer harassing

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Union troops in eastern Madison County and was the first Confederate soldier to enter Huntsville after the Northerners' hasty retreat.

It was inevitable that the Yankees would come back to Huntsville. Union cavalry began a series in raids in north Alabama in the summer of 1863, and the area would remain under Union control almost continuously for the remainder of the war. The raiders seemed preoccupied with black men, taking as many as they could find and impressing them into the Union army.

The enslavement of people of African descent had been the occasion for the war, if not the cause. Alabama was a slave state, but in Huntsville pro-slavery sentiment was not nearly so pronounced as it was in the cotton-growing areas to the south. By the mid-1830s, runaway slave notices were rarely seen in the newspapers, although they had once been plentiful. There was even an abolitionist paper, the Southern Advocate.

Interestingly, a number of local blacks fought in the war, but on the Southern side. Among them was Matt Gray, known as "Uncle Matt." After the war, Uncle Matt never missed a veterans' meeting and always wore an old gray uniform.

By 1864, it was becoming more and more difficult for Southern armies to fill out their numbers. Many of the best of Southern youth lay dead at Shiloh, Antietam, and Gettysburg. Nor could the Confederacy rebuild its number through prisoner exchanges; Grant had ended that policy, realizing that it was only encouraging the Southerners to continue the war. Lee was watching his numbers steadily reduced



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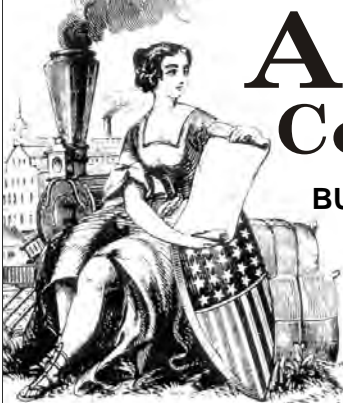
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during the Petersburg campaign, knowing he had no hope of replacing them.

The Southern cause began to depend more and more on raiders, men who ranged far into enemy territory on hit-and-run raids. In the beginning, Confederate policy had rejected the notion of guerilla fighters. Secretary of War Walker had stated that for Southern troops to operate outside the accepted bounds of military conduct would make them no better than "outlaws and pirates." Now, in 1864, the guerillas were becoming almost the only means of projecting Southern power on the enemy. One of the most effective of these was known as "Bushwhacker" Johnston.

His real name was Milus E. Johnston, and he was a Methodist circuit preacher from Tennessee. He once called Huntsville "one of the neatest and most beautiful little cities to be found in any country." Johnston had no interest in fighting at first, but because his wife had three brothers in the Confederate army, he was frequently harassed by Union troops. Showing little regard for his minister's robes, the Yankees burned his house down and stole everything he had, including, he recalled later, the shoes off his feet. They had been just as hateful to his father-in-law, who lived in Vienna (now New Hope). His wife was even taken prisoner for a time.

Johnston escaped across the Tennessee River and swore revenge on his blue-clad tormentors. He was awarded a captain's

commission and given permission to raise a company. During 1864 Johnston's men crossed the river a number of times to attack Union troops. His most frequent victim was the 12<sup>th</sup> Indiana Cavalry, whose commander, Colonel Edward Anderson, had a reputation for ruthlessness.

In his first encounter with the 12th Indiana on June 26, Johnston had surprised the Hoosiers and put them to flight, even though they were looking for him. They met again west of New Hope on July 8, and this time the 12th lost ten men, two of them officers. On August 11, Bushwhacker Johnston struck again, capturing an entire wagon train. The enraged Colonel Anderson responded by arresting and executing an innocent teenage farmer's son named Patrick Davis, who had no connection to Johnston whatsoever. Anderson was later acquitted of the murder in a court-martial.

By December Johnston had



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traveled is sometimes the  
hardest road.**

**The road less traveled is  
oftentimes the reason that  
there is still beauty in  
the world."**

**Robin Scott, Huntsville**



rejoined his commander, Colonel Lemuel G. Mead of Paint Rock. On a bitterly cold New Year's Eve, Mead's rangers attacked soldiers of the 13th Wisconsin Veteran Volunteers who were guarding the railroad bridge over the Paint Rock River. Most of the Yankees were caught asleep. Those who could do so ran away. The victory was especially sweet because some of the Union soldiers were Alabama turncoats from Marshall County, led by Captain John B. Kenamer.

"What a contrast between this and a New Year's morning five years ago, before the advent of this miserable war!" wrote Mary Jane Chadick on January 1, 1865. Her husband had been home on leave in December but had had to flee when Union cavalry reoccupied Huntsville. Her 16-year-old stepson Eddie had also enlisted and had barely escaped capture when his unit was attacked just before Christmas. She would soon learn that Eddie had been taken prisoner in another engagement and was being held at Camp Chase, Ohio.

By now it was clear to all in Huntsville that the Confederate cause was all but lost. It was only a matter of time before Robert E. Lee would have to evacuate Richmond. In January, Jefferson Davis appointed a commission to represent the government in peace talks in Washington.

Lemuel Mead continued to fight, but he could not postpone the inevitable for long. In February one of his company commanders had surrendered in Fayetteville, Tennessee. Then on April 2, Robert E. Lee abandoned Richmond. Lee surrendered his army to Grant at Appomattox Court House one week later.

Realizing the war was over, the Union commander in Huntsville, General Rob-

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ert S. Granger, ordered Mead to surrender. Mead refused. Granger wired General George H. Thomas in Nashville for instructions. Thomas replied that Mead and his forces were outlaws and were to be shot on sight.

It was Bushwhacker Johnston who finally made the hard decision to surrender. At his camp on the slopes of Monte Sano, he called his men together and told them he was going to give himself up. Many, though not all, of his men agreed to go with him.

On May 8, Johnston wrote to General Granger and told him of his intentions. It was arranged that Colonel William Given of Ohio would meet Johnston at a point on the Huntsville-Vienna road about halfway up the mountain. At the appointed time the next day, the deed was done.

The Union troops were understandably in a good mood and had brought along ten gallons of apple brandy to celebrate.

Once introductions were made and the formality of surrender completed, everyone began to relax. Soon everyone was partaking of the apple brandy, which further heightened the mood. Johnston, the circuit preacher, declined to participate in the drinking.

The Southerners were marched into the city to the Union arsenal, where Huntsville Hospital now stands, and surrendered their weapons. The

next morning they were given their paroles and dismissed. The war was over.

Over half a million lives had been lost in the war. The men who gave those lives would be sorely missed during the rebuilding of the South. But with the end of the war, the return of the survivors would bring joy to many Southern homes.

One of these was the home of Mary Jane Chadick, who awaited the return of her husband, William Davidson Chadick, and her stepson Eddie. Both made it home safely, and the Chadicks lived for many years in Huntsville. When the preacher died, Mary Jane moved to Arkansas to live with her sister.

After leaving his cabinet post,

Leroy Pope Walker served as a general in the field and as a military judge. When the war ended he returned to his law practice in Huntsville. He died in 1884.

Bushwhacker Johnston became Milus Johnston and returned to the pulpit.

Frank Gurley, the young cavalryman who had ridden into town as the Federals left in 1862, survived the war, but just barely. He was charged with murder in an incident in 1862 in which his men had killed a fleeing Union officer.

He was sentenced to be hanged but was granted clemency by President Andrew Johnson. When he died in 1920, he was buried with full military honors.



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# Brotherly Love

by Tom Baker

Leroy and "Callie" Sharp were brother and sister. They grew up in northeast Madison county, in a area their ancestors had settled in the early 1800's called Sharp's Cove. Leroy was four years senior to Callie & they seemed very close throughout their growing-up years. When Callie was 14 in 1891, she married Sidney Johnson Pence, a local boy who lived in the cove. The next year Leroy married the sister of Sidney, Mildred Pence.

As time passed, Leroy, Callie and their spouses were living in Oklahoma, where they seemed to prosper. All was well within the families.

That is until something happened in the early 1920's that would be discussed in the Sharp and Pence households for generations to come. This tragic event took place in Oklahoma in December 1921.

The following story was taken from the Norman, Oklahoma Newspaper: "Sidney Johnson Pence was shot and killed on December 13, 1921 in McClain County, Oklahoma by Leroy California Sharp, his brother-in-law. Sharp, in preparation for moving across the river to Norman, Oklahoma was in the act of digging up some plants from Pence's farm, which he was renting, when Pence arrived.

An argument ensued, escalating into a fight in which Pence was killed."

Sharp was freed on a \$3,000 bond, awaiting trial for the crime. Pence was married to Callie Pence, sister of Sharp. She returned his body to Gurley, Alabama for burial. Returning to Oklahoma, she met her brother

in a store in Norman, where she shot him. He lingered in the hospital for some days before he died March 27, 1922, age 49, being buried in Denver Cemetery, Cleveland County, Oklahoma. His sister, Callie, who killed him, likewise was charged but never went to trial.

Why Callie never went to trial for the shooting of her brother is unclear. Maybe Leroy on his deathbed told the authorities it was an accident. That his sister was showing him the gun when it discharged. On this we can only speculate. Or, maybe this did happen and it was a final act of brotherly love on Leroy's part.

Callie died in 1971 in Huntsville, Alabama at the ripe old age of 93.

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- North Alabama Hatchery & Supply Co. - "Baby Chicks - Thoroughbred White Leghorn, \$.13 each; Rhode Island Reds, \$.15 each".

- Edwards Buick Co. - "New Dodge coup - never been used - will sell for \$100"

- Grand Shine Parlor - East

Clinton street - "Why pay the price of a new straw hat when we can make last summer's hat look like new?"

- May & Cooney - in business since 1899 - Redfern Corsets \$3.95 (back or frontlace); ladies' two piece pajama suits of Batiste and Crepe, in white, blue, pink, rose and canary.

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# The Rolling Store

by Malcolm Miller

When I was growing up in the nineteen thirties and early forties we were pretty isolated. The tenant houses we lived in were usually a mile or maybe three miles from the nearest general store. If we needed coal oil for the lamps or ran out of basic items we used back then we either had to walk to the community general store or ride a mule, however Papa didn't want us riding the mules much especially after they had pulled a plow all day.

Our main connection with the outside world back then was the rolling store. I can almost still feel the thrill I would get when I would hear the peddler, as I called him, honking his horn as he approached our house. It was a large truck and the enclosed back was filled with shelves and

bins with all kinds of things that country folks needed back then. There was a large chicken pen attached to the rear end along with a large metal container of coal oil. For you young whipper snappers, coal oil is what they call kerosene these days and it cost ten cents to fill a gallon jug and even at that we had to use the lamps sparingly because even dimes were hard to come by in those days.

Since money was so hard to come by, Mama would trade chickens and eggs to the peddler

for the things we just had to have. This seemed to be a great idea to me so one day I heard that horn blowing and I got a bright idea, I was probably three or four years old by then. I grabbed up an arm load of kittens and ran as fast as I could to meet the peddler; I was going to trade those kittens for all the candy I could eat. I believe this particular peddler was Mr.W.D.King, and he really got a laugh out of me trying to trade the kittens.

Mr. King would bring special things that he didn't normally

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carry on his truck some times, such as material for making clothes and even shoes.

We had other rolling stores come by in later years. I remember J.D. Carrol and also Bill Clardy and some of these really went modern and had ice cold soft drinks on their trucks. I still remember running from the cotton field just in time to catch the peddler if I was lucky enough to have a nickel on me and getting an ice cold Double Cola. I don't think I have ever tasted anything as good as that was back then.

As time passed and more people had cars and trucks to get to town or at least to some community store, the need for the rolling store slowly faded and finally no longer existed.

But you know these days when I drink a Double Cola they just don't taste nearly as good as they did on those hot summer days back then when I got them

from the rolling store. I will always have fond memories of those hard times when little pleasures meant so much.

### Reward for Return

Missing nine hogs of a reddish nature. The hogs are the property of J.D. Kendall and were last seen near the corner of Clinton and Jefferson.

The above has already, this year, lost 33 hogs and two milk cows to the infidels of the dark who seem to be continuously preying upon the trusting manners of our townspeople. A liberal reward will be paid.

*from 1891 newspaper*

**"If a pig loses its voice, is it disgruntled?"**

*Jeremy Stevens, Arab*

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# Heard On the Street

by *Cathey Carney*



Congratulations to **Curtis Parcus**, who called with the first correct guess for the May Photo of the Month. That adorable little girl was **Jane Tippett**, of the Historic Lowry House. Many people know Curtis, and he and his wife **Becky** are owners of Dallas Mill Deli on Pratt & Washington.

Speaking of Curtis, his grandfather **Harris Lee Parcus** of Triana died during the month. We send our sympathy to daughter **Toney** and Harris' friends & family.

It was so good to see **Billy Layne** recently. Back in the day, Billy worked as Environmental Technician at Marshall Space Flight Center, and retired in 1986. He likes to visit **Floyd Hardin** (Mayor of Dallas Mill) at Jackson Way Styling Salon, and is a sweet guy.

**Debbie Williamson** just loves her Mom, **Gladys Gray**, and wants to send out a special Hello to her.

**Linda Drace** is sure proud of her son. **Kevin Drace** received his Ph.D in Microbiology & Genetics from the University of Alabama in Birmingham recently, and will begin his appointment in July as

Professor of Microbiology at Mercer University in Macon, Georgia. Congratulations to you, Kevin!

We were so sorry to hear that **Barbara Fortner** had died in her sleep in early May, at the young age of 78. Barbara is the mother of **Cheryl Tribble** of Woodstock, GA., and both had visited Huntsville several times. Even though she lived in California, Barbara always thought she was a Southerner at heart and people here called her "Scarlett."

The employees of the Therapy & Sports Center at the Medical Mall would like to congratulate **Stephanie Taylor** on her recent engagement to **Frankie Perez**, along with her acceptance into the Physical Therapy Program at UAB in Birmingham.

It was great to hear from **Doug Raney** recently - he currently lives in Stafford, VA but visited friends in Huntsville recently with his sweet wife.

I spoke with a really interesting lady recently, many remember

**Juanita Adcock** who worked with **Dr. Bernie Moore** here in Huntsville for 30 years, in the old Crestwood Hospital location. Also working there were **Earl Robertson** and **J. Ellis Sparks**. She began working there in 1968 as ward clerk, and remembers **Louie Tippett's** Mom, who was manager of Housekeeping at Crestwood many years ago. Juanita sure misses her sweet husband, **Fred Adcock**.

**Susan Bernard** wants to send congratulations to her son **Preston Johnson** on his graduation from Kennesaw University located in Kennesaw, GA., with a Political Science Degree. His plans are to attend Law School. Susan works as Outpatient Physical Therapist Assistant at the Medical Mall. "Way to go, Son!"

That sweet **Evan Troup** and his classmates just graduated from pre-school at Latham Methodist with a ceremony held for the children and parents.

**Sarah Tucker** used to live in Huntsville, now in Virginia, and

## Photo of The Month

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

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had a question for our readers. Does anyone have information on the company **Meadow Gold (Barber)** that closed many years ago? She would love to get in touch with any former employees. Also, what happened to the cow that stood sentinel over the company headquarters? If anyone knows, give us a call at the magazine (info on page 3).

We were so sorry to hear of the death of **Marilyn Spry**. She was such an elegant lady and the beloved wife of **Sam Spry, Jr.** She helped him so much when he started the Spry Funeral Home. We send our deepest condolences to Sam and the many family members and friends she leaves behind.

Hello to that handsome **Eric Hansen**, Physical Therapist Assistant at the Medical Mall. **Colleen Durham** works with him and does a great job helping folks!

Many people know **Billy Joe Cooley**, who is one of the best humorists in this area. His latest book, "Away Down South", is available locally at the Senior Center and is very popular.

**Ann Smith**, that very popular Bank teller at Colonial Bank on Church street, is retiring after nearly 11 years at the bank. SOO many of the bank's customers are going to miss you Ann, but congratulations to you!

Recently while getting ready for therapy at the Medical Mall (I just had a great hip replacement, thanks to **Dr. Louis Horn**), I met **Bobby Hamilton**. He was a really nice guy and told me that he's been working at one of our favorite garden spots, **Bennett's Nursery**, for 15 years now.

**Sam Citrano, Jr.** just had a birthday in May, and we, along with his sweet Dad **Sam Sr.**, want to wish him many more!

**Lois Miller** of Harvest just had a birthday, too, in May. She has had her share of physical challenges and we just want to

send our love to Lois. Her husband **Malcolm** is also well known to many in this area.

**Jesse James McLain**, who works at ColorXpress in Madison, is sure one proud Dad. His daughter, **Katrina McLain**, is in the Navy and was just promoted to submarine navigator. She is stationed in Pensacola, Fl. We asked Jesse if he might be related to the Jesse James of years ago, but he doesn't think so! Jesse's son **Derwin** turns 30 in June and is really enjoying single life!

**Chuck and Annelie Owens**, seniors, were driving along University Drive recently when their car stalled. Traffic was terrible but 4 firefighters from Station #5 appeared (they were there working on a fallen traffic light) and helped push the car out of danger to a safe area. The firemen who helped were: **Norm McKelvey, Jason Phillips, Tally Fanning and Jim Bob Walter**.

It was interesting to read that **Star Market** has hired many of the **Terry's Pizza** employees and that the delicious pizzas will be cooked and sold hot at Star Market. Owner **Darden Heritage** recently made some major upgrades to the 5 Points Star Market and now they even sell Sushi! You've got to go by and see them, even just to try some of their fresh ice cream

**Wanda Garrett** is the sweet

Mom of **Angie Tallent**, who works as Therapy Scheduler at the Medical Mall. Wanda loves exercising in the heated swimming pool there, and highly recommends it.

**Col. Jim Winning** came here from Scotland at age 6, and recently died at 91. We send our deepest condolences to Jim's family and many friends.

Happy Father's Day to all our wonderful Dads out there!

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## Dad's Day Comfort Foods

### Bourbon Sweet Potatoes

- 6 med. sweet potatoes
- 1/2 c. sugar
- 1 t. salt
- 3/4 stick butter
- dash nutmeg
- 1 egg, beaten
- 1/2 c. bourbon whiskey

Marshmallows for topping

Boil potatoes til fork tender. Peel and mash, add sugar, salt, butter and nutmeg. Beat the egg into the whiskey and mix in the potato mixture. Place all in a greased pyrex baking dish and top with halved marshmallows. Bake at 350 degrees for 45 minutes and marshmallows are golden brown.

### Cheesy Grits

- 3/4 c. grits
- 3 c. water
- 1/2 lb. sharp cheddar

cheese, grated  
 2 t. seasoned salt  
 3/4 stick butter  
 Tabasco sauce, dash  
 Cook grits in boiling water 20 minutes and they have absorbed nearly all the water and have the consistency of mashed potatoes. Add the cheese, salt, butter and Tabasco, stir well. Pour in baking dish, cover and bake at 250 degrees for an hour.

### Eye of Round Roast

Eye of Round roast, 3-4 lbs.  
 Seasoned pepper  
 Seasoned Salt  
 Garlic powder  
 Worcestershire sauce  
 Defrost roast completely. Sprinkle generously with: seasoned pepper, seasoned salt, garlic powder, Worcestershire sauce. Bake at 275 degrees for an hour and 20 minutes.

### Easy "Fried" Corn

- 4 cans whole kernel corn, drained
- 1/2 stick butter
- 1 8-oz. pkg. cream cheese
- 1 t. garlic pepper
- 1 t. salt

Pour the corn into a large saucepan, and heat over medium. Add the butter, cream cheese, salt and pepper and slowly heat til the butter and cream cheese is melted. Stir well and serve.

### Veal with Lemon & Butter

- 1 lb. veal, quartered
- 4 T. unsalted butter
- Flour
- Freshly ground pepper
- salt
- lemon Juice

Pound veal slices with meat mallet, and sprinkle them with

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salt and pepper. Flour them well. Melt butter in a large frying pan and brown the veal quickly. Drizzle a little lemon juice over the veal, cook another 2 minutes and serve.

### Party Rice

- 6 stalks green onions, tops and bottoms finely chopped
- 1 stick butter
- 2 c. rice, washed
- 2 T. butter
- 4 c. boiling water
- 5 T. soy sauce
- 1/2 c. slivered, toasted almonds

Place the butter in sauce pan and melt over low heat. Sauté the green onions in the butter. Place into a 2 1/2 quart pan: green onions, rice, water. Cover tightly and cook on low til water has evaporated. Uncover and toss the rice.

Add: 2 Tablespoons butter, soy sauce and the almonds. Place all in over-proof casserole and warm in oven at 250 degrees for 30 minutes.

### Mexican Pralines

- 2 sticks butter
- 1 c. brown sugar
- 1 c. chopped pecans
- Graham crackers

Break apart enough graham crackers to cover the bottom of a jelly roll tray. Combine the butter and sugar in a saucepan, bring to boil and boil for 2 minutes. Remove from heat and add the pecans. Spread over the graham crackers. Bake at 350 degrees for 8-10 minutes. When cool, break apart and serve or store.

### Dump Cake

- 1 8-oz. can crushed pineapple, drained
- 1 can cherry pie filling
- 1 yellow cake mix
- 1 c. chopped pecans
- 1 c. butter, sliced

In a 9 x 13" baking pan, spread the following evenly on the bottom: pineapple, cherry filling, then cake mix, then pecans. Cover evenly with the butter. Bake at 325 degrees for an hour. Serve with whipped cream or ice cream.

### Almond Sponge Cake

Beat 2 eggs til light, beat in 1 teaspoon melted butter. Add a teaspoon almond extract. Sift together one cup each of flour & sugar, 1/4 teaspoon salt and 1 teaspoon baking powder. Bake at 350 degrees for 25-30 minutes.



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# Strange News from 1901

- Mrs. C.V. Lewis was taken to the hospital yesterday, the victim of an accident which carries a moral for other women. She was in her yard hanging out the week's washing on a line and pinning the clothes up with ordinary pins. These she carried safely in her mouth until she sneezed suddenly and swallowed at least a dozen of them. Since then she has suffered intense agony and at the hospital it was said she was in critical condition.

- A one-legged man attempted to take charge of the Southern Depot today and was

arrested by the police. He was drunk and anxious to get a fight out of anybody. He refused to give out his name. According to our sources he is a Confederate veteran, who when intoxicated, takes offence at any blue uniform.

- Officers Crunk and High and Deputy Sheriff Mitchell made a raid on a bunch of crap shooters late Saturday night near the Rodgers stable and captured Jim Johnson, Tim Lightfoot, Step Lowe, Frank Reeder and Eli Brooks. They were all gathered around a blanket on a floor shooting craps. One made an attempt to pull a gun but was battered on the head and gave up the idea. They were "Rolling Bones" as they called it and having a fine time.

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and is the area’s premier Life Care Retirement Community. We at Redstone Village offer a vibrant, independent lifestyle and peace of mind for the future through our Life Care agreement, which guarantees residents access to additional levels of care – from licensed Assisted Living to Skilled Nursing care – should they ever require it.

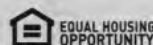
Connie says every morning she asks “What do I *want* to do today?” instead of “What do I *have* to get done?” Redstone Village has programs ranging from computer workshops to Golf and Country Club privileges at a local country club. Rudy adds, “Why would anyone wait to start living like this?”

Don’t wait, call 256-881-6717 to find out more about Redstone Village.

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*Redstone Village*



# Old Shiner

by Austin Miller

I got Old Shiner from Jack West. In 1947, Jack was just out of the Navy and lived across the field from us on Wess Taylor road. We farmed the land in front of his house and sometime when we were working in the field, Daddy would let me visit Jack and his wife. Jack was from Huntsville but his wife whom he met in the navy was from Minnesota. I loved to visit because they made over me and gave me treats. One day Jack told me that they had a new litter of puppies and I could choose the one I wanted when they got a little older.

Late in the afternoon on my first day of school, Daddy and I went to get my dog. I remember Jack asking me how I liked school. I told him I didn't like it and school was not for me.

The dogs came out from under the floor and I looked at them for a long time but couldn't make up my mind. Suddenly another one came running out. He had a mostly black body; mixed in with some white around his head, feet and at the end of his tail. The indecision was over, I had found my dog. There was a black splotch over his

left eye surrounded by white; thus the name Old Shiner.

Old Shiner was just dog; he had no special talents. All he could do was bark and eat. I doubt if he had average dog intelligence. But he was good-natured, wagged his tail all time, caused no trouble and was totally loyal. Most of the time we didn't realize he was around but he was part of the aura of our family.

One cool rainy Saturday morning in September of 1953, when I was twelve, we had vis-

ited one of our neighbors, the Sharps, and were walking back home. When we got a little piece up our drive past the mailbox a car came speeding by and hit Old Shiner. I heard the bump and saw him flying through the air. I pointed and cried out "Mama, Old Shiner"! The car didn't stop or even slow down. It was a 1951, green Ford. I was devastated.

The next day Uncle Paul came home from Korea after his release as a prisoner of war and we went to the old



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airport to meet him. He had been held by the Chinese for almost three years and thousands turned out to welcome him home. All the family got to ride with him in a parade through Huntsville. We rode in a specially made open top vehicle that looked like a train engine. I am not sure if it belonged to the city or the American Legion. It was before the parkway and I don't remember the route but we came downtown and circled the square.

All along the way there were people lined up on both sides of the street. Occasionally, I would see someone I knew and wave to them as we passed. All the excitement made me feel better but I was still a sad little boy over the loss of my dog. The next day Daddy, my brother Berns and I were in the field picking cotton. It was tough to be back in the field after so much excitement the day before. I remember thinking if it hadn't rained, it wouldn't have been too wet to pick cotton on Saturday, and Old Shiner would still be alive. I also remember thinking that being in the Army and returning a hero was a lot better than picking cotton.

Shortly after Jack gave me Old Shiner, he and his wife moved to Los Angeles and opened a pawnshop. Sometime later, they sent us a picture of a baby son named Rodney. We got Christmas cards from them until I was grown. I think Daddy may have seen Jack a few times when they returned to Huntsville to visit family but after they moved, I never saw them again.

The day I got Old

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Shiner, Jack asked me if I knew what garlic was. I didn't. He showed me a patch he had growing and said, "Why don't you take some home and set it out?" I planted it at the east end of the house where it grew until April 3, 1974. The big Ryland tornado blew the bulbs out of the ground and scattered them among the debris in the yard. I found a few that weren't mashed and replanted them close to the old spot. Miraculously, they survived.

Like they have every spring since 1947, the bulbs sprout new growth that flourishes until the stalks go to seed in the summer. We still own the property and everybody in the family knows to leave my garlic alone. It is important to me because it has been in our yard since my first day of school. Also, it reminds me of the only dog I ever owned and the nice couple that gave him to me.

## News from 1901

- Our city fathers have passed an ordinance, which has been on the statute book for some time, forbidding hog pens in the city limits, yet the nuisance is kept up in defiance of the law by persons who should know better.

- George Hardy, aged 37, has been committed for trial on \$2,500 bail, on a charge of grand larceny, preferred by his sister-in-law, Dora Rane, who alleges that he stole \$50 from her pocket on the day of his marriage to her sister. The accused denied the charge, and said it was a case of spite. When arrested he had over \$1,200 in his possession. It was said Hardy made a practice of marrying women for money and leaving them on their wedding day.

- Since the arrest of one or two men last week charged with burglary, the Huntsville police have had things their way. Saturday night there was an unusually large number of men employed and some were hid out while others patrolled the street. This is a warning to any who would be thinking of foul play in the future.

## Looking for Information

I am looking for information regarding my mother, Louise Timms, born 1843 in Rochester, New York. In 1864 she abandoned her husband and children and reportedly moved to Huntsville, Alabama where she lived with a man by the name of Nance. She is supposed to have had several more children by him before deserting him also. At last report she was residing near the community of Hazle Green. You may reach me at this paper.

*from 1888 newspaper*

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\* People during the depression rarely had eating disorders, they were just happy to eat.

\* Some people we know are coasting down hills to save gas!

\* If you have a plot of land and some sun, grow a vegetable garden. It'll save you money and you'll love the taste.

\* A rag dipped in vinegar, then salt, makes a good solution to get the tarnish off copper and brass.

\* Don't waste food. Old bread can become next day's bread pudding dessert, leftover mashed potatoes can make really good potato pancakes.

\* Make a large pan of oatmeal (not instant) for breakfast. Pour the leftover into loaf pans and chill. Cut into slices next day, fry in butter and drizzle with syrup.

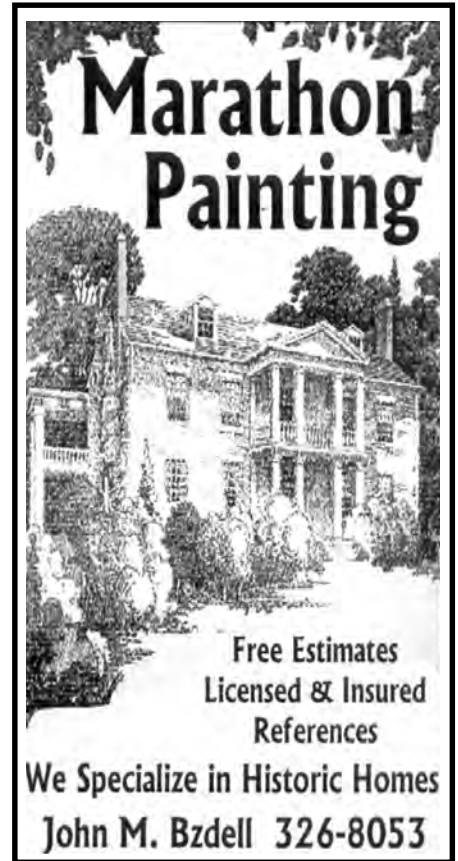
\* After you've had your first pot of coffee, don't throw away the used grounds - just add another tablespoon of fresh coffee grounds and make another pot.

\* Believe it or not, dandelion greens are really good! If you have a yard full of them, try to pick a few, cook down in water and add a bit of butter and vinegar to taste.

\* If you eat a good variety of fresh vegetables and fruit, you won't need to spend money on vitamin supplements.

\* Dried beans are a great staple to keep in the kitchen. They are inexpensive, filling and healthy.

\* Flax seed and sesame seed are just delicious on buttered toast, salad or cereal. To really bring out their taste, get out your frying pan, put a layer of seed in the pan, heat over med-high heat, when the seeds just begin to pop pour them onto a paper plate to cool. Store in Ziploc bags and you'll have a healthy, delicious treat.



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# Almost Famous

It was an old dilapidated nightclub on Holmes Avenue. The air was thick with cigarette smoke and fumes of stale beer. There were only a few people sitting around the tables, bored to death, while on the small stage was an old gray-haired man, trying to coax one more song out of his memory, as his gnarled fingers gently stroked the strings of a guitar.

The old man had been almost famous at one time. Years earlier he had been known as "Crying John," a name he had acquired because of his soulful rendition of the Blues. But with the new popularity of the radio, time had passed him by.

Now he was just another broken down old man, playing in clubs for whatever tips people might decide to give him.

No one really noticed the stranger when he slipped in the door and pulled up a chair at a table in the back shadows of the room. He sat there for almost an hour, listening to the old man and drinking, never saying a word.

Finally, when the old man was finished playing, the stranger invited him to sit at his table and have a drink. They talked in voices so low that no one else in the room could hear them. Not that anyone cared, of course. The old man had long ago become the butt of all the jokes told in the bar.

When it was time for the old man to begin playing again, the stranger joined him on stage. With the old man taking the lead, the stranger hesitantly began to follow.

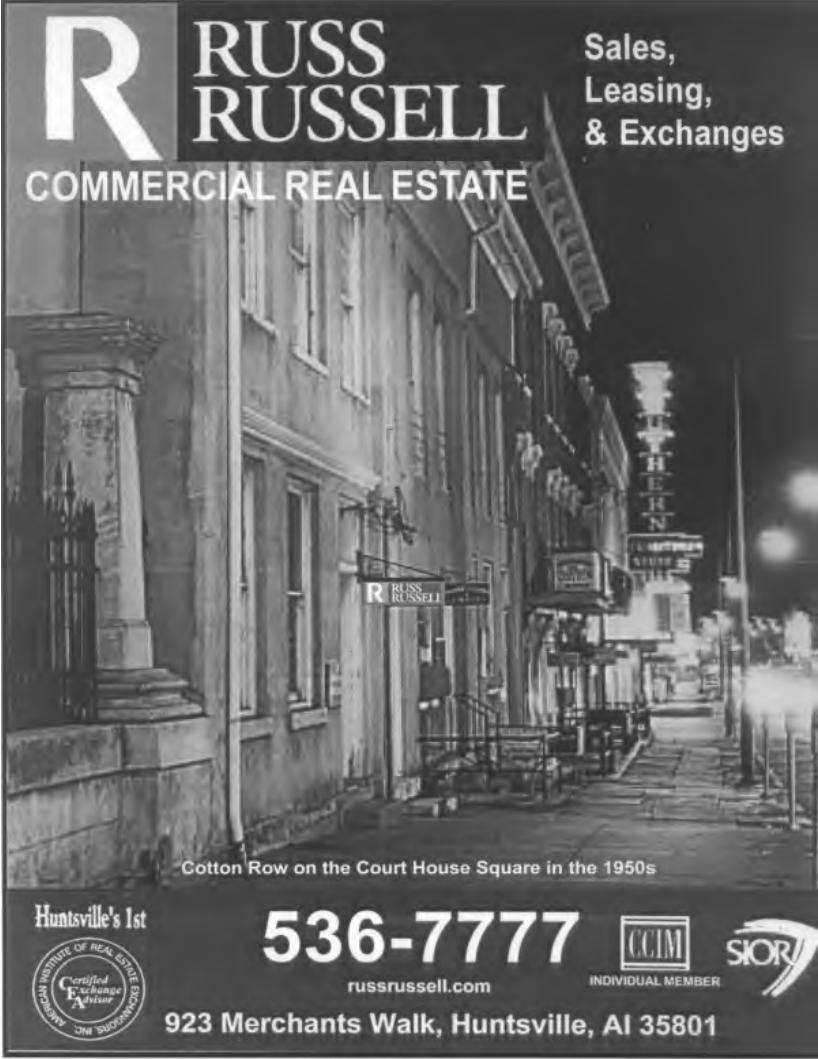
Slowly and awkwardly at first, they began singing the songs of the cotton fields and of the poor people. Their songs told of empty whisky bottles, and heart-break, and lost loves.

Two men; one, an old broken down shell of his former being, and the other, a tall, young gangly lad, together on the make-shift stage, staring into one



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another's eyes as they blended their voices in perfect harmony while singing the songs that most people had forgotten.

When they had finished the last song the stranger told the old man it was time for him to leave. They stood there silently for a moment, and then the stranger reached out and embraced the old man.

After watching him leave, the old man paused, wiping a tear from his eye, and then slowly picked up a handbill the stranger had given him. Carefully he smoothed the paper and with a piece of old scotch tape, stuck it to the wall behind the stage.

Once more, he stood back and looked at the stranger's picture on the handbill and read the words, "Hank Williams - Appearing in Concert."

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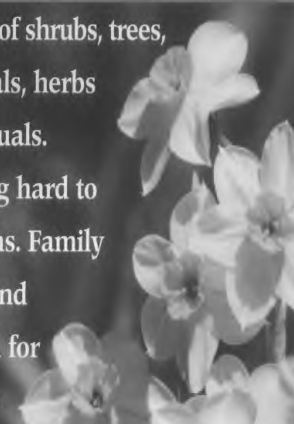
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# My Memories of Life in Old Huntsville

by Rudolph V. Strickland

As a small child I would sit and talk with my grandmother. We spent many hours together over the years because she raised me. I remember asking her a lot of questions. Some of her answers I remember to this very day. Mama told me she went to work at the cotton mill when she was nine years old, in 1905. She made a quarter per week; she kept a nickel and gave 20 cents to Pa. Mama said that the children were too small to reach the equipment they worked on, so they stood on apple boxes. After the children finished their work they played bob jacks on the floor.

Some of the fondest memories of my childhood are from the Christmas parties and quilting parties at our house. Mama's department at the mill had their Christmas party at our house. The workers exchanged gifts and then mama would turn out the lights and everyone would sing Christmas carols around the fireplace. Everyone had a merry Christmas. At the quilting parties at my

house the women dipped snuff. Mama placed the cuspidor next to the fireplace, and I watched those women spit in the cuspidor or the fireplace. It was something to watch!

My grandfather came to Huntsville in 1901 from Dunlap, Tennessee. He worked in the mill and as a conductor on the old Huntsville Street Car lines until it closed. I have a picture of him in his uniform.

As a young boy I lived on 9th Avenue in Westlawn and our playing field was between North Rose Street and South Rose Drive. Our favorite sport was football, of course. Some of the boys I remember are Boots Herron, Bob Meden, Pat Miller, Sonny Archer, Robert Suns and Roland Brown.

One day, a new boy Marvin moved to town and came to the field where we were playing. Marvin was from Scottsboro. He asked us what we were playing and we thought it was the funniest thing that he didn't know what football was. Marvin asked us if he could play, so we coached him along. We instructed him when the ball was centered to him he should take it and run for the goal line. We were laughing because we were going to tackle him so hard that he would never forget it.

Marvin got the ball and ran through the center of the line and knocked a bunch of boys on their

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BUTTS! Marvin Miller was then considered to be one of the boys. I might add, he became an outstanding running back at Butler High School and was given a scholarship to the University of Alabama.

We enjoyed sports and all of the boys in our neighborhood belonged to the Virginia McCormack YMCA. Most of us could not afford the dues, but the manager Mr. Bill Childress let us play there anyway. Mr. Childress, as well as Pie Bates, were coaches of a pee wee football league I was involved in. Our football equipment consisted of shoulder pads, a leather helmet, and a jersey. Some of the boys on that team were Glen Nunley (who went on to play quarterback for the University of Georgia), Roy Yell, Gene Yell, Pat Miller, and Donald Crutcher.

One of our favorite past times at the YMCA was shooting hoops in the gym. When the Y would close at night, Eli Miller would round us up and then lock the doors and leave. We would wait until Eli left and would open a window and climb

back inside and continue playing basketball. Now, 60 years later, I'll see Eli at Mullins Drive-In. He just laughs at me and has told me he knew all along what we were doing. I thought we were getting away with it. He knew we would not bother anything. I remained a member of the YMCA for many years and also coached little league football, baseball and basketball.

One of the fringe benefits of working as an usher at the Center Theater was getting to meet celebrities who appear there live. On Saturdays, cowboy movie stars, along with other celebrities, would make personal appearances. This would thrill all

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of the young kids and bolster their popularity within the community. Gene Autry was a friendly fellow, but did not have much to say. Others I met were Johnny Mack Brown, Sunset Carson, Lash Larue, Little Jimmy Dickens, Oakridge Quartet, and Harry Gilmer. Johnny Mack Brown was a football star at the University of Alabama and a cowboy star. Johnny would not talk about the movies, but he would talk all day about Alabama football. He was a very down to earth, friendly human being. I have always regretted not being able to talk with Harry Gilmer, also quarterback at the University of Alabama.

In the late 1930s and 40s, it appeared that every Saturday everyone in Madison County and Huntsville proper would go to town. The women folk (as they were called in those days) would shop and talk about current events and other things, while the men would gather at the Courthouse, tell lies and swap knives or anything else they had to trade. It was a thrill and very entertaining to watch.

Lastly, during WWII German POW's were imprisoned at

Redstone. When the prisoners were brought to town to work they would walk past our house on 9th Avenue. The prisoners would cut grass and pick up trash along the roads, as they were under guard of the American Military. On occasion, they would take a break and we would talk to them. Several of the POWs spoke English and the guards did not mind as long as they could hear us. Most of the prisoners told us kids that they did not want to go back to Germany, but wanted to stay in America.

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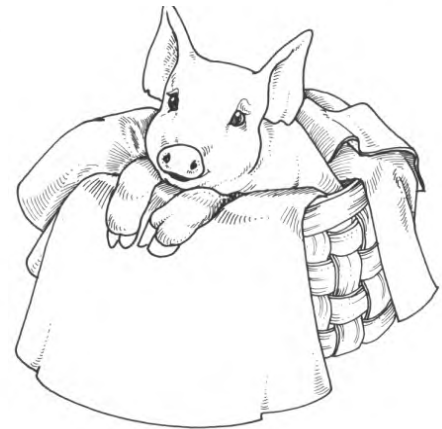
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# The Trial of Frank Gurley

The source information for this article on Frank Gurley came from an old 1920's publication called the Confederate Veteran and was generously submitted by Bill Walker.

Captain Frank B. Gurley feared for his life. He had been captured and was to stand trial for killing Union General Robert McCook during a raid near New Market in 1862. The Northern newspapers had misrepresented the McCook incident and pictured Gurley as a criminal and murderer, and the Federals wanted their revenge.

Capt. Frank Gurley finally arrived in Nashville by train and was placed in a four by seven foot cell in the military prison and clamped in heavy chains. In the same wing of the prison, there were 400 Federal prisoners all in ball and chain. Some would whistle, some would sing, and all would curse and rattle their chains. Gurley said "such a sight is better imagined than described."

Gurley was kept confined and his harsh treatment and illness made him delirious with fever. He wrote to the Union commandant at Nashville, Major General Gordon Grainger, and told him "long confinement and lack of attention will soon kill me and if that is what you want, please do me

the honor of having me shot as soon as your conscience will permit." This complaint allowed him to go outside to the yard during the days.

By this time, Captain Hunter Brooke, who had been on the wagon with McCook, was acting judge advocate of the Department of the Cumberland. He was most anxious to bring



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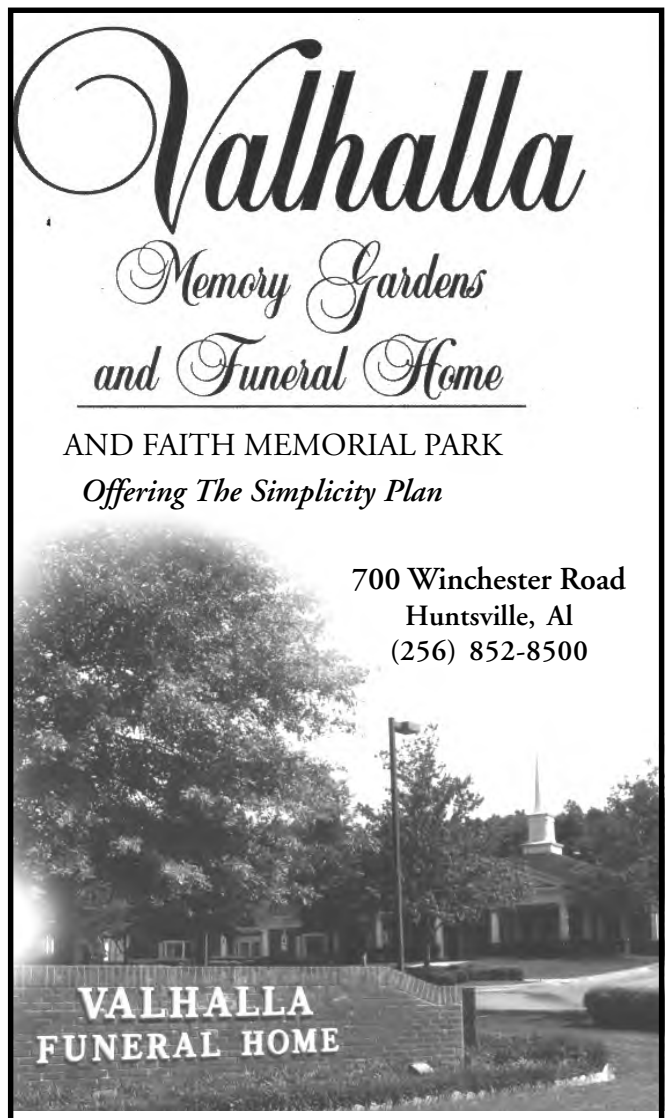
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Gurley to trial and convict him, and began pressing Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton and Judge Advocate General Joseph Holt to arrange for an early trial of the "robber and murderer". They agreed and arranged for an early trial before a military commission to commence on December 2, 1863.

Meanwhile, letters from Confederate Generals Nathan B. Forrest, Joseph E. Johnson, and William J. Hardee were received by the U. S. Army supporting Gurley's contention that he was a Confederate officer at the time of the killing and should be treated as a prisoner of War. These letters were sent to General U. S. Grant who advised the Confederate officers that the Gurley affair fell under the jurisdiction of Major General George H. Thomas and assured them Gurley would get a fair trial.

A fair trial was impossible, considering the anger and prejudice against Gurley. His lawyers, Jordan Stokes and Belie Peyton were able to present their evidence and cross examine the prosecution witnesses. There seemed to be no question that Gurley had shot McCook.

The case centered on whether or not he was an officer or citizen at the time of the killing. The defense failed to produce a commission, perhaps because Gurley's house had been burned to the ground by Union cavalry. Major General Lovell H. Rousseau did testify that he had seen a commission earlier from Major General Kirby Smith authorizing Gurley to raise a company of partisan rangers. The court also had a letter from General Nathan B. Forrest that stated Gurley had served in his regiment from July 1861 and had not been out of the



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service until his capture. In spite of this evidence, passions were too high and Frank Gurley was found guilty of the murder of General McCook and sentenced to be "hanged by the neck until dead".

Gurley commented that the prison was a horrible place with 800 Union prisoners and "flies so thick you would get two of them in your mouth when you opened it". For trying to escape, he was made to sleep in his cell in chains. Gurley saw one Yankee prisoner slash his own throat with a razor. Eight of the ten men in the same lock-up with Gurley were hanged.

Gurley's execution was delayed while the verdict and findings of the commission moved up the chain of command. General Thomas approved the

guilty verdict but suspended the execution due to the unusual circumstances and battle excitement under which the crime was committed. Thomas recommended the sentence be commuted to five years in prison and sent these recommendations to the Judge Advocates office in Washington. Judge Advocate General Joseph Holt seems to have been particularly vindictive in the Gurley case because he sent the trial papers to President Lincoln with his rec-

ommendations that the original sentence be carried out in spite of threats of retaliation from the Confederate Government. Lincoln signed the papers approving the verdict, but he pigeonholed the authorization to carry out the sentence.

Gurley remained in prison for a year expecting to be hung at any time. Then in January 1865, the army bureaucracy made a big mistake and Capt. Frank B. Gurley was included with other prisoners

*Overheard, one gossip to another:*

"I won't bore you with details. In fact, I've already told you more than I heard myself!"

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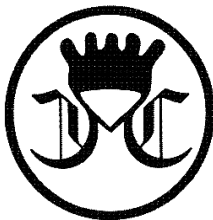
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being transferred to Louisville for the exchange of Confederate officers who were being exchanged. Due to the high profile of Gurley's case, the jailer in Nashville asked for clarification from Washington, and was told by the War Department the order applied to "all officers" held in irons and close confinement. The jailer then sent Gurley to Louisville with eighteen other prisoners.

From Louisville, the prisoners were sent to Pittsburgh, then to Point Lookout, Maryland. In Pittsburgh, the group was nearly mobbed by a large angry crowd who had found out Gurley was in the group. They had thirty guards that protected them.

On March 17, 1865, Capt. Gurley was exchanged at Aikens Landing, Virginia and embarked on the long trek home. As he moved south, he found most of the railroads had been destroyed. A year in prison had made him too weak to walk but some of the stronger ones went ahead and sent back wagons and carriages for him. He arrived in Montgomery, Alabama where he ran into his old commander General Roddy who gave him a horse. He continued on to Madison County and stayed with his brothers and sisters in Gurley until Lee surrendered.

Frank Gurley went to Huntsville, took the oath of allegiance, and received the parole. He did not feel safe in Huntsville so he went to Gallatin, Tennessee for two months and "had a big time with the women". Then, believing the danger had passed, he




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went back home and on November 6th, was elected sheriff of Madison County.

Gurley did not know it but he was in greater peril than before because General Joseph Holt found out Gurley had escaped punishment and got President Andrew Johnson to approve orders to re-arrest Gurley and carry out the sentence. Orders went out to all departmental commanders to search and capture the culprit. A sergeant was even sent to the Louisiana swamps to search for him. No one thought to look for him at home until news of his election to sheriff appeared in the papers.

On November 28th Gurley was arrested, loaded with irons, and put in the Huntsville jail. His execution was set for November 30th but a telegram arrived from President Johnson suspending the execution until further orders. Frank Gurley's

friends and neighbors had come to his aid. They had arranged for a delegation to meet with the President and since many of Gurley's supporters were pro-Union, Johnson was receptive to their case. About the same time the Union Army commander in Huntsville had advised President Johnson the citizens were threatening to resume killing Yankees if Gurley was executed. The situa-

tion could turn real ugly. After the delegation returned from Washington, they began to prepare a case, including a collection of character references and depositions from Confederate soldiers who had been on that fatal raid.

The collection took a long time and Gurley remained in irons until one of his friends wrote to General Thomas and pointed out the jail was escape proof. The irons

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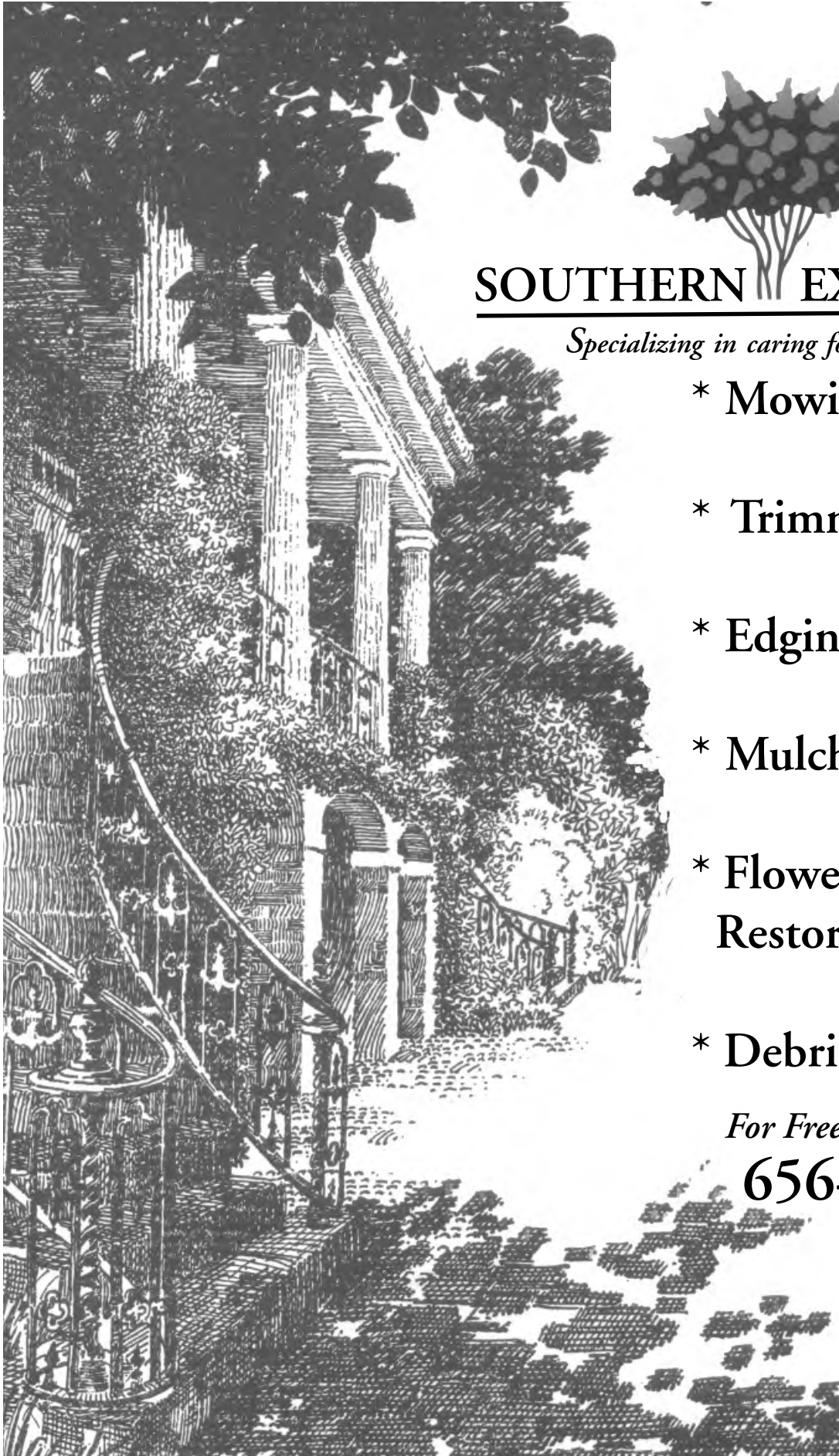
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were ordered removed.

In April 1866, President Johnson consulted with General Grant about the case, and although General Holt still insisted that the sentence be carried out, Grant recommended the case be dropped and Gurley be released upon taking an oath to remain a loyal citizen to the United States. Gurley signed the oath and was finally released.

For the next fifty four years, Frank B. Gurley lived on his farm near the town of Gurley. Every year he held a reunion for the veterans of the 4th Alabama Cavalry. He died on March 29, 1920, outliving, by many years, Captain Brooke, General Holt, and others who sought his death during and after the Civil War.



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# Man Whipped for Abusing Children

*from 1923 newspaper*

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

The story was brought to Huntsville by the father of the man flogged, who said his son had been called from the home

of his sister-in-law, where he and Mrs. Warren and their two children were visiting, and taken in charge by a band of thirty or more men, robed in white and with faces masked.

According to the story told by the father, young Warren was forcibly carried a short distance, where he was severely beaten. Later he was taken to the Huntsville-Fayetteville pike, where another beating was administered and Warren headed north and was told to leave.

The beaten man is said to be about 30 years old. No arrests have been made but an investigation is said to be under way.

It is rumored throughout the county that the flogging came about because of the cruel manner in which he treated his children. They have been placed in care of relatives and are doing well.


The Sheriff has assured this paper that there is no Ku Klux Klan in Madison County and that the rumors are baseless.

## FROM THE HEART



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# Brothers and Simpler Times

by Herman Hunt

In 1928 my 19-year-old brother, Louie, asked my grandmother how she would like a squirrel for breakfast. She said fine. He left and went to the woods. He didn't come home that day. My mother was worried. Papa said he was probably at his Uncle's house. On Wednesday, our landlord, Mr. Joe Click and his wife, came by and asked where Louie was. We didn't know. They left and went about a mile in their wagon and found my brother dead with a squirrel by his side. His death hurt me more than any other death in my family. He was my big brother and my idol and I was only 10 years old.

One time Louie saw coon tracks in a ditch and he set a steel trap to catch the coon. The next morning he knew the coon had been caught but it was gone. My brother-in-law, Roy Craig, said the coon had bit his foot off to escape. Roy and Louie often went rabbit hunting. Louie would get 6 rabbits to Roy's 2. One time Louie cut a buggy tire in two, dipped it in water and tied a string to it. Mama thought it was a snake. She jumped on top of the trunk saying "don't you come any closer". The only kind of snake Louie was scared of was a rattlesnake that was rattling and he couldn't see it. I've seen him pop the head off a snake or throw a snake up in the air and let it hit the ground to knock the breathe out of it. Not many people are left that would remember Louie.

Mr. Glenn Parsons was our mail carrier. He was also the

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owner of Parson's country store in Hobbs Island. His brother was Judge Elbert Parsons, a strict but fair judge. The judge was also a good singer.

My younger brother Fred put a cat in the mailbox and raised the flag. When Mr. Parsons pulled the lid open the cat jumped out in his face. It scared him. A few years before Mr. Parsons's death I was at his store and I asked him if he remembered the cat in the mailbox. He said: "I sure do" and laughed. He told his son and daughter-in-law all about it and they really got a kick out of it.

Mr. Parsons had everything you needed in his store. I bought my one-year-old son Houston a pair of bibbed overalls. He was still carrying overalls 58 years later. His whole upstairs was full of them. Mr. Parsons had a round cheese box with a cutter on it. He would turn the cheese and cut any amount you wanted. He bought big squares of chewing tobacco and cut those to the size you requested too.

There was a depot across from the Parsons' store. Everybody in Elon went there to get his fertilizer. Papa was a farmer and he had two hired hands, Bo Martin and Aubry Bird. Papa and Mr. Bill McDonald, of West Huntsville, bought and sold cattle together. Our barnyard would be full one night and the next day they would carry them all to Louisville. They even took our milk cow. We once had three guinea hens sitting on 60 eggs. If you took the egg out by hand the hens would leave the nest. You had to use a large spoon to get the eggs.

Sometimes our well

would go so dry in the summer that Mr. Herman Maples would let us have drinking water. Papa would take three wooden barrels to Flint River to get water for washing the clothes. Herman Maples had an incubator that would hatch eggs in three weeks.

One day, Mr. Maples thought a dozen eggs weren't going to hatch and he threw them out in the pasture. When we came back

from Oak Bowery Church there were twelve chicks in the pasture. The sun had finished hatching them. We got to keep them.

Mr. River had a store at Yellow Bank. We would take our Sunday school money and buy candy. He would give you all you could eat for five cents. Mr. River would give us a penny a piece for all the crawfish we could catch. He used them to bait his

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trotline when he fished. There were three stores at Buggs Chapel. Bill Self, Jim Brazelton and Mr. McMillian owned the stores. Galilee Baptist Church is also there. Roy Stone preached there for many years. He married and buried many of my family

We used to go to Charlie Lemley Mountain sometimes by buggy and sometimes by walking. If you drove a buggy you had to stop and put on the brake half way up because the road was so steep, the mules couldn't make it to the top if you didn't use the brakes to help going up. Mrs. Lemley had a dirt floor in the kitchen. I had never seen a dirt floor in a house before but that dirt floor kept the kitchen cool. One time a bunch of us kids walked up to the Lemley house. They gave each of us a watermelon. I dropped mine on the way home. We stopped and ate it and it was a good thing we did because when we got home we discovered that most of the other watermelons were green.

Someone stole a ham from my uncle's smoke house. They accidentally fastened their dog in the smoke house, so my uncle knew who stole the ham because he recognized the dog.

I served 33 months in the South Pacific during WWII. My brother Fred served in France. After the war, Fred went to dental school at Emory University in Georgia. He practiced for many years in Decatur, Georgia. Fred said his very first patient gave him a bad check. He later went to Montgomery, Alabama and worked for the state under the Alabama Health Director, Dr. Meyer.

Dr. Meyer's father was a former pastor of Jackson Way Baptist Church in Huntsville. Fred and his nurse assistant had a well-stocked mobile dental clinic called the Smile Mobile. They provided dental services to underprivileged

children mostly in the Atmore, Alabama Area. Fred was a good friend of Dr. Sammy Citrano, a dentist in Huntsville. They were both newspaper carriers for the Huntsville Times when they were young. When Fred was four years old, he had colitis. The doctor said to take him to Keel Mountain for a week on account of the water. It really did help him.

I remember things that happened 80 years ago, but I can't remember what happened last week.

**"Son, you've got a real good engine, but your hands just aren't on the steering wheel."**

**Bobby Bowden / Florida State**

## POOR HOUSE CLOSED

*from 1935 newspaper*

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

Spokesman Lawrence Goldsmith explained that with the Welfare Department now taking care of the indigent, there is no longer a need for an Alms House.

By the end of the year the poor house is expected to be empty as new homes are found by the present occupants. Alabama currently has 63 poor houses. Huntsville's first poor house was established after the Civil War.

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# Going To Town

by Rodney Miller

The year was 1931, our country was in a severe depression. Lots of people were struggling to make a living. I was in the second grade at Big Cove School, and had never been to town. We were living on the land that is now the Hampton Cove Housing Development and the Robert Trent Jones Golf Course. My Dad was farming the land and producing cotton.

I had been pleading with him to let me go to town the coming Saturday. He explained to me it was a day of work for him and wasn't any fun at all. I was persistent in my pleading and Dad finally gave in and said I could go on Saturday. My Dad picked up the reins and spoke to the mules, and as they started the 10 miles to town.

The first neighbor's house was

about one mile away and as we passed, Dad pointed out that they hadn't gotten up because there was no light in the window. We reached Highway 431 just as it began to get daylight. Highway 431 was not paved in 1931.

I remember only one motor vehicle passing us all the way in. There were very few cars in 1931.

The city limits began at what is now Governors Drive, Madison Street, and Whitesburg Drive intersections.

I remember thinking there must be a lot of people in town because the houses were side by side all the way up Madison Street.

We arrived at the west side of the Courthouse and there were lots of wagons and mules and horses hitched to the large chains that ran all the way around the Courthouse. People were milling around everywhere. I could not get one thing looked at until there was something new to look at.

The cotton buyers would come by and cut a sample out of the cotton bales and make an offer on the cotton. My Dad kept

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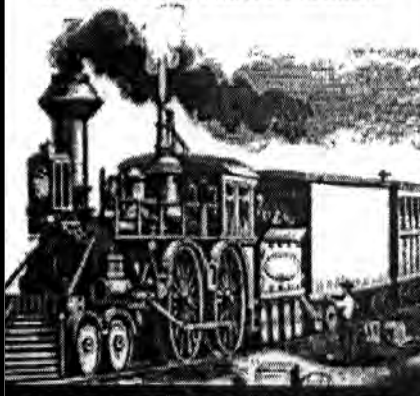
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telling them he wanted 5¢ a pound for his cotton, and they wouldn't give him that much. I thought the buyers were being mean to my Dad because they would not give him what he wanted.

Later on he sold the cotton and we had to drive the wagon out to the Planters Warehouse on Clinton Street, West.

I told my Dad I needed to go to the restroom and in 1931 the restroom was out behind the warehouse. There was some men out there who were drinking a clear liquid out of a bottle. The only clear liquid I had ever seen was water or kerosene (coal oil, as we called it then). I knew that we drank our water from a dipper or glass out of a bucket of water. So my next question was, why were the men drinking coal oil out of a bottle? The answer was that they were drinking wild-cat whiskey, and he hoped I would never drink any.

The cotton was unloaded and we started the long trip home. Dad stopped at a little store and got us some bologna and crackers and a banana.

At that time you could drive through the Big Spring Branch below the bridge on Gallatin Street. Dad drove in the branch and let the mules get a drink of water.

At this time, I remembered the mules didn't have any food at

lunch time. Dad explained to me that he fed them well before we left home and he would give them some extra when we got home. I felt a lot better about that.

The trip home seemed to take forever. I had been to town and now I wanted to be at home.

My Dad would probably go to town again next week, but I decided not to ask to go.

For right at that time, I was afraid he would say yes.



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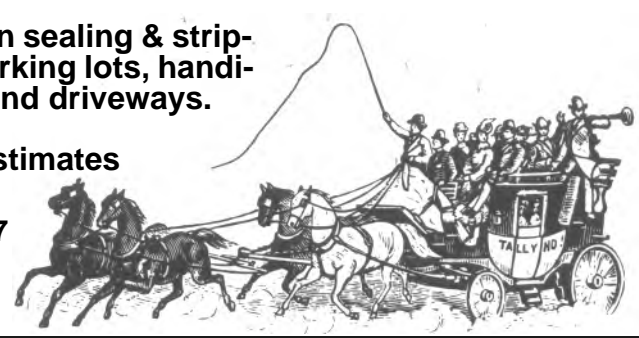
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# News From the Year 1908

## News From Huntsville and Around The World

### Law Makes It a Crime for Women to Smoke

The Sullivan smoking act was invoked for the first time within a day of its passage when Katie Mulcahey was arrested early this morning after lighting up a cigarette in the Bowery in downtown New York City. When the arresting officer spied Miss Mulcahey strike a match on a house wall he shouted, "Madame, you musn't! What would Alderman Sullivan say?"

"But I am, and I don't know," she replied. Later, in night court, she fumed, "I've got as much right to smoke as you have. I never heard of this new law and I don't want to hear about it. No man shall dictate to me." Magistrate Kernochan nonetheless did, sending the young lady to a cell when she was unable to pay the \$5 fine. She took her cigarettes with her.

It's possible there has been

a misunderstanding, or neither the policeman nor the magistrate have had time to inhale the finer points of the ordinance, which does not make it an offense for women to smoke. Rather it enjoins restaurant and hotel managers to forbid such unladylike acts in such public places. How, then, was last night's scene beyond the pale?

At the meeting which debated the proposal, Alderman Doul said it was unconstitutional and warned of a feminine call-to-arms. Has Miss Mulcahey, in striking that match, also fired (tic) first shot?

**"My roommate locked all my clothes in a shed for spite."**  
*Employee excuse for not coming in to work*

### U.S. Army Raises Strength to 77,000

Recruiters have been told to contain themselves as the U.S. Army ranks have grown to full strength for the first time since the Spanish war. Some 77,000 men are now in uniform. According to some reports, the hard economic times forced many to enlist.

Yet one officer claims an article entitled "The Army as a Career," published in The New York Times, attracted many young men.

The Army is now ridding itself of all undesirable soldiers to make way for the new recruits.

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## Autoists asking for Licensing of Vehicles

Automobilists from around the nation lobbied Congress today, supporting a bill calling for federal registration and licensing of vehicles. Passage of the bill does not seem likely, however.

The American Automobile Association and National Association of Automobile Manufacturers assigned a Columbia law professor to present their arguments. Charles Terry likened the country's federally controlled waterways to its dirt roads, citing both as sources of interstate transit. He argued that roads and their travelers should experience similar regulations. Auto enthusiasts would prefer federal control to the sometimes capricious laws of the many states. A few states tax autos for simply crossing their borders.

**"What hair color do they put on drivers licenses of bald men?"**

*Jenny Sanders, Arab*

## Japanese Learning How to Grow Taller

A program designed by the Japanese government to increase the height of its citizens is said to be showing remarkable success. K. Aishima, General Manager of an Osaka newspaper, described the prodigious feat to American reporters while visiting newspapers in New York City.

According to Aishima, about 15 years ago the government was disturbed by its people's lack of stature. It decided one cause was excessive sitting. Since then, schools have encouraged boys and girls to stand more often. Some schools have gone as far as removing all chairs from school property.

The army too has made strides, building gymnasiums and starting a more rigorous course of physical culture.

There is a feeling in Japan now, Aishima asserts, that the present generation is two inches taller than the last. The Japanese hope this trend will continue. If it does, the average Japanese male in the year 2000 will be over six feet tall.

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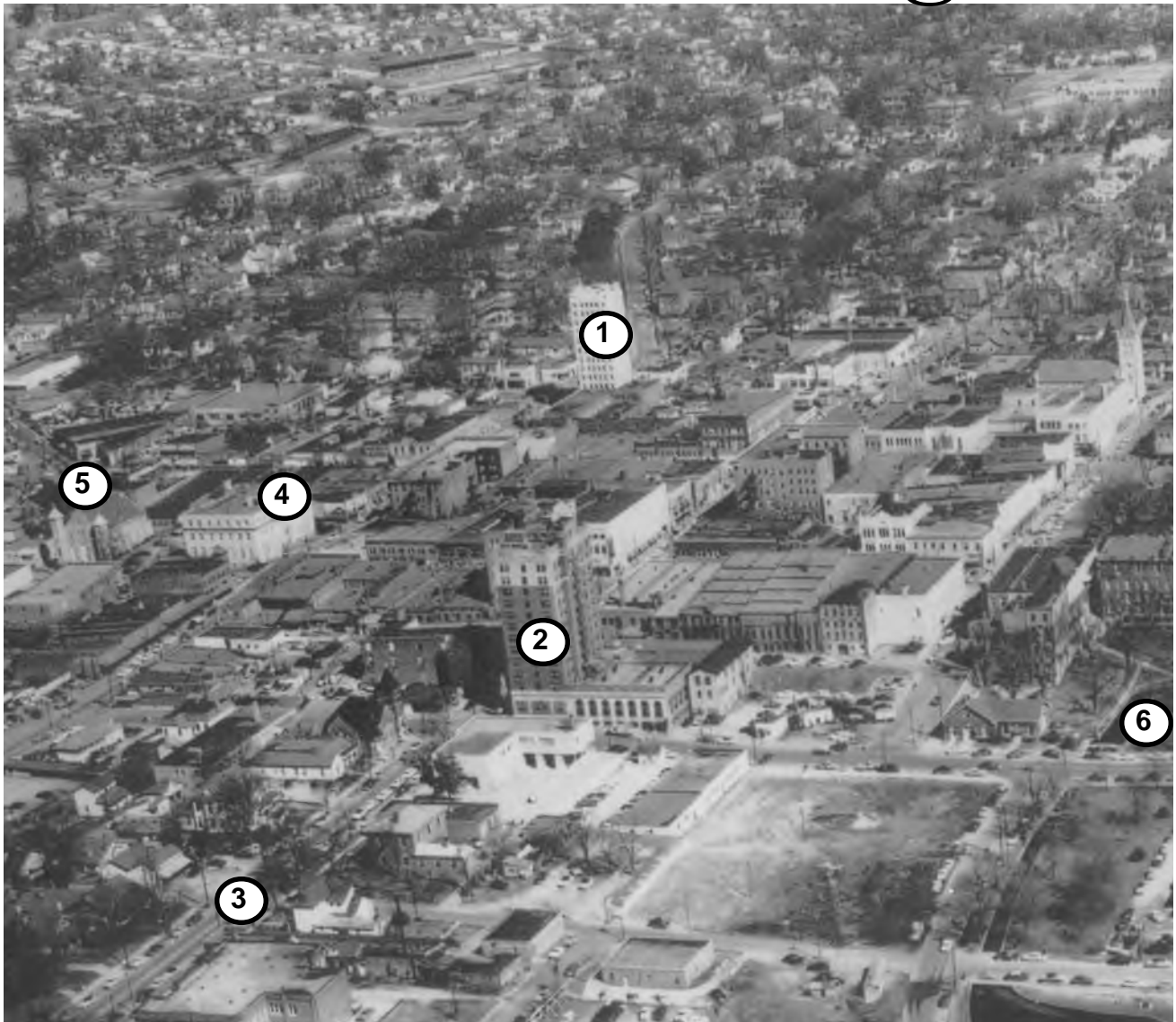
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# Days of Slavery

*The following interview was given by Cato Carter in 1938 as part of the Federal Writers Project. Carter was raised as a slave on a plantation in North Alabama.*

I am a hundred and one years old, 'cause I was twenty-eight, going on twenty-nine, a man growed, when the breaking-up came. I'm pretty old, but my folks live that way. My old black mammy, Zenie Carter, lived to be a hundred and twenty-five years old. And of Carter, my white marster, who was the brother of my daddy, lived to be a hundred and four. He ain't been so long died. Al Carter, my daddy, lived to be very ageable, but I don't know when he died.

Back in Alabama, Mis' Adeline Carter took me, when I was past my creepin days, to live in the big house with the white folks. I had a room built on the house where I stayed, and they were always good to me, 'cause I was one of their blood. They never hit me a lick nor slapped me once, and they told me that they would never sell me away from them. They were the best quality white folks, and they lived in a big two-story house with a big hall that ran all the way through it.

My mammy lived in a hewn oak log cabin, in the quarters. There was a long row of cabins, some bigger than others on account of family size, 'cause my marster had over eighty head of slaves. Those little old cabins was cozy, 'cause we chinked them with mud, and they had stick chimneys daubed with mud mixed with hog hair. The beds were draw beds - wooden bedsteds held together with ropes drawn tight to hold them and to put the mattresses on. We scalded moss and buried it for a while and stuffed it into ticking to make mattresses. Them beds slept good - much better than the ones nowadays.

There was a good fireplace for cooking, and on Sundays the mistress would give the niggers a pint of flour and a chicken, for to cook a mess of vittles for themselves. Then, there was plenty of game for them to find for themselves. Many is the time when I killed seventy-five or eighty squirrels out of one big beech. There was a lot of deer and bears and quails and every other kind of game, but when they run the Indians out of the country, the game just followed the Indians. Wherever the Indians left, the game all left with them, for some reason I dunno.

Our place was fifteen hundred acres in one

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block, and besides the crops of cotton, and corn we raised in the bottoms, we raised vegetables and sheep and beef. I couldn't hardly eat fresh beef, but mostly we dried beef on scaffolds we built. I used to tend the beef as we were drying it out. But best of anything to eat I liked a big fat coon, and I always liked honey. Some of the slaves had little garden patches they tended for their own use.

My grandmammy was a "juksie," because her mammy was black and her daddy was a Indian. That's what makes me so mixed up with Indian, African, and white blood. Sometimes it feels like I don't know what I am.

My marster used to give me a little money to buy me what I wanted. I always bought fine clothes. In the summer, when I was a little one, I wore lowerings, like the rest of the slaves. That was the things made from cotton sacking. Most of the boys wore shirttails until they were big yearling boys. When they bought me red russets shoes from the town, I cried and cried. I didn't want to wear no rawhide shoes. So they would take them back. They had a weakness for my crying. I did have plenty of fine clothes - good woolen suits they would spin on the place, and doeskins and fine linens. I drove in the carriage with the white folks, and I was about the most dudish slave in those parts.

I used to tend to the nursling thread. When the slave women were confined with the babies having to suck and they were too little to take to the fields, the mammies had to spin. I would take them thread and bring it back to the house when it was spun. If they didn't spin seven or eight cuts a day, they would get a whuppin'. It was considerable hard on a woman, when she had a fretting baby, but every morning, those babies had to be taken to the big house so that the white folks could see if they were dressed right. They was considerable money tied up in those little nigger younguns.

They whupped the womens, and they whupped the mens. I used to work some in the tannery on the place, and we made their whips. They used to tie them down, or to a stob, and give them the whuppin's. Some of them it would take four men to whup them, but they got it.

Most of the ones I know had their marriage put in the Book after the breaking-up. Plenty I know had it put in the Book after they had grown chillun. When they got married on the place, mostly they just

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jumped over a broom, and that made them married. Sometimes, one of the white folks would read a little out of the Scriptures to them, and they felt more married.

When my marster and the other mens on the place went off to the War, he called me and said, "Cato, you is always been a 'sponsible man, and I leave you to look after the womens and the place. If I don't come back, I want you to always stay by Miss Adeline." I said, "Befo' God, I will, Mr. Ol." He said, "Then I can go away peaceable."

We thought, for a long time, the sojers had the Federals whupped to pieces, but they was plenty bad times to go through.

The young mens in the grey uniforms used to pass so gay and singing in the big road. Their clothes was good, and they looked so fine, and we used to feed them the best we had on the place. Mis' Adeline would say, "Cato, they is our boys, and give them the best this place 'fords." We took out the hams and the wine, and we killed chickens for them. That was at first.

Then, the boys and mens in blue got to coming that way, and they was fine-looking mens, too, and Mis' Adeline would cry, and she would say, "Cato, they is just mens and boys, and we got to feed them." We had a pavilion built in the yard, like they had at picnics, and we fed the Federals on that. Three times, the Federals said to me, "We is going to take you with us." Mis' Adeline let into crying and say to the Yankee gentlemen, "Don't take Cato. Most of my niggers has run away to the North, and Cato is the only man I got by me

now. If you take Cato, I just don't know what I will do."

I tell them that so long as I live I got to stay by Mis' Adeline, and that unless somebody forces me away, I ain't gwine to leave. I say, "I got no complaints to make. I want to stay by Old Mis' till one of us die. The Yankee mens say to Mis' Adeline, "Don't 'sturb yourself, Miss. We ain't gwine to take him nor harm nothing of yours."

There was springs round and about, not too far from our place, and the sojers used to camp there at one of the springs and build a fire to cook a mule, 'cause they got down to starvation. And when some of the other gorillas [guerrillas] would see the fire, they would aim to the fire, and many is the time they spilled the dinner for the sojers. The Yankees did it, and our boys did it, too. There was killing going on so terrible, like

people was dogs, and some of the old ones said it was near to the end of time, cause of folks being so wicked.

Mr. Ol came back, and all the others did, too, but he came back first. He was all wore out and ragged. He stood on the front porch and called all of us to the front yard. He said, "Mens and womens, you are today as free as I am. You is free to do as you like,

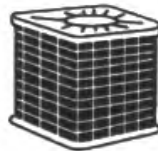
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'cause the damned Yankees done 'creed that you are. Go if you wants or stay if you wants."

Some of them stayed and some went. And some that had run away to the North came back. They always called real humble-like at the back gate to Mis' Adeline, and she always fixed it up with Mr. Ol that they could have a place.

Near to the close of the War, I seen some of the folks leaving for Texas. They said if the Federals win the War, you have to live in Texas to keep the slaves. So plenty of them started driftin' their slaves to the West. They would pass with the womens riding in the wagons and the mens on foot.

When some of them came back, they said that it took three weeks to walk the way. Some of them took slaves to Texas, even after the Federals done 'creed a break-ing-up.

Long as I lived, I minded what my white folks told me, but once. They was a man working in the fields, and he kept jerking the mules, and Mr. Ol got mad, and he gimme a gun, and he told me to go out there and kill that nigger.

I said, "Mr. Ol, please don't tell me to do that. I ain't never killed anybody, and I don't want to."

He said, "Cato, you do what I tell you." And he meant it. I went out to the man and I said, "You has got to leave this minute, and I is, too, I cause I is s'pose to kill you, only I ain't, and Mr. Ol will kill me."

He dropped the lines, and we ran and crawled through the fence, and ran away.

I hated to go, 'cause things was so bad. Flour sold for twenty-five dollars a barrel, and pickled pork for fifteen dollars a barrel. You couldn't buy nothing 'lessn you had gold. I had plenty of Confederate money, only it don't buy nothing.

But today, I am a old man, and my hands ain't stained with no blood, and I is always been glad that I didn't kill that man.

**The only soldier from Huntsville to win the Medal of Honor during the Civil War was Richard Taylor - for capturing a Confederate flag.**

# A General Exodus

In the end, that dissolute section of the city that has become notorious in the courts of Madison County will soon be nothing more than other sections of the city. All of its boarding house owners and boarders must be out of the city by next Saturday.

Acting upon instructions from Mayor Smith, the police have given notice to a large number of keepers of disorderly houses that they and all of their boarders must be out of the city by Saturday. They are given just that time to make their arrangements to leave. There will be a general exodus of the "women of the town" and only those who have never given trouble to the police will be allowed to remain. Those who stay will be required to conduct their places in an orderly manner or they too will be given notice to leave.

*from 1907 Huntsville newspaper*



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# The Dance Hall

Just a few miles up Pulaski Pike, well within the city limits, is a cave that was once heralded as the most popular nightclub in this area.

The early history of Shelta Cave but like any other large cave it has legends woven around it concerning buried treasure, ghosts and eerie noises. These remained just legends with no basis in fact until 1888 when a Mr. Bolen James sold the land to a Mr. Henry Fuller.

Not much is known about the early life of Mr. Fuller but judging from his actions he must have been a born entrepreneur.

Immediately after taking possession of the cave he hired a team of carpenters to install steps down into the main chamber. Next he assembled a crew of craftsmen to install a dance floor in one of the great rooms with large stand-up bars at each end. He made no secret of the fact that he intended to open the grandest, fanciest and most unusual dance hall in Alabama.

Huntsville had seen its share of weird wacky ideas; but a dance hall in a cave? Even for Huntsville's standards that was too much. Town people began to call the yet un-completed dance hall "Fuller's Folly."

As is true in many a new business, Fuller soon found himself facing a slight problem ... too many lofty ideas and not enough money. Reluctantly he let himself be talked into forming a corporation called, appropriately enough, SheltaCave Corp.

With this new influx of money from investors came new ideals and it wasn't long before Fuller heard of a new attraction

in Nashville that he thought would be perfect for the business.

There had been much talk in Huntsville about a new invention called "electric lights," but while most people dismissed it as just another crazy idea Fuller was determined to light his dance floor with the "marvel of modern technology." Within days of Fuller's visit to Nashville, workmen arrived to begin stringing wire throughout the cave.

Although few people realize it today, when Fuller pulled the switch on his new lighting system, he earned himself (and the dance hall) a place in

Huntsville's history as having the first electric light bulbs in Madison County.

Even this was not enough for Fuller, for as he cast his eyes upon the vast underground lake he began to see another possibility for potential profits. Within the week neighbors watched in amazement as workmen unloaded three large boats from a wagon and awkwardly maneuvered them down the steps.

The citizens of Huntsville must have had a good chuckle when he announced his intentions of providing "Underground Boat Rides." And, as if that was

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# Tommy Battle

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## MAYOR

"Huntsville's promise is what this campaign is all about. We must have a vision for the future that includes everyone. As your mayor, I will work to manage our tax dollars wisely, improve and build new roads, support our schools and keep our neighborhoods safe. I believe by working together and building a solid plan for the future, we can make a difference. Please join me in my campaign for mayor. I ask for your vote on August 26th."

*Tommy Battle*

Paid for by Battle Campaign  
2117 Metro Circle  
Huntsville, Alabama 35801



not enough, he purchased hundreds of Japanese lanterns to hang overhead!

Finally the day of the "Grand Opening" arrived, and true to Fuller's predictions, crowds thronged the cave to see the marvel of electric lighting, ride the boats and dance to the sound of a newly hired band. With the admission price of one dollar, Fuller should have been able to make a profit but unfortunately he was too deeply in debt. Also, the town people, after making one or two visits to the entertainment mecca, quickly lost interest.

Desperate for money, Fuller began to travel throughout the South promoting Huntsville and Shelta Cave as a convention center. Evidently he had some success as the "Huntsville Mercury" in 1889 ran an article about a gathering of the press association:

"The entertainment of the Press Association by the citizens of Huntsville closed today with a grand barbecue in Shelta Caverns and nearly one hundred delegates and their ladies were in attendance.

"The affair was gotten up in a delightful manner and the beauties of the place were fully investigated by the astonished guests."

As almost any nightclub owner can tell you, crowds are fickle, and within a few years the dance hall was facing financial ruin. This time,

even Fuller's salesmanship could not save it. On June, 28, 1897 the cave was sold at a sheriff's sale on the steps of the courthouse to settle a judgement.

In 1968, after being neglected for years, the cave was purchased by the National Speleological Society. An iron gate has been placed over the entrance to prevent accidents

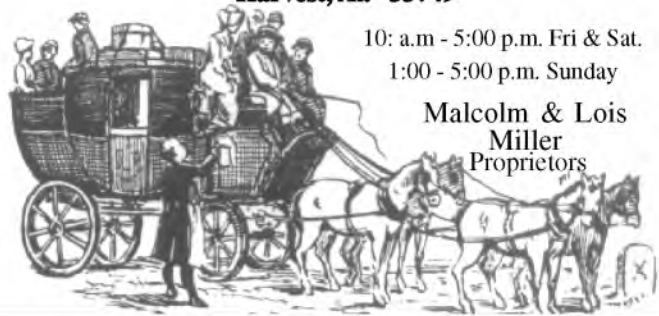
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## *It Has Been an Honor*

*Win or lose, I want to thank the citizens of Huntsville for allowing me to serve the past twelve years as your full time councilman.*

*Huntsville is a special place to live and it has been an honor for me to help contribute to its growth and prosperity.*



**Vote for  
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County Commissioner  
District 2**



***Help us build Huntsville and Madison County***

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# When life was simple...



Downtown, in 1955, was still the center of Huntsville's business and social life. On Saturdays the sidewalks would often be so crowded with shoppers that people were forced to walk in the streets. The city was enjoying the prosperity that came with the rocket program even though a mule and wagon could occasionally still be seen on the streets.

That same year Dr. Wernher von Braun and 108 other German scientists became American citizens at a special ceremony conducted at Huntsville High School....

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

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