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## Days of War

There was a frantic pounding on the door. Some men opened it a bit to let inside a crying woman and a girl of about 12. The little girl was stone-faced and wide-eyed with shock. Small eyes can only hold so much.

The woman was completely hysterical. She screamed and cried. She was injured, but seemed unaware of it. She repeated over and over, "Our Darmstadt is gone. There is no stone standing above the other. Everyone is dead. Everything is destroyed. Everything is gone."

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*Domie Lewter*  
*Mae Lewter*

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# Days of War

by Rick Carter

In the mid-sixties you didn't have to work on Redstone Arsenal, nor live in Huntsville, Alabama to hear the deep rumbling sound. People in Madison County, surrounding counties, and even southern Tennessee heard it, too. It was more than noise. It was an awesome force felt deep in our bones, down to the marrow, where our very souls trembled; man had made thunder that rivaled God's own.

Cups, plates and flatware danced in our cupboards. Mama always said it was the sound that was made when the dish ran away with the spoon. But our laughter was hollow when those old windows rattled. Something ominous was coming, was there, wanted in, and brought the uneasy feeling that it could not be stopped.

It was the future. And the future always feasts on the past in the present, and what we heard was history in the making.

Those mad scientists on Redstone Arsenal were testing rockets; sticks of fire they claimed would send man to the

moon, in effect, bring it closer to earth, so close that men might go there in a decade, and return home safely, like President Kennedy said we would before he was gunned down in Dallas.

America believed him.

The claims of moonwalks were the dreams of a German genius; Dr. Werhner von Braun. He and his team of Rocket Boys would make the dream true. In less than a decade, the man on the moon met the man in the moon and bounded effortlessly across his powdered, crater-scarred face.

Those rocket tests inspired thousands of boys like me to ignore our teachers and waste millions of sheets of notebook paper. With tongues stuck from the corners of our mouths in heavy concentration, we rendered crude drawings of the moon, the rockets we heard, and later saw on TV, and the astronauts who rode them.

Man has discovered, invented, or made few advances in his quest for civilization that he could not bend for use in the barbarity of war. Many advances came as a result of the very search for better weaponry. It was inevitable that better combinations of weaponry in warfare would fuel our way to the moon. God only knew how valuable that might prove in count-



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716 East Clinton Ave.  
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(256) 534-0502

Email - oldhuntsville@knology.net  
Internet Home Page  
www.oldhuntsville.com

Advertising - (256) 534-0502  
Sales & Mrktg. - Cathey Carney  
Gen. Manager - Thomas Frazier  
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less ways.

It is a long, long way from Huntsville to the moon. The fiery path of war that eventually led to footprints on the lunar surface wound from Peenemunde, Germany, through Texas, then to Huntsville, Alabama, down to Florida, and from there to the moon. The events that led man to the Sea of Tranquility were anything but tranquil.

\* \* \* \*

More than six decades ago, people who never knew each other, and lived an ocean apart, were trapped by circumstance and horrendous events beyond their control.

My father Conway was born in 1916, and grew to be a stout young man who stood no more than 5'9". In February 1936 he was 19 going on 20 when he asked for Kathleen's hand in marriage. She was almost 16. People married earlier back then. Both were considered quite the catch.

Conway was hardened by years of farm work and logging. He had eyes of blue, bore a ruddy complexion and wavy hair the color of ginger. Everyone called him "Red."

Kathleen, called "Kat," was a shapely 5'4" with long dark hair and eyes of cobalt.

The couple danced better than any pair in the area. People used to clear the floor just to watch them. People fed nickels to the Rockolas just to watch them dance to their favorite songs.

Fate makes us dance to tunes we never called; like marionettes, we answer the pull of fate's gossamer strings, finer than the silken strands of spiders' webs. They are inescapable and we usually never hear the tunes to which we dance.

Red and Kat had little money, but were happy. These were my parents, ten years before I was born.

December 7<sup>th</sup>, 1941 was a Sunday much like any other until they turned on the radio that sat atop the ice box. The little radio had big news – a day of infamy — Pearl Harbor had been attacked by Japan.

America was sucked into WW II. Nothing would ever be the same.

When war came, many young men marched off to foreign lands; Red was called to work in a new munitions factory on Redstone Arsenal, making ordnance for the soldiers "over there."

\* \* \* \*

The Arsenal was established a scant four months earlier, in 1941, as part of the mobilization

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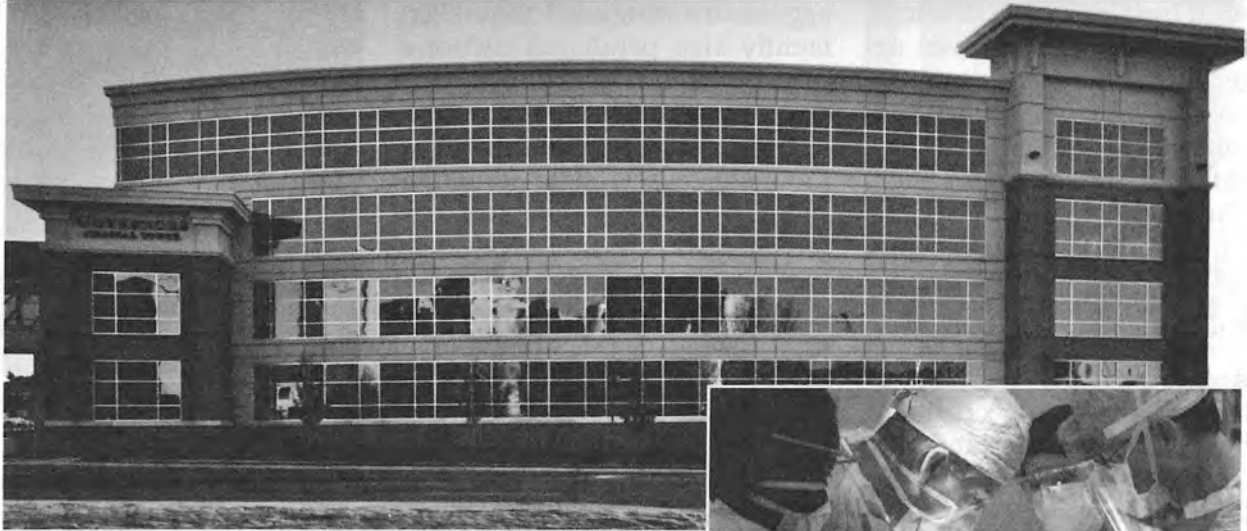
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leading up to US involvement in World War II. Over 550 families were displaced when the Army acquired the land. Over 300 of these were tenants and sharecroppers. Most of the landowners were allowed to salvage their assets and rebuild elsewhere. The remaining buildings were almost all razed by the War Department. A land-use agreement was arranged with the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) for the Army to use about 1,250 acres of land along the Tennessee River front.

The installation would eventually grow to employ almost 20,000 people and encompass near 40,000 acres of the rich, red soil along the banks of the Tennessee River.

Many of the displaced sharecroppers and former landowners returned to their lands as civilian workers on the military base. It must have seemed strange to work in a bomb factory on the very land they plowed, planted and picked cotton from a few years before.

The military installation was originally composed of three separate entities: the Huntsville Arsenal and the Huntsville Depot (later the Gulf Chemical Warfare Depot), which were operated under the auspices of the Chemical Warfare Service, and the Redstone Ordnance Plant, which was later renamed the Redstone Arsenal, operated by the Army Ordnance Department.

In the early years, the Arsenal operated as a production and

stockpiling facility for chemical weapons such as phosgene, Lewisite, and mustard gas.

The use of toxic gases in warfare was banned under the Geneva Protocol of 1925, but the US agreed to sign only with the reservation that it be allowed to use chemical weapons against aggressors who used them. The facility also produced carbonyl iron powder (for radio and radar tuning), tear gas, and smoke and incendiary devices (Reed and Langdale 2001). The Redstone Army Airfield was established for the 6th Army Air Forces to test the incendiary devices in preparation for the firebombing of Japanese cities, which began in February 1945.

Germany cities had had their own taste of Huntsville earlier.

While Huntsville geared up to make bombs, on the other side of the Atlantic, a beautiful young, blond-haired, blue-eyed fraulein named Heidi danced in Darmstadt, Germany. She did not dance alone. Most of the Fatherland danced with her. The tunes were called by a charismatic orator named Adolph Hitler.

Originally thought to be Germany's salvation after the treaties of WWI, Hitler offered promise and hope to a downtrodden people in bad need of restoration of national pride and dignity. By the time people recognized him for the genocidal megalomaniac that he was, he had embroiled Germany in a

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two-front war with Britain, America and Russia.

The University in Darmstadt is and was one of the important technical institutes in Germany and is well known for its research and teaching in the Electrical, Mechanical and Civil Engineering disciplines. This made the city a natural attraction for much industry, including the chemical / pharmaceutical company, Merck.

The natural attraction of industry also made Darmstadt a natural attraction for the allied bombers during WWII. The city was the target of more than 35 bombing raids from 1940 through 1945.

Germany had taken its toll on London with relentless attacks via the feared V2 rockets that rained fire on the city at all hours of the day and night. Werhner von Braun and his team of scientists had developed a weapon unlike any the allies had: an unmanned bomb, capable of flying itself to targets.

Britain and the allies had their revenge on Germany, and many of the bombs were manufactured right here in Huntsville,

Alabama. Men and women worked day and night on Redstone Arsenal to provide ordnance for the allies' bombers.

Sitting in her beautiful home in Huntsville, located just beyond the western edge of Redstone Arsenal, Heidi Medina recounted the worst of the raids Darmstadt was to endure.

\* \* \* \*

Heidi had bad memories of Sept 11 before 2001.

On the night of Sept. 11, 1944, the young fraulein was awakened by the air raid sirens over her hometown of Darmstadt, Germany. The bombers were coming again.

She and her parents dressed sleepily, grabbed their important papers, and headed four blocks up the hill to the shelter in an underground storage facility for what was once a brewing company.

They felt secure inside this "Felsenkeller" (boulder cellar) it was a cave with a door on it, so sturdy that the heavy metal door rarely had to be closed when other areas of the city were

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bombed.

About a block from the shelter, as detonations came from nearby, they quickened their steps but thought the explosions were from the FLAK — "Flieger Abwehr Kanone" (anti-aircraft canons).

They took their places in the shelter among friends and neighbors, many of whom brought chairs in which to sleep as best they could. Not long after they settled in, they heard the huge, steel door closing. All conversation stopped. This was going to be a bad one.

They heard the bombs raining down and felt the explosions one after another. Heidi and her parents held hands in a small circle and shivered with fear. Then the lights went out. The darkness was brightened little by cigarette lighters, candles and flashlights.

Heidi says the sound of the explosions and roar of the falling bombs was indescribable, yet the sound is indelibly fused in her mind.

"One is aware that death is imminent, but you are resigned, and helpless. You literally wait for your death. Your only hope is that death comes quickly, without pain."

All around them, death dropped from the sky. There was terror, horror, and that unimaginable noise. People were crying, praying, huddled together, and quaking with fear.

She recalls a strong male voice seeking to calm them, "The shelter is strong enough. No bombs can penetrate the boulders. We will get out of here alive. Just stay calm."

The bombing continued.

There was a frantic pounding on the door. Some men opened it a bit to let inside a crying woman and a girl of about 12. The little girl was stone-faced and wide-eyed with shock. Small eyes can only hold so much.

The woman was completely hysterical. She screamed and cried. She was injured, but seemed unaware of it. She repeated over and over, "Our Darmstadt is gone. There is no stone standing above the other. Everyone is dead. Everything is destroyed. Everything is gone."

Wave after wave of devastation continued to shower down on them. It lasted about 50 minutes, but seemed as if it would never end. During a lull, someone opened the shelter door and they gathered out front for a disbelieving look. The immediate neigh-



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borhood around the shelter was unrecognizable. It was a pile of bricks, mortar and stones amid fire and smoke. The maimed and badly burned smoldered in the streets.

And the most frightening thing of all was the eerie howl of the wind as the huge fire drew breath. It seemed as if all of the air was being sucked into the inferno that fed itself oxygen and consumed the city.

There were huge, boiling clouds of dark smoke. Fire flickered inside them like lightning. Huge craters yawned where minutes before four-story solidly built buildings had stood since the late 17<sup>th</sup> century. In minutes, buildings hundreds of years old were crumbled like handfuls of crackers.

The sound of more explo-

sions rode the screaming winds. They seemed further away; still everyone scrambled back inside the shelter and was scared anew. They could not imagine why wave after wave of bombs was necessary because there was nothing left.

Finally word reached them that the bombing had stopped, but there was a munitions train at the railway station. The box-cars exploded one after the other.

After a couple of hours, they dared to leave the shelter. Going home was a journey into hell. They stepped gingerly over corpses that were charred beyond recognition. They knew the smoking remains had been friends and neighbors who had not gone to the shelter.

There were flaming buildings and gutted ruins in the crater-

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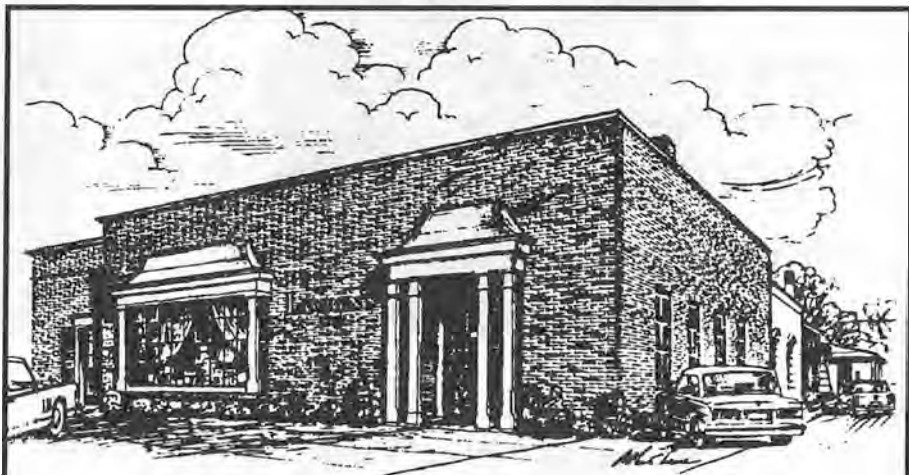


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pocked destruction field. There were no more sidewalks, or traffic lanes, or yards. All had turned into debris, charred timbers, ruin, rubble, chaos.

Heidi and her parents were stunned to find that their house was one of a handful left standing in their neighborhood. The windows were blown out, the massive wooden front door splintered, but they would have a place to shelter from coming winter.

They joined the bucket brigades to help bring fires under control, saving what they could.

Daybreak revealed devastation the dark had hidden. The biggest tragedy of it all was the people. They cried, dug, and clawed at the rubble with their hands, looking for the bodies of their children and families.

The smoky air was tinged with a new smell, something sweet and odd. Young Heidi soon learned it was the odor of the swiftly decaying bodies under the rubble. And the rubble would grudgingly yield 12,000 bodies.

The toll was 12,000 dead, 60,000 homeless. Darmstadt had taken a pounding of 300,000 incendiary bombs and 700 detonation bombs.

Bombs made – guess where?

Heidi recalls they felt an immense outrage toward the enemy. Toward Hitler? No, at the time they believed it was all the

work of the enemy. "We were furious, incensed, appalled and hateful. We wondered how anyone could do this."

It wasn't until after the war that they found out how badly Hitler had duped them, what he had really done, and that Germany's blood was on his hands. They could not believe how easily they were led, deceived, and brainwashed by his powerful propaganda machine.

She had learned not to put a lot of trust in the words of world leaders.

She recalls there was no water, no food, no transportation, no lights, no gas, no stores, no hospitals, nothing to help bury the dead. People made crude make-shift carts and piled their dead on them, dug graves and buried them.

Those who were not so lucky to have someone left to bury them found their final resting places in mass graves.

The survivors cleared the streets as much as they could so that vehicles from neighboring cities could get through to bring them water and sandwiches.

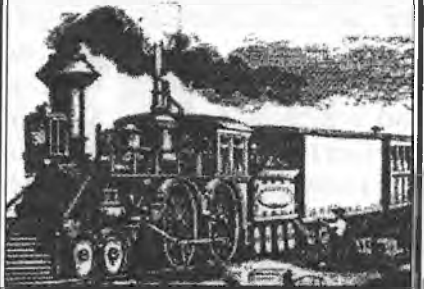
She felt thankful their garden was spared, and she and

**"Monday is an awful way to spend 1/7 of your week."**

*Diane Owens, Huntsville*

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her parents would go there every day to escape that horrible thing that was called living.

They had no mail for weeks. There were no trucks.

Then Heidi's family received the most devastating news yet.

"My dashing, promising, good-looking brother Richard had been killed as an Officer of the German Army. He died on the Russian front on Sept 15, though we did not find out until much later. All we could ask ourselves was "Died for what?"

Six months later, on March 25, 1945, the Americans came. Darmstadt was occupied.

"That day, I stood with my parents at the window of my room and watched the American tanks rumble by. I cried my heart out."

"Since you have — by the grace of God — since your war between the states, never been exposed to it, you have no conception of how war affects your life, your total being, your very soul. One does not feel it as much during that time because one has been conditioned to be brave."

Her voice grew softer. "In retrospect, the fact is piercingly clear; war tears you apart from

**"All government without the consent of the governed is the very definition of slavery."**

*Jonathan Swift*

your own self, your family, your principles, your philosophy, your beliefs, and your future. It leaves only scars and horrific indelible memories."

One sees this is painful for her. "When the man-made horrors of war appear, the soul-searching question arises over and over, "Where was God. Where is God?"

She winces when I suddenly recall that many of the incendiary bombs dropped on Darmstadt were probably manufactured in Huntsville, on the arsenal across the road from her home. She was unaware of that. I wished I had not mentioned it.

\* \* \* \*

At the end of the war, the allies made a mad scramble to capture all of the German scientists they could. Dr. von Braun and hundreds of his top scientists made a decision to surrender to the Americans.

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- Whole Shoulders
- French Fries
- Potato Salad
- Pies
- Baked Beans
- Green Beans
- Hushpuppies

- Specialty Items
- Salads
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They were initially sent to Fort Hood, Texas for debriefing.

It became quickly apparent that American technology was far, far behind that of Germany, and if the USA was to compete in a changing world, they would have to use the knowledge that the Germans offered.

Von Braun and his team were transferred to Huntsville where they developed the Redstone rocket – simply an improved version of the V2. By the late 1950s America had its first ballistic missiles.

Von Braun always worked with the military for funding for research, hoping to eventually get the chance to realize his dreams of space travel, to the moon, and beyond.

Heidi and her husband were in the “second wave” of German scientists that came to aid von Braun in the quest to put a man on the moon as President Kennedy had challenged.

They did it. The irony that she would come to live in the American city that made the ordinance that destroyed Darmstadt is not lost on Heidi. But she is not bitter. She knows there are no real winners in war; some just lose more than others. You move on and do your best.

She says, “I cannot adequately express how happy I am to be alive, how happy I am to live here in Huntsville, Alabama. I feel blessed.”

She sighs and adds, “I wish to tell everyone to take every God-given moment of their life and make it a gracious and thankful event. You should be happy you are alive, even if life doesn’t seem to be fair, or worth living at times.”

**In 1908 there were about 230 reported murders in the entire U.S.**

# Police News from 1911

- Frank Lambert, from Birmingham, was arrested for attempting to pass off counterfeit gold coins. He has been traveling throughout the state passing the coins to mostly rural people who had probably never seen a gold coin before.

- Harvey Gibson was arrested last night by the police on a charge of appearing in public with a woman of bad character. He was fined in Mayor Smith's court this morning.

- Willie Burkley, a boy from Tullahoma, Tenn. claims he came to the city with J. Gibson and was deserted by him. He had no money and no place to go and applied to the police for aid. His people in Tullahoma were notified and they asked the police to keep the boy until they could send for him.

- A vagrant claiming to be Abraham Lincoln was arrested Tuesday night at the depot. He will be emancipated in 30 days along with a ten dollar fine.

- Tom Uptain is in jail again for public drunkenness. Twelve times this year. Enough said.

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# Moonshiners and Bootleggers

By Malcolm Miller

Back in the days when the only place you could buy alcoholic drinks was at the State ABC store, on what is now Gallatin Street down near Big Spring Park, and since some folks just had to have a drink now and then, there was a big demand for whiskey and beer so some turned to bootleggers to satisfy their thirst. This is where the makers of illegal whiskey called moonshiners came into the picture. There have been many movies made about moonshiners throughout the years, some hilarious and some serious. Also there were those who made home-made beer that was known as home brew.

A lot of the illegal moonshine was hauled in from Jackson

County, from mountain places it wasn't safe to venture into unless you knew some one there. I worked with a man who hauled moonshine out of Jackson County when he was a teenager years ago. He hauled the liquor for his uncle who was a big farmer between Meridianville and Hazel Green and he was never once stopped by the law. The reason he was never stopped was because his uncle paid the sheriffs deputies to leave his operation alone. This went on all over Madison County and had been practiced by every sheriff for many years past.

One sheriff that I knew well because we lived in the same community was L. D. Wall. Everyone

really liked L. D. and they would turn their heads at the payoffs his deputies were collecting and when election time rolled around he would be reelected over and over, I don't think the moonshiners in Clouds Cove paid off and like those in Jackson County they were pretty much left alone. There was only one road into Clouds Cove and most folks in those days didn't dare venture in there because they might not come back out and for a while that included the law.

One of the first drive through businesses in Huntsville was a bootlegger on Arm Street in north Huntsville named J.B. Webb. The customers would pull up to his



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window and make their purchase and drive away. Once in a while they would arrest him and fine him a hundred dollars to satisfy some complaining citizen, however I heard J.B. say one time that these little arrests were the best advertisement he could get for his business.

A friend of mine told me recently that he used to occasionally ride with his uncle who was a deputy sheriff. He said his uncle would pull up to the bootlegger and the bootlegger would give him a double shot of whiskey and a bag full of money. He said he thought that was the best job in the world and that was what he wanted to do when he grew up.

There was one deputy who was close friends with J.B. Webb and they often visited each other. J.B. got in a supply of expensive Scotch whiskey and he was afraid the state ABC men might catch him with it; so he went to his friend the deputy's house and

stored the expensive whiskey in the deputy's shed. Sometime later J. B. visited the deputy and the deputy gave him a bottle of the expensive whiskey. J.B. asked him where he got such fine whiskey and the deputy told him someone had left it in his shed and he was giving it away for Christmas. This could have broken up their friendship but it didn't because they needed each other and it definitely gave them a lot to laugh about later.

There were small time bootleggers all over the County mostly selling home brew that they made and there were several people scattered over the County operating moonshine stills and now and then they would be caught by the State ABC men and some of them had to spend time in the State pen. I guess they didn't pay off the local law enforcement.

Things really started to change here when the sheriff's de-

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partment was put on the merit system. Before this went into affect a new sheriff would be elected who usually had no law enforcement training and he would fire all the deputies hired by the former sheriff and hire a whole new force and usually none of them had ever been in law enforcement.

The sheriff we have now I believe is honest and even if he wasn't there is no reason for

payoffs because you can buy anything you want to drink legally. As far as I know bootleggers and moonshiners are about extinct, just another way of life that only remains in those of us who still remember such things.

## Heard on the Street in 1908

- William Moore is being held here for charges of forgery and bigamy. He tried to commit suicide in his cell by eating the heads of a large number of matches. Women companions had returned from seeing him and went to his mother to get help. The jailor discovered his plight and administered medicine. Before eating the matches he wrote a letter to his mother, companions and chief detectives.

- A local woman, asserting that for months she had been abused and threatened by her husband. Mrs. Ethel Olsen, formerly of England, and later of Huntsville, sent a pistol bullet at her husband in a crowded street near the courthouse here late Sunday, missed him and powder-burned a passerby. She declares she fired to protect her face from a dash of muriatic acid which she charges her husband was preparing to cast at her. She was arrested and charged with assault with intent of murder. She tells a story of her husband's alleged cruel treatment of her and their children.

- Jennie Smith holds the record in this area for marriages. She claims she was widowed 6 times in Nashville before moving here, and marrying Jimmy Smith.

- Mayor R. Earle Smith stated today that no whiskey shall be sold in Huntsville while he is mayor. He stated that a few bottles may occasionally change hands but that there will be no general or even restricted sale, and that the law shall be enforced as it appears on the statute books.



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# Heard On the Street

by *Cathey Carney*



Congratulations to **Betty Browner** for calling with the first correct guess for the Photo of the Month in October. Betty is a safety patrol lady at Westlawn Elementary and helps keep the kids safe. The little boy with the huge smile was none other than our City Councilman, **Bill Kling!** Congratulations to you Betty!

Our friend **Betty Williams Gordon** called the other day. She currently lives in Callahan, Fl. Betty was here for their family reunion, with the family who's left (2 brothers) and told us she was born in Huntsville and left in 1950. She couldn't believe all the changes that are happening here now!

Congratulations to that good-looking couple, **Joe and Liz Waggett** of Huntsville who very recently celebrated their 45th anniversary with sons **Steve, David** and **Chris**, along with their spouses & children. We love you guys!

**Huntsville's Operation Green Team** is an award-winning, hard-working group of people.

They have so many projects going on, but couldn't do it without the help of the Huntsville residents. You can see their upcoming events by going to their website, [www.hsvcity.com](http://www.hsvcity.com), and click "Operation Green Team."

One recent collaboration with the Green Team is that of **Old Town Historic District** and the little park on Pratt/Walker and White streets. This former eyesore was totally transformed by the OTHD board & residents along with much help from **Joy McKee** and the staff of the Green Team. The new Rice Park was named after **Charles & Frances Rice**, of Old Town, who worked very hard to establish the historic district back in the early 70's.

We are so proud of **Johnny Johnston!** He worked for years at the old airport off South Mem.

Pkwy., and now entertains thousands when he speaks before groups and tells them how it used to be in Huntsville, in the "Old days." He recently was honored by Raytheon when they asked him to speak before an elite group of young people, the top 20 worldwide recruits of **Raytheon**. I know they enjoyed listening!

**BB&T bank**, which used to be Colonial, has a birthday in November! **Jane Eller**, a very sweet lady and customer service rep at the bank, is celebrating on Nov. 15. Happy birthday to you Jane!

**James Hughes** was 84 when he passed away in late August. James was the manager of **Eastern Airlines** when our airport was located off Airport Road, east of Parkway. He was a proud Army Vet and will be remembered forever by all who knew and loved him.

It was great running into **Meckel Richardson** recently at Larry's Pistol & Gun shop on North Parkway, where he works. Those who know Meckel know that he is also an outstanding

## 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 was into radio & television but now is into the internet.



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From Nov. 27- Dec. 13 on the Alpha Stage on Meridian St. the **Reindeer Monologues** will be performed! You're in for a treat with this one - really puts you in the holiday mood!

**M.D. and Judy Smith** recently hosted her best friend, **Anna Gene Cliff Chesnut** and her husband **Charles Chesnut**. They were here for the 50th anniversary of Huntsville High's class of 59, and had a great time visiting friends.

Happy 30th wedding anniversary to our dear friends **Barb & Ron Eyestone**. To celebrate such an important occasion, they are traveling to Aruba for a warm vacation!

Another 30th anniversary is being celebrated by **Hospice Family Care**. They are the only non-profit hospice service in this area and have provided comfort and help to thousands of people. To celebrate the event, they are hosting a gala at the Jackson Center of HudsonAlpha Institute. It will take place on Nov. 13, tickets are limited and sell for \$75 each. Call 650-1212 for more info.

**Rob Zimmerman** loved history and was very successful in radio advertising sales. We remember Rob for his smile and wonderful sense of humor. He died recently after having been sick for several years, he was only 61 years old. We will miss Rob.

A special hello to **Mildred Johnson**, our 81 year-old friend from Fulton, Ms. who loves reading about Huntsville history!

We were really sorry to hear that **Scottie Brier's** mom had passed away, in October. **Jane Scott Brier** was born in 1918 and had a good long life. We send our deepest condolences to Scottie.

**Dick Maroon** is a Twickenham resident who thinks about kids probably 15 hours a day! He spends most of his waking hours building little wooden

toys, trucks, trains, etc. for sick children who have no insurance. He brings his toys, thousands of them each year, to Huntsville Hospitals Children's unit, as well as to DHR, each Christmas. He does all this on his own, spending thousands of \$\$ each year to buy the supplies. Dick brings so much happiness to this sick kids and definitely has a place in heaven!

**Harrison Brothers** is that unique store downtown that many new people to Huntsville Love! They are having their **Christmas Open House** on Nov. 19 from 5-8pm, and our mayor **Tommy Battle** will be there to unveil their 2009 Christmas window!

Happy November Birthday to **Stephanie Troup**, my beautiful daughter who is mom to **Hannah** and **Evan**, and wife of **John Troup**. You're the BEST!

Anyone who's teeth have been to **Dr. Whitworth's** office in Madison know **Cathi Harless**, the office manager. She recently had a birthday and she looks as young as she did 5 years ago! Her brother, **Don Gross**, recently celebrated his 34th wedding with sweet wife **Pam**. Congratulations!

We were so sorry to hear that **Jim Worden**, of Munith, MI. had died in February. He loved reading about the history of this area. He and his wife **Doris** raised 4 wonderful daughters, and he will

be so missed among his friends and family.

Have a warm and wonderful Thanksgiving with friends and family, and be sure to take walks around the downtown neighborhoods - it's beautiful this time of year.

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# Best Southern Sweets

## Spiced Cider

- 1 qt. sweet cider
- 1/4 c. sugar
- 8 short cinnamon sticks
- 12 whole cloves
- 8 whole allspice
- Pinch salt

Mix all ingredients and heat to boiling. Turn off heat and allow to stand for several hours. Reheat and strain. Serve hot or cold.

## Morning Sunshine Shake

- 2 c. orange juice
- 1 banana, cut into chunks
- 1 egg
- 1 T. honey

Combine all ingredients in blender; blend til smooth. Serve immediately.

## Irish Coffee

- 1 shot Irish whiskey
- Sugar to taste
- Strong coffee, brewed

## Whipped cream

In a stemmed glass, combine a shot of Irish whiskey and sugar to taste. Add the coffee to within 1 inch of top, stir well. Let settle and top with a dollop of whipped cream. Sip your coffee through the cream.

## Orange Balls

- 1 12-oz. pkg. vanilla wafers, crushed
- 1 c. confectioners sugar
- 1/4 c. soft butter, softened
- 1/2 c. frozen orange juice concentrate, thawed
- 1 t. vanilla
- 1 c. chopped pecans

Combine the wafers and sugar; blend in butter. Stir in orange concentrate; add vanilla and nuts. Shape mix into bite-sized balls; shake in plastic bag with more confectioners sugar.

Arrange orange balls in single layer on tray; store uncovered overnight in fridge.

## Fried Sugar Pecans

- 6 c. water
- 4 c. pecans
- 1/2 c. sugar
- 1/4 c. salad oil

In a saucepan over high heat, boil water. Boil nuts for one minute, drain. In a large bowl gently stir nuts with the sugar til the sugar is dissolved. In saucepan, heat salad oil very hot.

Add 1/2 of the nuts to the oil and fry til brown, stirring. Place nuts in a coarse sieve to drain; sprinkle lightly with salt. Transfer to paper towel to drain.

## Monkey Bread

- 3 cans buttermilk biscuits
- 1/2 c. sugar
- 1/2 t. cinnamon
- 1 stick butter
- 3/4 c. sugar
- 3/4 t. cinnamon

Cut biscuits into quarters and roll in sugar-cinnamon

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# Gibson's BAR-B-Q

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mixture (1/2 cup sugar and 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon). Pile them in a greased and floured Bundt pan.

Melt the butter and add 3/4 cup sugar and 3/4 teaspoon cinnamon. Heat til sugar melts and pour over the biscuits.

Bake at 350 degrees for 30-35 minutes. Let stand for 10 minutes, then invert onto cake plate. You can't stop eating this!

## Easy Coconut Cake

Duncan Hines white pudding cake mix

Condensed milk

Cool Whip

Frozen coconut, thawed

Using directions on box, make the cake and pour into 14 x 9" greased baking dish. Bake according to directions.

When cake is done but still hot, pierce the cake all over the top with a fork. Drizzle condensed milk over the top (slowly to fill the holes made with fork).

After the condensed milk has soaked into the cake, spread Cool Whip over the top and sprinkle with coconut, refrigerate.

## Crunchy Nut Balls

1 lb. butter, softened

2 lb. peanut butter

3 lb. confectioners sugar

1 c. pecans, chopped fine

2 lb. dark chocolate

Melt butter and mix well with the peanut butter and sugar. Add pecans to the dough-like mixture. Roll dough into balls about the size of large marbles. Set on waxed paper.

Melt chocolate in double boiler. Using a long toothpick, dip the balls into the chocolate, coating each one well. Set on waxed paper to dry - makes about 200 pieces.

## Old-Fashioned Chess Pie

2 c. sugar

2 T. flour, heaping

1 T. yellow corn meal, heaping

1 stick melted butter

3 eggs, beaten

1/2 c. buttermilk

2 t. vanilla extract

1 unbaked 12-inch pie shell

Combine sugar, flour and meal; mix well. Add melted butter and mix well. Add beaten eggs, mixing well. Add buttermilk and vanilla and blend thoroughly.

Pour mixture into unbaked pastry shell and bake at 425 degrees for 10 minutes. Reduce temperature to 325 degrees and bake 30 minutes. When pie begins to brown, cover with sheet of aluminum foil to prevent deep browning or burning.



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# People I Have Known

by Johnny Johnston

A dream of a man who cared was Jack Heffelman. Not a newspaper name you hear often, not a news-grabbing man who wanted the spotlight. No, Jack was one of those people who maintained a quiet life in the shadows. He was in entertainment. For many years Jack owned the Princess Theatre just off Holmes Street on Church. It is gone now, so are the Parkway and 231 Drive-In Theatres which he also owned.

Jack was one of the first people I knew who bought a new car every year and a fancy car it was. He showed up each September as soon as the new Lincoln came out with the new models.

A spotless, new, beautiful Lincoln which usually was yellow and black, pink and black or some other bright color. It always had leather interior with the latest in gadgets (there weren't many gadgets in the 50's). His car was not the first one I saw with air conditioning.

That belonged to another flyer I knew named Clayton Mercer owner of Mercer Motor Co.

I think it was a 1958 Chrysler Imperial with the plastic air condition ducts prominently displayed above the back seat moving the cool air from the trunk to the cabin.

Jack had a Piper Pacer plane when I first met him in 1953, he soon bought the latest which was a Tri Pacer. The Pacer was a tail dragger while the Tri Pacer had a tricycle gear. Jack flew the airplane to Atlanta about once a month to review movies for his theatres.

I was invited along on one occasion but didn't see the movies. I ran over to the CAA (now FAA) office to take an impromptu test to become a Control Tower Operator. I flunked it, too young I



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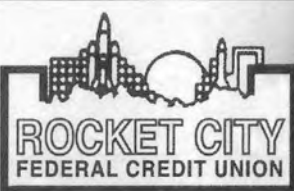
Jack Heffelman was good to me, he took me under his wing when I first came to work at Huntsville Air Service at age 16. He offered to pay for my first flight lesson if I decided to learn. Jack also gave me a permanent pass to the 231 and Parkway Drive-In Movies.

When I was much younger, about 11, I had driven dad's truck to the trash pile with dad in the right seat. We went to unload a weeks worth of disposal. When returning I pulled up on a little hill where we could see the airport including the old terminal at the far end of the runway. I could see the Piper J-3's which were used for flight training. I told dad then "I sure would like to learn to fly someday". Dad's answer was "well maybe you can." Little did I realize that 5 years later I would be working on that airport.

Back to Mr. Heffelman. At 40 cents per hour it was difficult to pay \$7. per hour plane rental and \$3.50, flight instructor time. When I decided to fly which would take most all my earnings, Jack came through and paid for my first hour of flight time.

One of Mr. Heffelmans worst times came just after he bought his 1957 Lincoln. It was especially beautiful with light tan leather seats, Gold paint on the bottom and light cream on the top. I could only stand and admire such beauty thinking no one in my family would ever own anything that looked like that. (I was wrong). One morning Jack drove his new car to the small T-Hangar where I worked, which was his custom being an early riser, and showed me what someone had done the night before. He was trying to find out who would take such a large knife and cut that beautiful leather into shreds! Insulation and leather was all over the seats and floor. I had never seen such destruction up close, it broke my heart.

After transferring to Atlanta in 1960 and moving around the country with Eastern for many years, I never saw Mr. Heffelman again. I heard he had moved to another city but couldn't find out where. I won't Ever forget him!



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# Population Control

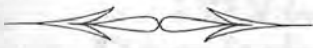
A salesman regularly, over a period of almost 15 years, drove through a small town in lower Alabama. His attention was always drawn to a sign outside of town welcoming visitors and giving the population as 119 citizens.

One day, out of curiosity, he stopped at the town's only store and struck up a conversation with the owner who was also the town constable.

After a bit of small talk the salesman asked a question that had been bothering him for years.

"I noticed the sign outside of town saying you have 119 citizens living here. That sign's been there for years and with births and deaths the numbers have to change. How can you have the same number for 15 years?"

"Well," drawled the store owner, "I suppose the number is right. Every time someone has a baby some man has to leave town so it keeps things even."







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# WAAY Treasure Key Hunt

By M.D. Smith, IV

"We'll never do it that way again," was the statement made by M.D. Smith, III after the first WAAY Radio Treasure Key hunt.

The first hunt was around 1959 for a "Treasure Chest" key. The key, when found from clues given out daily on WAAY Radio, would open a chest of Parkway City Merchants gift certificates for merchandise and prizes. A list of clues given to date could be found by visiting the merchants daily if you missed any on the radio.

At first clues were vague and general, but nearing the end of a month, they got more specific.

When the clues mentioned an intersection like Whitesburg and Four Mile Post, those clues focused all the city's searchers in one area. Other clues that vaguely mentioned something red would fit almost anything, including the red flowers in one home owner's yard. A lot of flowers got dug up looking for the buried key, and other places near by that fit other clues caused a lot of rocks of every size to be turned over.

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It was like a demolition squad of several hundred people descending on a small geographic area of Huntsville with search tools of every shape and size. Mostly they had picks and shovels. This was NOT a good thing for the first contest.

Quickly the DJ's on the air were instructed to give almost the exact location that I believe was under the lip of a sewer drain cover on the edge of the road. Lawsuits were not as common in those days and I believe apologies, and a garden center making things right with the property owner, salvaged the situation.

My father learned a lot from that first hunt. When it came time to find the key for a NEW CAR a few years later, the promos on the air started with "The Key is NOT located on Private Property and

you won't have to dig to find it."

That year, I hid the key myself under a small overpass in Huntsville and it was placed INSIDE a crushed Budweiser Beer can. Only my father and mother knew the location of the key and my mother wrote the clues from my description of the location, my Polaroid camera photo of the hiding place and a city map of Huntsville.

When the key was finally found, we did have some of our staff in the general area, which had finally been narrowed down, and there were no adverse comments or destruction evidenced after it was located.

Many other "treasure key" contests took place in those years of 1959 through 1975, but none as memorable as the first one. If that hunt had been for a new car,

I think WAAY Radio might have had to rebuild a house for an unfortunate property owner.

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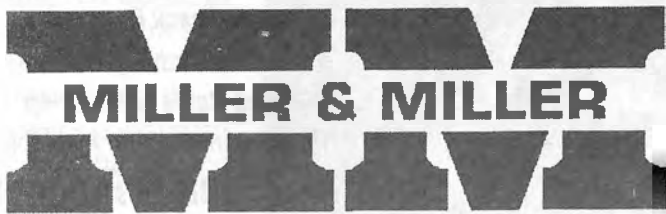
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# The Legend of Monte Sano

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

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

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

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

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

In reality, the naming of

Monte Sano came about because of a disease.

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

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

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

The words are Italian for "mountain of health".

## For a Sore Throat

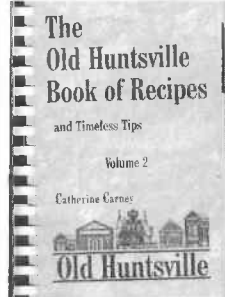
Into half a cup of water, grate 1 teaspoonful of horseradish and 1 piece of lemon peel. To that, add 1/8 teaspoonful of cayenne pepper and 2 tablespoons of honey, mix well. Take 1 tablespoon every hour.

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# Love Kills Love

The Huntsville Cotton Mill was created by the efforts of D.L. Love, a businessman from Mississippi. Traveling throughout the Southeast, Love aroused interest in Huntsville, found subscribers for common stock, and persuaded the city to pass a ten year exemption on taxes.

As the cotton mill began to prosper, such was not the case for its organizing genius, Apparently in his gallivanting around the country, Love fell in love with the young and beautiful Ada Johnson of Huntsville. But, following the demands of a busy travel schedule, Love did not press his suit in time. The newspaper on September 21,

1881 announced the marriage of Ada Johnson to Mr. John F. Lanier of Madison County. The paper further commented: "The Huntsville public was greatly surprised that Miss Ada, whose hand had been sought by so many suitors, had at last succumbed to Mr. Lanier's offer of marriage."

None was more surprised than Mr. Love, who, when learning of the betrothal, lost his temper and sought to avenge his loss by besmirching her character.

So foul were his accusations that the young husband did what honorable young men of breeding were expected to do in such cases. He went to Greenville, Mississippi and killed Mr. Love.

Defended by Huntsville attorney Capt. Milton Humes, young Lanier was completely exonerated. The judge announced from the bench, "It is my opinion that he did just what I or any other

man of honor would do, and I therefore discharge the prisoner, and bid him go hence without delay."

## 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.

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# Huntsville Happenings in 1907

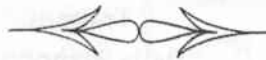
- John Williams, an old man who was arrested a few days ago for drunkenness, was ordered released and directed to leave Huntsville at once. Williams is quite an old man being 72 years of age and Mayor Smith took pity on him.

- By reason of an open switch on the Southern railway freight train No. 306 and switch train No 431 with Conductor Miller in charge - collided on the side track on Meridian street late yesterday afternoon, wrecking and derailing two cars of the regular train, demolishing the pilots of both engines, smashing the front of a car and the trucks of the end of the switch train. No one was hurt.


- The bursting of a water main leading from the city pumping station to the standpipe caused no end of trouble Saturday and Sunday. A leak was found in front of the Schiffman Building on the southeast corner of the square early Saturday morning and a force of men set to work to dig down and make the necessary repair.

The job was bigger than they thought it to be. When the hard crust of the macadamized street was removed the escaping water burst forth and flooded the street.

The daily newspapers of the city are the chief sufferers because they had to depend on water power to run the presses. The Evening Banner was caught half through with its editions and city subscribers were furnished with the paper in an unusual form.



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# Two Presidents in Mooresville

In the early 1800s, the Tennessee Valley was beginning to see the establishment of villages and towns, complete with merchants and tradesmen to cater to the needs of the populace. Limestone County, Alabama was no exception. In November of 1818 two towns were incorporated in Limestone County. One of these towns was Athens, the present county seat. The other, incorporated three days before Athens, was the village of Mooresville.

Mooresville was home to an excellent tailor by the name of Sloss. Mr. Sloss was extremely adept at cutting the "Prince Albert" style frock suit for gentlemen. One day in the early 1830s, a young tailor's apprentice named Andrew called at the shop for Mr. Sloss. Andrew had come with the purpose of learning the art of cutting this stylish garment. He was a good student and even managed to sell some of the suits he made in the village. In a few weeks he had mastered the desired skill and was gone. This incident would not be worth mention except for some notoriety this young man received before arriving in Mooresville, and some he would receive later in his life.

Andrew, originally from Raleigh, North Carolina, ran away from his home for fear of being arrested after throwing rocks at a neighbor's house. He fled through South Carolina,

and in 1826, came to Greenville, Tennessee, a town he would call home for the remainder of his life. In Greenville he worked in a tailor shop, eventually opening a shop of his own. Shortly thereafter, he sought Mr. Sloss in Mooresville. A few days after Andrew left North Carolina, the following article against harboring or employing said apprentices,

on pain of being prosecuted was published by James J. Selby.

### TEN DOLLAR REWARD

"Ran away from the subscriber, on the night of the 15th instant, 2 apprentice boys, legally bound, named William and Andrew Johnson. The former is of a dark complexion, black hair, eyes and habits. They are much

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of a height, about 5 feet, 4 or 5 inches. The latter is very fleshy, freckled faced, light hair and fair complexioned. They went with two other apprentices, addressed by Messrs. Wm., and Charles Fowler. When they went away, they were well clad - blue pants, light colored homespun coats, and new hats, the maker's name in the crown of the hats is Theodore Clark. I will pay the above reward (\$10) to any person who will give the above reward to Andrew Johnson alone. All persons are cautioned against harboring or employing said apprentices, on pain of being prosecuted. James J. Selby"

Perhaps Mr. Selby would have upped the ante had he known that one of those rock-throwing, black-habited escapees for whom he was advertising was to become the seventeenth president of the United States.

For a village the size of Mooresville to be able to boast a future President as a resident, even for a short period of time, is a source of pride. But Andrew Johnson's leave-taking did not mark the end of this extraordinary burg's flirtation with future presidents.

Approximately thirty years after Andrew Johnson received the tutelage of Mr. Sloss, Abraham Lincoln was President, Andrew Johnson, Vice-President, and the nation was embroiled in civil war. Following the fall of Nashville, North Alabama was occupied by Union forces. In the summer of 1863, the 42nd Ohio Volunteers were camped at Bibb's Spring, a short distance behind the Bibb residence at Mooresville. One of the officers of the regiment was James A. Garfield.

Garfield, a native of frontier Ohio, was reared by his mother and older brother after the death of his father. Though young James had to work to help the family, his mother and brother provided for him a good education. He

attended Geauga Seminary in Ohio, and worked his way through Williams College, graduating with honors. After graduation, Garfield returned to his home in Hiram, Ohio where he obtained a post as a school teacher. In addition to his duties as teacher, he sometimes preached at the local church and made political speeches. When war came, he received a commission in the U.S. Army

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and served his country with distinction.

Some of the villagers at Mooresville learned of Garfield's presence and invited him to preach at the Christian Church. General Garfield, in writing to his wife, mentioned the invitation.

"There is a church in the village of Mooresville near by and they have sent up (an invitation) inviting me to speak to them on Sunday. If I am not too unwell I have a notion to speak to them." Apparently the General was not "too unwell" because he delivered several sermons in the Mooresville Church.

General Garfield left Mooresville with his unit to fight at Chicamauga. Following the battle, the General resigned his commission to enter Congress. In 1880, Mr. Garfield was elected the twentieth President of the United States.

The building in which Mr. Garfield delivered his sermons is still used for worship every Sunday morning. It is now known as the Mooresville Church of Christ. When General Garfield left Mooresville, he left his Bible in the

church building. The Bible remained on display in the building for many years before it was moved to a private home to ensure its safety.

It has been well over a century since Johnson and Garfield walked the streets of Mooresville but their presence can still be felt as you wander the streets of the historic village.

**"If only 1/3 of your clothes are mistakes, you're ahead of the game."**

*Jane Smith, Huntsville*

## Old Huntsville Trivia

**1829** New City Hall is occupied. On January 2, the Mayor had been authorized to secure one stove, a dozen chairs, and one desk to furnish the new building. Total cost of furnishings - \$67.85.

**1831** Huntsville citizens are irate over the new tax increases. The tax rate was 27 cents on each \$100 and a poll tax on white males of 25 cents each.



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# Booger Town Remembered

by Garland Derting

Not far from the hum of Rocket City's buzzing traffic, a few acres of prime land is the sight of a quiet and lovely apartment complex. Located just west and north of Bob Wallace Avenue and Triana Boulevard, it is a far cry from what it was.

There are very few old times that history shied away from. This cotton mill village didn't deserve one letter that spelled its name—Booger Town, because the name was signed, sealed and branded by a bunch of pack rats that drug in after the mill closed. But come to think of it, the name fit these varmints like a glove.

Let's think about a name. A name can affect the lives of people from all walks of life. The name Booger Town is a good example. The name bewildered the brightest and puzzled new people that made Huntsville their home, and brought amazement to the curious. The name Booger Town did something sinister for the village. It put a weight on the good people's shoulders and hung out a welcome sign for trouble.

My Dad and mother had a good reason for moving into this

cotton mill village. My family needed to eat and the cotton mill provided our needs for a hard day's work. This was in the twenties. Booger Town had decent hard working people. The village was one big happy family.

Whenever someone was in need the word got out. A cup of flour, sugar, potatoes, lard—what little the others had would find its way to the needy's front door. If one of the family had a cough, Vick's salve would be sent to their house.

The real name of the cotton mill village was the Old Nitten Mill. The village was a place of survival. Hard times was the name of the game. But bad times wasn't as harsh to people in those days, because people weren't acquainted to what modern days had to offer, so desires and wants didn't burden the hearts of people. Everybody knew each other by first name. The mill was running full blast. Things were peaceful even though people were a little ill. There was peace in the village but things were going to change. The strain of life's burden would slowly pull a man down. Most families were large. The average family numbered from four to eight.

Coming from a young boy's memories, I would say there were from forty to fifty houses. Each

house had four rooms for each family to occupy. Four kids, six kids—it didn't matter.

Don't get me wrong—Booger Town had its own luxuries. By the grace of a woman preacher, who

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got the village folk to dig deep for pocket change and some folding money, she managed to buy a large tent— it was our church no matter what kind of material it was made of. The prayers got out and the blessings got in— and Booger Town had its own cemetery. Being a young boy I can't remember any burials in the small unkempt plot— and it was said that no permission was required to bury a loved one there. But beyond any doubt it was a cemetery all right. Because I remember the remains had to be moved to another place. The people that built apartments there had to locate the next of kin to remove the bodies. And the talk was then that some of the bodies could have been overlooked. Because some of the people had seen and heard strong sights and movements.

In 1929 a slow and killing kind of ghost hit all over our great land. It was the Great Depression, and so help me I will never figure out why people called it Great. It took a depression to bring silence to that hum of the cotton mill. It took a while for the truth to soak into the heads of the working people. If a cotton mill shut its gates, what else was waiting in the future? Not only was Booger Town going to face pain and hunger, the village was turning into violence and darkness. Empty houses were plentiful. Most folks that were there had kinfolk living in the country. They left the village to plow, plant and survive. So Booger Town was wide open for the un-

desirables.

The empty houses were occupied by what the old folks called carpetbaggers. The good folks had to hold their ground against the no good that tried to take over. It wasn't long until all the mill house windows were broken out. And when a house became empty it would eventually be torn down. There's an old saying— there's a little good in everyone. But when it came to survival all good turns to bad. Like the time I was coming from the store with a few slices of bologna for my dad's lunch. Two guys grabbed the sack and as I looked back they were fighting over it. These self-surviving men were mean to the core. But the more you watched them the crazier they became. Like the guy that went from house to house with a ham bone on a string. He would tell the lady cooking beans; I will dip my ham bone in your beans for a nickel. But two dips will be a dime.

If you have a desire to ride over to Booger Town, head to the old Center Theatre and go to Black's on Ninth Avenue,

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but don't expect to hear the roar of the old cotton gin or to see long lines of wagons loaded with cotton. You will hear the noise of half drunks standing out in the open and see them passing wine bottles from one to another.

Back then, it didn't have to be drunks to give you a hard time. I remember what ice we got in Booger Town was delivered by a flat bed truck. It was brought from the ice plant down town. Sometimes we had an iceman that didn't mind us getting the small chips of ice that fell as he chipped a small piece from the five hundred-pound chunk. For a dime Mom could get enough to last twenty-four hours, if it was put in a tub and covered.

On one hot August day the iceman, Mr. Grunch, seemed upset. As my friend Soupy reached for a chip of ice, like a streak the ice pick went through Soupy's hand and pinned him to the wooden truck bed. As old Grunch pulled it out of Soupy's hand he had a pleased gleam in his eye. Later we heard Mr. Grunch fell in

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

a ditch and broke his leg. His house and truck burned putting him out of business, probably a blessing wouldn't you say?

We always had a few chickens for fresh eggs. And maybe if we were lucky, Mom would surprise the family with chicken and dumplings for dinner. But to get fresh eggs you had to be ready for the cackle of the hen, and grab the eggs before they hit the nest. If you weren't watchful a hungry hand would grab it and hit the back alley.

I was just a lad when my family moved from Elora, Tennessee to the Nitten Mill village. But I learned quick that a switchblade knife and brass nucks weren't boy's toys. But every day more and more friends were moving from Booger Town. Dad knew it was time to be getting ready to leave the old run down place. It was in the thirties and we were just kids. But we knew what was going on. One day Dad got an extra pair of pants and shirts. We watched as Mom put a few biscuits and fat back in a brown bag. As Dad kissed us all good-bye, I heard Mom ask where he was going. Softly he said, I will write when I get there. In four weeks a letter came. Mom quickly read the one page. Something fell from the letter and Mom smiled as she picked it up. It was a five-dollar bill. I will never

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## Remembering our Veterans

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*In Flanders Fields the poppies blow  
Between the crosses, row on row,  
That mark our place; and in the sky  
The larks, still bravely singing, fly  
Scarce heard amid the guns below.*

*We are the Dead. Short days ago  
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,  
Loved and were loved, and now we lie  
In Flanders Fields.*

*Take up our quarrel with the foe:  
To you from failing hands we throw  
The torch; be yours to hold it high.  
If ye break with us who die  
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow  
In Flanders Fields.*

— *By Major John McCrae, May 1915*

*Two weeks after writing this, Major McCrae was killed in action - on the Fields of Flanders*

---

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forget her words. "Thank the good Lord for that man. And this here money."

As the old saying goes, time sure slips away. Because in no time my Dad walked in the front door, hugged everyone and with a look of achievement, he quickly locked the doors, ordered us all to the kitchen and emptied his pocket on the table. It was more money than our eyes and mind thought existed. Dad said that's the foundation of a house— and the freedom of Booger Town.

Dad had been working in a Detroit car factory. The year was 1941. The Japs had pulled their sneak attack on Pearl Harbor. No more cars would be made until '46. The end of the war.

Just three blocks from Booger Town, Dad bought a lot to build our house on. He got it for two hundred dollars. That was when things started sky rocketing. Our government bought 35,000 acres of land from dozens of farmers. Redstone Arsenal sits there now. Just six miles from old Booger town. Boy what time can do. When Japan bombed Pearl Harbor, never in history has any country put a fighting force together so fast. The Huntsville arsenal seemed to have grown out of the ground overnight.

But something seemed strange. It took a while for me to grasp what was wrong. Then it hit me - the men were scarce - they were joining all parts of the service. So the women who were only used to having babies and making lye soap were slipping on pairs of coveralls and going to work on the assembly lines at Redstone Arsenal.

The women were turning out bombs so fast the arsenal was named the bullet plant.

They had three shifts— day and night. Bombs were rolling

out like marbles. Every thing was rationed from sugar to gas, and even building material. My Dad went to work as a painter and being the talker he was, he met this man who would come in handy. The man had a brother who owned

a sawmill in Paint Rock Valley. He traded the man for enough rough saw mill lumber to almost build our house. I was young and Booger Town strong, so Dad hired a carpenter and I was put through the mill. It wasn't long

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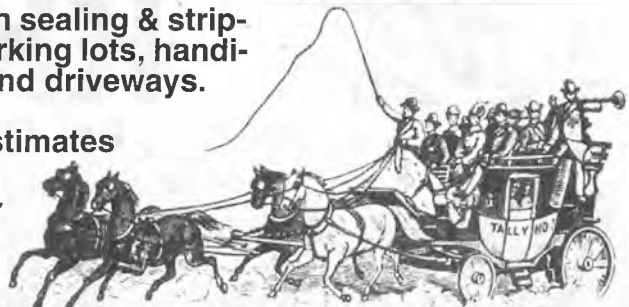
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until our family would say "so long" to Booger Town. A few roughnecks said they were staying no matter what.

After moving I would go back. I watched as bulldozers destroyed and dumped truckloads of what used to be Booger Town. Some of the down and dirty stayed until the last moment and had to be dragged out screaming and fighting. As I watched through the dust from destruction of falling shacks, I remembered the neat rows of houses and ladies planting pretty flowers— I seem to hear my mother bidding Dad good-bye as he walked through the cotton mill gates. But the home we built is only five blocks from that lovely apartment complex. My sister owns the old home place today.

I'm sure I have removed some of the mystery around Booger Town, but maybe I have helped the curious to know more about it. If you come from a large city you have seen everything that Booger Town had to offer. But maybe in a more civilized way— the expert burglars, bootleggers, gamblers and muggers didn't wait for night fall, I could go on and on.

About the dark corners—

**"My wife and I were happy for 20 years, then we met."**

**Rodney Dangerfield**

like the time one of the big-time gamblers staggered into a card game and said deal me in— they shot him six times, then threw him into a hog pen to be devoured.

As long as there's people, there

will be a Booger Town. And every person's story is different. But you can bet your peg leg it won't hold a light to the Booger Town that we survived in and still look back at with a tear for the good and bad.

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# Tips from Liz

**We're all trying to avoid the Swine Flu right now, so here are a few tips that may help:**

\* Avoid going where sick people go: ER, Doctors offices, hospital, drug store, post office, big box stores and any crowded, closed-in locations.

\* If someone is sneezing, coughing, etc. avoid them at all costs, go the other way.

\* If someone you know wants to come over for a visit and you know they're sick, make it another day.

\* Keep your immune system as healthy as it can be; eat right with lots of fruits and veges, don't smoke, keep drinking liquor to a minimum, take your vitamins (especially fish oil & B-Complex), drink plenty of water, and get sufficient sleep. It also helps to drink a couple of cups of hot green tea per day.

\* That antiseptic gel that everyone is told to use now really works! When you do have to go out, each time you get back in your car put it on your hands and rub well.

\* Keep your hands away from your eyes, nose, mouth, etc. You would be surprised how fast germs are transmitted.

\* Get the regular flu shot when it's offered, then get the swine flu shot too.

\* Try doing more things at home rather than going out all the time.

\* If you work and feel sick, stay home! Your company doesn't want you to be a hero, and then you infect everyone else.

\* If you feel achy and start

having the Swine Flu symptoms, (Diarrhea, nausea, fever, etc.) make sure you stay hydrated! That's very important. Eat bland foods to keep your strength up, stay in bed if that feels better, and pamper yourself. Better yet, get your spouse to pamper you.

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# News From the Year 1914

## News From Huntsville and Around The World

### Europe On Brink Of War

Austria-Hungary is eager and ready to invade Serbia and as the sending of his passports to the Serbian minister is a virtual declaration of war, hostilities will begin probably within the next day or two. Serbia had acceded to most of Austria's demands and nothing but an entire surrender on its part could now avert war. While the war-like attitude of Austria-Hungary has been precipitated by the assassination of the Crown Prince Franz Ferdinand, about two weeks ago, a Slavic propaganda against Austria has been in progress for some time.

But the moment Austria starts a war with Serbia, Russia will take up the fight and aid its little Slavic neighbor to the full extent of its military resources. Germany would join Austria. The German people are in a frenzy of war. France and possibly England would be drawn into the conflict. The only certainty is that the United States will mind her own business and stay out of the fracas.

Europe has been long preparing for such a war as this which is threatened, but although it seems inevitable, all peace-loving people will pray that some way out of it will yet be found.

### Skyscraper in Huntsville

Ground breaking was held today for the Twickenham Hotel, a project expected to cost \$100,000. The hotel is being built on the site of the old market house which was purchased by the city for a reported \$15,000. A crowd of some three thousand people attended the ground breaking.

A chef from New York has already been hired and will preside over the food preparation. He is said to be one of the most promising of the century.

With the completion of the six story hotel, Huntsville will be able to boast of having the tallest skyscraper in the Tennessee Valley.

### Family Saved by Dog as Home Burns

A Dallas mill family is counting their blessings this morning after their home was completely destroyed by fire. The family was sound asleep when the blaze began and were alerted by the pet wire-haired terrier which began barking until the whole family was roused.

The dog continued to bark until all were out of the home.

The family is staying with relatives until more accommodations can be found and neighbors are already taking up a collection to replace the family's belongings.

The mills have a policy against pets but it is expected to be waived in this instance.

**"If you're a good kisser, it might make your wife forget that you never take out the trash."**

*Love advice from Eric, age 8*



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# Local Man in Jail After Drowning Death

Vassar Vest, residence 121 Washington Street, Decatur was drowned in the Tennessee River this morning about ten o'clock. At a point several hundred yards below the bridge, a boat occupied by Vest and a young man named Jim Breedlove turned over according to Breedlove's story throwing the two out.

Breedlove has been arrested and placed in the county jail. Breedlove, when seen in the county jail this afternoon, told the following story to a reporter: "Vest and I were crossing the river to fish and had reached the other side when the boat turned over, but I do not know what caused it. I grabbed the side and saved myself. I got the boat turned right side up when I had gotten about 50 yards from this side, after having looked for the body of Vest. I came on to land and got the family of Vest and went back across the river. I was sitting on the bank over there when Deputy Sheriff McCulloch arrested me."

Breedlove does not appear to have a criminal face, but there appear to be several details of the

drowning which he doesn't seem to be quite familiar with. He stated that he didn't know what caused the boat to turn over, dumping the men in the water, though he said that Vest had been teasing him about not being able to swim and had been rocking the boat in an effort to aggravate him.

## Deer To Go

County official today announced that they would no longer permit deer in the court house yard. The announcement was met with hoots of derision by people who have grown attached to the pet deer.

Supporters of the deer have vowed to go to court to prevent the county from removing the animals.

## New Speed Limit

The Huntsville city officials moved the city into a new era last night when they approved raising the automobile speed limits from 10 miles an hour to 15.

Despite protests from people who claimed the increase will result in total mayhem on Huntsville's streets, the measure was approved unanimously.

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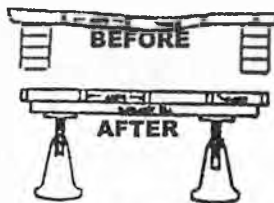
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# The Telephone System

Seven years after the telephone made its first public appearance, at the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition, William B. Leedy determined that Huntsville should have its own "highway of speech."

In 1883 he began negotiations with Superintendent W. J. Cole of the Southern Bell Telephone & Telegraph Company regarding the establishment of a local telephone exchange.

On June 6th, 1883, the Huntsville Weekly Democrat announced that the town was about to see the advent of the telephone, and added that it hoped "the project will meet with liberal encouragement from those in official authority and from private citizens."

That same day found Mr. Leedy making formal application to the municipal administration for permission to erect the necessary telephonic poles. It was not, however, until October 2nd that the Board of Aldermen finally granted the right to ahead with construction.

On November 8th, Huntsville found itself possessed of a telephone system. The entire personnel at that time consisted of Miss Sallie Leedy, who acted as day operator; Mr. Robert L. Hay as night operator, and Mr. George L. Lippincott as manager.

In 1889, Alexander Graham Bell appointed Robert A. Moore manager of the Huntsville exchange.

Moore had grown up in Shelbyville, Tn.. and in 1883, at the age of 16 had been selected by Bell to be tutored in the telephone business at Bell's headquarters in New York.

Telephones were still in their infancy and Moore, as manager,

found himself working as salesman, lineman, repairman and even operator if the scheduled person did not show for work.

One of his more persistent problems had to do with farmers who discovered that doves sitting on the lines were easy shots. Unfortunately, more often than not, the lines were also shot down.

The first telephone line of any distance from the Huntsville exchange was a line built by Mr. James D. Rice, Sr., connecting Huntsville with Whitesburg, the telephone being placed in his store at Whitesburg. His line was operated as a toll line for several years, and was the first toll line built from Huntsville.

In 1887 Mr. George A. Lippincott, who was then in the nursery business, built what was known as the Huntsville, Guntersville and Gadsden telephone toll line, which was incorporated, and the line was completed to Guntersville, Ala.

This line was of great ben-



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efit to Huntsville merchants, who had traveling men selling goods in Sand Mountain, as well as the cotton men, as this was before the days when Guntersville had telegraph connection.

This line furnished service to Huntsville for Maysville, Gurley, Paint Rock, Woodville, New Hope, Deposit, Manchester, Guntersville, and Albertville,

The first true long distance phone call was made in 1896 by Mayor Hutchens from the old Huntsville Hotel. The Exchange manager, Robert Moore, by careful planning and coordination, managed to route the call from Huntsville to Fayetteville, then to Nashville, Evansville, Terra Haute, Chicago and finally to New York, a distance of 1,100 miles which was a remarkable feat in those days.

In 1928 Robert Moore was honored at a special ceremony in recognition of being manager of Huntsville telephone exchange for 45 years.

During this period local telephone subscribers grew from 36 to 1770, a feat unrivaled by any other city of its size.

## Civil War Generals Born in Huntsville

Huntsville was the birthplace of six generals of the War Between the States.

### Confederate

Maj. Gen. John Hunt Morgan  
Maj. Gen. Jones M. Withers  
Brig. Gen. LeRoy Pope Walker

### Union

Brig. Gen. David Birney  
Brig. Gen. William Birney  
Brig. Gen. Thomas Crittenden  
Brig. Gen. Edward O'Neal

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# A Ride Back in Time

by Austin Miller

Bill Glover, a friend of mine at church told me that he had met a man on his Meals on Wheels route named Grover Ratliff that I needed to talk to about old Huntsville. I gave Mr. Ratliff a call and learned that he was 93 years old and moved to Huntsville in 1922 when he was six. He said he would be glad to talk to me but he could do better if we went on a tour. A tour sounded good to me so we set a time and Bill and I picked him up at his home on Capri Drive. From there, the three of us went sight-seeing. I thought I knew everything there was to know about Dallas, Lincoln and East Huntsville but Mr. Ratliff soon proved me wrong.

When we got to the Norfolk Southern crossing at Oakwood Avenue, Mr. Ratliff started telling us about the area faster than I could listen and faster than Bill could take notes. He told us the railroad track was the dividing line between Dallas and Lincoln. The villages got their names from

two cotton mills, Dallas Mill and Lincoln Mill. Both neighborhoods were created, built and maintained by the mill owners to house mill workers and their families. Lincoln Mill opened in 1906 as Madison Spinning Company but closed under that name in 1908. From 1908 to 1918 it was Abingdon Mill. In 1918, the name was changed to Lincoln by a new owner from Lowell Massachusetts named Lincoln Barrell. Old pictures show that the Lincoln Mill was huge and extended west on the left side of Oakwood from the railroad tracks to Meridian Street. Long time residents know that where the mill once stood is now a shopping center and parking lot. Dallas Mill opened in 1892 and was only a short distance across the railroad track from Lincoln Mill. It sat in what is now an open field; but the old Dallas Mill water tower still stands and has recently been refurbished.

Lincoln Mill closed for good in 1957 but that was not the end of the building's history. The vast structure soon became the Hunts-

ville Industrial Center (HIC Building). Brown Engineering, Chrysler, NASA and other space related research and development firms moved into the facility. With-

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out question, the work done in the old cotton mill building was very instrumental in putting men on the moon and a spring board of the nation's space industry. Sadly, a spectacular fire in 1980 burned the colossal old structure to the ground and only a relatively small appendage to the vast old building was saved and still stands. Fortunately most of the tenants had moved to other locations but a landmark familiar to three generations of Huntsville area residents was gone. The fire took a large visible symbol of Huntsville's rich history and heritage that can never be replaced.

After we passed the old mill site, we drove through the residential streets and houses of Lincoln village. Many of the period single homes, duplexes and row houses are still standing and occupied by residents. Mr. Ratliff said at first the exterior of the houses were wood painted green but sometime in the twenties the Mill owners covered the walls with white stucco. He told us a paper covered wire barrier was put between the wood and stucco to enable the stucco to adhere to the wall and the combination of wood, wire, paper and stucco created a roach bug haven.

We left the houses north of Oakwood and headed down Meridian Street to Lincoln School. He said as a young boy in 1929, he watched the workers build the school and the thing he remembered most was that they poured the concrete walls in sections. Mr. Ratliff said his wife, who died about six months ago, graduated from Lincoln High and thought it was the grandest place in the world.

We drove behind the school to the big drainage canal that runs through most of East Huntsville.

The canal behind the school is between the railroad track and the street. Mr. Ratliff said that the concrete wall along the canal had been there longer than he could remember and we were riding on the original concrete surface poured by the mill owners many years ago.

Of all the things that we saw Mr. Ratliff was most excited about showing us a speed bump at the end of Cottage Street. None of us could speculate why there was a speed bump in Lincoln in the 1920's when most everybody walked and there were very few cars. We decided that this was very likely the first speed bump in Huntsville. We turned onto another concrete street that led to more

mill houses. He then directed us to an ancient rust colored concrete bridge on Abington Street that he once drove over in his car. The bridge is now closed to cars but you could tell that it was still used for foot traffic. When we left the bridge he pointed out where the Huntsville City limits once ended about a

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block or two north of Pratt Avenue.

We left Lincoln and drove south on Andrew Jackson Way through Dallas. Mr. Ratliff pointed out that the boundary between Dallas and Huntsville was in the vicinity of O'Shaughnessy and McCullough Avenues. The Dallas Mill closed in 1949 and the building burned in 1991. The loss of this building was particularly sad to me because my grandmother went to work there circa 1900 when she was fourteen years old. Her work hours were 6 A.M. until 6 P.M. five days a week and 6 A.M. until noon on Saturday. This was before child labor laws and she told me that a crowd of men were always waiting at the gate on payday to get their children's paycheck. Her long twelve hour day started each morning after walking from her home on what is now Toll Gate road, a distance of about three miles. She of course had to make the walk back home at the end of the day. Both trips were always made afoot even in inclement weather. In the winter months she often didn't see daylight from Sunday afternoon until Saturday afternoon. Dallas was a much smaller mill and there are far fewer of the Dallas Mill houses left than the Lincoln houses but they are almost all in good repair and well kept. Dallas is generally the area from Oakwood Avenue south along both sides of Andrew Jackson Way to O'Shaughnessy Avenue.

Back in Lincoln, Mr. Ratliff told us that a sandstone rock wall forty eight inches high once

ran along the west side of Meridian Street in front of Lincoln school. The wall extended about two blocks and the boss of the mill lived behind the wall up a long drive in a big house. Mr. Ratliff said the wall was a very popular place where people came to whittle, pass the time, visit with friends and talk about hard times. He added that when the mill workers were on strike times were hard indeed.

One of the most interesting things to me was what Mr. Ratliff said about the house keys. He told us that every single house from the low end to the high end of Lincoln had the same key. I asked him what the residents thought about that; he answered that they didn't care because nobody ever locked their door anyway. Bill asked him if the villages had any kind of governing body. He replied that the villages were not incorpo-

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## AT LINCOLN CENTER

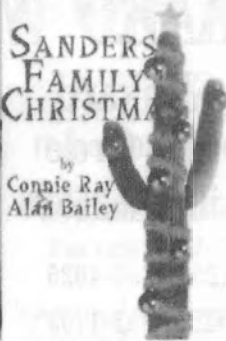
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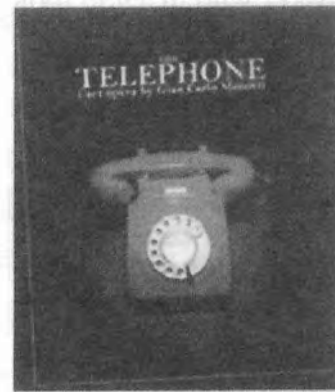
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rated and came under the county commission but had an arrangement with the city of Huntsville for police services. He went on to say that Lincoln had a constable for a while that patrolled on a big white horses but he didn't last very long.

In his younger years Mr. Ratliff knew most of the residents of east Huntsville, Dallas Village and Lincoln Village. Two that he knew were Mr. and Mrs. Milton Cummings. The Cummings were one of Huntsville's most prominent families. He showed us the location next to Lincoln school where Mr. Cummings lived as a boy. The spot is now a playground. Mr. Cummings was a cotton broker who in 1956 took over management of a small struggling establishment called Alabama Engineering. The business prospered under Mr. Cummings' leadership and was soon renamed Brown Engineering. The company is now known world wide as Teledyne Brown; it is located in Cummings Research Park.

Mrs. Cummings' (maiden name Vastus Ivy) family also has a rich history in Huntsville. Her father, Roscoe Ivy, was principal of Lincoln School and Jean Watts, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Cummings, told me that her mother once worked directly for Mr. Phil Peeler, the superintendent of Lincoln Mill. She also told me that she remembered visiting her grandparent's house

at the site next to Lincoln School.

Mr. Ratliff was also friends with Macon Weaver, a long time Madison County district attorney and later federal judge. Before that, in his growing up years, Mr. Weaver was a resident of Lincoln Village. Mr. Weaver was a regular customer at his service station. Mrs. Chapman of Chapman Dairies was also one of his customers. The Chapman family owned all the land along both sides of Maysville Road including the

mountain along highway 72. The entire area, to include the mountain, now bears the Chapman family name. The Chapman dairy barn was located in the vicinity of what is now Rosalie Ridge.

I asked him about a well known character actor in the fifties and sixties named Harry Towns. He said he didn't know him personally but knew who he was and that he was from Huntsville. Mr. Towns often appeared on shows like Bonanza, Gunsmoke, made for television specials and a number of big screen movies.

At the end of the tour, we drove



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to the square, Mr. Ratliff wanted to see if the phrase, "great is the power of cash," was still on the T.T. Terry building located on the south side of the square. It was not. I asked him about the White Castle and the Snuff Dippers Ball. The White castle was a notorious roadhouse at the corner of Winchester Road and Meridian Street. The Snuff Dippers Ball stood in what is now the parking lot of the Heritage Club. He said he did not drink, want to fight or get into any kind of trouble and steered clear of both places. But he did say he was outside the White Castle one night when he was about twenty and a lady came out and told him to leave because a young boy like him had no business being around such a place.

Mr. Ratliff, a skilled wood worker and mechanic, takes great pride in the fact that he made a good living in Huntsville with his hands in several different trades. He held many different jobs and ran a successful business for nineteen years. The business was Ratliff Standard service station located in the vicinity of what are now Oakwood Avenue and Andrew Jackson Way. He closed the station in 1982 when he was 66 years old. You won't find his name

on the Who's Who list of well known people that made Huntsville a world class high tech city. But he was of no less importance. He is one of the salt of the earth hard working people that flavored the heart and soul of Huntsville's history. He is a man of God that made his own way, loves his friends and family and is proud of the way he has lived his life. Bill

and I agreed that touring with Mr. Ratliff was a most enjoyable and educational experience. The best part was that for a little while we got to see through his eyes the way things once were in our town.

**"Tracers work both ways."**

*From U.S. Army Ordnance manual*

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# Three Caves

by Chip Knight

The name "Three Caves," came about long after this former limestone quarry, or mine, had ceased operation. During the years it was active, it was known simply as the "rock quarry" and it was not looked upon with the nostalgia commonly felt for it today. It was loud, as both dynamite and crushing machinery were used in its operation, and loaded trucks spilled stone on what were rapidly becoming residential streets, particularly along Hermitage Avenue.

The rock quarry was first opened in 1945 on land owned by Madison County near the old County Poor House, and was well out from town in an area

of pastures and nurseries. For the next seven years the quarry supplied crushed limestone for road construction in Huntsville, notably for Governors Drive which was known then as the "Four Lane Highway" because it was the only one around.

The rock quarry started out like most others in the area, as an open pit operation. Blasting in the pit occasionally caused problems with large rocks being blasted hundreds of yards and dropping on the Poor House and, once, on a brand new 1949 automobile.

As the quarry grew, the operators found that they had to go deeper and deeper to get to the desirable limestone. The dirt and rock on top of that was known as overburden, and had to be blasted and removed from the site. This caused a growing problem which they finally solved by turning it into an underground mine. By going underground they avoided the effort and expense of removing the overburden and there was little danger of damage from the blasting.

Mining operations ceased in 1952 because of a large

number of complaints and because the cost of underground mining became more expensive as the mine grew.

By that time, three large entrances had been created and work had begun on a fourth. Rock was drilled and blasted carefully to leave large supporting pillars while the rest of the rock was removed. This method, called "room and pillar" mining, was used when the

**"I was on my way to the doctor with rear end trouble when my universal joint gave way causing me to wreck."**

*Seen on local police report*

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amount of overburden was large compared with the available rock.

When operation of the quarry ceased, the site was simply abandoned. Unfenced, the old mines gave a generation of children a place to explore and teenaged couples a place to find privacy. It was even rumored about town that one rather well known citizen had been found there with another man's wife.

The area remained largely out of the public eye until the year 1962 brought the Cuban Missile Crisis, and Madison County decided that the site would be an excellent location for a fallout shelter. An Engineer Company from the Alabama National Guard spent several weekend drills removing debris and otherwise cleaning the place up, but the crisis soon passed and the effort was dropped before emergency supplies of food and water were stocked.

Once again the old rock quarry was pretty well forgotten. Then, in 1978, movie producers found several sites in the Huntsville area which were ideal for a film to be called *The Ravagers*, which was about the time following a nuclear war. Although the film starred Richard Harris and Ernest Borgnine, it was not particularly successful, perhaps because people did not want to even think about a nuclear war, much less spend the time watching a movie about it.

In any case, the quarry was the location for a number of scenes in the movie, and the open area was filled with trucks, power carts and trail-

ers. Another location used in the movie was the Space and Rocket Center. There, the normally gleaming white missiles were covered in a rather mottled gray that made them look old and abandoned.

As with most films shot on location, there were a number of parts which were filled by local

area residents. Among these were musicians Tony Mason and a fiddler known as Monte Sano Crowder. When filming was com-

**"Old age is always ten years older than I am."**

**Ron Eyestone, Madison**

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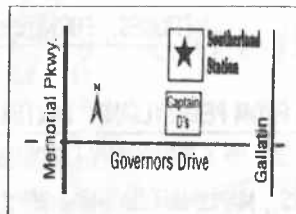


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**"You know you're getting older when your childhood toys are now in a museum."**

**Sam Huffstetler**

pleted, the old quarry was again quietly forgotten.

In the 1980s, local land developers began to believe that they could build houses on the steeply sloping and cave-ridden limestones of Monte Sano Mountain.

One reaction to this was the formation of the Huntsville Land Trust, which was dedicated to preserving not only Monte Sano itself, but any other undisturbed lands in the area. The Land Trust bought over 500 acres of the west face of Monte Sano from private owners and got others through the City of Huntsville with the help of the Land and Water Conservation agency which is a State agency. The Madison County Commission donated the acreage which included the old rock quarry, now known as "Three Caves" to the Land Trust.

The area around the three caves is now fenced, much to the chagrin of youngsters seeking to explore and of young couples wanting privacy. The cliffs around the mine are sheer vertical, and several people have been injured falling from them. The "caves" have now become a well known attraction.

Volunteer groups, the Boy Scouts and others, have built trails, so to speak, throughout both the mined area and the land around it which have made it for the first time, really safe to explore. The Land Trust conducts tours of the "caves" on a regular basis and special tours can be arranged when needed.

Perhaps the most interesting thing is that, although the old quarry, mine, or whatever you want to call it, was never really a cave - it is becoming one. A stalagmite, which grows from the floor of a natural cave, is growing in this old abandoned limestone mine, and the numbers of brown bats which call this

place home is growing.

Perhaps, one day, it will even look like a natural limestone cave.



**"In the Olympics games years ago, Greeks ran races, jumped, hurled the biscuits and threw the java."**

*Seen on 4th grade history test*

## New Enterprise

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

*from 1888 newspaper*

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# Monte Sano Railroad

Near the intersection of Tollgate Road and Bankhead Parkway in northeast Huntsville are several entrances into the western slope of Monte Sano mountain. Take any one of these trails and you will find yourself going back into another time, a time of long ago, a time when Huntsville was much simpler and life was not the complicated reality that it is today.

Yet, people then, as today, had dreams and ambitions. The dream that once existed on these now quiet trails on the western slope of Monte Sano Mountain took the form of a railway ... the Monte Sano Railway.

The year was 1888 and with the ever growing popularity of the grand hotel on top of the mountain, it became clear that better transportation up the mountain was needed.

The Huntsville Belt Line and Monte Sano Railway Co. employed engineer Arthur Owen Wilson to construct the railroad to the hotel. The line started from the union depot and ran south along Jefferson Street. At Clinton, it turned east towards the mountain and eventually down into Fagin's Hollow, where it began a circuitous route, gaining altitude all the time. Winding and circling to the rim of the mountain, the route rose so steeply that the grade seemed impossible for an engine to ascend: The remainder of the way lay directly across the top of the plateau to the back yard of the

hotel. Half an hour was required for the entire journey when the line was finished.

In the construction of the Monte Sano Railway, more than 300 persons were employed on a regular basis. The weekly payroll was approximately \$10,000.

Mr. Wilson, himself, designed the three coaches that comprised the train and the St. Charles Car Co. manufactured them. The engine was of standard gauge, although smaller than those used on the trunk line. The compact size of the engine was the reason the line was called the "dummy line," as the undersized locomotive resembled a trolley car. Of course, some Huntsville wags called it the dummy line because, "only a dummy would ride that steep

and perilous route to or from the mountain!"

Sure enough, not long after the railway opened, there occurred an incident that seriously damaged the popularity of the railway. Returning from the hotel, the train's sand-pipes clogged as the engineer tried to check the speed of the locomotive down a steep incline. The train went out of control and left the tracks. Happily, no one was injured, but people then became somewhat nervous about taking this precarious path to and from the mountain.

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Luckily, this accident had no lasting effect on consumer confidence and the Monte Sano Railway was successful in bringing visitors to the mountain, and business at the hotel continued to flourish.

Unfortunately by 1895 the hotel was suffering financial problems and the railroad had to be shut down. Tracks were torn up and sold as scrap to pay off debts.

Now, with the passage of time, the old railroad bed and stone foundations of the trestles are all that remain. They say that as late as the 1950s there were still railroad ties stacked up near the area known as the "button hole." But they're gone now.

So, take a walk on the old railroad bed trail. Knowing what was once there makes the trek all the more worthwhile.



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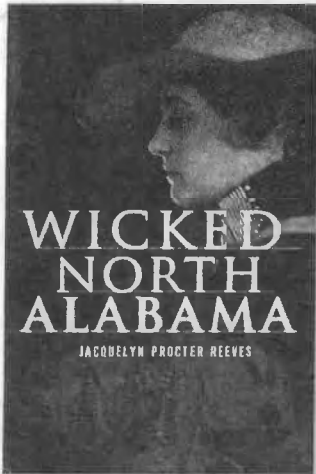
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