

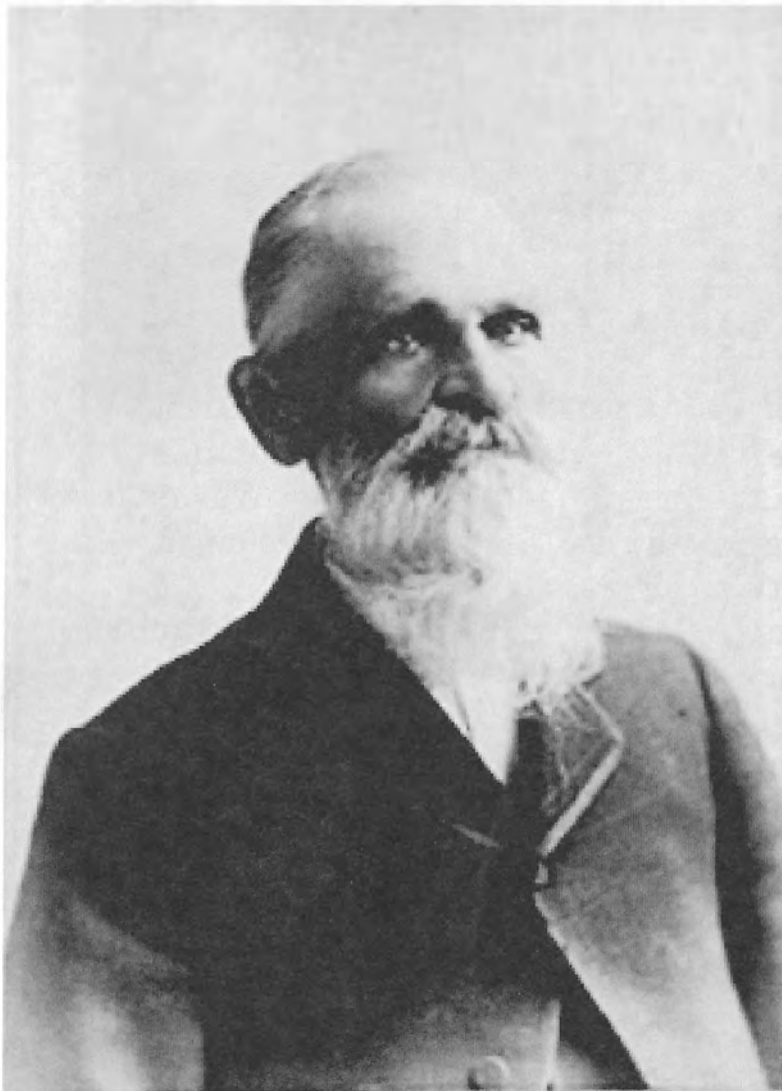


No. 208  
June 2010



# Old Huntsville

HISTORY AND STORIES OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY



## All For Nothing

"My name's Troy Livingston and I want to give myself up," the old man said. "I killed a man in a fight."

The stranger seemed to be in control of his mental facilities and was clearly not a mental case.

"How old are you?" Sheriff Dave Headrick asked. He could not imagine a man that old being in any kind of fight.

"Ninety."

"When did this fight occur?"

"In 1904. I was seventeen years old at the time."

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# All For Nothing

Few people paid any attention to the old man as he entered the courthouse in the late fall of 1976. There was nothing really unusual about the stranger; he was just an old man of indeterminable age. His body was bent from a lifetime of toil and he paused every few feet to lean on his walking stick while catching his breath. His hair was white, curling about the collar, and seemed to highlight his face which had been burnt a reddish brown from a lifetime of working outdoors.

After asking directions, the old man made his way to the Sheriff's office where he asked to speak to the Sheriff.

Sheriff Dave Headrick was having problems of his own and told his secretary to "Take a message. I don't have time to talk to anyone."

The secretary, being more diplomatic, relayed the message to the old man, saying "The sheriff is tied up right now. Would you like to leave a message?"

The stranger appeared to be resigned, saying "I'll wait."

Several hours passed, with people coming and going and the old man still sitting in the corner patiently waiting. Finally Headrick, probably realizing the stranger was not going to go away, motioned for the secretary to show the man into his office.

Impatient, and barely looking up from his paperwork, Headrick asked the old man what he could do for him.

"My name's Troy Livingston and I want to give myself up," the man replied in a voice so soft that Headrick had to lean forward to hear the words.

"For what?"

"Murder. I'm just too old and tired to run anymore."

The Sheriff's head jerked up as he heard the words. After pausing for a moment to digest what he had just heard, he looked at the man carefully. The stranger seemed to be in control of his faculties and was clearly not a mental case.

"What happened?" the sheriff asked.

"I killed a man in a fight," the man answered, repeating the fact that he wanted to give himself up.

"How old are you?" The sheriff could not imagine a man that old being in a fight.

"Ninety."



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"When did this fight occur?"

"In 1904. I was seventeen years old at the time."

Sheriff Headrick stared at the old man, speechless. As a long time law enforcement officer he had heard almost every kind of confession but this was the strangest he had ever encountered. Normally, at this point, he would have turned the case over to a detective but the whole affair was so bizarre he decided to continue the questioning.

"Tell me about it," the sheriff ordered while leaning back in his chair.

Relieved at finally being able to tell his story, the words seemed to burst from the old man as he traveled back to a time when he was young again.

His name was Troy Livingston and he had been born near Scottsboro, Alabama where his mother and father worked as sharecroppers. After a few years of disastrous crops, the family decided to move to Huntsville where they heard the cotton mills were hiring.

With all their belongings packed in the back of a wagon, pulled by a mule, the family showed up at the gates of

Dallas Mills, where they were quickly hired. Troy, although only fourteen years old, was given the job of sweeper with the salary of thirty five cents a day.

After receiving their "hiring papers" they were directed to another office where they were assigned housing. Although there were never enough homes to accommodate all the workers, the mills made it a point to provide housing in cases where the whole family worked for the mill, thereby ensuring the maximum amount of labor at the cheapest price.

Along with the housing came a strict set of rules. No livestock or chickens could be kept and no gardens could be planted. If any member of the family quit, the whole family could be forced to move. All the coal for heating and cooking had to be purchased from the mill and the workers were "strongly encouraged" to buy their groceries and other supplies at a mill owned store.

Despite the rules, the Livingston family began their new lives as mill workers. Their work days were 12½ hours long, beginning at 5:45 in the morning and ending at 6:15 in

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the evening, for which an able bodied worker could earn fourteen dollars a month.

The family's original plan had been to work at the mill for several years, save their money, and return to Jackson County where they intended to buy a small farm. Unfortunately, there never seemed to be any money left to save. Every month came more bills. Regardless, the family kept trying. The father worked in the evenings sawing fire wood he would peddle door to door on the weekends. The mother took in ironing and made hand sewn quilts for sale to neighbors.

Troy Livingston was probably the most enterprising of the family. He was a quiet, somewhat shy young lad whose diminutive size made him appear to be no more than eleven or twelve. His job enabled him to travel to all parts of the mill and he noticed that when people ran out of tobacco or snuff they had to wait until the end of the shift before they could purchase more.

After thinking about this for some time, he visited a local store where he talked the owner into selling him some cans of snuff and tobacco on credit. He then stuffed the pockets of his overalls with the supplies which he would sell throughout the day as he visited the different parts of the mill. He

was careful to only charge a few pennies more than what he had paid. His new business was probably against the mill policy but as long as Troy was discreet, no one said anything. Before long he became a regular feature of the mill and although he probably didn't make more than a few dollars a week, it was a welcome addition to the family's finances.

The only dark spot in Troy's employment came from a foreman named Bullet Gaines who was a notorious tyrant and took a particular delight in tormenting the younger employees. Anyone incurring Gainé's wrath could be assured of a swift kick, or at the least, a hard slap on the side of the head. After a few bruising encounters with the tyrant, Troy learned to simply stay out of his way.

The winter of 1902 was hard on the mill workers. A deadly form of the flu, some people called it the Spanish flu, had spread throughout the mill villages. Almost every household had someone sick, and in many cases it was the whole family. Troy's father, like most of the other employees, continued to drag himself to work every day

**"Don't let worry kill you off - let the Church help!"**

*Seen in local church bulletin*



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despite being deathly ill.

"Pa went home one day after work and laid down," Troy recalled many years later. "The next morning Mama went to wake him up and he was dead. The mill gave us that day off to bury him but we had to be back at work the next day."

With the loss of the major wage earner the family's already precarious financial situation went from bad to worse. The small amount of money they had managed to save went for funeral expenses. Making matters even worse was the fact that the mill was experiencing one of its periodic slowdowns and in turn had reduced the employees hours to a minimum.

Several weeks after her husband's death, Troy's mother was called to the housing office where she was notified that once the mill started full production again, she would have to move. The houses were reserved for whole families, the bigger the better.

Mrs. Livingston was faced with a dilemma. She was too

old to get another job and had no other place to go to. She knew she could not depend on Troy's help forever; he was already talking about moving to Birmingham someday and getting a "high paying" job in the iron mills.

In the end she made the same decision that so many women had been forced to make throughout the ages. She "took up housekeeping" with a neighbor who had lost his wife and was faced with the same situation.

Troy remembered Mr. Sanders as a good man who never raised his voice and who always treated his mother with respect. The only problem with the new family was Sander's son, Dennis, who was jealous of Troy and resented the fact that his father was living with another woman.

**"You know you're getting older when 'tying one on' means fastening your Medic Alert bracelet."**

*Bill Drake, Huntsville*

"That boy was rotten to the core," remembered Troy, "but we tolerated him just to keep the peace."

With his home situation deteriorating rapidly, Troy began

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making plans to move to Birmingham. He was still giving his mother his whole paycheck but was saving the money he made from selling tobacco and snuff at the mill. Troy had always been discreet but now, in a hurry to save more money, became more open with his peddling. Before long he came to the attention of some of the foremen.

One afternoon as the employees were filing out the door at the end of another work day, Bullet Gaines accosted Troy, ordering the youngster to empty his pockets. Troy refused.

In a rage at being disobeyed, Gaines began slapping the boy.

"I reckoned I was just plain scared," recalled Troy many years later. He just kept hitting me so I picked up a piece of pipe off the ground and started hitting back. I hit him real good one time and he just fell down."

Immediately a crowd began to gather around the still form of the foreman who was on the ground with a thin stream of bloody foam dripping from his mouth.

Terrified, Troy ran home where minutes later he was joined by his mother and Mr. Sanders. Sanders, at first didn't think it was a big thing. "Just go to the office in the morning and explain what happened."

While Sanders was talking, his son Dennis walked in the door, highly agitated. After listening for a few minutes, Dennis announced he had just

heard that the foreman was dead from a crushed skull and a warrant was being issued for Troy's arrest.

Without saying a word, Troy and his mother began getting his clothes together while Mr. Sanders went to a neighbor's house to borrow some money.

"When I left," remembered Troy, "I had two shirts, one pair of pants and twenty-two dollars. Mr. Sanders had borrowed ten of it from a neighbor."

Although Livingston was fleeing for his life, in many ways it must have seemed like a Huckleberry Finn adventure to the young lad who had never been away from home. Leaving here he made his way to Tuscaloosa, walking most of



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the way, where he worked in a lumber camp for a while as a clerk. "I didn't really know nothing about clerking but the other clerk ran off with another man's wife and I was the only other person there that knew how to write and figure."

After working for a few months, and saving his money, Troy next went to Mobile where he bought passage to Panama. Thousands of people had been employed building the Canal and although most of the work was finished, there were still dozens of work camps scattered across the narrow country.

Troy purchased a mule and began working as a peddler, visiting the most remote camps in the jungle. "I had an old bugle," remembered Troy, "and when I got within a couple of miles from the camps I would start blowing. When I got there

everyone would be waiting."

Troy was well on his way to becoming a successful businessman but could never forget the fact he was a fugitive from justice. Unable to visit his mother, he wrote letters in care of his step-brother who was the only one at home who could read or write. With each letter he would send money for his mother.

A year or two went by with no answer but Troy kept writing and sending money. Finally he received a letter from Dennis, his step-brother. Mr. Sanders had died, he wrote, and Troy's mother was in a bad way. Dennis was trying to take care of her but there wasn't much work in Huntsville. He also wrote that the law had been by the house several times trying to learn where Troy had gone and they had a warrant for his arrest. Dennis, appear-

ing concerned that Troy's letters might be intercepted, sent another address for Troy to write to.

Troy, deeply worried about his mother, responded by sending more money. Several months later he received another letter telling about how the mill was forcing them to move and they were trying to buy a house but didn't have the money.

Troy took all the money he had saved since leaving home and sent it to Dennis.

As the years passed a routine developed. Troy worked, saved every penny he could, and sent it back to Huntsville every time a crisis arose. Try as he might, he could never get ahead. His mother had to have an operation that cost thousands of more dollars. The house she had purchased needed a new roof, she need-

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ed glasses or there were more doctor bills. He felt comforted, though, that someone was back home caring for her.

Cut off from all contact with his mother, except through Dennis, Troy remained the dutiful son. His business was prospering to the point where he had bought a small store and had several peddlers working for him.

More years passed and Troy began to grow older. The letters he received from Dennis became even more sporadic; sometimes he would receive two or three letters a month and then it might be several years before another one came. With each letter, however, came another request for money.

In the 1950's Troy received a letter telling of his mother's death and asking for money for funeral expenses. He sent the money along with instructions for a large marble tombstone. With his mother's death the let-


ters stopped.

As the years crawled by, and his hair began to turn white, he began to think more and more about returning to Huntsville. Although he had acclimated himself to his adopted country, spoke the language well, and even looked like a native, he never really considered it his home.

Sometime in the 1960's he resumed writing his stepbrother, Dennis, explaining his desire to return.

Dennis wrote back that it would be dangerous, the murder was still talked about and Troy would no doubt be sentenced to life in prison. After a series of letters Dennis proposed another approach.

He knew a politician, he



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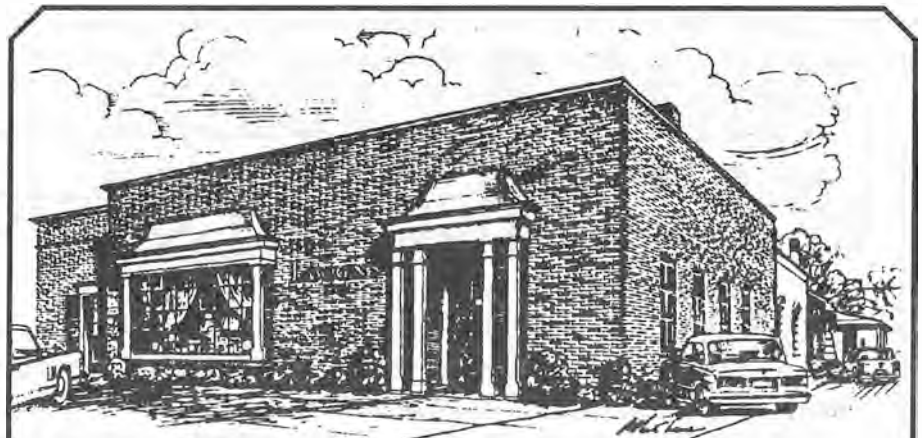


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wrote, who was close to the governor. He had talked to this person and for twenty or twenty five thousand dollars might be able to get him a pardon.

Troy sent the money, grateful that he might finally be able to return home. Unfortunately, more letters came, with more requests for money. Other politicians had to be bought and attorney's fees had to be paid.

Suddenly the letters stopped. Troy kept writing for years, but this time his letters were returned.

The years had finally caught up with Troy and he was now an old man. Any thoughts of ever returning to Alabama seemed to have vanished. In 1976 he became ill and spent several months in the hospital on the brink of death. As he lay in the bed recuperating he thought about his life and the mistakes he had made.

He would run no more, he decided. He was going home.

As Troy finished his story, Sheriff Headrick leaned back in his chair, pondering what to do next. He couldn't arrest the man until he could prove a murder had been committed and, since so many years had passed, that might be impossible.

Suddenly Headrick made up his mind. Reaching for the phone he called Dianne Thompson, a lady well known around town for helping people. Many people called her "Aunt Bee" after the popular "Mayberry" series on television.

Briefly explaining the situation, Headrick asked her if she would be willing to look after the old man for a day or two while he did some checking. After being assured he was not dangerous, she readily agreed.

That evening, after the old man had gone to bed, Dianne started making phone calls hoping to find a relative of Troy's. After spending hours on the phone she called the sheriff. It was well past midnight but the sheriff answered on the first ring.

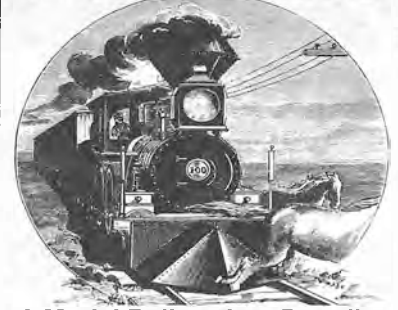
"Dave," she said, "There's something wrong here. His story doesn't match what I've been able to find out."

There was a brief pause as if the sheriff was trying to decide exactly what to say. "I know. Bring him to the office in the morning."

The next morning, after telling the old man to sit down first, Headrick told him what he had found out.

There never was any

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**Touched By The Hands Of God**

murder. Gaines had recuperated from the fight with nothing more than a scar on his forehead to show for the fight. He moved to a small community in Tennessee where he had died in the 1940s.

A look of shock and relief both tore at Troy. "What about my mother?" he asked.

"She died in 1904, the year after you left here," Headrick replied. "Your step-brother died about ten years ago."

Troy sat motionless, too stunned to move or talk. Finally, in a low voice that sounded almost like a plea, he said, "It was all for nothing, wasn't it."

"It was all for nothing." Headrick repeated the words.

The silence in the room was almost unbearable. Finally Dianne Thompson asked if there was anything they could do.

"I would like to see where my mother is buried."

A few minutes later they were at the office of Maple Hill Cemetery. A search of the records showed no one with his mother's name. "Most likely," an employee explained, "she's probably buried in what is known as Potter's Field. They didn't keep very good records of a lot of those burials."

"I want to see it."

When the police car pulled to a stop in the section known as Potters Field the old man

gazed out the window as if he was searching for something. Finally he turned away, saying, "Not even a tombstone."

As they started to leave the cemetery the old man made one more request. "I want to see where my step-brother is buried."

Headrick thought about it for a minute. The other cemetery was out in the county and he had other appointments that morning. "The hell with it," he decided, "Someone owes the old man something."

A half hour later they pulled to a stop in front of the cemetery. After parking the car they got out and began searching. Minutes later they found the grave several hundred feet from the road.

Headrick and Dianne Thompson watched the old man as he walked around the gravesite, reaching out every few moments to touch the im-

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posing polished marble tombstone. After a few moments he asked if they would wait for him in the car. He wanted to be alone with his step-brother for a few minutes, he explained.

Headrick and Thompson had almost reached the car when they turned around to see what he was doing.

The old man was zipping his pants up. For the first time there was a smile on his face as he gazed at a large wet stain spreading slowly across the grave.

Later when Headrick told the story, he remembered the man being almost happy as they drove back to town. "He kept pointing out roads and buildings and saying how he remembered them and telling stories about growing up here. When we got to town we stopped at the Big Spring so he could see it again. He knelt down and, using his hands, took a big drink."

"I used to do this when I was a kid," he grinned.

"We drove around for a while looking at the old buildings," Headrick remembered, "and then he asked us to drop him off at the bus station. I asked where he was going."

"Birmingham," the old man replied. "I started to go there a long time ago but something came up."

"I hope he made it," said Dave Headrick years later as he sat staring at an empty glass in front of him. "I really hope he made it."

**"Weight Watchers will meet in the church Saturday. Please use the large double doors on the side."**

**Seen in recent church bulletin**

## Heard on the street in 1923

- For sale - Cheap. Hogs and pigs. If you want pigs or hogs come to see me. D. B. Jett, Brownsboro, Route 1

- One hundred and nineteen arrests were made by the Huntsville police department during this month. Arrests for violating the Sanitary laws, 21, lead the list. Stock at large coming next with 16 and drunks, 14 coming in third on the list. There were 12 arrests for traffic law violations and eleven for affrays, the balance were scattered among a large number of other causes. The total fines assessed amounted to \$1,398.25, collections being \$1,053.25. Fines worked out totaled \$300.

- W. I. Thompson has been appointed truant officer of Huntsville, succeeding Mrs. T. A. Rankin who recently resigned the position. Her duties will be to see that no child of educatable age is kept out of school for other than valid reasons.

- During the heavy electrical storm of Wednesday night a barn belonging to James Bryce, new Hope, was struck by lightning and destroyed together with its contents of feedstuffs and farm machinery.

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# Moving Day

By Malcolm Miller

Being the son of a share cropper growing up I never knew from one year to the next where we would be living. Fortunately the first fifteen years of my life, my family of Mama, Papa and six older boys moved around several times but stayed mostly in the Ryland area. I was born on the Carl Moring Sr. farm and lived there just off of what is now Wail Road, and then we moved to the Ben Lawler farm when I was six years old, then after two years there we moved to a farm bordering the Flint River.


In fact we moved so often that there was a joke about moving the chickens. You see the night before we were to move the chickens we would go to the hen house after dark, pull the chickens off the roosts and tie their legs together with strips of cloth. The joke was that we moved so much people would say that when we went to the hen house at night with a

lantern the chickens would lay down and cross their legs waiting to be tied.

Of all the places we lived when I was growing up my happiest days were spent on the farm along the Flint River. For an eight year old boy who loved to fish and swim I felt like I was as close to heaven as I ever wanted to be. We had a great swimming hole that all the boys in the community loved. We fished with poles and trot lines and made wire baskets out of chicken wire and put them in the river. This gave us a good supply of fish the year round. Believe me this was a welcome change from the

rabbits, possums and squirrels we were able to kill or trap. The fish were especially welcomed in the late winter months when the old milk cow went dry, the hens quit laying and the meat we had preserved in the fall was down to some sow belly and fat back.

Living in the Ryland area the first fifteen years of my life I was fortunate to be able to go to Central School from first grade to half way through the ninth grade so naturally I had the same buddies through all those years. There was my best buddy Charlie Gossett, also Muley Taylor, Elroy Phillips, Craw Dad Warren, Claxton Warren,



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Dewey Webster, Emmett McK-inney, just to name a few, but sad to say some of those are no longer living. Dewey Webster, Craw Dad Warren, Claxton Warren are still around and I did see my old buddy Ed Bailey recently and it is very good to know several of them are still around.

My life totally changed when I was fifteen years old. Papa rented a farm on Bob Wade Lane near Merediantown and I was heart broken. I was leaving my beloved Flint River where I had spent those happy seven years and for the first time having to leave all my school mates and to make matters worse my dog, Old Shep, who I, with affection, called Old fuzzy, died. We were practically inseparable for nearly fifteen years.

One other thing that made the move from the river more painful was the fact that they offered to sell the farm on the river to Papa for four hundred

dollars a year, about the same amount that he was paying for rent, but Papa had this worry about not wanting to go into debt so we had to move again and they sold the farm to someone else. So you see moving day from the farm on the river was one of the saddest days of my young life.

Sometimes when I look back on those days we must have looked like the Beverly Hillbillies, with a wagon load of furniture, chickens, farm tools and a couple of milk cows tied to the back of the wagon. But as the saying goes, all's well that ends well. I soon made friends at my new school at Merediantown and am still close to some of them till this day, but the fact remains that the seven years I spent on the banks of the Flint River will always remain in my mind and moving away from there was not a happy day for a young boy. As I grow older those days seem so much dearer to me as each day passes.

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# News from 1875

- For Rent - the large and commodious store room with ware room attached, and the enclosure included, situated at the foot of Jefferson Street and adjoining the Railroad, now occupied by Joe T. McGehee & Co., will be rented for one year. Contact Mrs. Geo. Neal at her residence on Franklin Street.

- Our friend Henry Ford, who has a most elegant little saloon on the North East Corner of the Square, invites all his friends of the old 4th. Alabama, and everyone else, to call and test the quality of his cooling drinks. Henry was a good soldier, and therefore a good judge of liquor.

- The public is invited to try Volta's Electro Belts and Bands, available at all drug stores. All nervous disorders, chronic diseases of the chest, head, liver, stomach, kidneys and blood, aches and pains, nervous and general debility are quickly cured by wearing the electric belt.

- Lost - somewhere between the Baptist Church and the Public Square, a large double Shawl, all wool, black and white plaid.

- Dr. Henry A. Binford, one of Huntsville's highly esteemed citizens, was stricken down with paralysis a few nights ago and now lies in critical condition, with no hope of recovery. It seems on the day of his affliction he had been unusually active and had exercised more than usual, and had eaten more heartily than ordinary. He had visited a patient at ten o'clock that night and was quite lively up to that hour.

- On Saturday night the warehouse of Mr. J. A. Stephens was broken into, and as much bacon carried off as the thieves desired. A large hole was made through the wall at the rear of the house where was stored a large amount of bacon - some thousand pounds. The amount taken could not be ascertained. No arrests have been made to this time.

- Where there are so many idle and worthless people floating around as are now found in Huntsville, this thieving will continue and the sooner the vagrant law is enforced the better. Whenever a man is found loafing about without visible means of support he should get promptly arrested and put to work. It is evident that those who do not work must steal for a living.



**"Congress is so strange - a man gets up to speak and says nothing, nobody listens, and then everyone disagrees."**

*Will Rogers*



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# Heard On the Street

by *Cathey Carney*

Our Photo of the Month winner for last month was **Kevin Clemons** - who was the first caller to correctly identify that sweet girl as **Sandra Moon!** Kevin works for the City of Huntsville in the Traffic Department - Signs & street marking. I said it last month and I'll say it again - ALL our city workers are the best and we're so proud of them! Congratulations to Kevin for being on the ball for this month!

**Michael Sylvester** of MS Masonry wants to send a special "way to go" to his nephew **James Edward Sylvester III**, whom they call "Trey", on his graduation from Lincoln County High School. Trey lives in Huntsville and his family is very proud of him!

Congratulations to that handsome **Neil Cocker** and his beautiful bride of 60 years, **Teddy**, on their wedding anniversary! We're proud of you!

We want to wish **Joe Southers** a very happy birthday - he recently turned 83 and lives in



Grant. He loves reading stories of the area's history.

Happy birthday also to **Evan Troup** who turns 7 in late June. He's planning a fun swim party at home for the event.

Another graduate is **Justin Micheal Bzdell**, son of **John Bzdell** of Marathon Paining, who went to Huntsville High and got his diploma the end of May. Congratulations to a really sharp young man!

We were so sorry to hear of the death of **Dr. Tom Neely** of Huntsville. He moved here from NYC, worked at Thio-kol for a number of years and raised his family here. He was a deacon at First Presbyterian church and was a proud member of the Golden K Kiwanis. We send our deepest condolences to his wife **Rebecca Neely**, daughters **Ann Neely**

and **Janie Vianey**, son **Tom Neely** and their many friends and family.

Some very special students attending Weatherly Elementary school recently traveled to Montgomery in order to compete in the Alabama Council for Technology in Education. **Hannah Troup** & her group of 3 others came in 3rd in the State for Video Production!

Congratulations to **Judy Smith** who took home awards in the recent NAR-AARC Antique car show - she won 2nd place for her '37 Plymouth and 3rd place for her '76 Mercedes.

The **Historic Lowry House** is becoming quite the exciting destination for elementary schools in this area. Recently some Hampton Cove 2nd graders learned all about medicine of old days and how cotton was processed. Then Weatherly Elementary 4th & 5th graders heard about some of the ghost stories surrounding the old home. Word is spread-

## 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 girl is well known around town and the courthouse.



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ing around the city and many youngsters are reserving spots for the special field days.

**Newman Ward** is a name that many readers may find familiar - Newman lived in Huntsville years ago and was a mail delivery person for many years prior to 1950 and had many favorites along his route. One very special friend Newman knew here in Huntsville was **Jean Pitsinger**. Newman passed away at the age of 94 at home in Malibu where he lived with his son **Fred Ward** and **Charlotte**, Fred's wife. He will always be remembered for his funny stories of people he met in Huntsville and places that are no longer here. We send our sympathy to Fred, Newman's daughter **Lynn** and husband **Jim Erckmann**, as well as the rest of the family, I know they miss him so much.

Speaking of **Jean Pitsinger**, she told us she will turn 97 on her birthday this December, and is doing really well. She's working on some stories for Old Huntsville, including one on a store that used to be located on the square downtown.

That special lady **Lola Stutts Braxton** had a birthday in May and it was celebrated with her daughter **Diane Owens**, as well as her son **Will Stutts**. Lola never seems to get any older and looks beautiful every day!

**Eddie Allen** wrote us and said that we had run a story recently about a bus route downtown where the buses were yellow. Eddie says the buses were GREEN and were operated by Crescent Transit and they were 1940's GM brand in green. Crescent also operated black and white taxis. He lived on the Mayfair bus route that picked them up on Whitesburg at Dawn Avenue and let them

out downtown at Dunnavants. They walked over to the library on Madison street to catch the bus back home, and paid ten cents each way! He said the drivers knew whose boy you were so if you got into trouble on the bus your parents would find out very soon and capital punishment followed. He also remembered that elementary kids rode the bus downtown all the time with no worries! Certainly a different time.

**Chris Wallace** wrote us about his mom **Betty Jo Southers** (maiden name Lambert) whom many people remember. She was born in Dallas Mill area and raised 10 children. She worked at the old Bon Aire restaurant and also Sno-White across from the courthouse. Then she went to work for a long time at Zesto's at 5 Points. Some years she worked two jobs at a time in order to keep her kids clothed & fed. Betty Jo died in early February of this year and her family misses her each and every day.

Welcome to all our Newcomers to Huntsville, and be sure and visit downtown & the beautiful Historic Districts. You won't believe the gorgeous gardens & homes you'll see!

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*Teddy Roosevelt*



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# Cool Summer Salads

## Bridal Salad

- 2 8-oz. pkgs. cream cheese, softened
- 2 c. mayonnaise
- 8 T. confectioners sugar
- 1 sml. bottle sliced maraschino cherries
- 2 c. crushed pineapple, drained
- 2 c. whipped cream

Cream the first 3 ingredients. Stir in cherries & pineapple before folding in the whipped cream. Place in individual molds or large dish and freeze. Serve on lettuce leaves.

## Fresh Mushroom Salad

- 1/2 lb. mushroom caps
- 1/4 t. ea. salt & black pepper
- 1 t. minced garlic

- 1 t. dried oregano
- 3 T. fresh lemon juice
- 1/2 c. olive oil

Cut stems from mushrooms and reserve them for another dish. Wash caps and dry with paper towel, slice evenly. Combine remaining ingredients, add mushrooms and toss to coat. Let stand for about 2 hours. Serve over salad greens or on an antipasto tray.

## Green Cabbage Salad

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

- 1/2 c. salad oil

Wash, drain and combine vegetables in a serving bowl. Put remaining ingredients in a blender and whirl til dressing is thoroughly mixed. Add to salad just before serving. Excess dressing keeps well in fridge.

## Cousin Doris' Asian Salad

- 1-lb. pkg. broccoli slaw
- 4 green onions, chopped with greens
- 3 oz. Ramen noodles
- 1/2 c. cashew nuts
- 1/2 c. sunflower seeds, toasted
- 1/4 c. vegetable oil
- 1/2 c. sugar
- 1/3 c. cider vinegar
- Seasoning packet from the

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noodles.

Break up the noodles and mix with the onions and slaw. Mix the oil, vinegar, sugar and seasoning and pour over the broccoli mix. Refrigerate for 24 hours. Add cashew nuts and sunflower seeds right before serving.

### Dilled Tomatoes

6 ripe tomatoes, peeled and sliced

- 2/3 c. salad oil
- 1/4 c. vinegar
- 1/4 c. snipped parsley
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1/2 c. sliced green onions
- 1 t. salt
- 1/2 t. fresh ground pepper
- 1/2 c. thyme or marjoram

Pour ingredients over the tomatoes and marinate overnight. This will keep for days.

Not sure why this is called "Dilled Tomatoes". Not a bit of dill in it.

### Black Bean Salad

- 1/3 c. olive oil
- 1/4 c. fresh lime juice
- 2 T. fresh cilantro, finely chopped
- 1 T. jalapeno pepper, finely chopped

- 1 t. chopped garlic
  - 1/2 t. cumin seeds
  - 1/2 t. salt
  - 2 cans black beans, rinsed and drained
  - 1/2 c. red onion, chopped
  - 1/2 c. chopped yellow bell pepper
  - 1/2 c. chopped red bell pepper
  - 2 c. white shoe peg corn, drained
- Mix all ingredients together and marinate overnight.

### Garlic Dill Potato Salad

- 3 lbs. new potatoes, peeled
- 1/2 c. sour cream
- 1/2 c. mayonnaise
- 1 1/2 t. dried dill weed
- 2 T. Dill pickle cubes
- 2 T. capers
- 2 t. Dijon mustard
- 1 1/2 t. lemon juice
- 1 t. chopped garlic
- Salt & pepper to taste

Boil the potatoes in boiling salted water til tender, about 30 minutes and a knife goes in each potato cleanly. Remove from pan, rinse in cold water, cut into slices or cubes and put in bowl.

Combine other ingredients, pour over the potatoes and refrigerate overnight before serving.



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# The End of the War

by Bushwhacker Johnston

*A true and authentic account of the end of the war in Huntsville and Madison County as described by one of the leading participants.*

Lee has surrendered, Joseph Johnston has surrendered, and as far as we know, all have surrendered. Hence it looks very much like we have been beaten and all is lost. "Now, boys, hear me for the last time. Had I no one depending on me for a living and no one to care for but myself, and just one man to walk by my side and press Southern soil, just as long as we had strength to stand upon our feet we would fight those blue-coats hilt to hilt. But your unworthy commander has a family depending upon him for support. Therefore, for their sake we are going to surrender, and you who wish to go with us shall have the best terms possible to be made."

A large majority of those present agreed to surrender with us, while the rest refused the proposition. At once, we sent a dispatch to the Federal commander in Huntsville, which ran as follows:

*"General Granger,*

*Dear Sir: We have concluded to surrender our command, provided you will give us a living chance. But we wish it distinctly understood that after we surrender, we are not to be marched through the streets of Huntsville, to be tantalized like so many monkeys, or court martialed, shot, or hung like so many dogs; or in other words, if we are forced to sell out, we intend to sell out at the very highest price. We repeat it, give us a living chance and we will surrender all the men we can get to come in."*

General Granger replied, in substance, as follows:

*"Major Johnston, Dear Sir: I will grant you, with pleasure, the same terms that were granted to General Lee and General Johnston.*

*Respectfully, Granger."*

At the same time he proceeded to state the

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terms so plainly that they could not be misunderstood. The reader will understand that there had been so many threats against our command that we had no notion of surrendering until the terms were laid down in black and white.

After a few more dispatches had passed between the two parties, the terms of surrender were agreed upon, and General Granger appointed a man to receive the surrender, while we appointed a man to make it. Rather in "grand army" style, the reader will perceive. Colonel William Given was appointed by General Granger to receive the surrender. In the meantime, we had requested the general to allow none of his men to come south of the Memphis & Charleston railroad until after we had met him, giving as a reason that it would tend to scatter our men and render it difficult to get them together to surrender. We shall have more to say about Colonel Given as we proceed, for there were things that occurred while we were with him that much astonished us. Wherever we touched the colonel, he proved to be all over a man; and we would add that he was the first blue-coat that had given us this evidence since the war began. We were to meet Colonel Given at Trough Spring on the side of the mountain, about half way between the base and the summit. And at the appointed time away we went to become prisoners of war.

We arrived at the appointed place first, which was on the public road leading from Huntsville to Vienna (New Hope). We did not have to wait long until we heard the bluecoats coming. There was quite a crowd of them, and they had two brass bands. And to finish the thing up, well, they had brought along a ten gallon demijohn, which they said was full of old apple brandy. In the crowd were Dr. Patton, Squire Tabor, and old Ben Jolly, all staunch friends of Johnston and his boys, and they were present to make as fair weather for the bushwhackers as possible.

As they approached, the Federals were making the welkin ring with music. As soon as we heard them coming, we had a white rag hung high in the air. Then we beheld a Union flag with a white flag waving close by its side, advancing to meet us. Colonel Given and our appointed officer met first, after which this notorious bushwhacker advanced and was introduced to the colonel. As soon as the formal salutations were ended, the bushwhacker remarked, "Colo-

nel, permit me to say that you are the first Federal, officer or private, whom I have met since the war began who treated me as if I had been anything above a four-footed animal."

The colonel replied, "I am sorry to hear that, major."

"I know that is plain language, colonel," we rejoined, "but it is nevertheless the unvarnished truth."

In a few minutes Colonel Homer, who had fallen in behind us with his regiment, came marching up. As soon as the major laid eyes on him, he turned to Colonel Given, saying, "If we had met that man ten



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minutes before we met you, there would have been a fight, for we never intended to surrender to that fellow." And we found before we got through with him, that Given was not burdened with respect toward Homer.

Soon they began to drink their apple water, and some of them became rather lively. Among other things, they urged the major to drink also: and they kept pressing him so that he became uneasy, lest they should try to pour it down him. At length he said, "Gentleman, if I were in the habit of drinking at all I would drink with you today, but you must excuse me for I do not drink with man, woman, nor child." Just at that moment, Dr. Debow said, "I am authorized to do Major Johnston's drinking." Which gave the major elbow room to slip out.

Thus things went on for some time, and the Federals, if no one else, seemed to enjoy themselves hugely. The agreement was that we were to be paroled on the ground and set at liberty. But presently it began to rain, and there was little chance to write paroles in the rain. Colonel Given then proposed that we march into town, where we could find shelter. But we objected. He continued to urge and we to object. At this crisis up stepped old Uncle Ben Jolly, and with



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his strong commanding voice called out, "Major, move into town with your men. It is true we cannot treat you as well as we would like to. But I've got plenty of meat and bread, and two large rooms covered with carpets where your men can be crossed and piled. Besides, I've got the best Rebel gal in all America."

Then Colonel Given began to urge again, and under the pressure of both we yielded. When the latter was appointed to receive our surrender, he asked our courier some pointed questions. First: "Are not Johnston's men poor men?" "They are." Second: "Will they not need their horses in order to make a crop?"

"They will."

"Well, you tell the major to dismount his command and come into town on foot, for if I do not see their horses I will not have to report them." This sounded strange coming from a Federal soldier. When Ben Jolly had finished, Colonel Given pitched in the second time. He was standing in the midst of his officers, when he called out, "Major, it is true your men laid down their arms, but let them shoulder them again and march right into town, and if I had my way, I would allow your men to keep their arms to kill Borne or those rascals who might give them trouble."

We leave the reader to draw his own conclusions, while we pass on. The time we are writing about was the middle of May, 1865, and what we have just

mentioned occurred in the afternoon.

As it continued to rain, we were finally compelled to go into the city. And as we entered the city, there were two roads, one entering the upper and the other the lower part of town. The arsenal where they intended to deposit our arms was in the lower part. Colonel Homer, who was in advance, took the right hand road, while Colonel Given took the left hand, leading to the arsenal. We had not advanced

far into the town, when Homer sent a courier across a number of streets, ordering Given to take the right hand road. We were by the colonel's side when he received the order and saw his eye flash as he answered. "You tell Colonel Homer that I am in command here, and he will do well to attend to his own business."

In a few minutes we halted near the arsenal, when a number of citizens and soldiers gathered about us. And while our arms were being stored away, we could hear the soldiers and citizens mak-

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ing various remarks, when one of them exclaimed: "Well, those fellows did more execution than any set of men I ever heard of, to use such pokestalks for guns."

If we had been so minded, we could have made the secret plain to him. The fact was when we found out we had to surrender, we hid our best guns in caves for safe keeping. And we are of the opinion that there were no better arms of the kind in all the United States than those we hid away.

On the other hand we doubt whether a sorrier set of guns could have been gathered up in all Dixie than those we surrendered.

Night came on very soon after our arms were stored away, and the next thing that concerned us most was a place

of lodging. But the enemy put no special guard over us, but allowed us to stay with our old friends, while the citizens vied with each other in trying to make us comfortable.

The next morning when everything was in a bustle up and down the streets, our boys were gathering at the point at which they were to be paroled. When we reached Colonel Given's headquarters, he gave us a firm grip of the hand, as a pleasant smile spread over his face. He began business at once, and while writing the paroles, in stepped one of his aides and said, "Colonel, there is a U.S. horse out here."

Raising his head, the colonel replied, "You may go away from here, sir. There may be a U.S. horse out there, but I do

not see him."

Perhaps an explanation would not be out of place here. When the United States government bought or captured a

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horse, it was branded with U.S. and ever afterwards it claimed to be Uncle Sam's property.

Colonel Given continued his writing, but it was not long before the same fellow came back and said, "Colonel, there are three or four U.S. horses out here." We saw at once the colonel was stirred, for he used such strong language in reply that we shall not repeat it.

Among other things he said, "If I were to go out there perhaps I would find half a dozen U.S. horses, but I do not see them. Sir, you go away from here, and stay when you are gone." The fact was there were more than half a dozen horses there, but the terms of surrender were that our officers were to retain their horses as well as their side arms. After so long time our command was paroled and released as citizens of the United States.

When the men of our command arrived at their respective homes, taking their horses with them, we settled down to make a living, and to accept the situation as best we could. And although the Reconstruction period that followed proved something harassing, we tried to be loyal to our oath and make good citizens of the restored union. It is true that as a consequence of war, bitter feelings were stirred up in the minds and hearts of the opposing parties. But we were willing to forgive and to ask forgiveness; and after more than thirty-five years have passed by, we have not seen fit to change our mind.

## Old Huntsville Trivia

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

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

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



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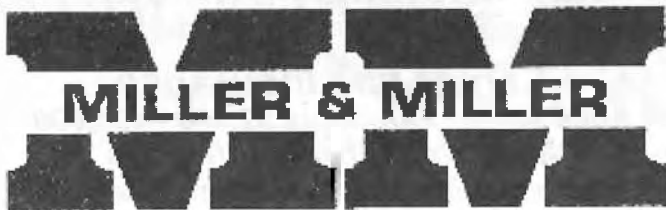
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# Huntsville's Pioneer Newswomen

by Stephanie Troup

In 1885, John Withers Clay was stricken with a cerebral hemorrhage and forced to leave his publishing duties at the Huntsville newspaper he purchased in 1856, the Democrat. In his absence, his two daughters, Virginia and Susie Clay, took over the responsibility of publishing the paper.

At the time it was very unusual for women to work in the journalism field, and the work was hard. The sisters were responsible for gathering materials, writing all the articles and editorials, and setting the type before they could print the paper. Then there were the daily office chores to be done. The sisters had to split and carry the firewood up-town to make the office fire, clean the office, and carry water from the public hydrant on the square.

As single women, they did not have the standing in the community that married women did. The paper allowed them a voice to speak out about a variety of issues that other women in their position would not have had the opportunity to do.

The Clay sisters saw the newspaper as the moral conscience for Huntsville. They felt that they were in a unique position to be able to comment on and write what was on other people's minds in the community. Years earlier John Clay had chosen the motto for the newspaper, "The people must be heard, and their rights vindicated." His daughters carried on this theme when they took over publishing duties.

The sisters had strong opinions and had the courage to voice them through their editorials. Some common issues that attracted their moral in-

dignation were the practice of cock fighting and the lack of a public library in Huntsville. They wrote, "We have heard nothing in regard to the proper officers of the law arresting cockfighters and bringing them to justice. Do they lack moral courage to enforce the laws of our state, or are they guilty themselves?" and, "Huntsville needs a public library. Let someone start the ball rolling." The women also admonished city fathers who were trying to abolish music education from the city schools. They argued that is where children learned to sing patriotic songs of their country.

If the city leaders were neglectful in their du-

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ties, the publishers of the Democrat were quick to point it out. Comments such as "We have heard nothing recently about a bridge being built across the creek on Clinton Street," and, "The condition of the cemetery is a disgrace, not a path decent for a lady to walk on, it's so filled with weeds," were common.

As the years went on, the women expanded the paper to include more worldly news. The front page contained articles related to world, national and state politics. The inside pages were reserved for local news and any subject that caught the interest of Virginia and Susie. The sisters often contributed personal recipes and poems as well. Other competing papers at the time might have sold more copies and been more up to date, but the Democrat contained any and all local news important to the community.

On the inside pages, the

births, weddings and deaths in Huntsville were announced under a heading called "In The Garden of Life." These pages also included updates about the Clay family's happenings. The sisters might have included news about visitors they had entertained at their home, trips they had taken, and personal family anecdotes. The ladies decided what other social items

in the community were worth reporting and included those as well.

One memorable series of stories published in the Democrat was called "Old Mahogany Table Tales." These were family stories related in a very chatty, homey manner, as if a family was sitting around a table recounting their passed down family stories. These tales came

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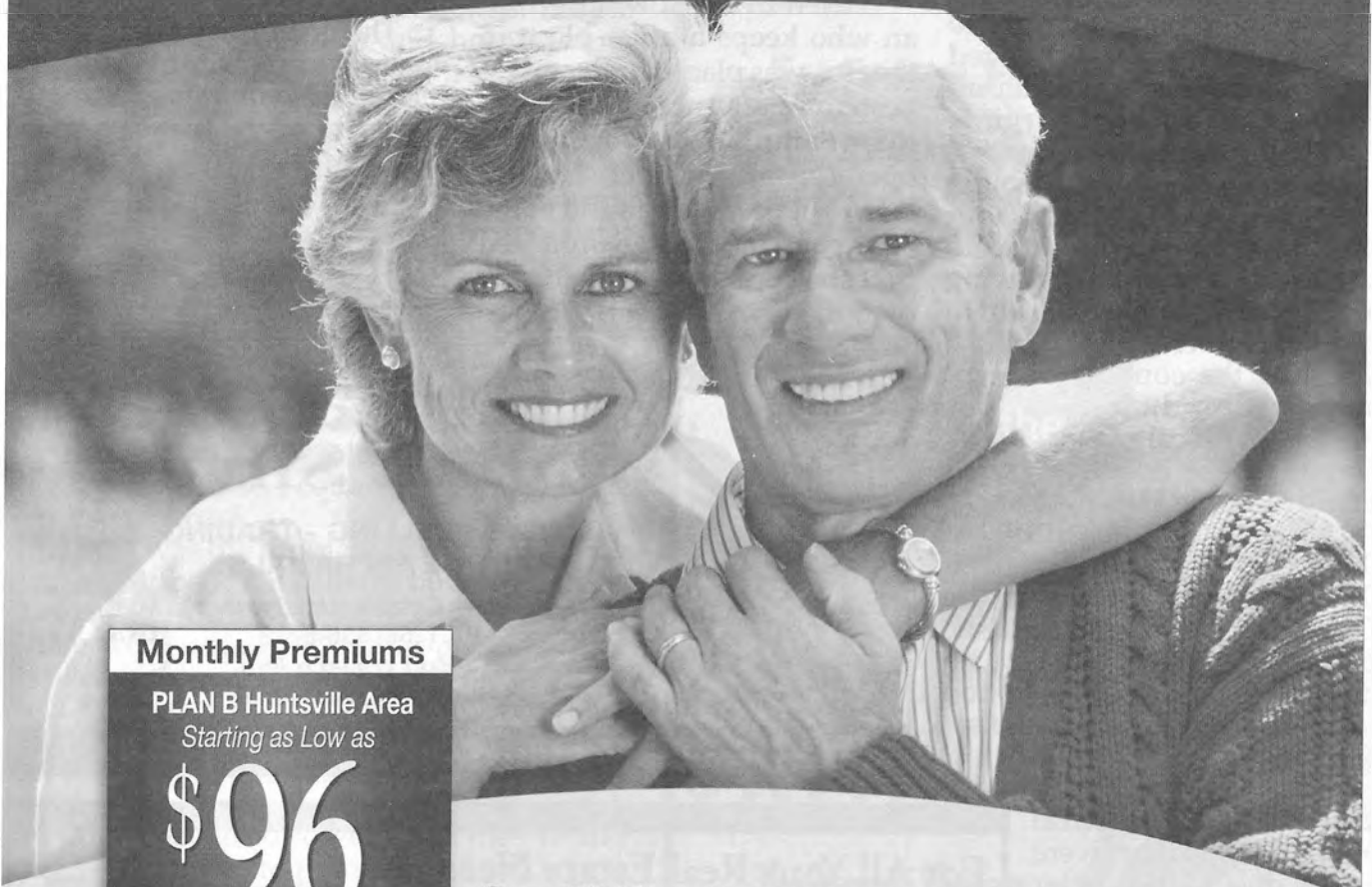
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not only from the Clay family but other prominent Huntsville families of the day as well.

The sisters' opinions evolved with the times, as did the paper's content. For instance Virginia and Susie were at one time strongly opposed to women gaining the right to vote. However, they changed their opinion on that matter influenced by their aunt, Virginia Clay-Clopton as well as socialite Elielee Humes. Through the power of the newspaper the Clay sisters were able to add their voices to the growing number of those speaking out to support women's suffrage. They also had the courage to print about their admiration for a progressive local author, Norah Davis, whose books offended many old-time Huntsvillians.

Virginia Clay died in 1911 at the age of 49 after a prolonged illness. In her obituary in the Democrat it was said that she possessed "vitality, energy, indomitable will to do, devotion to family and friends, always faced the sunshine and left the shadows behind" and that her "mental and physical labors were those of a man." After her sister's death, Susie continued to publish the newspaper alone until 1919 when it was sold.

By the end of their careers, the sisters had gained confidence and prominence and had affiliated themselves with the Alabama Press Association and the National Editorial Association. Through their hard work and example, they paved the way for other women to follow them into the journalism profession.

In 1908 crossword puzzles, canned beer and iced tea hadn't been invented yet.

# Huntsville News from 1910


Helen Evans, a white woman who keeps a quiet place in the city, was placed under arrest yesterday afternoon by policeman Pamplin on a charge of operating a blind tiger. Several bottles of beer were found in the cooler and the woman protested that she kept them there for her own medicinal use. She made

bond in the sum of fifty dollars and appeared in the police court for trial this morning. Dr. Lacy Mastin, city physician, testified that he had prescribed for the woman and directed her to drink beer. The case was dismissed.

The doctor will no doubt increase his prescription business ten fold as word spreads.

**"Any day on this side of the flower bed is a good day."**

*Maxine*



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# Memories

by Newman Ward

My days have been many, but really seem like a few. Some of these I would like to share with you. I have given thanks many times for being born when and where I was. People were so good, friendly, and helpful. Life proceeded at a slower pace, with less tension, less heart trouble, and more knowing and caring who your neighbors were. There was no crime, and everybody helped everybody.

Well, as the fellow said, "I came into this world with nothing, and I still have most of it left." Me too, but I've had fun along the way every chance I got, I wanted to tell you about some of my memories from a long time ago.

I was born in West Huntsville, and practically lived at the Y.M.C.A. I used to go about half way up the block and yell back toward the house, "I'm going to the Y" and then run like the dickens so I couldn't hear a possible call to come back.

The Y was the ultimate playground, with tennis, softball, basketball, bowling alleys, checkers, and movies three nights a week. There were usually always some kids there to play with.

Of course, I had chores to do, and going to the grocery store was one. I like to think of the prices back then, around 1925, when for a nickel you could get a loaf of bread, a stick of butter, coal oil (kerosene), and they would give you a potato to put in the oil can where the cap was usually missing. The potato is worth a lot more than a nickel now.

A big box of wooden matches was also a nickel, and one day I bought a box of matches, stuck them in my back overalls pocket, was skating home and fell. I haven't ever moved

as fast since as I did then getting those matches out of my pocket.

Groceries were usually charged, and paid for weekly. When you paid the bill, the clerk would give you a bag of candy of your choice.

The three local groceries would also deliver your daily order, which you could phone in, or if you pre-

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ferred you could just go by the store and leave a list. You would only order by the contents of the can, such as a can of corn, butter beans, etc., and the store would choose the brand and would deliver to you free.

J.C. Brown's, and Walker's would use a T-model truck, and Chaney's in Lowe Mill would use a horse and wagon, with Sonny Chancy frequently driving. One more price that was a bargain, you could get 10 cents worth of baloney and crackers, or cheese and crackers, which made a pretty good lunch.

If we mentioned 'lunch' in those days, it was usually in regards to a school lunch of peanut butter sandwiches, or maybe an apple, in a time honored lunch box with pictures of some cowboy or movie star. We ate meals of breakfast, dinner,

and supper. Lunch was for the kids' school, or for picnics.

The graduates of West Huntsville 8th. grade, went to Joe Bradley High School for the last three grades, and we usually went home to eat, not being too flush with pocket change.

One of our classmates was Louise Gattis, and her father would drive down to take Louise home, and like magic the car would fill up, and three people hanging on and perched on each running board would luck out for a ride home.

Walking to school in the morning, we would be frequently picked up free by the city bus. Before the buses, the city ran

street cars to Merrimack, then out East Holmes to 5th Street, to Oakwood, and back, for 5 cents.

I

graduated from Joe Bradley in 1933, and married my classmate Bessie Church in 1934. There were 16 in our graduating class, and I don't know if any others are still alive or not. John Riddle was an Air Force Pilot in WWII, and Louise Gattis was a Colonel in the Army's Nurses Division.

Professor Edward Foyl DuBose was our High School Principal, and was beloved by all. He wrote me a letter, January 3rd. of this year, his last letter to me, and said "I miss Huntsville, and all our good friends so much." He was 102 years old, and was being cared for by Ann, his daughter and family in Mobile.

He died on October 4th of

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this year. He was a great man, and always seemed so glad to see you, a big smile always on his face, he was certainly one of my best friends.

Every teacher at Bradley was the best. I think that most folks knew of Mrs. J.B. Clopton, our math teacher, who painted pictures on cobwebs. Mrs. John Sparkman, the Senator's wife, was our English teacher. John O. Broadway was another. All the rest, I have such good memories of them, each one a gem.

Our Civics teacher, Mr. Vines, told us in 1932 that our next war would be with Japan - and I remember that we laughed at him.

I lived in Huntsville from 1916 and moved from there in 1948. I worked as a mailman.

I currently live in the city of Bethesda, MD., after living

in Miami for 53 years. I have thought many times that I would have been better off if I had stayed in Huntsville where I knew most everybody.

The Postmaster had said that I would get a good promotion, but the magic of Miami, and tropical beauty, and the fact that mailmen rode bicycles there lured me away, but I never felt as much at home any where else as I did in Huntsville, Alabama.

**"Don't stick your elbow  
Out so far,  
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*Burma Shave Sign seen on  
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# B-26 Crashes Near Huntsville

by Charles R. Wells

On an early summer morning in June of 1944, I decided to go fishing. With Mama and Daddy's permission, I found my fishing pole, dug a can of worms, got my new (to me) bicycle and got ready to leave. I had celebrated my fourteenth birthday about three weeks earlier (June 2nd), and Daddy had scrounged together enough money (\$6.00) to buy me a Hienz 57 used bicycle.

By this, I mean it had over-size handlebars, no chain guard, a 26-inch wheel in the back and a 24-inch in the front. I was always going downhill. I rolled up my right overall leg to keep it from being caught in the sprocket and headed over to one of my favorite fishing holes on Indian Creek.

After traveling about three or four miles, I had gotten to the hill on the west side of the creek and the north side of 72 High-

way. I was pushing my bicycle along a cow path that ran about halfway up the side of the hill. As I was nearing the highway, I heard a huge explosion to the south and looked that way.

It appeared that the whole end of Rainbow Mountain was gone. There was fire and a lot of smoke, and I could see trees falling from the sky.

I looked up and saw a plane (B-26 Marauder) coming toward me. It was on fire and smoke was coming out of the cockpit and the bomb bay doors.

It was losing altitude rapidly as it passed over me and headed toward a cultivated field at the top of the hill. Its nose was down at a very steep angle and did not flare out before impact. Upon impact, the nose-wheel collapsed, the nose of the plane dug into the ground, the tail went up into the air and a matter of seconds later, it blew up.

The pilot had apparently dropped part of his bomb load on Rainbow Mountain.

I made my way closer to the crash site. The pilot must have radioed the base that he was in trouble because only minutes after the crash, the area was crawling with MPs, police cars and ambulances.

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Within minutes, they had formed a circle of guards around the site. There were several planes, flying around the area. Curiosity seekers began to gather on the highway but were not allowed to approach the crash site. No one questioned me as to what I may have seen.

I was told to leave the area immediately. I guess a freckled face, barefoot boy dressed in overalls, carrying a fishing pole and holding on to a weird-looking bicycle could not tell them anything they wanted to know. An article in the Huntsville Times stated that the only witness to the crash was a Negro woman who could not tell them very much.

Besides myself, the McMurtrie family, working in their field across the highway, were also witnesses to the crash. For whatever reason, none of us were ever questioned about the crash.

I had seen the plane many times before. Almost daily, depending on the weather, it would come over the farm several times; always approaching from a southeasterly direction, pass over and then go on to the southwest. A few minutes later, we would hear the report of

exploding bombs dropping on a mock village on the Arsenal.

Sometimes it would be flying low enough that we could clearly see the pilots. We would wave and sometimes they would wave back or dip their wings to let us know that they had seen us.

The crash site is now occupied by Huntsville Memory

Gardens. Perhaps a fitting tribute to the three men who perished there.

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*Glenda Huffstetler*

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# Official Orders

Camp near Maysville, Ala., November 18, 1863.

CAPTAIN: I have the honor to report that, under orders from Col. W.W. Lowe, temporarily commanding Second Cavalry Division, dated November 13, 1863, instructing me to thoroughly scour the country situated between the Memphis and Charleston Railroad and the Tennessee River from Whitesburg to opposite Decatur, and over that country, pressing horses, mules, cattle, sheep, hogs, wheat, &c., (to prevent them from being run across the river) for Confederate use; to capture and destroy all boats and ferries on the river from Whitesburg to Decatur; to break up or capture a band of rebels, supposed to be encamped near the Tennessee River, about the

mouth of Limestone Creek, and to destroy or render unserviceable a grist and saw-mill in that vicinity and in the service of the rebels.

I left camp early on the morning of November 14, with detachments from the Fifth Iowa, Fourth United States, Seventy-second and Seventeenth Indiana - in all, 400 men, and moving by a circuitous route across the mountains, leaving Huntsville to the right, reached Whitesburg at 5 P.M., capturing 2 Confederate soldiers after a lively chase of some 4 miles, a drove of 29 young, fat hogs, and the ferry-boat which had just come over for them. Learning that the island above was used as a rendezvous for captured stock, I detached Lieutenant McCamant, Fifth Iowa Cavalry, and 24 men to proceed with

the ferryboat and search it thoroughly. He returned about midnight with 25 head of horses and mules. The ferry-boat was then destroyed.

November 15, broke camp at daybreak and moved down

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the river some 3 or 4 miles below. Captain Bowman, Fourth United States, was detached with 150 men to make a detour northward, by way of Madison Station, down the Memphis and Charleston Railroad, and to secure a position in the rear of Limestone Creek, guarding the roads leading out by way of Mooresville and the point opposite Decatur, on this side the river; while I, with the remaining command, moved on down byway of Triana to the mouth of Limestone Creek.

At Triana, captured a sergeant (Confederate States Army), but found the ferry-boats (two of them) on the opposite side of the river, and saw rebels apparently guarding them; also learned that all boats below were, by Confederate authority, kept on the opposite side of the river and sent to this side only on certain preconcerted signals.

Patrolling the banks of the river, a skiff and two canoes were found. The detachment of the Fifth Iowa Cavalry was called on for volunteers to cross in these and bring off the ferry-boats. The call was almost unanimously responded to. Quartermaster Sergt. A.T. Phelps, Company G, and 11 men were selected, who, under cover of 25 sharpshooters selected from the Seventy-second Indiana, dashed

across the brought off both the large boats without loss or accident.

The information that all the boats below were on the opposite side of the river and also that a number were collected for some purpose over there and secreted up a creek some miles below, necessitated the idea of organizing a regular boat expedition. Lieutenant Cassell, Com-

pany 1, Seventy-second Indiana, and 30 men were selected, and with instructions to capture all boats where it was practicable and join me with them at the mouth of Lime-stone Creek, where, should we be fortunate enough to find the enemy, they could co-operate in the attack from the river side. The boat party moved out into the stream, just beyond Triana. The advance

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chased a party of 15 rebels several miles, but their horses were too fleet for ours.

Arriving at the mouth of Limestone [Creek] I found no enemy there; communicated with Captain Bowman, who was already in position.

Learned from him that he had chased a squad of rebels and been fired on in the rear by a small party, but in both cases the enemy's horses were too fleet. He (Captain Bowman) also informed me that the day before a squad of 20 and another of 60 rebels had passed down the road and crossed over the river to Decatur.

Shortly after our arrival Lieutenant Cassell and party arrived with eight boats, some of them being 60 feet long. Having learned that Major Falconnet, with four companies of rebels, was commanding the post at Decatur, I thought that with the eight boats now in my possession we could attack the post and bring off the ferry-boat without incurring too much risk; accordingly, organized an expedition to start from the mouth of Limestone, which is 5 miles above Decatur, two hours before daybreak the next morning. About 12 midnight the enemy commenced throwing up rockets, and continued some time.

November 16; deeming it advisable to be cautious and reconnoiter before dispatching the boat party, parties were sent out in all directions. At dawn the rebels opened on us a brisk fire of small-arms from across the river. A party returning from opposite Decatur brought information that two pieces of artillery could be seen across the river in position and covering

the landing.

A prisoner captured by the same party reported he had been sent over that morning with small party; that General Roddey had been sent for, and was to be at Decatur by sunrise; that a portion of General Lee's command had already arrived, and that they had been entrenching on the upper and river side of Decatur since midnight. Another party reported seeing the enemy throwing up

earth-works.

Rather amused than otherwise at so unexpectedly stirring up so much trouble for the rebels. I deemed it not advisable to attempt just at that time capturing that only remaining boat mentioned in my instructions, and had the boat moved around from under fire of the enemy and up Limestone Creek, where they were chopped up and burned.

Having destroyed certain

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*Jeremy Barksdale, 8*



portions of the machinery of the mill referred to in my instructions, and which I found to be in the service of the rebels, grinding corn and sawing lumber to build boats, the command was divided into three separate detachments, and, with instructions to concentrate at Huntsville, moved out by different routes, leaving the rebels across the river still shoveling dirt, according to last accounts.

We had 1 man slightly wounded. No means of ascertaining the loss, if any, of the enemy.

Arriving at Huntsville, the Fourth United States reported having captured on the way 5 Confederate soldiers, 1 of them the notorious Captain Robison.

November 17, arrived in camp here about noon. The country from Whitesburg to Decatur is bottom lands, exceedingly rich, and in a high state of cultivation; the plantations very large, generally from 2,000 to 4,000 acres each.

The crop of corn is enormous, and horses, mules, cattle,

hogs, and sheep were in abundance as I passed through. Many who had their stock hid out or run across the river, had just had it returned or brought out, thinking the Yankees all out of the country.

As the result of the expedition, we captured and destroyed 9 ferryboats, 9 Confederate States soldiers, one (supposed to be) a captain, and one a sergeant, and remounted the command with from 150 to 200 fine mules and horses, with a loss of 1 man slightly wounded.

Respectfully, your most obedient servant.

J. MORRIS YOUNG,  
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# News from 1878

## Deadly Family Feud

Mathias Jolly was shot and instantly killed by Sam Green last Wednesday night at Brown's Bend on the Tennessee River. The particulars so far as we were able to gather them from persons in the neighborhood are about as follows: It seems that Jolly and his wife, who is a sister of Green's, fell out about some trifling matter, when Jolly slapped her in the face. The wife told her brother what had happened, when he

deliberately took down a rifle that was hanging in the boat, and when Jolly saw Green go for the gun he jumped off the boat to the shore and fled, but he had not gone more than 75 yards before Green fired and the ball went through Jolly, killing him instantly. All the parties lived on a trading boat on the Tennessee River, which was moored at the time to the bank of the river on the Limestone County side.

## Poison Brandy

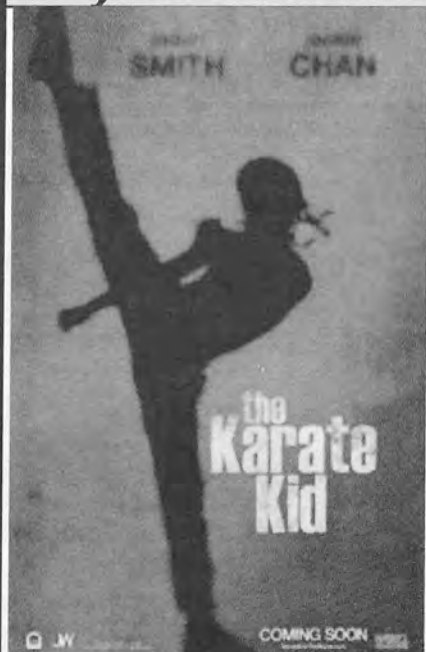
The supposed poisoning of a young man named Childers, in the lower end of Morgan County, has caused some excitement. The fact that he was at a grog-shop and, after taking a drink, complained of feeling

badly, went home and suddenly died, seems to have caused the belief that he was poisoned. We strongly doubt the correctness of this conclusion. The fact that the vendor of the brandy refused to test the brandy afterward, by taking a drink himself, does not change our opinion in the least.

## African Princess

Died in Nashville, TN. this Thursday morning past, Abigail Robinson, an old colored woman well known in the community. She was reputed to have been more than 120 years old and the daughter of an African King who sold her into slavery at the tender age of 13 years old to a slaver.

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# News from the Year 1940

## News From Huntsville and Around The World

### Battle of Britain Raging

Luftwaffe pilots spoke of "an ocean of flames" over London, as German aerial bombardments have dumped tons of explosives on Britain in the last two months, killing thousands. Yet, British defenders have blasted many Nazi raiders. Despite incessant, merciless air attacks, the royal air force has downed over 1,200 Luftwaffe planes; only about 700 RAF craft have been picked from the sky in this "three phase," August-September German offensive, which is being called the battle of Britain.

At the height of the raids, on the 15th, London was terrorized by waves of Nazi bombers. Much of the city has been seriously damaged. As a London correspondent reported after three days of constant attack: "Black columns of smoke are rising from many directions. The Germans are pounding and re-pounding their targets, reopening old wounds. Apparently, the Nazi war strategists have failed in their goal: to defeat Great Britain in the air by

destroying the RAF, and then to neutralize the mighty royal navy. Credit must be given to the spirited, stubborn English aerial defense.

Regardless of war objectives, many innocent people have perished, as the number of victims continues to climb. From Sept. 7-30, during the heaviest air raids, British civilian casualties ranged from 300-600 lives lost and 1,000-3,000 persons injured daily.

### German Explosive Drops on St. Paul's

The Germans demonstrated that nothing is sacred in war last night by dropping a bomb on St. Paul's Cathedral, destroying the high altar. The beloved landmark was only one of 50 targets hit as more than 200 German planes swooped low to deliver their cargo of destruction on London. The bombs that hit St. Paul's however, missed the great dome and the cathedral still stands as a symbol of British resolve, battered but erect.

### Roosevelt Promises 50,000 Pilots


May 24. President Roosevelt, in an effort to prepare for the worst— direct American involvement in the European conflict—has announced plans to train 50,000 volunteer airplane pilots. The extensive training program will draw men from colleges, where the Civil Aeronautics Authority provides courses, from citizens who already have private airplane licenses and from those who simply want to join.



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## First Draft Number Drawn in U.S.

As a band played and planes flew overhead, the first number was drawn today in America's peacetime military draft lottery by Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson. The ceremony opened with a speech by President Roosevelt.

The bowl from which the numbers were drawn had proved to be too small to hold the 8,500 capsules and had to be enlarged by an expert from the Smithsonian Institution.

## Anti-War Organizes in U.S.

Distraught over President Roosevelt's foreign policy of recent months, a group of isolationists has formed the America First Committee. Among its members are Charles Lindbergh, Robert McCormick, publisher of the Chicago Tribune, and a few senators.

The isolationists oppose U.S. intervention in the European war and have organized to protest, picket and parade for their cause. Most of them believe Roosevelt is secretly planning to involve this country.

## FCC Making Television Rules

Saying that commercial television service could begin by September, President Roosevelt today announced the Federal Communications Commission would delay start of the service so it could develop rules preventing any group from monopolizing the new medium. The difficulties standing in the way of commercial television should be resolved by the end of the summer, the president said. While television will put many people to work, financial experts say it will not have the impact of radio or automobiles on the nation's economy.

## Chaplin War Satire: "Great Dictator"

Charlie Chaplin's film "The Great Dictator," now in release, is as disturbing as it is hilarious. Chaplin plays a dual role as a Jewish barber and Der Phooey, Adolf Hynkel. The barber is Chaplin's friendly tramp; Der Phooey is a boor who bats about a beachball globe of the world. Chaplin began the film only a few years ago, when fascism seemed to be just a lot of empty, bombastic posturing. The Nazi party has strongly protested the film and has refused to allow it into any country controlled by Germany.

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# The Dead Children's Playground

By Amber C. Saunders

Dead Children's Playground is a place clouded in mystery and lore. According to legend, children who have died more than a hundred years ago linger there, while the retched spirit of their murderer remains veiled in the darkness. The steel blade in his hand glimmers on even the blackest of nights. He is waiting to reenact a bloody scene that has been repeating itself for over a century.

The playground itself seems harmless enough. Hidden amidst a ring of trees and a solid wall of natural rock formation, lies a secluded safe-haven for children and picnicking families. Two swing sets, a slide, and a seesaw with metal saddles atop it stand firmly on a circle of sand. The playground is almost ancient in its layout, like a Stonehenge for children, though its equipment seems almost new. Except for the occasional rustle of leaves of curious passer-by, the general atmosphere is as peaceful and quiet as a grave. It is hardly the type of place where one would expect to hear of a "haunting", though that is the reputation this place has acquired.

Teenagers of Madison County have come to view the playground as an unorthodox rite-of-passage, daring to go there on summer afternoons at twilight to see if the stories are accountable. Swings sway by unseen hands, phantom feet leave prints in the sand, and shadows of children float across the stones, or so it has been told. Some people say that on humid summer nights the death cries of little children can be heard reverberating off the rock.

In 1988, three teenage girls entered the playground just as the sun was setting for the day. They came in hopes that something out of the ordinary would happen. It did. Only a few short moments after entering there was a change in their

surroundings. The air was deathly still and yet the swings began to move, slowly at first until they were at a steady pace, as if someone was on them. The wind began to blow violently in



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**Steven Wright**

large circles around them, stirring the sand at their feet.

One of them claimed to have heard the sweet soft whisper of a child's voice. And then they saw something that burned a deep hot scar on their brain forever: the unmistakable figure of a man. He was standing stock-still on the rocks above them. His figure was faint, almost a shadow, although he was standing in the sunlight. The girls did not stay long enough for "him" to make his identity known.


Another girl claims that when she was nine years old, her parents took her on an outing to Dead Children's Playground. She enjoyed the day, dining on

ham sandwiches her mother brought from home and gliding down the slide into the safe open arms of her father. The day remains memorable to her, but for a different reason. Her mother and father had already turned their backs and were walking away when she felt a strange compulsion to glimpse behind her. She later swore that she had seen little kids in

"old-fashioned" clothing running and skipping in the hot Alabama sun, even though the place was empty only minutes before.

Many people swear to have seen the infamous forms of children darting back and forth as if playing an unearthly game of hide-and-seek while casting their shadows upon the rock. A few people say that they have

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heard the diabolical laughter of a mad man.

The story of how these children became eternally trapped here is sad but not unfamiliar. According to local myth, the playground rests atop the tiny graves of babies who died sometime in the early 1900s (one has yet to give an exact date).

Supposedly, a wild eyed crazed man bent on the destruction of the innocent, and some say in a alcohol induced rage, brutally ended the lives of three young children at play. His murder weapon of choice was a rusty knife, or ax depending on who is telling the tale. He crept silently onto the rocks and looked down over the children, studying them for almost an hour while plotting his next move. The children below continued to play, unaware of the danger lurking just yards away. Eventually, he crept down the rock and in a fit of fury, silenced their laughter before fleeing the scene of the horrible crime.

By late afternoon, the parents of the children began to grow worried. One parent visited another, who talked to another and it was not long until they realized that none of their children had returned home that afternoon. Frantically they searched for their missing children, crying out their names in the darkening shadows of the late evening.

They were far too late. Night had fallen and the moon had cast an eerie glow before

the victims' parents discovered the grisly scene and the bodies of their offspring. In a fit of hysteria and desperation, the citizens, now turned angry mob, searched for the slayer. Their efforts were in vain. The murderer was never found.

Some locals say the mad man escaped to the next town while others say that he committed suicide after he realized what he had done.

Some people claim to have heard the voices of the parents, still calling for their children, almost a century after the gruesome murders.

Another popular myth about Dead Children's Playground is just as mysterious, although not as chilling as one of a crazed killer. It was a normal and lovely spring morning in the early to middle 1930s when a group of kids decided to go hiking in that

area. One of the kids got the idea to climb up high enough to look over the edge of the cliff and gaze at the spectacular view below.

Here is where the story gets a little hazy. No one knows what exactly happened. Some people say that the boy completed a successful suicide attempt. Others say that one of the other hikers purposely pushed the

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boy, although it is unknown as to why. Still others say that it was pure accident and that the boy fell without the assistance of anyone else. Regardless of what happened the result was the same. The boy plummeted to his certain death. Maybe it is his ghost that haunts the cliffs of Dead Children's Playground, warning others not to come too close.

The one thing all the stories have in common is the playground. Supposedly, when it was built the construction disturbed the souls of the children who had died there. According to legend the children are now supposed to spend eternity playing and laughing, while the murderer is condemned to wander the park reliving the horrors of his deed.

The greatest question is: are

the stories true? Perhaps they were invented by high school seniors with the intent to frighten lower classmen. Were they dreamed up because of the location? A nearby large cemetery can be viewed from the road. Venture there sometime and decide for yourself. The answers you seek could be right over the next cliff.

Just don't go there after dark, not for fear of ghosts but because it is closed to the public after nightfall and you may end up spending the night in jail.

**"Some dog we had.  
We called him 'Egypt'  
because he left a pyramid  
in every room."**

***Rodney Dangerfield***

## How People Get Sick from 1875 Publication

- \* Keeping late hours at night and sleeping too late in the morning.
- \* Eating too much and too fast, and swallowing poorly masticated food.
- \* Keeping up a constant excitement and fretting the mind with borrowed troubles.
- \* Taking too much fluid during meals.
- \* Neglecting to take sufficient exercise so as to keep the feet and hands warm.
- \* Starving the stomach to gratify a vain and foolish passion for dress.
- \* Employing cheap doctors, and swallowing quack nostrums for every imaginary ill.

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# When I Was Young

by Carly C. Vining

When I read a column in the Huntsville Times, long ago, written by Bill Easterling announcing the end of the light-green, returnable Coca Cola bottle, memories of my own life in the country began to stir.

I, too, tasted my first Coca Cola in a country store many years ago.

It was in this same store that I first saw a radio, and heard a broadcast of the Grand Ole Opry on a Saturday night. It was a battery radio with three tuning dials on the front and a horn type speaker that sat on top. A Philco, I think.

Childlike, I'd stop and gaze at the speaker. The music was so real and natural I'd wonder why I couldn't see the artists. It was a miracle to my small mind how music could be sent like that from one place to another. There wasn't much music in our lives in those days.

The Coca Cola box was just an ice-box with a sliding top. A chunk of ice inside and a lot of cold water. Ice was never plentiful in the country. It had to be brought from Huntsville twenty miles away. There was no delivery service either.

The Coca Colas were never cold, just cool. But they were so good!

Mr. Reynolds owned the general store, and stocked most of the things country people needed. Everything from dry goods to hardware. But in those days of no electricity or refrigeration, meat and produce were limited. Most country people grew and preserved their own anyway.

Sometimes on Saturday night I'd help Mr. Reynolds' sons restock their peddling trucks. "Rolling Stores" they called them. Often I'd candle the eggs they had collected and place them in crates. Twelve

dozen to the crate. They were then taken to Huntsville where they were sold or exchanged.

Candling eggs was easy and didn't require much skill. The candling device had a small light in it. An egg was placed in a slot and the light came on. If the egg was fresh it would be clear, if it had dark spots, or was completely dark, it was discarded.

Country folk were pretty honest in those days. Not many of them had money, so their pro-

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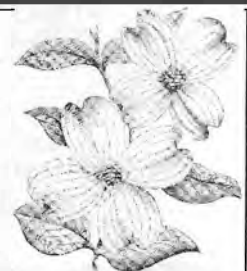
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duce was about all they had to trade on.

After work we'd all sit around on nail kegs and listen to the Grand Ole Opry. My reward would be a Coca Cola, and I really enjoyed it!

In those years the store was lighted by gasoline lamps. Compared to the kerosene lamps used in most country homes; they were great.

Gasoline lamps had a metal base; usually of brass. A small amount of gasoline was poured into the base which had a small, built-in compression pump, to force the gasoline upward to the twin mantles. There was a small valve in the stem to regulate the flow of gasoline and air. The mantles were lighted by a match.

The store's gasoline tank was underground just as they are today, but gasoline was pumped by a hand pump into a round measure at the top of the pump. It was then drained into a car, or a can by a hose similar to the ones on modern pumps.

Later Mr. Reynolds installed a Delco generator in a shed at the back of the store. This was a real revolution in lighting for the countryside.

The generator was powered by a Briggs & Stratton gasoline engine, and provided

32 volts of direct current to the entire place.

At night the light on the front porch could be seen for miles shining through the darkness.

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# Facts You Can't Live Without Knowing

Q. Who was the first couple to be shown in bed together on prime time TV?

- Fred and Wilma Flintstone.

Q. What color was Coca-Cola originally?

- Green.

Q. What company prints more money every day than the US Treasury?

- Monopoly

Q. What state has the highest percentage of people who walk to work?

- Alaska

Q. What is the cost of raising a medium-size dog to the age of eleven?

- \$6,400

Q. What is the average number of people airborne over the US any given hour?

- 61,000

Q. How old was the youngest pope?

- 11 years old.

Q. What was the first novel ever written on a typewriter?

- Tom Sawyer.

Q. How old were the world's youngest parents?

- They were 8 and 9 and lived in China in 1910.

Q. How many people signed the Declaration of Independence on July 4th?

- Two, John Hancock and Charles Thomson. Most of the rest signed on August 2, but the last signature wasn't added


until 5 years later.

Q. Half of all Americans live within 50 miles of what?

- Their birthplace.

Q. What do bulletproof vests, fire escapes, windshield wipers, and laser printers all have in common?

- All invented by women.



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# The Florida Short Route

In 1919, the automobile age was still in its infancy and most roads were literally dirt paths but already tourists were making the long drive to Florida. For many Northerners the most direct route was thru Huntsville. Despite the fact that the roads were horrible, there were no road signs and few gas stations, the city fathers decided to promote the route in an effort to draw tourist dollars to the city.

Thousands of maps and brochures were printed and distributed, advertising the route thru Huntsville as the "Florida Short Route." The brochures, along with providing directions, were full of traveling tips such as "Do not attempt this road during wet weather - wait for at least three hours of full sunshine," and "a person skilled in automobile repair may be found at blacksmith shop at mile 73.8. If he is not there, inquire at the general store next door or the nearby church as he is frequently at both."

Below are directions from Huntsville to Gadsden. Although the distance was only 84 miles, motorists were advised to allow 3 1/2 hours for the trip - in fair weather.

**Huntsville** - Court House on left, First National Bank Building on right, Jog straight ahead South on macadam pike.

**Mile 5.8** - Lily Flagg - Cross RR track; straight thru four cor-

ners; straight thru at 9.7.

**Mile 11** - Whitesburg - The Tennessee River, bear left around store house. (Caution) Do not cross river at Ferry located just around curve to right. Turn right over iron and wood bridge following road straight ahead with poles. Cross wood and iron bridge at 12.4 then bear right over winding road. Cross RR then pass church at 13.9.

**Mile 14.6** - Hobbs Island -Station on right; straight thru, following gravel road and poles. Pass church on right at 16. Pass school house on right at 16.6. Cross wood and iron bridge at 18.1. Sharp turn to right at 19.1, straight ahead; keep to right at

20.7, keep to right at 21. Church on right at 21.4. Straight ahead and turn right at 24.4.

**Mile 24.6** - New Hope - Post Office on left. Straight thru; bear left with poles at 24.8. Bear left at 25.4. Cross iron and wood bridge at 26.2. Keep straight ahead at 27.2. Old school house on right at 28.4. Church on left at 29. Keep straight ahead with travel at 29.4. Cross culvert and bear left at 30. Mile 32.1 - Cottonville - Store on left, straight thru; Fork; take left at 32.7. Church on left at 33. Cross two wood culverts at 34.4 Go over long winding hill at 36-2. Sharp turn to right at 37.6. School house on left at 38.7.



## Village Market

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**"You know you're getting older when you use more 4-letter words - 'What?'...'When?'"**

*Linda Drake, Huntsville*

**Mile 42.8** - Bear right down hill to Tennessee River Ferry; cross here to Guntersville; ferry runs day and night. Necessary to call for ferry at night as it anchors during the night on the Guntersville side. Two large gasoline power ferries each handling five cars. Toll \$1.00. Go straight out from ferry. Four-corners; turn right.

**Mile 44** - Guntersville - four-corners; Courthouse on left; straight thru. Brick church on left at 44.1. Pass watering trough in middle of road, at 45.5. Go thru covered bridge at 46.4. Go up winding road to Sand Mountain.

**Mile 48.3** - Top of Mountain. Irregular four-corners; bear left thru covered bridge at 51.7. Go thru bridge again at 52.4. Pass Cemetery on left.

**Mile 54.4** - Albertville - Four-corners; straight thru. Cross RR station on right at 51.7. Forks keep right at 56.2. Cross iron bridge at 58.8. Cross RR at 60.

**Mile 62** - Boaz - Straight thru; Post Office on right. Pass church on right; thru covered bridge. Forks; take left. Cross RR. Church and school house on right at 65.8.

**Mile 68** - Descend long winding road with wide sweeping curves. At bottom of mountain cross iron bridge and bear left and then right over another mountain at 76.2. Four-corners; straight thru at 78.3. Turn left, RR on right at 78.4.

**Mile 78.7** - Attalla - Bank on left; Four-corners; straight thru

with trolley, crossing RR. Keep straight up hill at 78.9. Cross concrete bridge at 79.6. Cross RR at 80.

**Mile 81.3** - Alabama City -Post Office on right; cross RR

and follow trolley. Cross concrete bridge. Forks; take left at 82.2. Gadsden - Court House on left.



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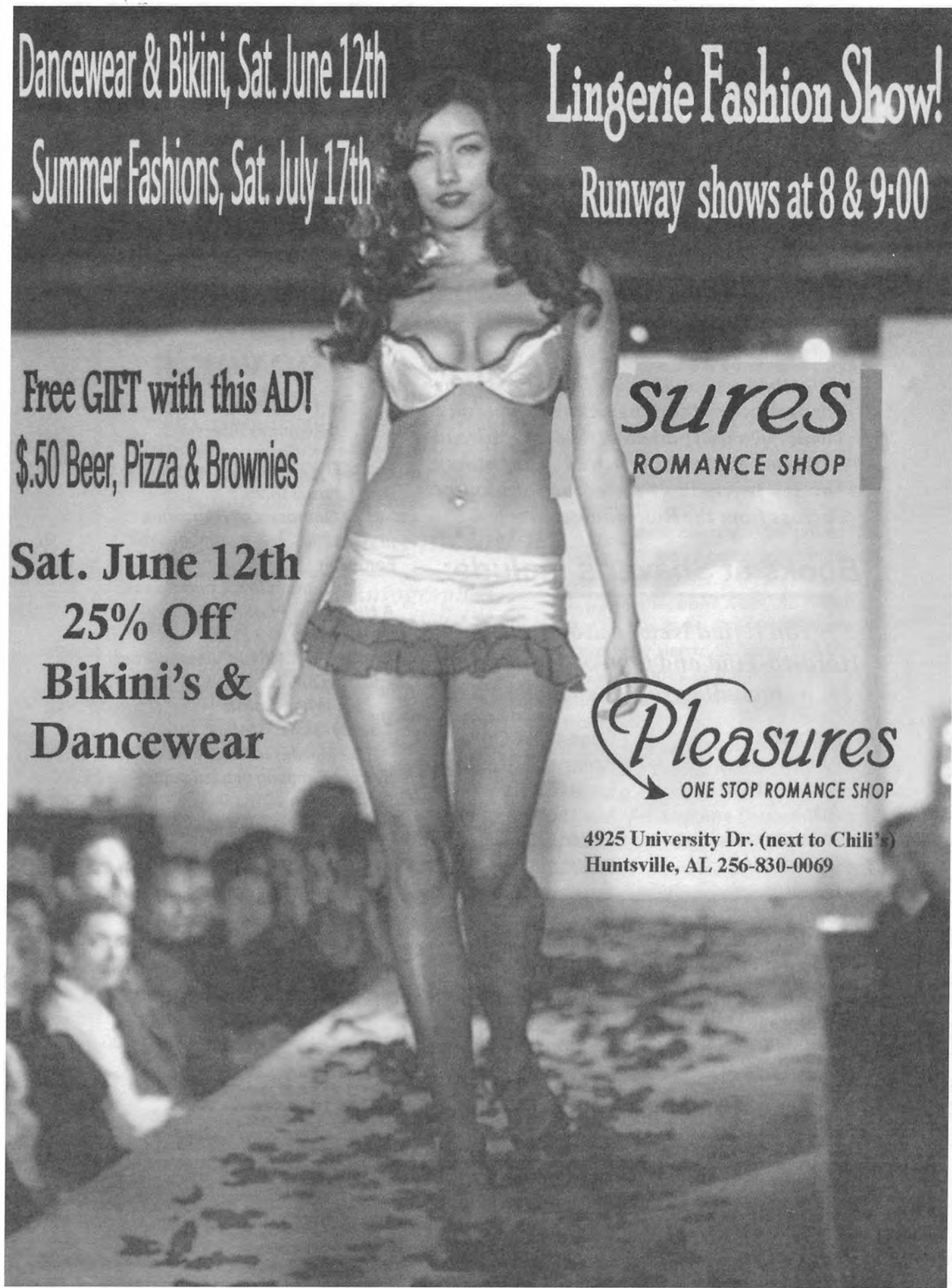
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