



No. 197
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Old Huntsville

HISTORY AND STORIES OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY



In The Name of God

The man who had joined the preacher near the pulpit suddenly reached down into a wooden box that had been placed there earlier. Without missing a beat in his praise for the Holy Ghost, he raised his arms revealing a four-foot long timber-back rattlesnake coiled around his right arm, its head darting back and forth as if trying to find the source of its anger.

A strange dance began as the man moved the snake from arm to arm, placing it around his neck and draping it over his shoulder, all the while keeping a running commentary on his faith in his religion.

Also in this issue: **Madison County's Forgotten Hero**

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*Dornie Lewter
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In the Name of God

The first thing that most people noticed when they pulled into the crushed gravel parking lot of the church was the variety of car tags. One car was from Georgia, another from Tennessee and two from Madison county. The car from Georgia boasted a bumper sticker that read "My Child is an Honor Student."

The building had not originally been built as a church. A faded metal RC Cola sign near the door gave the impression it had been a country store years earlier. Nearby, a 1974 Chevrolet, minus its motor and left front fender, was perched precariously on concrete blocks. Kudzu vines, the scourge of the rural south, had almost completely covered a large mound of unidentifiable trash near the back fence row.

Inside the building one had the eerie feeling of being transported into a time warp where different cultures had collided and created a new one, where neither the past nor the present was reality. The women, all of whom wore their hair in tightly wrapped buns and were dressed in long dresses extending almost to their ankles, sat in a small group clapping their

hands in time with music coming from an electric guitar in front of the pulpit. One woman was furiously shaking a tambourine in an effort to keep up with an electronic version of "I'll Fly Away." The guitar player's belt buckle was an advertisement for John Deere tractors.

The men, all dressed in long-sleeve shirts despite the heat, stood in a tight bunch off to the side of the pulpit, some of them tapping a foot to the music and occasionally raising their arms as if beseeching an unknown power to acknowledge their presence. Even before the last chords of the guitar had faded away, one man, the preacher, stepped forward and began his testimony.

He told of a life caught up in sin, wracked by drugs and alcohol, that finally led him to jail where he met his Lord. He told of how he wasn't long for this earthly world and how he was going to a better place. He said sinners who did not repent would burn in an everlasting hell.

The congregation was standing now, swaying back and forth

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as the preacher continued his message in a singsong cadence. Every few seconds he would be interrupted by someone shouting an "Amen," or "Praise Jesus." One woman constantly repeated the refrain "Sweet Jesus."

A woman moved into the middle of the aisle. Her body was stiff, yet shaking all over; her eyes glazed as if in a hypnotic trance. She seemed to be talking yet the sounds coming from her lips were unidentifiable, an unknown tongue that others in the congregation found familiar. Another woman, the "Sweet Jesus" woman, joined her in the aisle and a few moments later also began shaking and twitching and speaking in the unknown tongue.

The preacher was really sweating now. He had moved near the pulpit and every few seconds, as if to emphasize his message, would slap it loudly before hopping across the room on one foot while waving his arms wildly in the air. The guitar player tried to keep up, trying to hit a chord every time the preacher slapped the pulpit, but finally gave up and contented himself by attempting to adjust the various knobs on his amplifier.

Another man, dressed in blue polyester slacks and a cowboy shirt with a buffalo head

above the left pocket, joined the preacher and began shouting his testimony as he stomped loudly from one side of the building to the other while holding a bible in the air. An envelope bearing a State Farm Insurance return address stuck out of his back pocket. The building reverberated with Amens, Sweet Jesus's and stories of sin. All the other people, except for two small girls sitting in the back playing with a game, added to the frenzy. Some were clapping, some were shouting and some were doing both.

The man who had joined the preacher near the pulpit suddenly reached down into a wooden box that had been placed there earlier. Without missing a beat in his praise for the Holy Ghost he raised his arms revealing a four foot long timber-back rattlesnake coiled around his right arm, its head darting back and forth as if trying to find the source of its anger. A strange dance began as the man moved the snake from arm to arm, placing it around his neck

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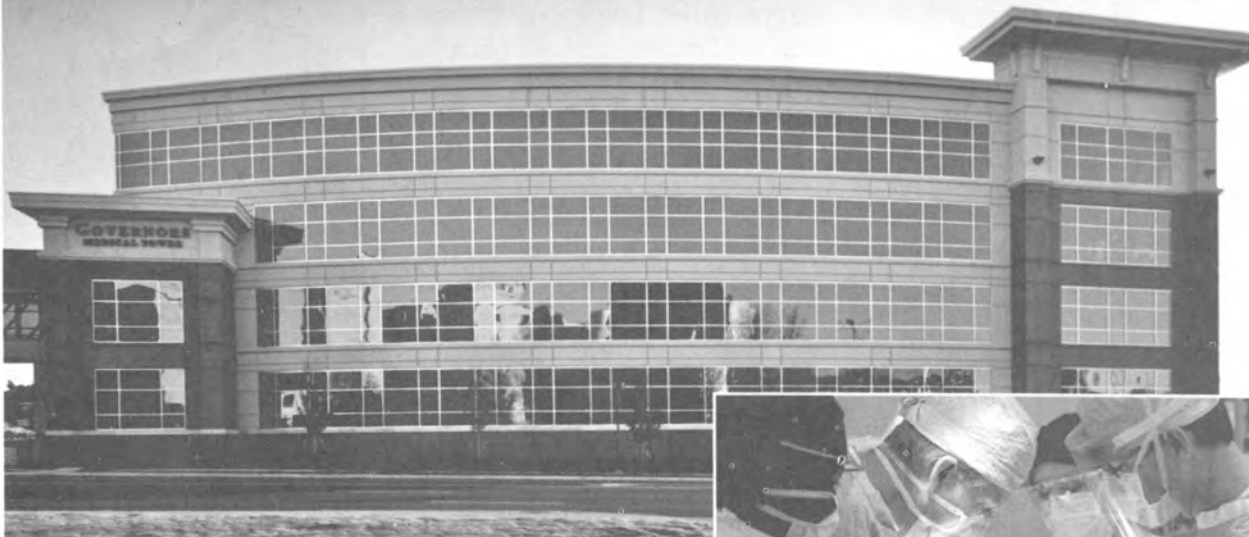


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and draping it over his shoulder, all the while keeping a running commentary on his faith in his religion. Another man took the snake from him and the same strange ritual was performed again as the congregation urged them on with more cries of Amen. The Sweet Jesus woman joined the men, passing the serpent back and forth and letting its body slither across her chest and around her shoulders. The next snake, another diamond back rattler, was taken from the box and passed from hand to hand, often with one person handling both snakes at the same time.

The guitar player had left his amplifier and stood near the side of the room watching. Nearby a woman was rolling on the floor as she talked in the unknown tongue.

Almost as suddenly as it had begun, it was over. The snakes were back in their box. The woman who had been shaking uncontrollably minutes before was now complaining about the food in a restaurant where she and her husband had eaten earlier that day. The men were talking about the war. "God's Will will be done," noted the preacher in a somber tone. The other men nodded their heads in an understanding way. Someone, a newcomer, asked him if he had ever been bitten by a snake. "Everyone's faith," he said, "will be tested someday."

He later admitted to having been bitten nineteen times.

There is no written history of the "Snake Handlers" in Madison County but by most accounts the first local "handling" took place near Maysville, around 1917, when George Went Hensley, a traveling evangelist, held a brush arbor revival. Local youths who had heard of the new religion caught three large and vicious rattlesnakes, placed them in a box and carried them to the service. Undoubtedly they thought Hensley's snakes were "fixed" in some way and wanted him to try his faith on the real thing.

Hensley was reported to have ignored the youth's taunts at first. Halfway through the service, however, Hensley who was already holding a snake he had brought with him, reached down and took up the other ones, holding them high in the air, caressing them and at times even seeming to talk to them. People in the congregation, who had never witnessed anything like it, were deeply divided in their beliefs. Was it a miracle? - Was it the Devil's work? - or was there another explanation?

George Went Hensley was a bootlegger and moonshiner turned preacher who, in 1909, was sitting on the side of a mountain in Grasshopper Val-

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ley, Tennessee meditating about a passage from the bible. The passage was Mark XVI: 17-8.

"And these signs will accompany those who believe; by using my name they will cast out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up snakes in their hands, and if they drink any deadly thing, it will not hurt them; they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover."

According to one story, Hensley then saw a rattlesnake lying on a nearby rock and picked it up. When he was not bitten, this served as a sign to him that he was anointed by God. At his next church service he preached about the bible passage, explaining it was God's will and the true believers would not be bitten. Toward the end of the sermon he opened a wooden box and pulled out a large snake, holding it in the air and letting it curl

around his arms while daring the congregation to come forward and take the snake as a sign of their own faith. "Nonbelievers," he warned, "would burn in an eternal Hell!"

Members of the congregation joined him at the front of the church, and when they were not bitten, a new religious movement was born.

Hensley traveled throughout the Southeast with his message, winning many converts among the hill people who desperately wanted to believe they were the chosen ones. His personal life, however, continued to be a problem. At one point he returned from a preaching tour and caught his wife having an affair with a neighbor. Infuriated, Hensley attacked the man with a knife and was sentenced to a term on the road gang. He returned to making whiskey but after several years trying to eke out a living decided to repent and become an evangelist again. Strangely, although he was a leader of a religion that believed a divorced person could never enter Heaven, he had married and divorced four times. He died in

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1955 after being bitten by a Diamond back rattlesnake during a church service. In the preceding forty-six years Hensley had been bitten over four hundred times.

As the movement began spreading, its beliefs began to change. At first it was believed that if a person was "anointed" he would not be bitten. After many people began suffering snake bites it was decided the bite was merely a test of faith, that their belief would make them immune to the poison. Then when people began dropping dead, it was taken as a sign that God was calling the "true believers home to a better place." This actually served as an impetus for more people to handle snakes.

Other members of the group began the practice of drinking poison as a test of their faith. In many of the churches the preacher would dissolve powdered strychnine into a jug of water and invite the believers to join them in a poisonous communion. Producers of the television show, Dateline, tested the poison used in a service in Jackson County and found it was diluted to a point where it was not harmful. Another test, however, at another church, showed the members drinking one hundred per cent pure strychnine, potent enough to kill anyone.

Many of the members also believed in handling fire; a practice which is believed to have began on Sand Mountain in the 1920s. A preacher at a revival, perhaps sensing that the congregation was getting tired of the same old snake handling, thrust his hand into a pot bellied coal

stove and grabbed a handful of red hot coals, declaring that his faith in God would protect him. When the members saw that his hands were not burned, they too went forward for a handful of hot coals, proving, at least to themselves, that they were the chosen ones. As coal stoves became obsolete the practice has largely died out, although members still occasionally use kerosine heaters or candles; holding their hands, or bare arms, over the open flames for long periods of time.

In Madison County the sect saw it's heyday between 1920 and 1950. A church was started near Gurley and drew a fair number of members until its minister picked up the wrong snake during a meeting and was killed. Other churches were started near Woodville and New Market and



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although they initially drew large crowds they too died out, mostly as a result of local prejudice. When Lewis Ford died from snake handling in 1945, in Grasshopper Valley, it led to the official banning of snake handling in Tennessee. In the next few years, after a spate of deaths by snakebite and strychnine poisoning, Alabama and Georgia followed by passing their own laws.

In 1951 Ruth Craig, of New Hope, took up serpents during a service that was being held at her home with the warning, "I'm going to handle this snake and anyone who doesn't believe had better leave." She was bitten four times and died shortly afterwards. A few years later a sawmill worker, Jim Thomas, died during services in Fort Payne. When Lloyd Hill, of Birmingham, was killed by a twenty-four pound rattlesnake at his church, over a thousand people filed by his open casket to pay respects.

With all the resulting publicity the religion went underground, confining it's presence mostly to

small rural churches in the mountains of Tennessee, Kentucky and Alabama where the authorities would turn a blind eye. Occasionally, as late as the 1980s, one could hear advertisements on the radio on Sand Mountain inviting people to a revival and telling them to "bring their boxes." Locally, members met in private homes or garages, often with dire consequences. One member, who lived on 9th Avenue, got in his car to go to work one morning and discovered a large and very angry copperhead snake coiled on the floor. On the steering wheel was a

"It's no exaggeration to say that the undecideds could go one way or another."

George Bush, Past President

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note: "If you want to handle snakes ... handle this one."

With its members scattered far and wide, and with few churches to attend, the movement took on a nomadic nature. Members would drive hundreds of miles to attend services and handle snakes in some hidden cove in the mountains, and then drive back home the same night. Oddly, the geographical distance between them served to draw the members into an even tighter knit group where the men would greet one another with a kiss on the lips and everyone was known as Brother and Sister.

Snake handling in North Alabama began a resurgence in the early 1990s when Glenn Summerford rented a converted service station near Scottsboro and started his own church, "The Church with Signs Following." Summerford, a small time hood who had been convicted of grand larceny and burglary, proved to be a highly charismatic and flamboyant leader who drank poison, handled snakes and red hot coals and often, if the spirit moved him, would stick his fingers into live electrical sockets.

Hundreds of people flocked to the church three times a week to listen to Brother Glenn and other traveling snake-handling evangelists. John Wayne Brown, who had begun handling serpents at the age of seventeen, and

his wife Melinda, were regular attendees. Dewey Chafin, who had been bitten over one hundred times, brought snakes from Tennessee and took his turn at the pulpit. When his sister Columbia suffered a fatal bite, Chafin had the snake stuffed and kept it as an eerie souvenir.

Unfortunately, while the church itself was moving forward, Glenn Summerford's life was beginning a downward spiral of backsliding fueled by prodigious amounts of vodka and orange juice. When his wife began to suspect he was having an affair with another woman in the church she had good reason to fear him; he had already broken her mother's jaw in a fit of anger during a family dinner.

It was later alleged that he had promised to marry his mistress on a certain date, which was probably the reason he decided his wife had to go. He attempted to accomplish this by grabbing her by the hair and forcing her to stick her hand in one of the cages holding his seventeen snakes. When she survived the first bite he repeated the same

procedure the next day. That evening after Summerford had passed out in an alcoholic stupor his wife made her escape.

A few days later the errant preacher was arrested and charged with attempted murder.

Summerford was convicted and sentenced to ninety-nine years in the penitentiary. Several weeks later Clyde Crossfield was bitten at the church and had to be flown by helicopter to Chattanooga. He survived the bite but many of the members believed he would not have been bitten at all if Summerford had been there to

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pray over the snake.

With Summerford in prison, attendance at the "Church with Signs Following" began to die out. John Wayne Brown died in a nearby church while handling a four-foot timber rattlesnake. His wife had died three years earlier after being bitten. Dewey Chafin, who had stuffed the snake that killed his sister, also handled the wrong serpent and met his maker.

When Chaffin was asked why he handled snakes he answered "I do it in the name of God,"

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from 1885 newspaper

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The initial purchase to begin the building of the home was an order of one million bricks. Construction began and progressed slowly because Judge Smith was not easily pleased. The building went on for seven years. In 1840 Judge Smith died, never seeing the completion of the house. His grandson-in-law, Meredith Calhoun, as executor of the Judge's Will, supervised the completion of the house.

The house faced Eustis St. and included a five-foot brick wall surrounding the entire block of what is now Lincoln, Eustis, Randolph, and Greene Streets. The 12,000 square foot house sitting within the brick wall was formidable and imposing with three stories, seven windows across the facade, and a gleaming copper roof.

In his collection of articles on celebrated Huntsville homes, Pat Jones wrote that the house sat on the "highest spot in the block...Wide stone steps ran the length of the small porch in front." He said it was outstanding and unparalleled for beauty and elegance.

Meredith Calhoun, his wife Mary, their three boys, and the Judge's widow and Mary's grandmother, Margaret Smith,

lived in the house. In 1842, Margaret died, and shortly afterwards the Calhoun's eldest son, Willie, experienced a crippling spinal injury. But possibly the most tragic event for the Calhoun family during these years was the death of their middle son, John, at the age of four.

Grief-stricken, the Calhouns decided to travel abroad to seek medical care for their son Willie in France, but it was hinted that Mrs. Calhoun herself was so distraught and ill that she required medical care as well.

While the Calhouns lived in

Europe, the palatial house stood empty for years and was maintained by a staff of servants. The interior was filled with the Calhouns' art collection that they had amassed during their travels. It was considered by many to be the largest and finest private collection in the South at the time.

During the years that the great house stood empty, a friend and neighbor of the Calhouns, Mary Lewis, commented that the house "...looks sad...flourishing with mellowness over its sad history."

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The house was very attractive to occupying troops during the civil war. Unruly prisoners were kept in the underground kitchen behind barred windows. Other parts of the house were used as a hospital and the rooms were crowded with beds, not only for battle wounds, but for the many soldiers who were stricken with measles. In 1867 the house served as military headquarters.

The house was rented in 1874 and used as a dance studio, and in 1876 it became the offices of the U.S. Circuit Court for the Northern District of Alabama.

The most illustrious event in the Calhoun House's history was the trial of Frank James in 1884 for a payroll robbery three years earlier. Huge crowds came from far and wide to witness the trial or just to be near the excitement. James was quite a celebrity and when he was acquitted, the sympathetic crowds cheered.

From 1895 - 1898, the Calhoun House served as the

location for a boy's school, the Huntsville Academy.

In 1907 a fire struck the house, and the burned out building remained an empty eyesore close to the heart of downtown Huntsville until 1909 when it was sold to L.C. Sugg for \$10,800. This is the house that cost Judge Smith over \$75,000 to build in the 1830's.

In May of 1911 after another fire, the Calhoun House was demolished. It is now a parking lot, located directly to the right of the YMCA (now law offices) as

you look east. Today there is nothing to remind one of it's past glories and drama except for the historic marker at the location, which describes the trial of Frank James that took place there.

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The Genius

John W. Hanner, a staff writer for the *Brooklyn Gazette*, while visiting Alabama in 1847, wrote a story about a slave in Huntsville who belonged to a Mr. McLemore. The slave had been born on the place where he lived, but had never traveled more than a half-mile away from home.

Apparently, the slave was born retarded, but had become a favorite of his master. Although able to perform simple chores, the man was unable to care for himself. He slept in the main house, where someone could watch over him.

Mr. Hanner described the slave as a very large, but calm, person who was never known

to tell a lie. His voice was low and his enunciation slurred. He never became angry or excited about any of the ordinary things of life. Like all other slaves at that time, he was unable to read or write.

What made the slave so unusual was the fact that he was a mathematical genius. The man did not know one figure or letter from another, but was able to add, subtract, multiply, and work complicated mathematical problems in his mind faster than most people could on paper.

Word of his unusual ability spread and before long he became a local celebrity. The Rev.

"I thought my window was down, but found it was up when I put my hand through it."

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John C. Burruss and Thomas Brandon, prominent men in the early days of Madison County, heard of the strange slave and decided to see for themselves.

Some of the questions used in testing the slave were as follows:

"How much is 99 times 99?"

Answer: "9,801."

"How much is 74 times 86 and 1/2?"

Answer: "6,401."

"How many 9's are there in 2000?"

Answer: "222 with 2 over."

"How much is 321 times 789?"

"253,269."

"How much is 7 times 9,223?"

Two-second pause. "64,561."

"How much is 3,333 times 5,555?"

This was the only question that seemed to stump the slave. He pulled at his clothing, wrung his hands, sucked his thumb and then ran out of the house into the yard where he began skipping and leaping into the air.

Satisfied that they had finally been able to best the slave genius, Burruss and Brandon were about to leave when the slave ran back into the room.

"18,514,815," he shouted to the bewildered guests.

A week later he was able to recall to the men what the last problem, asked him on that day, had been. He never had an explanation as to how he arrived at the answers, stating only, "I studies it up!"

When word of the slave's uncanny mathematical gift began to spread, his master was besieged by requests from people wanting more information. One group of learned professors from Nashville spent three days with him in an effort to prove trickery. All attempts failed as the slave answered each question correctly.

Finally, in a last effort to discredit him, one of the professors asked how many stars were in the universe. The slave jumped up, ran out of the room and never returned. Almost an hour later the professor found him hiding behind a woodshed.

"You don't know the answer!" exclaimed the jubilant professor.

"Yes sir, I knows the answer ... there jest ain't no word for a number that big."

No one knows whatever happened to the slave who was a mathematical genius. Years later, people could not even remember his name and he became just another footnote in Huntsville's history.



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Heard On the Street

by *Cathey Carney*

Our Photo of the Month winner for the June issue was **Angel Pennington**. Angel called with the first correct guess, that the picture was of **Lee Ann Lancaster**, boss lady of Lee Ann's Bar and Restaurant on Church Street. Angel said she just knew when she saw those eyes that it was Lee Ann! She works as hair-stylist and make-up artist at **Salon Solutions**, on Andrew Jackson Way. Congratulations to you, Angel!

Phyllis Rader let me know that she and her sweet husband, **John**, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on May 7. They went to Venice, Florida and had a great time. John and Phyllis still act like kids in love and are just a joy to be around. Their proud daughter and son-in-law are **Renay** and **David Nunn**. Congratulations, you two!

Ron McIntosh was only 67 when he died in early June, after a long struggle with cancer. Ron is the beloved husband of **Jean McIntosh**, and dad to **Lynn Albritton** and son **Bruce McIntosh**. We send our deepest condolences to Jean and her family



and their many friends.

Hattie Gentle of Huntsville has seen a lot of changes in the city. She will be turning 94 years young on July 28, and just loves the history of this area. Her sister is **Mildred Helton**, and is the grandmother of **Margaret Bondar** who is so proud of both Hattie and Mildred. Mildred wants to send a special June Happy birthday greeting to Margaret.

Mr. Bill Miller, owner of Miller & Miller, was a man who touched so many lives during his life. He died in June at the age of 86. Bill was the "bridge builder" in North Alabama and words can't describe what a kind, caring and ethical person he was. He leaves many friends and family who will never forget him and his gentle spirit. We'll miss you, Bill.

John Bzdell organized a surprise birthday party for his beautiful young lady friend **Margaret Watson**. The event took place at

Gibson's BarBQue on South Parkway and she was SO surprised! Way to go, John and Happy Birthday, Margaret!

There are many older folks who have no air conditioning, in these really hot days. **CASA of Madison County** is a nonprofit agency that collects air conditioners from people willing to donate them, or to donate money for them. It only takes \$100 to buy an A/C for an elderly person, and it could possibly save a life. They would even accept used, working AC units. If this is something you might like to do, please call **Larkin Grant** at 533-7777.

I didn't realize you could trim monkey grass! The people who take care of our front yard in Old Town, **Perfect Turf**, did that the other day and it looks so good! Those are some really hardworking young guys.

We met with **Steve Scarbrough** of Gurley recently, at **Lee Ann's** on Church Street. He was working in construction and in the process of tearing down a home, found some really good

Photo of The Month

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

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Hint: This little boy likes the taste of spicy food in his well-known restaurant.



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information about Huntsville in the 60's and donated it to "Old Huntsville." Thank you, Steve!

At the end of June **Redstone Village** celebrated the opening of their new addition, Grandview Gardens, Memory Support Neighborhood, for those with Alzheimers and memory challenges. Many were there to help celebrate the growth of Redstone Village.

Ellen McAnelly was a lady whom many people in Huntsville knew, especially the Irish. She was the owner/operator of **Finnegan's Pub** in Huntsville since 1977, an Irish pub where dogs as well as humans were always welcome. She operated it for 32 years, and died at the age of 77. She will always be remembered as a generous, kind person who loved animals and made great friends along the way.

In July, **Highlands Baptist Church** will celebrate its 50th anniversary. The church is asking all its former members to call about the plans for the event - call **Louise** at 852-1661.

Another very important event happening in August is the **Rison-Dallas Assoc. 37th Annual Reunion**, to be held Aug. 8 at the Jackson Way Baptist Church. This is hosted by the class of 1949 in celebration of their 61st anniversary, and all U.S. Veterans are cordially invited. Call **Sue** at 464-9432 for more info.

Louise Avery celebrated her birthday in June and always has her grandkids for a visit in the summer, called informally "**Camp Moo-Moo**." You'll often see Louise at the Concerts in the Park on Monday nights with her friends, along with thousands of others!

Marie Hewett hosted her annual birthday party for **Cecil Ashburn** at her beautiful bluff home on Monte Sano. Close friends toasted Cecil during the night, and Marie baked her famous coconut cake for the event.

Cecil turned 89, and celebrated with **Elroy Clark, Parris Dawkins, Joe and Connie Lougheed, Louie and Jane Tippett**, among many others. Happy Birthday Cecil!

The **2009 Old Town Hidden Gardens Tour** was a fabulous success and the weather turned out perfectly - for the thousands of visitors who walked around Walker Ave., Steele Street, Clinton Ave., and White Street to peek behind the homes to view the beautiful gardens. One home, belonging to **Tom and Patti Pruitt** on White St., even had two gardens - one in front and one behind, with many of the plants marked. There were delicious refreshments served and each of the 11 gardens were breathtaking and gave many visitors unique ideas for their own gardens.

Recently while feeding the ducks at **Big Spring Park**, we noticed a group of kids who were throwing rocks at the geese. One child chased one of the geese and it flew into Church street, where it was hit by an SUV. It was the worst sound and though not killed, the bird was badly injured. When we contacted the **Mayor's office** they sent people over to help take care of the goose. PLEASE help take care of the birds and geese and ducks at Big Spring, and don't allow your chil-

dren to be cruel to any animal.

Have a safe and fun **4th of July** with your friends and family, and remember to check on your older neighbors who may need your help during these sweltering summer days.

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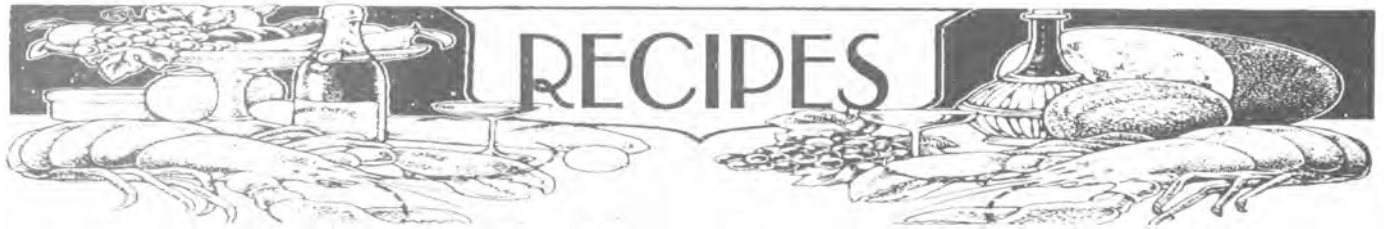
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Creamy Fruit Dip

1 8-oz. pkg. cream cheese, softened
 1/3 c. orange marmalade
 1/4 c. walnuts, chopped
 Milk as needed to make thinner

Mix all ingredients together, cover and put in fridge til ready to serve. Arrange fruit slices in a circle around the dip, which can be poured into a bowl in the center of the fruit. This is good with bread sticks also.

Quick Fig Bars

1 box pineapple cake mix (Duncan Hines)
 1 c. fig preserves
 2 c. nuts, chopped
 2/3 c. oil
 1 c. coconut
 1 egg
 1 t. vanilla extract

Preheat your oven to 350 degrees. Mix the cake per the box directions, add rest of the ingredients and mix well. Grease a 9 x 15" baking dish and pour mixture into the pan, bake for 30 minutes.

Dried Apricot Balls

1 lb. dried apricot
 2 c. flaked coconut
 1/2 c. sugar
 1/2 c. frozen orange juice concentrate, not diluted

1 c. vanilla wafers, crushed
 Using a food processor chop your apricots finely, add to larger bowl. Chop the coconut and wafers finely in processor, put all ingredients back in processor bowl, add orange juice and sugar at the last.

Process until well blended, then roll into 1 inch balls. Coat with additional sugar, place on tray and refrigerate til firm. Store covered in refrigerator.

Nutty Chocolate Balls

2 pkgs. semi-sweet chocolate chips

15 oz. can Eagle Brand sweetened condensed milk
 1 t. almond extract
 Pinch Salt
 1 c. pecans, chopped fine
 1 T. cocoa powder

Melt your chocolate and milk in a saucepan, stir til blended, melted and smooth. Remove from heat and add your extract and a pinch of salt. Place in a buttered dish, cover and set in fridge for an hour and you notice that it begins to get firm.

Shape into small balls and roll in the nuts til covered. Layer on plate in a single layer, dust lightly with cocoa powder.

These can be refrigerated til used, or frozen for later use. You can use shredded coconut to roll them in, if you prefer.

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Oatmeal Fudge

1 square unsweetened chocolate
 1/2 c. sweetened condensed milk

1 stick butter
 2 c. sugar
 2 1/2 c. quick oatmeal
 1/2 c. nuts, chopped

In a saucepan slowly heat the chocolate and butter. Add the sugar and milk, increase heat. Cook for 2 minutes. Remove and pour over oatmeal and nuts.

Beat well til cool enough to drop by teaspoonfuls onto waxed paper.

Champagne Punch

1/4 c. sugar
 1/4 c. lemon juice
 1/2 c. boiling water
 1 pint cranberry juice
 1 c. orange juice
 1/4 bottle white champagne or
 2 7-oz. bottles ginger ale

Boil sugar in water til dissolved, add juices, mix and chill. Just before serving, add the champagne or ginger ale.

Cheese Crisps

1 stick butter
 1/2 t. dried red pepper flakes
 1 c. flour
 1 c. grated sharp cheddar cheese

Salt to taste
 1 c. Rice Crispies
 1/2 t. paprika

Mix all ingredients thoroughly and form into small marble-sized balls. Place on greased cookie sheet, dip fork in flour and lightly mash each ball nearly flat. Bake at 325 degrees for 10 minutes, remove from sheet to cooling rack.

Poppy Seed Cake

1 pkg. yellow cake mix
 1 pkg. instant vanilla pudding
 4 eggs
 1 c. sour cream
 1/2 c. cooking oil
 1/3 c. poppy seeds

In a mixing bowl, place all above ingredients and mix well for 5 minutes. Pour into greased Bundt pan and bake for an hour at 350 degrees.

Remove from pan and while warm, drizzle with Sugar Glaze.

Sugar Glaze

1 1/2 c. powdered sugar
 3 T. butter
 1 t. vanilla extract
 Warm milk to make a paste
 Mix together the sugar, butter, extract and a bit of warm milk or cream to make a stiff paste. Spread over cake while still warm.



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Madison County's Forgotten Hero

by Phillip Kennedy

It was a warm spring day in New Market on May 14th, 1925. Hardly a cloud in the sky, the birds were singing their songs of welcome to the new season of hatching & raising their young. The sweet smell of honeysuckle was in the air.

It was a great day just to be alive.

In the distance, one could hear roosters crowing and the faint sound of the NC & StL train whistle, carrying it's load of commodities from Elora, Tennessee to Huntsville, AL.

Frank Cantrell had hitched his team of "borrowed" mules together and was plowing furrows for the upcoming season of crops. These were the days when people lived "off the land", and a penny saved was a penny earned. There were many large farms in this region of rural Madison County, and sharecroppers who survived & raised their families from the harvest and toil of the fruits of their labor. Mr. Cantrell was farming 75 acres, a small piece of land in those days, just one & one half mile west of New Market. This land was owned by Mr. J. W. Cochran, and was located southeast of what is now known as New Market Road, coming from Butler Road to the east. A small parcel of his land, facing what was then known as New Market Pike, was being rented by a Mr. Van L. Hillis and his family. There was a well about 5 feet south of the southwest end of the back porch of this house that had gone "dry". Mr. Cochran hired a man from Tennessee, Mr. J. Edgar Horton to come there and dig the well "to water".

This well was 60 feet in depth before Mr. Horton started his project. He had experience in wells and had constructed a windlass, made of a 6" diameter cedar log about 7 ft. long, stretched across an X shaped wood cradle on either side, 3 ft. above the well opening. To the log was attached a crank at each end and a length of 100 ft., 3" thick rope. On the end of this rope was an iron hook, holding a 5 gallon wooden nail keg which hauled the debris from the blasted rock at the bottom of the well to the surface. As the project was nearing completion, Mr. Horton had extended the depth by 5 feet, and water was beginning to seep to the surface of the solid rock.

There was a problem in those days of



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"marsh gas" which came from the bowels of the earth. In wells of those depths, there was always the possibility of this natural phenomenon occurring. Mr. Horton knew of this, being experienced at his trade. The elders called the effect "air damp", because not much was known about it at the time. To be on the safe side, Mr. Horton took several trips back to the surface into the fresh, spring air to rest & recuperate.

At around 8:45 that morning, he went back into the well but had only worked for a few minutes when a bubbling poisonous gas began to seep from the earth. He began to get nauseous and started to cough.

At the top, James Hillis and Len Edwards had just wrenched-up the keg, holding more debris from the bottom to empty and return it to Mr. Horton. It was then that they heard Mr. Horton's heavy, labored breathing and they began to get alarmed about his safety. They looked into the well and could barely distinguish his form, laying in the bottom.

The two men became frightened and began calling for help. Mr. Van L. Hillis was in a field a short distance from the house and heard the call.

George B. Wiseman was on the New Market Pike, about 500 ft. northeast of the house when he heard the frightened calls for help. One or two others heard it. Amos Franklin (Frank) Cantrell heard it while plowing in his field about 500 ft. east of there and left his plow & 2 mules standing while he ran the distance to the alarmed men at the top of the well.

Meanwhile, Van Hillis had arrived and saw James Hillis with a rope tied around himself, ready to go down and get Mr. Horton. No one was aware of the danger involved with the poisonous gas at the time.

Then Frank Cantrell, who had just turned 37 years old 4 days earlier, arrived. Cantrell did not know Mr. Horton personally, but had been in wells before, cleaning them. He was told what had happened, but was not told about any gas fumes in the well. When Mr. Cantrell saw Mr. Hillis with the windlass rope he asked "have you ever been in a well before?" The man shook his head no and



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Cantrell said "I have been in wells, I'll go down & get him".

So, James Hillis took the rope from himself, helping to re-tie it to Frank Cantrell. A loop was made in it, through which he thrust his leg into and a shorter length of different rope, about 6 ft. long was tied under his arms & around his chest to the main rope. By this time, Mr. Wiseman had arrived and proceeded to help James Hillis, Van Hillis and Len Edwards lower Mr. Cantrell into the well.

After reaching the bottom, they could hear the labored, heavy breathing of Mr. Horton and nothing was said for a short while. Then they heard Cantrell say "I can't stay down here very long." A few seconds later they heard him say "let's go", being the signal to hoist them to the top.

With two men on each side they slowly began to crank the windlass with its heavy load. About ten feet from the top there was a sudden easing on the windlass, followed by the haunting sound of a body hitting the earth at the bottom of the well.

The men quickly pulled the unconscious Horton the remaining few feet to safety. He remained unconscious until the next evening, and was ill for several weeks after the accident.

Witnessed accounts say that Cantrell tied the rope securely to Horton and held on to the top of the rope, above his head. When they reached fresh air, he

fainted and losing grip from his hands, fell back into the well, breaking his neck.

No one would enter the well for Cantrell's body until Mr. Thomas L. McRae was summoned to the site and recovered it about a half hour later. The time of death was determined at 9:00 AM by Doctor A. W. Lipscomb, medical examiner & Mr. J. A. Payne, the undertaker, both of New Market.

Dr. Lipscomb, being a respected man in the community, hand wrote a desperate letter to the Carnegie Hero Fund Institute in Pittsburg, Pa. describing the accident and how it affected Cantrell's surviving wife and seven small children. At the time, Mrs. Cantrell was expecting an 8th child.

Along with Dr. Lipscomb, several prominent businessmen in New Market also requested the Hero Fund award be presented to Mr. Cantrell's wife, Sarah Frances (formerly White) Cantrell. Mr. R. N. Coleman, cash-

ier of the New Market Banking Co., took the matter to a friend, Mr. Charles Cason, vice president of the (then known) Chemical National Bank of New York. Mr. Cason sent the request on May, 19th 1925 to Mr. S. M. Wilmot, Director of the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission, in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania. Also, on June 12th of that year, the local Masonic Lodge #52, A. F. & A. M, of New Market, submitted a request for the award. This was signed by the acting president, J. T. Garner III and James T. Walker, secretary.

The Carnegie Institute sent Mr. George K. Thomas, special agent, down to investigate the case and certified the information on December 14th, 1925 in Huntsville, Alabama. Being that Mrs. Cantrell could not read or write, Mr. R. N. Coleman, her husband's banker, would be assigned her notary public and handle her financial indebtedness.

On January 19th, 1926, a bronze medal was awarded to

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Sarah F. Cantrell, on behalf of the heroic act performed by her late husband, Amos Franklin Cantrell. She would receive a monthly pension up until the day of her death in March 7th, 1%5.

After the death of her husband, the Carnegie Foundation helped her to purchase a home on Hurricane Creek Road, about 1 mile east of downtown New Market.

It was rumored that this was one of the original log cabins built in northeast Madison County by Joseph & Isaac Criner, the earliest settlers in the region.

Sarah had 15 acres of land with this house, which included a stock barn, smoke house, chicken house, root cellar & vegetable garden.

The last child born to Sarah Cantrell was named Frankie, in honor of her husband, and it was a girl. This little girl grew up to be my mother, Frankie Elizabeth Cantrell Kennedy. I am very proud of her, my grandmother, and most of all, my grandfather, Frank Cantrell.

Veterans

from 1904 newspaper

The commander of Camp Egbert J. Jones is deeply pained to announce the death of our respected and beloved comrade Felix Sibley, who died on the 19th after a long and painful illness.

All Confederate Veterans are requested to meet at the late residence of our comrade on Randolph Street and attend his funeral in a body.

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Letter from Huntsville

The following letter was printed in a Savannah, Georgia newspaper. It was signed "exiled."

"It is but a short time since I left Huntsville, Alabama. This iron hand of despotism is upon the people; not perhaps as roughly, nor as grossly, as two years ago, when the impotent Mitchel commanded there.

A few days ago, a body of gentlemen, unexceptionable in character, and conservative by age, were exiled upon fourteen hours order to leave, because they refused to take an oath of allegiance to a Government they abhor in their inner souls.

The officers in charge have determined not to make any more exiles, by sending the recusants of the oath South; they will, henceforth, be ordered North, and buried in Northern bastiles. Already they have immured one heroic old soul, William McDowell, in the penitentiary in Nashville.

The venerable Ex-Governor Chapman received an order, on the 19th of January, to leave his house and family at nine o'clock A.M. on the 20th; and when in the arms of his family, bidding adieu to the loved ones, on whom the

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winds of heaven had never blown roughly - at that painful moment a Yankee order was thrust into his hands, requiring wife and daughters to vacate their premises by two o'clock P.M. the same day, not allowing any article to be removed- and a guard was placed to carry out that order.

Greenbacks are two and a half for one in gold in Huntsville and Nashville.

The Yankee troops in Huntsville, whose term of service has expired, are converting their 'greenbacks' into Confederate currency to take home. I state this for an incontrovertible fact. Not in one instance only, but I witnessed several of the same.

The streets are becoming foul - the groves and woodland around the town being swept

away, all the lesser houses about the town are being torn down to the floor and weather-board winter quarters for them.

Every house in the city has been surveyed for occupation by them - not in a desultory manner, but regularly and systematically. It is the duty of an officer, one Lieutenant Cliff, to assign these quarters; thus, according to rank or personal standing (if any) at home, are they placed in places of average respectability in appearance.

Colonel G. P. Birney's mansion is assigned as headquarters for General Sherman & Co.

But, through all, the people are true and devoted. I would mention more, but already I have written at too much length.

"Signed" Exiled

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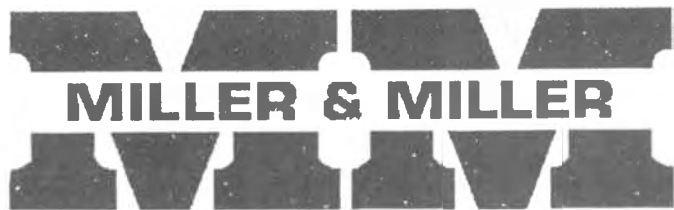
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The Honor Flight

By Malcolm Miller

On Saturday, April twenty fifth this year, I, along with one hundred twenty four other World War II veterans was flown to Washington DC on the seventh Honor Flight from the Tennessee Valley. I was told before going that this would be the greatest day of my life and I really believe it was. With all the changes in our country these days I had just about decided that real patriotism was a thing of the past but this trip proved me wrong. Every where we went there were people both old and young waving flags and thanking us for our service to the country, telling us they were free because of us.

I want to give special thanks to Joe Fitzgerald and all the volunteers that make these trips a reality; and a special thanks to my escort Ms. Leslie Hix from Gadsden, Alabama. When I made this flight I felt I was representing my four brothers who also served in the war but never lived to see the beautiful World War II memorial. I also escorted the F-16 pilot when he laid my Brother Paul Miller's flag at the base of the memorial. This was a very moving experience.

My memory goes back to a cold crisp Sunday afternoon on December seventh, nineteen forty one. I was a fourteen year old boy out riding bicycles with my buddies Charlie Gossett, Muley

Taylor and Elroy Phillips in the Salty Bottom Community in Eastern Madison County when some one came out of a house and told us that the Japanese had bombed Pearl Harbor. This sounded really bad but none of us knew at that time where Pearl Harbor was, however it didn't take long for us to find out.

The first thing I thought of was my two brothers, Gib and Louis who were in the Army. Little did I know that before the war was finally over five out of the seven brothers in my family including myself would serve this great country.

World War II brought about changes in everyone's lives. Since all the able bodied men had to go into the military that left only the older men and young boys and the women to carry on on the home front. Thousands of house wives who had never worked outside the home started working in defense plants and doing all the jobs that the men had done before the war. This trend still exists today, once the ladies started working away from home many of them were never satisfied to settle down to being full time home makers again.

Americans during that time, known as the greatest generation during World War II, made more sacrifices than any generation since that time. Even on the home front sacrifices had to be made. You couldn't buy new

cars because the car manufacturers turned to making tanks and other military vehicles, you could no longer buy new tires so they started recapping the old ones. You had to have war stamps to purchase gas, sugar and many other items and you were very limited on the amount you could buy. I do remember that the average driver was given a stamp which would give you very little gas. Since my Daddy was a farmer we were issued D stamps so we could buy fuel for our one row Farmall tractor.

Many times I have wondered how we as Americans would respond if our country were ever challenged the way we were following that cold day in December nineteen forty one. Would we come together the way we did then?

Yes, after what I observed on the Honor Flight, I believe we would.

"Good judgement comes from experience, and a lot of that comes from bad judgement."

Will Rogers

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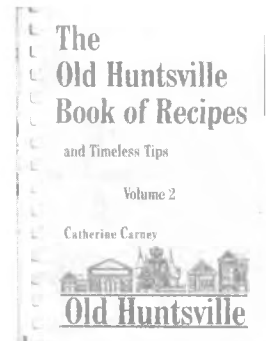
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Everyday Tips

* This tip is from Peggy Rhoden, of Hazel Green. Did you know that you can shake an egg to see if it's fresh or not? If you shake an egg and hear it slosh around, it's bad and you need to throw it away! If you don't hear anything, you're safe. Another test is to put an egg in a bowl of cold water - if it floats you don't want it, if it sinks to the bottom it's fresh!

* Also, keep your eggs in the coldest part of the refrigerator, they'll last longer.

* A good way to sharpen your scissors is to cut through a piece of sandpaper a couple of times.

* A soap sock for the kids: keep a small white sock in your bathroom and put all small pieces of soap into it. Tie a knot at the open end of the sock and use this at bathtime for the kids. Very handy and they will love it - it's something different.

* To remove the paint odor in

a freshly painted room, cut a large onion in half and put pieces in a pan of water - leave overnight.

* Epsom salts in a water solution is an effective spray for powdery mildew on plants.

* To brighten a rug, sprinkle salt over it before vacuum cleaning. It sweeps out the spots.

* Baked on stains in your oven? Leave a shallow dish of ammonia in the closed oven overnight. The stains will soften and be easy to remove.

* A good way to clean your copper is to take half a lemon, sprinkle salt on it and rub your copper. Rinse with cold water and polish with a soft cloth.

* The layers of a cake will come out of their pans without sticking if you will set the hot

pans on a damp cloth when they first come out of the oven.

* A little sour cream added to mayonnaise for any kind of salad dressing provides that special taste that so many salads lack.

* Cottage cheese and a small amount of grated onion makes a healthy and delicious topping for hot baked potatoes.

* Put egg shells in a dish of hot water for a day, water your plants with this - they'll love it!

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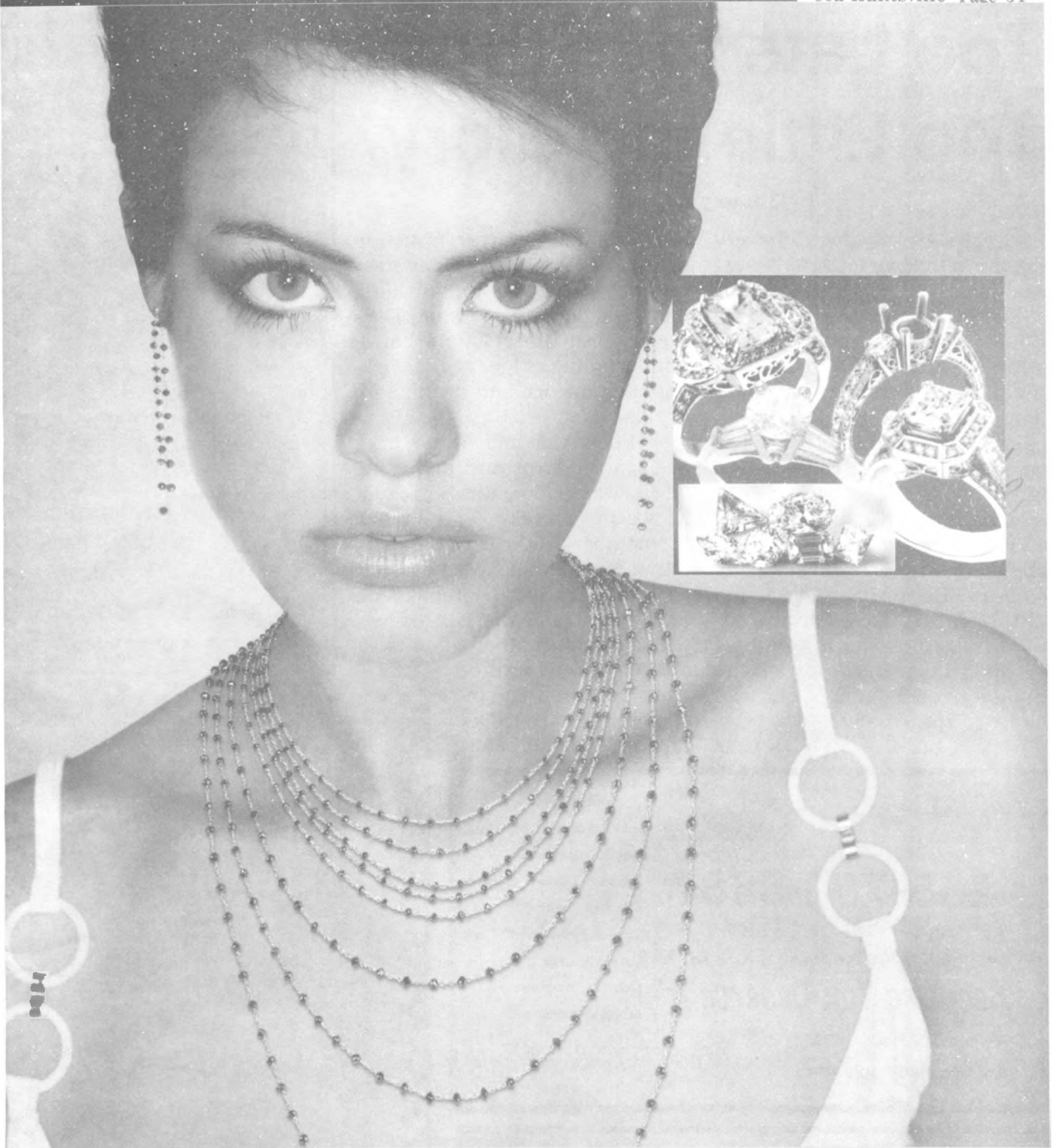
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Too Late the Story, Too Little the Glory

by Tommy Towery


Carl Fleming "Jack" Towery was born in Fayetteville, Tennessee, in 1919. His mother died before he turned one and he was raised by an aunt and uncle who adopted him. He moved with them to Huntsville where he attended and graduated from Lincoln High School in 1940. For a while he drove a delivery truck for Brown's Grocery Store, but like many of the young men with which he graduated, he eventually joined the Army to serve his country. He was assigned to the 29th Infantry Division and after his initial training he was shipped overseas to await the invasion of Europe. He was lucky to return alive.

I was born in 1946, a year

after my father returned from the fighting of World War 11. My concept of that war was John Wayne's heroics at the Lyric or Grand Theaters, with bullets flying and bombs falling as I sat in the dark and ate popcorn and drank soft drinks.

I knew that my father had been in the army and had gone off to a war before I was born, but he was no hero like John Wayne. I remember overhearing him telling someone that he had never even fired a shot in combat. All that he had done was run ashore with a bunch of other soldiers at some place named Omaha Beach during something called D-Day.

I also knew that before



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he could make it off the sands of that beach he stepped on a land mine that blew his leg off. He had one medal that I saw as a child - a Purple Heart. One medal did not make him a hero.

My dad came back from the war on crutches to the girl he had married just months before he joined the army. The citizens of Huntsville welcomed him with open arms. He was given one of the first automatic automobiles in the area since he could no long use a clutch because of his missing leg. He received training as a draftsman and started to work at Redstone Arsenal.

My earliest recollections of him were the seemingly constant trips he made in and out of the VA hospitals with one medical problem or another. We moved from 9th Avenue to East Clinton Street in 1952. Somewhere along the way, he started drinking and in the days before the medical profession made us aware of the problems associated with the strong drugs he took for his pain and the alcohol that he drank to forget the nightmares, he was not a very nice person to be around. I'll never know all the problems that he and my mother endured, but when I was eight years old they were divorced. That was in 1954, only 10 years after D-Day.

Although we lived in the same town, I never saw much of my dad over the next 10 years. He remarried and moved out to Chase, but drove by our house almost every

day going to and from work. I thought about him in 1962 when John Wayne starred in The Longest Day. I casually mentioned to my buddies that my dad had been in D-Day, but that was about it.

His drinking continued, he remarried and moved to the country, and we did not seem to find a way to be a part of each other's lives. On the day I graduated from

high school, he never showed up for the ceremony. I don't even think I bothered to send him an invitation to my college graduation

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Comment heard in 1955

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"I don't feel old. I don't feel anything until noon. Then it's time to take a nap."

Bob Hope

nor to the United States Air Force commissioning ceremony that followed when I pinned on my 2nd Lieutenant Bars.

I married shortly thereafter, and while I was awaiting my first assignment, I took my new wife back to Huntsville to meet my father. No, he had not come to the wedding. I could never put my finger on it exactly, but for some reason, from that period on, we communicated more through letters, cards, and phone calls.

Whenever I came home, we would get together for a meal or an evening of sitting around and small talk, but nothing much more serious than that. Throughout the years, I never found out much more about D-Day from him than the basic facts I had learned secondhand as a kid. I guess I always thought there was going to be a better time when we could sit down and talk it over, man-to-man, but it never happened.

I kept telling myself that someday when he was retired and I could get home, we'd sit down and fill in all the gaps of that part of his life. I needed to better understand the cost he paid for the Purple Heart he had long ago stuck away in a drawer somewhere.

Near the end of my own military career, I was stationed in England, where I found people that seemed to better appreciate the cost and sacrifices of war. I visited the war museums, went to the military parades, and saw the respect showed to the war pensioners on the streets. I vowed then that upon my return to the states, I would finally ask him about his D-Day experiences. Six months before I returned home, I received a phone call that he had died in his sleep. He was 68 years old.

His death took from me any chance to find the answers to the questions that I had

stored in my head most of my life. I had not only lost a father, I had also lost a comrade in arms. I wore my uniform to his funeral. On my chest were awards for meritorious service, the Air Medal, awards for service in Vietnam and other conflicts, and a dozen other colorful ribbons that reflected my almost 20 years of service.

I thought about his one medal - his Purple Heart.

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The bugler played Taps, and when the American flag was lifted from his casket and ceremonially folded, the color guard commander turned and presented me with the flag, with the hallowed words "With the thanks of a grateful nation." Tears came into my eyes for this fellow warrior that I hardly knew.

When Saving Private Ryan came to the screen, I saw more graphically than I wanted how terrible it was for the men during the invasion. It may have been the first time that I came even close to actually understanding what my father suffered through. I watched the movie, and wished that I had taken the time to talk to him.

Using the internet I have started putting together some events in my father's short military life that led him to that beach. I know facts about his unit and where he was stationed. I know how many men were killed and how many were wounded and how many were missing in action. What I don't know, and never will, are the personal feelings of the man

that would survive that hell to become my father.

After his funeral I had to go help clean out his apartment. I found his Purple Heart in the bottom of a drawer along with a clipping from The Huntsville Times that was written on the 25th anniversary of D-Day. The article had his photograph and quoted my dad saying that he had strayed off the path during the landing assault and had stepped on a land mine. It went on to tell how he had laid on the beach for 18-hours with that mangled leg before being evacuated. I thought about the term "the longest day" and knew that I would never in my life understand its meaning the way that my father had. The most haunting thing about the article was that it proved to me in black and white that my father was willing to talk about his experiences, if only someone took the time to ask him. How often I have wished that someone had been me.



Newspaper Clippings from 1893

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

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

- A very wealthy farmer of Decatur has this Notice pasted up in his field:

"If any man's or woman's cows or oxens gits in these here otes, his or her tail will be cut off as the case may be."

- There should be no trouble enforcing the liquor laws in Scottsboro now that the citizens have elected a former bootlegger as sheriff. This should be an interesting year.



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A Good Neighbor

by Austin Miller

Cora Cuzzort Shepard became our neighbor at Ryland in 1947. She had eleven children and nearly all eleven visited her every Sunday. Daddy sometimes got a little peeved because there was so many that they often blocked the drive out to our house. In hindsight it didn't matter that much because we didn't have a car and very little company. I expect there were things about us that irritated them about us but those things were not spoken. In forty years there was never an argument, a disagreement or a cross word exchanged. We soon learned to love this family like they were our own.

Mrs. Shepard was about five

feet four inches tall, wiry in statue and wore her iron toned gray hair in a ball on the back of her head. She weighed about 100 pounds and in forty years her appearance didn't change enough that you would notice. In her younger years she must have been a very pretty woman because she had seven girls and all seven were strikingly beautiful. In 1947, her three youngest children, Cora Jean, Franklin and Jimmy were still at home. When I was in the first grade the four of us caught the school bus together. Cora Jean was in her senior year at Gurley, Franklin and Jimmy was still at Central. Franklin was several years older and took me under his wing. If anybody messed with me they had to deal with

"I finally found an honest mechanic. He told me he honestly doesn't know how to fix anything!"

Maxine

Franklin.

A much older boy the size of a grown man was giving me a hard time at School. I told the principal and it didn't stop, I told Daddy and he talked to the boy's father and it didn't stop. I finally told

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Franklin and it stopped. I don't know what he did but the boy never bothered me or even spoke to me again.


In the forties Daddy had two mean mules named Old Blue and Old Red. They were very unpredictable and you never knew what they were going to do. Sometimes they would run away and the only way to stop them was let them run until they gave out. Once I was riding with Daddy in the wagon and for some reason he stepped down for a minute. As soon as he did the Mules bolted and ran as hard as they could through the fields behind our house over cotton rows, through bushes and over ditches and terraces. Mrs. Shepard saw all this happen. She said that when the wagon hit a ditch, rock or terrace it bounced high off the ground and she could see the top of my head fly up above the side boards. There was no doubt in her mind that I was a goner but fortunately our neighbor, Sammy Lee Ford, saw the team coming and was able to head them off. He finally got us stopped and drove the wagon back to where he met Daddy running toward him across the field. Mrs. Shepard told this story many times and said she had never been more terrified in her life. Daddy sold Old Red and Old Blue in 1955, I was never happier to see anything go than I was those two mules.

I never heard Mrs. Shepard raise her voice or use a sharp tone. She was the same every-day no matter what was going on in her life. But she had a way with words and was fast on the uptake with quips that fit the occasion. Once when my brother

Berns and her grandson Emmett Phillips were acting up, she told them: "If you put both your brains in a jay bird, he would fly backwards!" You can be sure both of them remember that little witticism until this day.

Poor people that grew up

in the country in her day were highly affected by weather. Crops were dependent on weather and people that were not prepared for winter could freeze to death in the old shacks they had to live in. Like most of her contemporaries she succumbed to weather



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folk lore that had been passed down. She called the days between Christmas and New Years ruling days. This meant that the weather for those days was an indication of what the weather in the next year would be like. When a snow lingered on the ground; she said it was lying around waiting on another one to follow. She also believed that the number of big fogs you had in August would correspond to the number of snows the next winter.

These old beliefs aside, she was very good at predicting the weather. If she said it was going to rain, turn cold, snow or storm there was a very good chance it would happen. I don't know if one of her predictions was based on chance, prescience or skill but for about thirty years, she said many, many times, "a big storm is coming through here one of these days

and blow Ryland away!" That big storm came April 3, 1974, when she was close to ninety, and in fact blew Ryland away. She was in the carport of a house in the direct path of the storm. The house was totally destroyed but thankfully Mrs. Shepard and everyone else in the building survived without a scratch.

On an ongoing basis she was the closest thing we had to a doctor. After raising eleven children to adulthood without money for a doctor or drugs you can understand why my parents put so much faith in her medical ability. Fortunately we were not sick often and the ailments we had were never serious. The best medicine was just having her come and check you out.

She and I always had a close bond and one year when school

"My second favorite household chore is ironing. My first being hitting my head on the top bunk bed until I faint."

Erma Bombeck

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started, for no apparent reason, she bought me a new shirt. The predominant color was red but it had a variety of other bright colors in various bold patterns and shapes. Loud was not the word, but I loved it and wore it a long time.

I am glad it still lives in one of my high school pictures. It didn't cost much but she didn't have much money and that made me like it even better.

In all the years she was our neighbor, I never once saw her dressed up. She wore plain print dresses, with an apron and sometimes a bonnet, that were usually well worn and faded.

In the summer she went bare-footed and could walk easily without shoes on the gravel road out

to our house. I never knew her to set foot in a church nor do I know her faith. She never talked about religion, church or what she believed but she practiced and lived the principles of Christianity.

Like us she was very poor but this fact did not appear to concern her in the least. She did not gossip, complain or criticize others. Mrs. Shepard may have looked frail but she was one of the strongest women in both body and spirit that I ever knew. Daddy always said she was as tough as a pine knot. This must have been true because she lived to be 97 years old.

Her grandson sold the house

to Shiloh United Methodist Church a few years ago and it now serves as the parsonage. The neighbors have all been good since then but I don't think I will ever get used to the Shepard's not being there.



"You know it's going to be a bad day when you go to put on the clothes you wore home from the party and they aren't there."

Steven Rhinestein

"Four of us slept in one bed. When it got cold, my mother just threw on another brother."

Bob Hope, on his early life

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Old Huntsville Trivia

1808 - First whiskey distillery opens in Huntsville, located next to the Big Spring, and its products are sold by the barrel.

1809 - Land containing the Big Spring is sold to Leroy Pope for \$23.50 per acre.

1820 - First tin can is sold in Huntsville. L. B. Williams reports throngs of people in his store to see the novelty of "Food in a tin can."

1835 - The courthouse is sold at auction for \$419.00. Jesse Scott was the auctioneer and James Fant, a surveyor, was paid \$5 to find the exact center of the square.

1853 - Citizens of Huntsville are in a uproar over the outrageous salaries paid to their public officials. The Mayor made \$300 annually, the clerk \$100, and the city Marshal made \$500.

1867 - Huntsville is under Yankee occupation. Military headquarters are set up at the Calhoun House, and the Calhoun property on the East side of the square was used as a stable for Union horses.



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News From the Year 1912

- Some excitement was created here today when it was learned that Dr. B. S. Pettus, one of the physicians who was sent out by the authorities to vaccinate the people in accordance with the city ordinance, had been "treed" by an infuriated citizen of the cotton mill settlement and was in the Superintendent's office and the man was on the outside with a shotgun threatening to kill the physician for having vaccinated one of his children who is a mill hand. The city sent out and brought the enraged fellow in and locked him up, and rescued the medicine man from his perilous condition. The man with the gun will have to face the police court on a charge of disorderly conduct and will be vaccinated with a heavy fine.

- The curfew rule was unexpectedly enforced last night by a number of young men who thought some of their friends were on the streets too late.

Some record breaking runs were made for home. As a means of persuading the other fellow to run faster a brick bat was shied close to his heels - and the way the poor fellow ran was a sin. One or two made the run in less than 1-0 in a four block race. The last seen of him was a big cloud of dust that many thought the street-sweeper was working Madison Street, while the other sucked the wind out of Walker street, only slacking his speed in turning corners, and jumping ruts. The curfew is being enforced very strictly in some parts of the city - and many record-breaking home runs are being broken.

- The "Tea Room" in charge of the Guild of the Church of the Nativity will be open again today from 12 to 4 o'clock. The menu embraces salads, croquettes, stuffed ham, potatoes, sandwiches, etc., served with tea, coffee or chocolate, charlotte russe, orange ice, chocolate cream, and cake. This is one occasion in which the ladies are glad to see gentlemen in their business suits.

- The ladies of the First Methodist Church will give their Bazaar and delightfully prepared meals on the 18th, 19th, and 20th of November. All are encouraged to attend,



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Rita Rudner

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Lacey's Spring Woman Starves to Death while Sleeping

from 1904 Huntsville paper

Mrs. Sallie Rutherford, of Lacey's Spring, was stricken with what was labeled "inflammation." She fell into a coma and her jaws were so tightly locked that no food, liquid, or solid could be administered to her.

Known as "The Sleeping Woman," her case attracted national attention and physicians from all over visited her. After 57 days without food or water, Mrs. Rutherford awoke and quietly asked for something to eat. Alas, she was unable to digest any food that she ate, and after lingering a few more days she died of starvation.

Local Boy Gets Third Leg

from 1918 newspaper

Private John Kellogg, of Madison County, received a telegram last week informing him that he had been wounded, degree undetermined, while serving with the Army in France last month.

When he contacted the authorities to tell them he was home on leave and was perfectly well, he was ordered to report to the military hospital

in Augusta, Georgia to be fitted for an artificial leg. Alas, the authorities would not listen and Kellogg departed yesterday to be fitted with another leg.

If the authorities have their way, Mr. Kellogg will be the only man in Alabama with three legs.

"The pistol of a flower is its only protection against insects."

Seen on 3rd grade science exam

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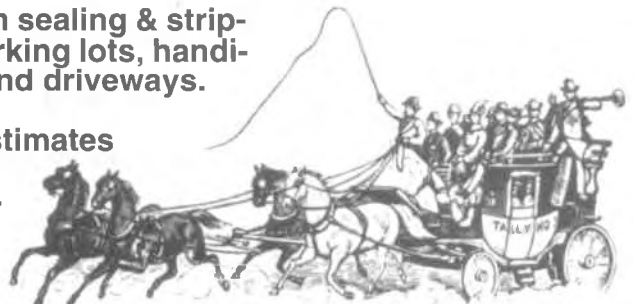
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Huntsville Huntsville Laws in 1860 In 1904

Ever wonder what Huntsville was like around the turn of the century? Below is a partial listing of businesses in Huntsville that were in operation in 1904:

- 3 saw and planing mills
- 2 carriage and buggy factories
- 4 latest approved steam cotton gins
- 3 cotton oil mills
- 2 fertilizer factories
- 2 sheet and tin working establishments
- 2 bottling works
- 1 soap factory
- 1 electric light plant and electric railway
- 2 steam laundries
- 3 daily newspapers
- 6 weekly newspapers
- 2 lime kilns, latest improved
- 1 cabinet factory
- 8 commercial printing offices
- 1 business college
- 3 bakeries
- 1 foundry
- 1 gas company
- 3 cold storage plants
- 2 monument works
- 1 cotton compress
- 2 candy factories
- 6 nurseries
- 5 sash, door and blind companies
- 1 stave factory
- 11 cotton mills
- 2 spoke and handle factories
- 1 hoop and stave factory
- 1 fiber and veneer factory
- 1 roller factory to supply cotton mills
- 1 mattress factory
- 1 ice factory
- 1 flouring mill
- 1 broom factory
- 2 machine shops
- 3 brickyards

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

A tax of \$1 per head was levied for each hog more than six months old and for each litter of pigs found at large in the city limits.

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

Kite-flying was banned as a misdemeanor.

Bathing in the Big Spring branch within less than 300 yards below the dam, between the hours of 4 a.m. and 10 p.m., constituted another misdemeanor.

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News From the Year 1900

News From Huntsville and Around The World

New York Subway Opens

New York - Wielding a sterling silver spade made by Tiffany & Company, New York, Mayor Van Wyck turned over the first shovel of dirt in a ceremony inaugurating construction of the city's first rapid transit tunnel. When completed, the \$36 million East River tunnel will link Manhattan with Brooklyn.

The tunnel marks the birth of a subway system promising to extend to Jersey City and even Staten Island. If Chief Engineer Parson is right, Harlem's 125th Street will be reached in only

13 minutes.

Subways are not a new means of transportation. London's system, which went into service in 1863, is the world's oldest.

The first in the United States was Boston's, begun two years ago. And Paris is now building a subway of its own.

Hailing it as "second only in importance to the Erie Canal," Van Wyck said "this rapid transit underground road is necessary" for "the accommodation and comfort" of residents.

Hawaii Becomes a Territory

Hawaii is now officially a territory of the United States. A chain of islands near the center of the northern Pacific Ocean, Hawaii had sought annexation by the United States for some years.

In 1898, America agreed to annex the islands and grant territorial status. However, it was not until this spring that Congress enacted legislation spelling out terms for the new island government.

President McKinley had pushed for territorial status, arguing that the islands are a natural gateway to trade in the Orient. Many in Congress were opposed to the measure stating the islands were useless and would be a drain on the treasury.


World Exposition Opens in Paris

Paris - The Paris Exhibition of 1900, covering a vast site of 547 acres, larger than any previous European world's fair, has opened its gates to the public. Most of the nations represented have their own palaces on the Rue des Nations along the Quai d'Orsay.


The most noteworthy at-

tractions at the fair are the magnificent effects produced by electricity in the Chateau d'Eau and Hall of Illusions; the two palaces of the fine arts on the Champs Elysees; and the Alexander III Bridge over the Seine. The exotic exhibits about France's and England's colonies also promise to be popular. Already, record crowds are expected as visitors from around the world converge on the fair.

"I had been learning to drive with power steering. I turned the wheel to what I thought was enough and found myself in a different direction going the opposite way."
Seen on local accident report



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Gold in Alaska

Canada's Klondike region east of the Alaskan border continues to draw folks with dreams of easy money, despite the fact that the more lucrative gold mines there have been staked out.

Since news of the 1896 discovery of gold at Bonanza Creek reached the United States two and a half years ago, 60,000 prospectors have flocked to the Klondike, and about \$50 million has already been mined.

The population is booming. Dawson has burgeoned from a mining camp of a few shacks to a bustling town of 20,000.

Dawson is also becoming known as the Sin City, as bordellos, gambling establishments and dives openly do business in spite of the authorities efforts to close them. The crime rate is said to be higher than any other city in North America.

It is said that three murders a week take place in Dawson although the exact number will never be known for sure as the bodies are never found.

Strikes Paralyze Europe

Belgium and Germany have been severely shaken by a recent wave of strikes in their respective coal basins, and many factories, already running short of fuel, have been compelled to halt their output.

This month, labor revolts spread into other industries in Europe as well. In Vienna, steelworkers are on strike; in Brussels, it is glassworkers.

And in western Bohemia, 5,000 workers in various fields are out on strike. These actions are reportedly spontaneous, not the result of an organized movement. But most of the laborers are making similar demands: an eight-hour day, a significant pay increase (up to 20 percent in some cases) and better working conditions. In spite of the disorders, company managers remain steadfast and do not appear to be making any concessions to their disgruntled employees.

"Always borrow money from pessimists. They don't expect to get it back."

Johnny Stevens, Madison

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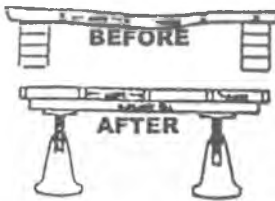
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Boxerless Bill

by Theresa Hanvey Fallwell
email: tfallwell43@yahoo.com

In 1966, Bill Fallwell began traveling the South selling a new product called a Salescaster. Salescasters were rectangular boxes about thirty six inches long and six inches tall that could be mounted and used to communicate messages on safety, motivation, or production.

The size of the Huntsville sales market required a stay of several months, so Bill set up residence in a boarding house in the Five Points Historical Area. The lady who managed the house only rented to single, young men, and was very particular about cleanliness, meal times, language, curfews, drinking, etc. The rooms were sparsely furnished containing twin beds and two dressers. Bill and another man had a room on the second floor at the

back of the house with a private entrance accessed by a steep, rather rickety wooden staircase.

Friendships developed among the young men of the boarding house as they played cards, swapped stories, and covered for each other when they fell short of their landlady's expectations. Bill's roommate ignored the house rules more than most of the young men. Having a steady girlfriend and the ease of an outside entrance, he was often not in by the established curfew. On those late nights, Bill left the screen door unlatched knowing that he would be in sooner or later. This plan worked well until one summer night.

Bam, bam, bam, Bill awoke abruptly to this loud noise, and his bed literally bouncing up and down across the floor. With

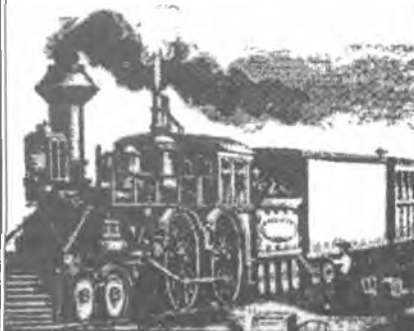
a jolt, he sat up and found a huge, honey colored animal tied to his footboard. In his sleepy state, he was unsure whether it was a dog or a horse, where it came from, or why it was attached to his bed. What he did know was that that animal was after stray cats caterwauling outside the house. When the noise subsided, the animal, a big Great Dane dog, became friendly. Reared up on his hind legs with his feet on Bill's shoulders, this 200 pound dog looked him in the eyes. He had a collar and a tag, so it was obviously someone's pet. Bill also knew that when his roommate came home that dog would

"There should be a support group for women who can't put their dishes in the dishwasher, dirty."

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probably attack him, so he stayed up, played with the dog, and waited for his roommate for a while. Then he got sleepy and decided that he would tie the dog to his wrist so when his roommate came home, he could control the dog. This was an excellent plan, but with some minor, unforeseen consequences.

It was about midnight when the commotion started. In the shadows, Bill could see the dog standing at attention near the foot of his bed and barking fast and furious. In his just awakened state, Bill did not respond quickly enough to the dog's barking to establish control of the dog or himself. Before he knew what was happening, he was on the floor being dragged toward the screen door. Then he became aware of his roommate's drunken voice at the bottom of the stairs.

In one bounding leap, this huge dog jumped through the bottom portion of the screen door breaking the cross bars and ripping a gaping hole in the screen. As the dog hit the landing outside the door, Bill tried to stop the forward motion of the dog by stretching his legs across the door facing. His attempts to stop the dog from dragging him through the door were thwarted

by the hundreds of little sharp spines from the torn screen sticking and scratching him. When he attempted to move into a better position to stop the pain and gain control, the dog saw his chance and lunged down onto the steps. Of course, Bill followed, not voluntarily. All six feet of him were stretched out behind the dog with his arms leading, followed by his head bouncing down the stairs, and his legs and feet exiting last through the destroyed screen door. Bill's boxer shorts remained on the screen door caught by all those little bits of wire.

The dog never stopped long enough for Bill to regain his footing. His roommate at the bottom of the stairs kept screaming for Bill to hold on to that dog. Lights came on in the houses around the boarding house. Bill was finally able to scream for his roommate to leave.

When he left, the dog began to settle down. Bill tried to get to his feet, but this huge dog jumped up and knocked him flat on his back. The dog straddled him and licked his face. By now, a small crowd of people had gathered around this scene laughing hysterically. It was at that moment that Bill realized his boxer shorts were not with him. He began to wrestle that big dog off of him, attempted some effort at modesty, and ran back up the stairs with his bare bottom shinning in the moonlight like new money. This time the Great Dane was the one who was being pulled involuntarily.

"The hardness of the butter is always proportional to the softness of the bread."

Steven Wright

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The next morning as he sat down at the breakfast table, Bill figured he was eating his last meal at the boarding house, certain that his landlady would throw him out. Everyone was smiling at him, making comments under their breath, and waiting to see their landlady's reaction. No reaction came!

It seemed that the little old lady was absolutely unaware that anything had happened. She was extremely hard of hearing and had removed her hearing aid before bed. In fact, she was pleased that "all her boys" were in such a good mood that morning.

Bill, saved from eviction, repaired the screen, and continued to live in the boarding house for quite a while.

So, how did that Great Dane end up tied to Bill's bed? His roommate brought the dog home earlier that evening. He said he told Bill, but he must have been too asleep to comprehend. He tied the dog to his bed because he

thought that the dog, as strong as he was, could not move both Bill and the bed. The dog belonged to his girlfriend and they decided to leave him there while they went out drinking.

Bill said he never figured out whether the dog was trying to attack his roommate or just happy to see him when he came home that night.



Coconut Cake

White cake mix
1 cup sugar
1 cup milk
1 large Cool Whip
1 can coconut

Bake cake mix as directed, in a 9x13" pan. Bring the sugar and milk to a rolling boil, pour over the cake. Combine the Cool Whip and coconut and spread over cake. Chill before serving. Very moist.



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The Last Soldier

John A. Steger was born on December 7, 1845, the son of Kennon H. Steger. The elder Steger had moved from Virginia and settled in Ryland, a few miles north of Huntsville, where he became a prosperous farmer.

When Alabama seceded from the Union in 1861, John, like all young men everywhere, was anxious to enlist. He was attending school in Ryland at the time and his father reminded him that fifteen was too young to go off and be a soldier. The war became a reality early the next year when General Mitchel and his hated Yankee troops invaded Madison County, burning, loot-

ing and terrorizing at will.

These were dangerous times. The Yankees automatically suspected any young man as being a rebel, while the Confederates assumed any young Southern man not in uniform was a deserter, or even worse, a traitor.

On May 24, 1863, John Steger was sworn in as a private in the Confederate States of America army. He had heard of Confederate forces camped at Brownsboro, and after receiving permission from his father, quickly made his way to join them.

The group he joined was Company G of Colonel William A. Johnson's 4th Cavalry Regiment, which was then passing through Madison County after a raid into Tennessee. Johnson's regiment served in the brigade of General Philip Dale Roddy, the famous "Defender of North Alabama."

Steger's army life was filled with adventure, and the teenage soldier quickly rose through the ranks to sergeant. He served mainly in North Alabama and Mississippi, though he also saw combat in Tennessee and Georgia. His closest call came on June 10, 1864, at the battle of Brice's Crossroads, Mississippi. Roddy's men had ridden all day in the hot sun to reach the battlefield, but General Forrest ordered them into action almost immediately. When the cavalry dismounted, the soldiers counted off and every fourth man was assigned as a horse holder. Steger was fortunate enough to be so designated. However, he traded places with another and charged with his comrades. As the Alabamians were driving back the Yankees, a bullet struck Steger's cartridge box and cut the strap holding it to his side. A fraction of an inch

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closer and it would have seriously injured him.

Another of Steger's encounters took place quite close to home. In the fall of 1863, Roddy's horsemen had been sent to North Georgia. When they returned to Alabama, they found the Yankees in force at New Market. Steger and several others were sent to scout. Unfortunately, they were cut off by the enemy for several days. Steger suggested the men head for his father's house near Ryland. They reached the house late in the afternoon. Steger was about to approach the house when he was stopped by one of the family's servants. The old black woman warned him that four Yankees were already there. Steger and his companions waited until early morning, then they surprised the sleeping Yankees and captured them, without firing a shot.

After General Lee surrendered at Appomattox, word was slow to reach the scattered remnants of the Confederate army still struggling in North Alabama. It was more than a month later, May 17, 1865, when General Roddy finally surrendered at Pond Springs (now Wheeler, Alabama).

For John Steger, like hundreds of thousands of other men, there was nothing else left to do except begin the long walk back home. Returning to Huntsville, he found a land that was completely devastated, with people starving and no way to earn a living.

Luckily, parts of his father's farm was still intact, and he was able to return to farming. On January 19, 1870, he married

Mary Simpson and with both of them working in the fields, they were able to rebuild the rest of the farm.

When the United States went to war with Spain in 1898, there were reservations in parts of the South about putting on a Yan-

kee uniform and fighting a Yankee war. Most people were content to sit back and see what would happen, but when General Joe Wheeler and General Fitzhugh Lee (late of the Confederate army) joined the hostilities, the mood changed in a


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hurry. Young men everywhere joined in droves.

When John tried to enlist, he was told that he was too old. There were no openings for 53 year-old soldiers. Disappointed, he returned home and sent his two sons in his place.

Around the turn of the century, Steger became active in veteran's affairs. He served several times as commander of the Egbert J. Jones Camp, United Confederate Veterans, in Huntsville. Later he was elected Commander of the Third Alabama Brigade and was often called by his honorary title of General, which went with the position.

Too old to serve in another war, John was forced to fight the war sitting on a bench outside the old courthouse, swapping wartime stories with his comrades.

Time began to pass by quickly. When automobiles became popular on Huntsville's muddy streets, John Steger was already too old to obtain a driver's license. The first war came and went with its bloody trench warfare and deadly machine-gun nests. Every year would see fewer of John's comrades returning to share the bench and swap stories with him.

Prohibition was voted in, and then out. Our country was in the midst of the Depression when a group of men went to visit John and give him the news.

A friend of John's had died and now he was the

only surviving Confederate soldier in Madison County. It became harder for people to get him to talk about his service in the Confederacy. When war with Japan was declared in 1941, John Steger raised an American flag in his front

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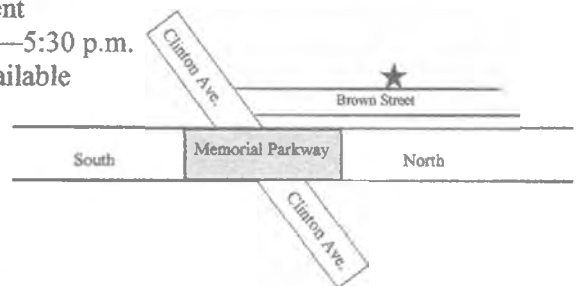
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yard. Every day, morning and night, it was raised and lowered for the duration of the war.

At the age of 99, no longer able to take care of himself, he was forced to move in with his daughter in Birmingham. Shortly before his 100th birthday, he returned to Huntsville one last time, by airplane. Years before he had walked much of the same route, as a defeated soldier.

On Saturday morning, February 28, 1948, John Alexander Steger died. While the rest of the world worried about the Iron Curtain and atomic bombs, a few people gathered at Shiloh Church in Ryland to pay their respects. Among the people gathered that day were veterans from the Second War, the First War, and the Spanish-American War. There were none from the Civil War.

John Steger was the last soldier.

Political Fight in Huntsville

from 1900 newspaper

The most disorderly meeting of the present legislative campaign was held tonight at the county court house. Two men were knocked in the head, a number knocked down and several articles of furniture destroyed during the progress of the speech of John H. Wallace, one of the legislative candidates.

Wallace made a statement which John Burke, a member of the democratic executive committee, branded as a lie. This appeared to be the signal for a general fight. Quiet was restored by the sheriff and the chief of police, and Wallace mounted a table to finish his speech. He was immediately knocked from the table by an ink stand, which struck him on the temple.

J.B. Cabiness was in the act of striking Wallace when he was hit in the head by a glass tumbler, which inflicted a serious wound. The man who threw the tumbler is unknown, and a re-

ward of \$50 is offered for the disclosure of his identity.

Feeling is very high among the friends of the candidates, and further trouble is feared at subsequent speakings.

The fight started when Wallace made a remark about Cabaniss not being a gentleman. Cabaniss replied that Wallace had evidently evolved from an African ape and was clearly not responsible for his mutterings.

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Emma Saunders, age 6

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When Fantasy Became Reality

"A man is on top of the Russel Erskine hotel and he's going to jump off the roof!" Within minutes all the citizens of downtown had heard the news. Eagerly, almost morbidly, they rushed to the scene of the impending tragedy. The street in front of the hotel became a mass of swirling humanity as crowds jostled for a better look.

"Someone said he works at the Huntsville Arsenal and he just got a letter from his wife saying that she was leaving him."

This news, by some unidentified source, was quickly consumed and spread to the four winds by the crowds who were now grasping at every morsel of new information.

Suddenly the still night air was rent by the screeching sounds of police cars arriving on the scene. Emerging from their cars the policemen began pushing the crowds back with night sticks, trying to establish some sense of order.

"Be careful. He's got a gun," yelled some voice from out of the darkness.

The crowd ran scurrying for cover as the policemen quickly ducked behind the safety of their automobiles.

When a few minutes had passed with no shots being fired, the crowd, now emboldened by the latest developments, began surging forward. The crowd now numbered in the hundreds and was growing larger by the minute.

While the police were frantically working to regain control, the sounds of a woman screaming emerged above the noise of the mob. The crowd

had inadvertently pushed her into a store front window, breaking the glass, and now she was running hysterically down the street with blood streaming down her arms. Before the police could reach her, another woman began screaming. This woman had been knocked down by the crowd jostling for a better look.

Sensing that something had to be done, and quickly, the brave men of the Huntsville Police Department drew their pistols and resolutely began making their way to

the front entrance of the hotel where the unseen deranged man lay in wait.

There was no hesitation in the purposeful stride of our brave policemen on that cold day back in 1942. This was their town and this was their job. Someone had to take





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charge and they were the ones to do it.

Cautiously, with their guns drawn they took the elevator to the top floor, The men were silent, probably thinking of their loved ones, and of the danger that lay ahead.

History does not record the name of the first brave soul to exit onto the roof, ready to do battle with the fiend lurking in the shadows.

History does not even record the name of the man, who after receiving the dear John letter, tried to commit suicide.

For, you see ... it never happened.

Some person, who understandably later chose to remain silent, started the rumor and within minutes the whole town was caught up in a frenzied state of anticipation. Every rumor became fact and every fantasy became reality.

And the good people of Huntsville became the victims.

The Price of Vengeance

from 1888 newspaper

On December 12, of the year last, my son was murdered by Leon Culpepper, late of this county.

I will trade my property consisting of one house, 24 acres with fresh water and 32 head of stock for the dead body of Culpepper. An additional \$1000.00 per carcass will be paid for the bodies of other parties involved, if accompanied by proof.

Culpepper's body must be delivered to my home and be recognizable.

Inquiries should be sent to Frank Sharp of Colbert County.

Her Teeth Saved Her

from 1901 newspaper

As the result of a bad quarrel growing out of jealousy, John Underwood, a local miser, shot his sweetheart, Mary Pratt, in Huntsville on Saturday.

The bullet entered her mouth at close range and the woman fell to the floor, but soon arose and spit out the leaden missile, together with two teeth which it had knocked out upon entering. Otherwise she seemed unhurt. Supposing that he had killed her, Underwood fled as soon as she fell.

Some say that her teeth, which were sizable, saved her from a sure death.

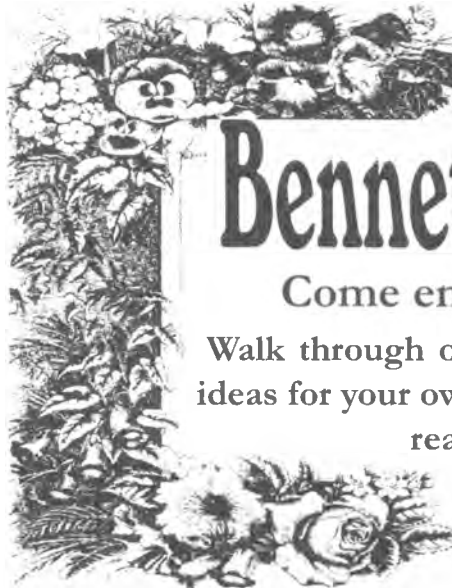
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Story of a Yankee

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

When the war was finally over and the soldiers had stacked arms for the last time, Major Sweinhart moved to Huntsville, determined to make it his home.

Feelings were running high at the end of the war, so it is not surprising that he was greeted with scowls and bitterness.

"Damn Yankee," the Huntsville natives would say as they passed him on the streets.

"Damn Rebels," the Major would mutter under his breath, while looking straight ahead.

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

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

In 1927, Major Sweinhart was awarded the highest accolade ever given to a Yankee by

Confederate veterans. The story can best be told by a newspaper article of the day:

"He was invited this week to attend a dinner given by the Daughters of the Confederacy to members of the Egbert Jones Camp of Confederate Veterans at the home of Robert A. Moore, acting adjutant for the Third Brigade, Alabama Division.

"He was welcomed with hand clasps and smiles. After dinner, the old veterans invited him to attend their business meeting. When discussions lagged a little, Major Sweinhart, who had remained in a corner deep in thought, rose and stood at attention.

"Men," he said, with a shake in his voice, "I've lived down here

so long I feel like I belong here." His voice quivered again as he added, "And by golly, I want to belong to you."

"The Confederate veterans gave a hearty cheer, and one of them proposed Major Sweinhart for membership. The proposal was accepted immediately and the major was accepted as a member of the camp by unanimous vote.

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

When he died, an honor guard of ex-Confederate soldiers escorted him to his grave in Maple Hill Cemetery.

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Secrets of the Ku Klux Klan

Huntsville, like much of the rest of the nation in the 1920s, was caught up in the fervor of the Ku Klux Klan resurgence.

Like any other secret organization, the Klan had its rituals, and most important of all, an official handbook.

This handbook, which spelled out all the rituals and signs, was considered to be one of the best kept secrets of the Klan.

In Huntsville, a Klan member was actually forced to pay a large fine and sentenced to six months banishment for allowing his wife to glance at the handbook.

In an effort to keep nonmembers from learning the contents of the secret handbook, Joseph Simmons, Imperial Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan, issued the following "Imperial Decree" from his, "Aulic in the Imperial Palace in the Imperial City of Atlanta":

"The Kloran is the book of the Invisible Empire and is therefore a sacred book with our citizens, and its contents must be rigidly safeguarded. The book or any part of it must not be kept or carried where any person of the 'alien' world may chance to become acquainted with its sacred contents as such.

Warning: A penalty sufficient will speedily be enforced for disregarding the decree in the profanation of the Kloran."

Six months later Simmons decided that a book as important as the Kloran should be officially recognized, so he applied to Washington for a copyright.

Like any other proud author, he forwarded one dollar and two copies of the book to the Register of Copyrights.

From that time forth *The Book of the Invisible Empire* was available to anyone who asked for it at the Library of Congress.

Ironically, even today, the book is still considered by the Klan to be a secret that must be maintained at all cost.

Heard on the Street in 1880

- Last Saturday night some malicious scoundrel killed a horse belonging to Mr. H.W. Helm, the well known blacksmith. The horse, a very fine one, was in the pasture bordering the spring branch, and was killed by being struck just above the eye with a brickbat. We trust the perpetrator may be discovered and punished.

- Yesterday, in the Big Cove, a man named Stewart Wishard was shot and mortally wounded

by a man named R.S. Buford, who was arrested. The trouble arose about a dispute in regard to crops. Wishard was cropping on Buford's place.

- We understand it is reported through the country that yellow fever is in Huntsville. This is untrue. There has not been a single case of yellow fever in Huntsville up to this time.

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