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Old Huntsville

HISTORY AND STORIES OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY

The Life and Times of Chief Doublehead



For longer than anyone could remember, the Tennessee Valley had been the ancestral hunting grounds of the Cherokee, Chickasaw and Creek nations. This was a land where Indians could live peacefully without fear of encroachment from the whites.

By the late 1700s, however, times began to change as white settlers from Virginia, Tennessee and Georgia began moving onto the Indian lands.

The great Indian nations, decimated by war and fragmented by internal strife, could no longer offer resistance. Only one man stood in the way of this movement.

Part cannibal, part savage and part statesman, Chief Doublehead would leave his bloody mark on the pages of the Tennessee Valley's history.

Also in this issue: Murder Stalks the Streets

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The Life and Times of Chief Doublehead

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Part cannibal, part savage and part statesman, Chief Doublehead would leave his bloody mark on the pages of the Tennessee Valley's history.

Doublehead was born into the Cherokee aristocracy in the Cumberland foothills of Tennessee. His father had been a ferocious warrior, well-known for his bravery and his brother, Tassel, was a principal chief and statesman. His oldest sister, Wurteh, married a white man, Nathan Gist, and produced a son who was destined to become the greatest of all

Cherokees, Sequoyah. Another sister married a white soldier and their son, John Watts, became the Chief of Chiefs among the Cherokee Nation.

The Indian nations were a scene of much turmoil during Doublehead's youth. Part of the tribes wanted to fight the white men who were taking their lands, while others, guided by their heads rather than their hearts, charted a course of peaceful cooperation.

To say that Doublehead was a rebellious youth would be an understatement. Even as a child, barely out of puberty, Doublehead began leading raiding parties against white settlers. Though too young to fight, the youths would lie in wait until the settlers were away from home, then sneak in, burn their cabins and run off the livestock.

Soon tiring of this, Doublehead began to look for other ways to harass the settlers. The isolated settlements depended on traveling peddlers for necessities such as salt, gunpowder and cloth. Realizing this, Doublehead fanned his group of teenage warriors out across the wilderness trails where they laid in ambush. Within a



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short while no peddler dared to enter the territory unless provided with a large armed escort. The few brave souls who did met with a premature, and often gruesome death.

Doublehead purposely cultivated his image as a blood-thirsty savage. Though the taking of scalps was not common among the Cherokees, he quickly made it his trademark. Even more grisly was his habit of cannibalizing his enemies' bodies. After a successful raid he would cut a piece of flesh from one of his victims, and often, with blood running down his chin, eat it as a sign of his enemies' impotence. Afterwards, he would demand that his warriors, as a symbolic blood oath, do the same.

Years later, when in Philadelphia meeting with President George Washington, an inquisitive reporter asked Doublehead's opinion of the white race. Without even giving the matter a moment's thought, the chief replied: "Too salty."

In order to keep his bands loyal to him, Doublehead knew he had to do more than merely lead them on raiding parties. He made the acquaintance of several white traders and soon goods from the hapless peddlers, who had met an untimely death, began showing up in

stores in the white settlements. In return, Doublehead was able to supply his band with guns, powder and other items not normally available to the Indians.

Despite Doublehead's growing popularity among the tribes, his days of running wild throughout the Cumberland were numbered. The whites were putting increasing pressure on the Indians as a result of the raids and even many of his own tribesmen were beginning to turn against him.

Realizing this, Doublehead gathered his band, a motley mix of Cherokees, Chickasaws and Creeks and moved to the sanctuary of the Tennessee Valley. They settled on a site several miles south of the present day Athens, Ala., which in a few years became a thriving village.

The land was supposed to be shared as a hunting ground by the Cherokees and Chickasaws, with none of them actually living on it. Doublehead quickly solved this problem by giving two of his sisters to George Colbert, the chief of the Chickasaw Nation.

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Ron Eyestone

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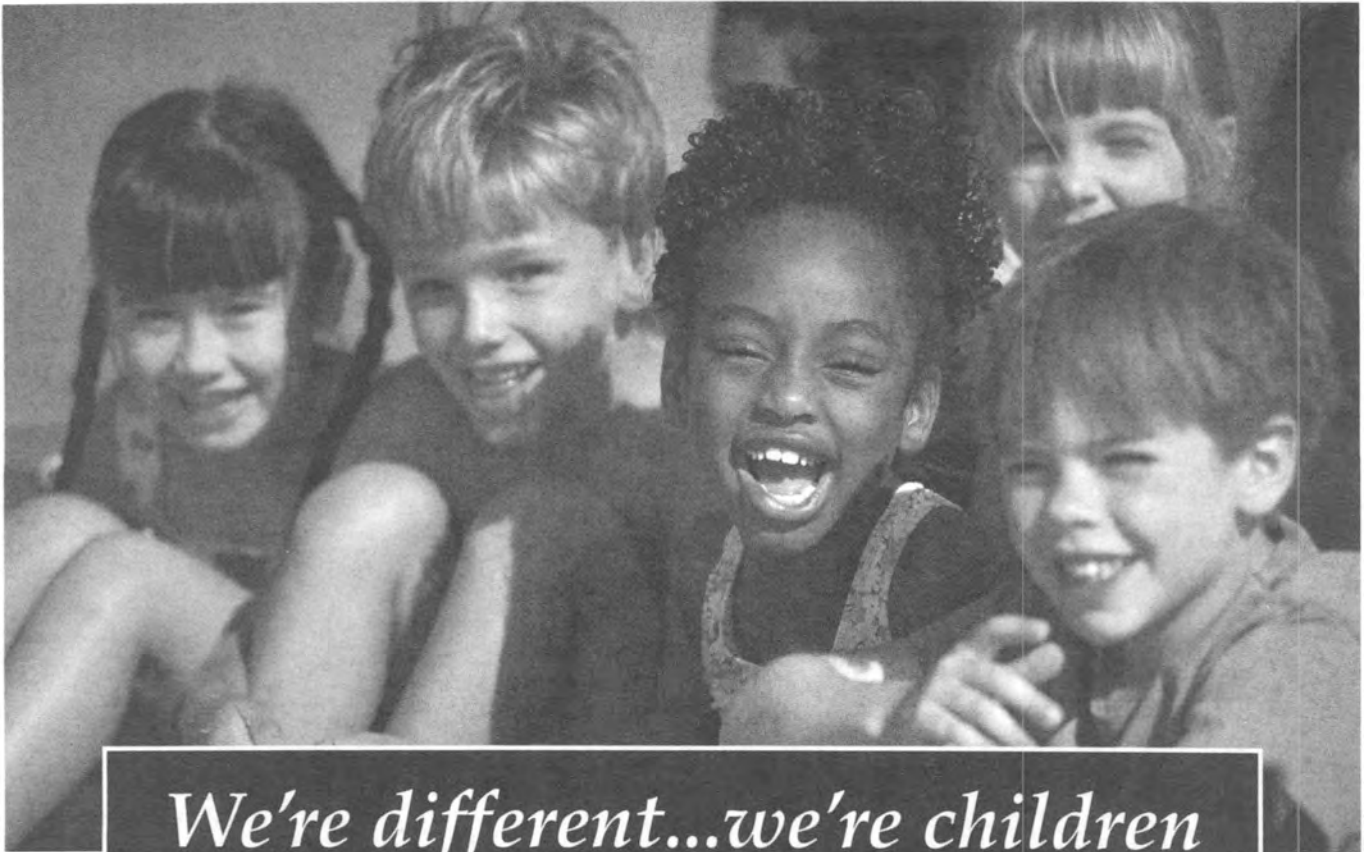
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Though Doublehead continued to be a nuisance, leading occasional raiding parties against the Tennessee settlements, it was the murder of his brother, Tassel, that ignited the fires of open hostility.

Tassel, head chief of the Cherokees, had been invited to meet with Major John Hubbert under a flag of truce. After a series of talks, the unarmed chief was escorted to a smoke house where he was to spend the night. That night, with Hubbert guarding the door, a youth, armed with a tomahawk, entered the building and killed the chief as he lay sleeping. To the whites, this was only justice, as the youth had recently lost his parents to a Cherokee war party.

A murderous rage descended upon the Tennessee Valley when Doublehead learned of his brother's death. His name soon became synonymous with terror as his band fanned out for hundreds of miles in every direction, dealing death and destruction to any settlements in their paths.

Knowing the importance of symbolism among his Indian tribesmen, Doublehead used the death of Captain William Overall to enhance his already gruesome reputation. Overall had distinguished himself as a particularly brave fighter before finally falling under Doublehead's tomahawk.

Doublehead carried the captain's body back to his vil-

lage, where in full view of everyone, he dismembered the body and began eating the choicest parts, inviting his tribesmen to join him.

"The white man is no more than a dog, or a pig of the woods," he reputedly said, "and should be treated the same way."

Perhaps the most unforgivable atrocity, and the one that turned many of the Cherokees against him, happened in 1793. Doublehead's brother, Pumpkin Boy, had been killed in a recent raid against the whites and he was still bitter about it when he entered a village and saw a small white child mounted on a horse behind his nephew, John Watts. Watts had captured the child while assaulting a white settlement, and as was Cherokee custom, would raise the child as his own.

With a wild scream of uncontrollable rage, Doublehead charged, burying his tomahawk deeply in the body of the small child. Afterwards, for the rest of his life, he was known as "Kill Baby" to many of the Indians who were shocked by the ghastly incident.

Then, abruptly in 1794 Doublehead quit the warpath. Almost immediately he began

"Let me know if you suddenly become interesting."

Maxine



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displaying a new found wealth. Indian couriers were sent to Nashville on a regular basis to purchase furniture and other items for his house. He became a collector of fine race horses, once sending all the way to Charleston, South Carolina to purchase one that had captured his fancy. He even began to dress the part of a wealthy man.

The source of his wealth became an item of speculation for people who knew him. Especially intriguing was the fact that much of his wealth seemed to be in the form of bars of silver bullion. At first it was supposed that this was treasure he had stolen during his days on the warpath, but as time went on, people realized there had to be another answer.

Before long, everyone in his tribe was wondering about the source of the bullion. According to legend, Doublehead once asked two of his warriors to accompany him on a trip. After walking for days, he finally led them to a cave where a great quantity of silver was stored. The men loaded as much as they could carry in back packs before returning to the village, where Doublehead

warned the Indians against ever revealing his secret. Quite naturally, as Doublehead had expected, later that night one of the Indians revealed to his wife what he had seen. Doublehead, who was lurking outside the cabin listening, immediately burst into the cabin and killed the hapless Indian.

No one in Doublehead's tribe ever again spoke of the mysterious silver bullion.

Though secure in his new-found wealth, Doublehead still took his life in his hands when he traveled outside of the Indian lands. For the people whose relatives had been murdered by Doublehead, there could be no forgiveness.

In 1794 a leading group of Cherokees had been invited to Philadelphia to meet with the president, and Doublehead, aware of the political ramifications of such a visit, appointed himself as the spokesman. With his tall, foreboding looks, and dressed in an elaborate costume, he was the center of attention.

People nudged and poked one another to catch a glimpse of the man reputed to be the most bloodthirsty savage in America.

Doublehead undoubtedly

capitalized on his reputation, for when he left, Secretary of War Henry Knox awarded him an annual annuity of \$5,000. Knox probably realized this was cheaper than having Doublehead return to the warpath.

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This also placed Doublehead under the protection of the United States Government, much to the ire of the whites who had lost their homes and relatives to his murderous band.

Doublehead quickly settled into his new life-style. He made frequent trips to New Orleans, Pensacola, Charleston and even visited New York once, where he was described as "the classic example of the noble savage." Strangely enough, Doublehead, who once feasted on his enemies' bodies, even visited some of the finer restaurants and attended a under pain of death play while in New York.

Unfortunately, even though Doublehead had become wealthy and was prospering, the Cherokee nation was not. Every year, with every treaty, the Indian lands became smaller. John Hunt had already settled near the Big Spring in northern Alabama of the Mississippi Territory and more settlers were pouring in every day.

In January of 1806, Doublehead and the other chiefs of the Cherokee nation signed a treaty giving up all the land lying between the Tennessee and Duck rivers. Unbeknownst to the other chiefs, Doublehead had negotiated a secret agreement with the Indian agent where he received a large tract of land, numbering in the tens of thousands of acres, in exchange for signing the treaty.

If Doublehead was hoping his duplicity in the treaty would go undiscovered, he was sadly mistaken. Several months later, while attending an Indian ball game at Hiwassee in the Indian nation, he was accosted by a fellow chief named

"Bone Polisher," who loudly denounced him and called him a traitor to his people.

As matters reached the boiling point. Bone Polisher drew his tomahawk and rushed Doublehead, swinging wildly at his head. Doublehead, despite having received numerous wounds managed to shoot his assailant through the heart.

Onlookers carried the wounded chief to McIntosh's Tavern where they sought assistance. Instead of help, however, they were confronted by another group of angry accusers who also called Doublehead a traitor. Someone in the tavern (it's never been established who) extinguished the light. Instantly, as soon as the tavern went dark, a shot rang out. When finally the light was relit, Doublehead was lying on the floor mortally wounded.



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Friends carried the chief across the field to the home of the schoolmaster. Unfortunately, the blood trail was easy to follow and within minutes another group of avengers appeared to finish the task.

Doublehead, the scourge of the Tennessee Valley, was dead.

Doublehead's death signaled the end of the Cherokees in North Alabama. Though they would remain here for another thirty years, they would never again be a powerful force.

Almost immediately after Doublehead's death, people began searching for the source of his wealth. In 1840, two prominent men of the Shoals area, Levi Cassity and James Thompson, found a cave that they believed to be the source of Doublehead's treasure trove. In the cave they found tools and crucibles used for melting silver. Many of the tools still had traces of silver on them.

But there was no mine or any ore. The closest thing

resembling a treasure was a few old Spanish coins retrieved from the cave floor.

Were the coins part of Doublehead's treasure? Many people think so. When Hernando de Soto visited North Alabama during his explorations, he was alleged to have hidden a large amount of silver coins somewhere in present day Jackson County. Could Doublehead have stumbled across the treasure and transported part of it to a cave closer to where he lived? If so, it would explain the tools and crucibles, as many people would readily accept bullion would not take two hundred year old Spanish coins.

We will never know, for as Doublehead once said, "When I die, my secrets are buried also."

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- Federal dry agents report breaking up two stills in Limestone county Saturday. Berry Horton and Willis Stanley, both Negroes, were placed under arrest.

- Quite a crowd gathered on the Green Street side of the county jail yesterday afternoon to witness the destruction of the big still captured Tuesday and resulting in three arrests, as related in the News yesterday morning. The still was of 150 gallon capacity and appeared to be of modern construction. It took hard blows to break it up, the job being accomplished only after half an hour or more of work by a hefty sheriff with a sledge hammer.

- Mayor Adams desires it to be known that hereafter children under the age of 16 will not be permitted to drive automobiles in Huntsville streets unless accompanied by a

parent and are clearly capable of handling a car themselves.

- The erection of twenty new cottages at the Lowe Manufacturing company's mill is well underway with carpenters and other workmen being busily engaged on the work. The houses are of pretty design, modern and well constructed. The new homes will be occupied by employees of the mill and will add greatly to the appearance of the mill village which is kept scrupulously neat and sanitary in all respects.

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Telephones Then and Now

By Malcolm Miller

When I was growing up in the Ryland community in the thirties and forties there were maybe a total of four or five phones in a four or five mile radius of where I lived. These few phones were used by all the people in the area. I know this story would be very hard to believe for some of the young whipper snappers today who think they can't live without cell phones, ipods, iphones, blackberries and a lot of other gadgets that I don't understand

Things were a lot different then than they are now, however the youngsters of those days didn't miss what they didn't know. The telephone operator in Ryland was a blind man named Charlie Lacy, yes I said a blind man. I watched him many times when some of my family and I went to his office to call Dr. Frank Jordan or for some other reason we had to make a call; he would insert the telephone jacks into the right slots by feel.

Those of you who have not seen how this was accomplished have missed the miracle of telephones in the thirties and forties. If you had to call

from Central School or one of the other few places that had phones you would have to use the only type of phone available at that time, a wooden box hanging on the wall with a mouth piece on the front and a crank on one side and a receiver on the other, slightly different than the cell phone we carry in our pockets today. To make a call you would simply remove the receiver and turn the crank a couple of times and say "hello Charlie" and tell him who you wanted to call. In fact there was a saying everyone said now and then, "ring, ring, hello Charlie."

The phone company was privately owned and half of the time some of the lines were down, in fact the telephone poles was so short that you could sometimes reach up and touch the lines and you better believe if a young man could he would.

Even in the fifties and early sixties after I was married and living in Huntsville, the phone service still left a lot to be desired. You see most everyone who had a phone was on a

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party line. I have been on both four and eight party lines and believe me party line was the correct name for them. Each member on a party line was assigned so many rings, and you were only supposed to answer your phone when it rang the number of times assigned to you, however it never failed, when it was your call one or two others would answer before you could and tell the caller they had the wrong number, then when you did get on the phone some of them would stay on the line and "eaves drop" as we called it when others listened to our conversations.

Charlie Lacys' wife Myrtle was the postmistress of Ryland and the post office and switch board were in the same room. They also sold candy, soft drinks and such things from a counter in the room. An old maid name Dora Newman lived with the Lacys and it was her job to take the out-going mail down to the Ryland depot, a structure only enclosed on three sides. She ran the mail bag up on an apparatus like a flag pole and when the train came roaring through they used a big hook to jerk the mail bag off the pole and throw the incoming mail off. It was just too bad if there was something breakable in the bag they threw off the fast moving train.

I sure hope that some of the younger generation, if they should happen to read this, realizes they have it pretty well

made these days, with all their fancy equipment, being able to text message, talk, etc. without someone on a party line listening in. On second thought most every one who reads this would be the younger generation to me since I saw an ad on my computer saying you can look up your ancestors who served in World War II. Since I served in the war, I must be an ancestor but I thought ancestors were dead people. Maybe someone will look me up and see if I am their long lost ancestor.

I also hope that if someone from my generation reads this they think back to having to leave their house to use a phone, having a party line with nosy neighbors, and visiting the telephone office which was quite high tech at the time.

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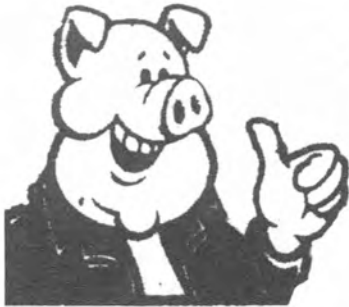
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Memories of Dea Thomas

by Charlie Lyle

I first met Dea Thomas at his home in Monrovia where he lived with his parents and one sister. His father was a prominent farmer and his mother a very well respected school teacher.

At the time, I had just gotten out of the Army and was trying to form a dance band combo. I needed a pianist, bass player, saxophonist, and a drummer. I found that there was an excellent young drummer from Monrovia (sixteen years old) and his name was Dea Thomas. We added a vocalist, Dee Cummings, who was quite a bit younger at the time but we got permission from her parents for her to sing with us. She was a doll. We played at the Skylark Club and Camerons Aero Club located at the end of Airport Road.

Dea proved to be a fantastic drummer and incidentally later on married Dee. Dea Thomas had the quality of being mischievous, which proved in some ways admirable as well as detrimental (I will expand upon this later). On one such occasion the band was to play at the Redstone Arsenal Officers Club. When Dea didn't show up for the job, we called his home and he said he had overslept but would be right there. He knew all the shortcuts and got there in record time. Meanwhile, a Colonel was literally giving me hell. Dea arrived and set up his drums quickly and proceeded to play this job. On our first intermission an even angrier Colonel came up and wanted to know what "son of a gun" had diagonally parked across not only General Toftoy's parking space but General Maderis's space as

well! After a few minutes we heard sirens and saw many flashing lights. Dea was then escorted off the post by 3 Military Police cars! The Officers Club was just one of the many escapades that occurred.

Dea's father, Mr. Thomas, passed away about that time and after his funeral, I will never forget, Mrs. Thomas said, "Charlie help me look after Dea". She must have had a lot of faith in me because at that time I was in my "Terrible Twenties".

After high school Dea decided to go to college. His father had wisely set up a trust fund that provided for the tuition and all the money he needed and as long as he stayed in school. He was in college about a year then he worked at a print shop a year before he made up his mind to go back to school and work on his law degree at the University of Alabama. Well Dea took his new bride Dee to Tuscaloosa where she enrolled in high school and he in college. Dea then pledged a prestigious law fraternity and also Delta Tau Delta, a social fraternity.

The fraternity had certain rules and procedures a pledge must follow. Unfortunately, these were not adhered to as required. So at the "big event", when pledge hood turned into membership, Dea was destined to be "blackballed" (a term

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meaning he was denied membership). At that time, he made an appeal to the fraternity to let him speak at the event (after all, every coin has two sides no matter how thick or thin). So speaking with great skill and oratorship, it is said, there was not a dry eye in the crowd. At this point, I believed he had the potential to be the governor of the state if he worked hard.

Later Dea and his wife came back to Huntsville where Dea started his law practice. He worked very hard and became assistant district attorney under Tom Younger. I know Tom personally not only as a fine attorney but also a terrific person.

After serving time in that position, he became District Attorney. As stated in the beginning, Dea had a rather "care free" nature. He loved motorcycles, which he drove to work. Some say he drove it up the steps of the First National Bank and also around the inside of his apartment! He went on to form a group of motorcycle riders called the "Saints".

One night a party was held upstairs in the courthouse. The party got a little out of control. Bottles, champagne glasses and other things were thrown off the second floor and in general disturbing the peace. Dea took responsibility for the party and was held accountable. He was subjected to be impeached but, according to my memory, was not although he was asked to step down from office.

The underlying theme of this essay is simply this - I think absolutely normal, which few of us are, is somewhat boring. David Thomas was one of the most interesting people I've known, but more than this, he

was one of the most extraordinary and brilliant trial lawyers I have met in my lifetime from 1930 on. He had the unique ability to mix law and humor to its best advantage, unlike some people (frothing at the mouth) and had the innate ability to have a humorous approach.

I think the only person who comes close to this would be a Chicago judge named "Judge Mathis".

"The guy was all over the road. I had to swerve a number of times before I hit him."

From local accident report

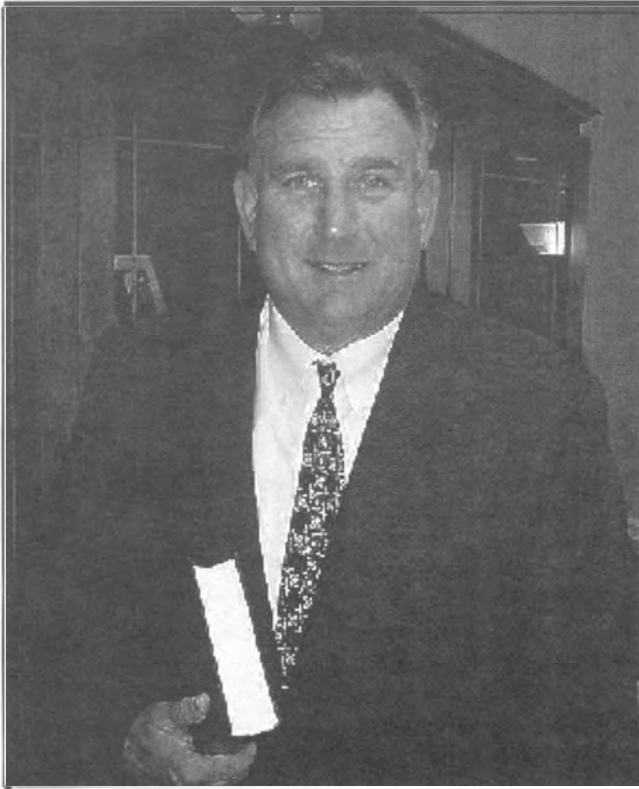


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Mr. Ott has extended his sales on talking machines over the entire North Alabama section, making selling trips by rail and spending considerable time on the road in his automobile, selling to families throughout the section. He has just recently placed machines in the public schools of Huntsville and Madison and in the Huntsville Y.M.C.A.

Mr. Ott sells machines for cash, of course, but also makes a specialty of long time payments. He carries a complete stock of the latest Victor-Victrolas. Victor records and talking machine accessories and the completeness of his store would do credit to a business of this kind in a much larger city.

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News from 1923

- A man who gives his name only as "Branch" and who had been sent to the street gang 3 months ago and escaped shortly thereafter was re-captured yesterday at his home about 4 miles from Huntsville. The officers, who had long suspected his whereabouts but until yesterday had been unable to get their eyes on him, finally managed to finish the job. Several of the officers yesterday went out to the man's home and learning that he was on the premises, surrounded the place and finally effected a capture. He was brought to the city and locked up, to be again returned to the street gang. Branch lived alone, and seemed to have no friends to speak of.

- Owners of dogs must not permit them to roam the streets without muzzles. If they do they may be brought up before the mayor and fined for their neglect.

- Theopias Brown, who is also known by the name of Scruggs, and who was arrested on a charge of drunkenness yesterday and placed in a cell in the city jail, became so violent shortly after being locked up that he had to be bound to his bed. Before this, however, he had broken up considerable of the meager furniture in his cell. It is supposed the stuff he drank was of the "mean" variety and made him temporarily crazy.

- When the car in which Jim Nash and his daughter Stella were driving Sunday afternoon turned over on the Whitesburg pike, near Lily Flagg, the young lady suffered a broken arm, the father sustaining severe body bruises. The accident occurred when Mr. Nash turned to the side of the road to permit the passage of another car and went too near the edge.

- The new 1924 Buicks are here in Huntsville. Announcement was made late yesterday by the Edwards Buick Company, that the new models have arrived and were on display at the show room. The new series of Buicks have many changes and improvements - the most striking being the four wheel brakes. The front wheels have a brake drum and when turning a curve the outside front wheel brake automatically releases, while the mechanism of this improvement is striking in the extreme.



"The best measure of a man's honesty isn't his income tax return. It's the zero adjust on his bathroom scale."

Arthur C. Clarke



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Heard On the Street

by *Cathey Carney*



Congratulations to **Dixie Ratliff** for being the first correct caller to guess the Photo of the Month last month - it was **Missy Ming-Smith**, who's been a familiar sight at the courthouse for many years. Dixie is a retired PE assistant with the Huntsville school system and worked at Farley school and Mountain Gap elementary - congratulations Dixie!

Bill and **Rosemary Leatherwood** of Hazel Green own Ole Dad's BBQ there and have some important birthdays coming up! Their nephew **Chris Rousseau** turned 22 on the 4th of July and is a teacher at Huntsville Christian Academy. Then their grandson **Chase Murphy**, who attends Lynn Fanning Elementary, turned 10 in July. Happy Birthday to both young men!

We were very happy to read that Judge **Karen Hall** had received a statewide excellence award by a victims advocacy group, who praised her commitment to justice. The annual King Solomon Award for Judicial Excellence was pre-

sented to Karen by the Victims of Crime and Leniency, or VO-CAL. We are so proud of you!

Another lady we're proud of is **Sandra Moon**, who is City Council woman representing S.E. Huntsville. She had decided not to run again in the fall and will step down. Her direct, honest approach and genuine empathy for people and their problems made her a very popular politician for many years. We will sure miss her "tell it like it is" approach at the city council meetings

Happy Birthday to **Ken Owens!** Get out and celebrate!!

Speaking of upcoming city council battles, **Jackie Reed** will be facing off with **Bill Kling** for his attempt to be re-elected for Council place # 4. Many people know Jackie and appreciate her gutsy presentations at each and every council meeting, which she attends religiously.

She brings up items that some politicians would rather not be publicized and is always thinking of ways that Huntsville can save money. It'll be a really interesting season for politics!

Zandora Bone wants to send special birthday wishes to her sweet daughter **Tonie Harris**, and also to her son **Corey Harris!** "They're the best!"

Cecil Ashburn was part of the company **Ashburn & Gray** who built most of our roads and overpasses over the past 60 years. Cecil just celebrated his 90th birthday with a party at 801 Franklin, hosted by **Marie Hewett**, and **Louie & Jane Tippet** and attended by others including ex-councilman **Glenn Watson**, and other friends.

At home Cecil surrounds himself with people who mean alot to him - **Barbara Crutcher** and her granddaughter **Lauren Blocker**, who's 10 and attends Monrovia Middle School. Also **Edward Hughes**, **Parris Dawkins**, **Marisa Reali**, **Kenneth White**, **Sheila Leslie** and **Angie Cartwright**. Congratu-

Photo of The Month

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

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Hint: This little boy gives good advice & knows a lot about the YMCA



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lations to you, Cecil - we think the world of you!

John Bennett just celebrated his 63rd birthday, unfortunately in the hospital. He is doing much better now and his sweet wife **Suzie Nolen** is taking extra good care of him.

It was good to meet two sweet ladies recently - **Barbara Kelley** and her Mom **Bobbi** own Aging Well Homecare and have a special place in their hearts for seniors.

Lyle and Ruth Taylor of Old Town just celebrated their 57th wedding anniversary on June 20. Congratulations to a really great couple.

Matt Hughes, a Relationship Banker II from Ashburn, Va. was recently in Huntsville to help train the Colonial Bank personnel in the new BB&T procedures. He thought the city was beautiful and would like to bring his sweet wife **Maria** back for a visit one of these days. He was helping **Jane Eller**, also a Relationship Banker, who is the knowledgeable lady with a big smile you see when you walk into the Church St. location.

We were saddened to hear that **Pat Patterson** had passed away. He was 90, a Golden K Kiwanian, and had delivered Meals on Wheels for 32 years. We send our deepest condolences to his wife & their family and friends.

I went into In Bloom recently on Pratt Ave. by the Sonic and saw the best gift idea. The owners, **Ron Cooper and Mark Kimbrough**, started making scented Soy Candles and named them after the historic neighborhoods of Huntsville! There's "Old Town Nights," "Twickenham Stroll," "Blossomwood Blooms," "Five Points Alley", you get the picture. And best of all, they smell really good!

There's been lots in the news lately about bicycle riders in the streets, and the

danger to these people when car drivers don't see them. It's not only cyclists, but people on scooters and motorcycles are in this group as well, and people who jog/walk on the roads too. The best thing we can all do is just pay close attention at all times when we're in our cars, so that if there is a motorcycle or bicyclist in the road we give them room and don't try to run them off the road.

Arriving to your destination a few minutes later would be a lot better than injuring or killing someone because you're in a rush and didn't see them. You don't want an event like that to be something you remember for the rest of your life. My brother rides a scooter and I worry about him always but if we're all extra careful and courteous maybe no one else will have to die.

Zach Jacobsen is sure proud of Redstone Village. Zach is the Executive Director there and he just found out that Redstone Village had received a "Deficiency Free" score on the annual recertification survey of their skilled nursing unit just completed by the Alabama Dept. of Public Health. In over 100 areas, including nursing, medical care, housekeeping and dining, RV received a perfect score, which doesn't hap-

pen often. Congratulations to **Perian Petcher**, the Nursing Home Administrator, and the committed nurses and nursing assistants that make RV home to those lucky enough to get in.

Have a safe and happy 4th of July and try to stay cool!

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RECIPES

Real Southern Soul Food

Southern Bread Pudding

- 2 c. milk
- 12 slices white bread, quartered
- 2 c. sugar
- 1 stick unsalted butter, softened
- 4 large eggs
- 1 c. shredded sweetened coconut
- 1 c. raisins
- 1 7 1/2 oz. can pineapple chunks, drained
- 1 T. vanilla extract
- 1 t. ground nutmeg
- 1 t. ground cinnamon
- 1 t. ground allspice

Preheat your oven to 350 degrees, grease a 9" square baking dish. In a bowl, add milk to bread and let soak for 10 minutes. In a larger bowl, cream together sugar and butter, beat in eggs. Add remaining ingredients and mix, stir in soaked bread. Pour mixture into baking dish. Bake for 45

minutes and dish is browned on top with knife inserted coming out cleanly.

Zucchini Pie

- 4 large eggs
- 1/2 c. vegetable oil
- 1 c. Bisquick
- 1/2 c. freshly grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 t. seasoned salt
- 1/2 t. ground black pepper
- 3 c. sliced zucchini
- 1 c. chopped onion

Preheat oven to 350 degrees, heavily grease a 9" pie dish. In a large bowl, beat eggs and oil together for 2 minutes. Add Bisquick and beat til smooth. Beat in Parmesan Cheese, seasoned salt and pepper. Stir in the zucchini and onion, pour in the pie dish. Bake for 35 to 40 minutes and top is browned.

Sausage & Grits Pie

- 12 oz. breakfast sausage
- 4 oz. grated mild Cheddar cheese
- 1/2 t. salt
- 1 1/2 c. cooked grits
- 4 large eggs, beaten

Grease a 9" pie dish and preheat your oven to 325 degrees. Cook sausage in a large skillet over medium heat til it's cooked, remove skillet from heat. Stir the cheese and salt into the skillet til the cheese is melted. Stir in the grits and eggs. Spoon entire mixture into the pie dish and bake for 45 minutes and puffy and cooked through.

Chocolate Eclair Cake

- For the frosting:*
- 1 stick unsalted butter
 - 1 c. sugar
 - 1/2 c. cocoa

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1/4 c. milk

For the filling:

3 c. milk

2 - 3.4 oz. pkgs. instant-French vanilla pudding

1 8-oz. container Cool Whip

To Finish:

20 graham crackers

Prepare frosting: melt butter in a saucepan. Stir in the sugar, cocoa, and milk. Bring to a boil over medium high heat. Boil for one minute, stirring constantly. Set aside.

Prepare filling: In a large bowl, beat milk and pudding, mix til thickened. Stir in the Cool Whip and set aside.

Lay enough graham crackers side by side to cover the bottom of a 9x13" baking dish. Spread half of the filling over the crackers.

Place as many of the remaining crackers as necessary to form another layer over the pudding. Top with remaining pudding. Spread frosting over the pudding and chill for at least 4 hours, or overnight.

1 stick butter, softened

2 large eggs

1 c. buttermilk

2 oz. red food coloring

1 t. distilled white vinegar

1 t. vanilla

For Frosting:

1 8-oz. pkg. cream cheese, softened

1 stick unsalted butter

1 1-lb box confectioners sugar

1 t. vanilla extract

1 c. chopped pecans

Preheat oven to 350 degrees and grease & flour 2 round 9" pans. In a bowl sift flour, cocoa, baking soda, baking powder and salt together, set aside.

In a large bowl, cream sugar with the butter, beat in the eggs one at a time.

Alternately add the flour mixture with the buttermilk. Beat in the food coloring and vinegar, then add the vanilla. Spread batter evenly in the pans. Bake for 20-30 minutes and a wooden toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean. Turn out onto a rack to cool.

To prepare frosting, cream the cream cheese and butter. Beat in the confections sugar til fluffy. Beat in the vanilla. Stir in pecans. Fill and frost the cake.

Red Velvet Cake

2 1/4 c. sifted cake flour

2 t. cocoa powder

1 t baking soda

1 t. baking powder

1 t. salt

1 1/2 c. sugar



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Murder Stalks the Streets of Huntsville

Grim Reaper Reaps Reward When Temptress Goes Too Far

by Fred Simpson

Murder was on everyone's mind in Huntsville in 1845 as word of a dastardly murder spread throughout the community,

A large plantation on the outskirts of town was owned by a Captain Elgin, a prosperous farmer and large slaveowner, known for being lenient to his slaves and letting them come and go as they wished after working hours. Most of the slaves respected Elgin for this practice and never abused it.

But one of his slaves, a big man named Martin, was not content on the plantation. His penchant for wanderlust would cost him his life.

Near the plantation lived a white woman of pleasure named Polly Roberts. Whether she accepted hard cash or just gifts for her charms is not known.

Martin, the slave, got acquainted with her and visited her on a regular basis. He soon became familiar with her daughter. Quickly Polly realized that Martin was infatuated with her and would do anything to stay in her graces. She began to work her magic on him by allowing him to catch fleeting glances of her scantily clad. She made vague promises about what she would do for him.

Teasingly, she told Martin that if he would steal things for her, she would let him have anything he wanted.

She started him off on his crime spree in a small way. First, she induced him to steal for her a few chickens, turkeys and other small items. Then she charmed him into stealing a washstand. After a period of time, Martin stole more expensive items.

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It took little encouragement. He was off and running on his new career.

Polly persuaded Martin to break into a store and procure sugar and coffee for her. The five cellar locks that store owners Fackler and Miller had placed upon their business proved to be no obstacle for Martin in his haste to please Polly.

As Martin grew more adept at his work he began to commit crimes on his own initiative. While attempting to buy some goods at McDowell's and Levert's, he became angry at the way he was treated and resolved to steal something in revenge. He hid in the store and after the clerks locked the door and went to supper he hunted in vain for money. He confined his loot to a dozen each of the fine silver pencils and pens, knives, silk cravats, watch seals, ribbon and related goods. He shared the articles with pretty Polly.

Polly quit the country life and moved into Huntsville, a growing city. She found a fenced two-story house on Madison Street, the "Georgia" neighborhood on the south side of town.

Martin still continued his intimacy with her and came into town when possible. But he grew tired of stealing for her as she did not pay him well except in vague promises of letting him have something. He would later claim that she began to harass him for money in order that she might purchase sugar and coffee. He told her he was unwilling to do so.

He tried to avoid her, but Polly knew how to use her feminine charms. Martin was soon back in her clutches. This time he broke into Graham's and stole 100 pounds of sugar. This kept her happy for a while.

Martin had stolen a bridle for Polly's daughter and now Polly told him her daughter wanted a saddle. He went to Dr. Patton's stable to find one, but could not do so. Just so the night would not be wasted, however, he stole a carriage cover and about 30 yards of cloth. Polly was adamant about the saddle and promised to give him a \$12 breast pen, an \$8 bracelet and money for the saddle.

He kept a sharp lookout for a saddle and finally managed to steal one from Robertson and Cross. Polly stashed it in her house until she could smuggle

it out of town. Martin went with her.

Near Guntersville, in a community called Warrenton, the saddle was sold. She gave him a dollar and a breast pen as his part of the profits. Martin was enraged at his small share of the profits.

Early on a Sunday morning he visited Polly, resolved that he would get his money and have nothing more to do with her. Unfortunately Polly's charms were again too much for him and it was not long before he began laughing, talking and playing with her. When he began to place his hands on her leg she became upset and kept knocking it off.

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Martin persisted in his amorous efforts until Polly, in a rage, stabbed him with a fork and ordered him out of the house.

Martin was furious and demanded his rightful share of their profits. He told her he would kill her if she did not pay him. Knowing that she had him ensnared by her feminine wiles, Polly only laughed and said she wanted him to steal some things from Mrs. Atwood's store.

Sheepishly he backed down and told her he would be in the next day. However, that evening he really resolved to kill her. He knew that while she let others take liberties with her, she forbade his advances. She treated him badly, tantalized him, and made a fool of him.

On Thursday night just after dark, Martin stole for her the things she wanted from Mrs. Atwood's store. She had advised him to steal only white cloth as the clerks would not be able to identify it as easily as colored cloth. After stealing the goods, he went home for his dinner, then started back to Polly's house with the goods. His mind was troubled. He had previously thought of "getting religion," but after thinking more and more, he was determined to kill Polly that night.

He thought about this as he walked





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into town. When he met a woman on the road he told her he would be at church that night. He stopped for a short visit at Billy Harris' house. No one would have suspected that murder was on Martin's mind.

Walking on down Madison Street below Polly's house, he started to enter the gate but was scared off when the dog began barking. After a short while he returned, jumped the fence and knocked loudly at the door.

Polly met him at the front door and immediately demanded to know if he had stolen the things for her. She spoke of leaving Huntsville soon and wanted him to get a good many things for her. He said he'd do so that very night and asked her to leave the door unlocked for him; she had often done so. He did not then know that a man named Davis, her beau, was asleep upstairs.

Martin was firm in his resolve to kill her that night. She had tantalized and humiliated him, and he was determined to take his revenge. Searching the neighborhood for a murder weapon, he found the spoke of a wagon wheel.

Grasping the make-shift club in his hands he went over to the next street to keep from being seen and crossed back through the alley. It was too early to go back to Polly's house so he found a hiding place. Waiting in the dark silence he drifted

off to sleep.

At about midnight he awoke. The streets were deserted, so he made his way cautiously to Polly's house. After knocking softly at the front door he was let in by an agitated Polly.

"Don't make a fuss," she said, "a man is upstairs. Have you got the things?"

He said yes.

"Where are they?" she asked.

"Outdoors."

She told him to bring them in. "I will bring them in," he said, "but not until you light the candle." He wanted to see how to kill her.

Her expression was one of horror as she glanced up from lighting the candle and saw Martin swinging the heavy club at her. Crumbling from the cruel blows she appeared to fall lifeless to the floor. Quickly Martin ransacked the house looking for money and anything else that he might be able to sell. Though afraid, he was con-

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fidient that the visitor upstairs had heard nothing.

He was busy gathering up his ill-gotten loot when he was startled by a loud moan coming from Polly's motionless body. She was trying to come to! Martin, deathly afraid now, grabbed his club and began swinging wildly at the body on the floor. She continued breathing. He put the spoke on her breast and pressed down, but she would not die. Finally he placed the spoke across her throat and stood on it until she gasped her last breath.

He used the candle to set the clothing in the room on fire. It blazed brightly, destroying any evidence that might have been found. After a last careful look around, he left the house and fled to the country.

On Dec. 13, 1844, there appeared in the "Southern Advocate," a Huntsville newspaper, a notice of reward for the ap-

prehension of the killer of Polly Roberts:

"Reward"

On Thursday night, Dec. 5, 1844, Polly Roberts was murdered in her dwelling in Huntsville, and her house set on fire by some unknown person. The Board of Aldermen offers a reward of two hundred dollars to any good citizen who will deliver the murderer and lodge him in the jail of Madison County to be dealt with according to law.

George P. Beirne, Mayor of Huntsville

Suspicion was first centered on Mr. Davis, Polly's beau, who had escaped the blazing inferno. Fortunately, proof of his innocence was so strong as to convince all that while his presence at the house was interesting, there was no evidence of his being involved in the murder.

Suspicion fastened itself indelibly upon Martin. Many articles belonging to Polly were

found in his possession. When Martin was arrested, he was told that the only chance he had for escaping the gallows was to tell all he knew about the matter.

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In a desperate attempt to shift blame, he concocted a story implicating John, a slave belonging to William Acklin. Authorities suggested to Martin that he turn state's evidence.

The fact that he implicated Hannah, John's wife, who lived in the same lot where the murder took place, made his story even more probable.

The brutal murder, and the supposed connection of others in its commission, caused public feelings to be more than usually aroused.

Atty. William O. Winston was prosecutor. Sept. 9, 1845 was the date of the trial. At least two-thirds of the 50 prospective jurors would be slaveholders.

After the jury heard the evidence, it issued its verdict:

"Guilty in manner and form as charged in the indictment."

The jury also set the price that would be paid to Martin's master for the loss of his property, fifteen hundred dollars. (Circuit Court Minutes, page 373, 1845).

Martin's lawyer filed a motion for retrial, citing that the jury that had found Martin guilty was not properly impaneled. The appeals court ordered that the verdict be set aside, that the indictment and trial had been held for nothing. Martin remained in jail in close confinement, to await the action of a new grand jury and another trial. (Circuit Court Minutes, 1844-1845, page 389-390.)

At the next trial Martin and John were both found guilty and sentenced to death. The public

mind was then startled at a new and totally different confession from Martin. He gave a full revelation of the whole matter, taking the entire blame upon himself, clearing John and also Hannah from all knowledge of participation in the crime.

On the day before Martin's execution, Captain Elgin, Col. McClung, and J. A. S. Acklin visited him in his cell and took rough notes of his confession, clearing up many of the burglaries leading up to the murder.

Martin recounted his many acts of thievery:

He stole \$3 from James Robertson; broke into Gormley and O'Neil's, but got nothing; stole \$12 from an organ woman driving with Mr. Knox; stole \$12 from old Mr. Mendadier; took bed and blankets from Capt. Martin's plantation; one stack of fodder each from his master and Mr. Patton, and broke into Betsey York's in search of money but got nothing.

He also broke into Mr. Curtis' and got window curtains and chickens; from Dr. Moore he took corn and saddle skirts; plates, dishes and chickens from

Mr. Parson's.

"I accused John to increase the public prejudice against him. I also was willing to implicate Hannah in hopes it would increase my own chances of escape. My object was to escape, no matter who suffered, but all was in vain."

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desire to repair the evil I have done to John by this public confession of my sole guilt. John is innocent of the crime of killing Miss Roberts. I am the guilty one. I ought only to suffer death for the crime. I am willing to die for it as it is right I should do so, for I have been a grievous and desperate sinner. I desire the forgiveness of Mr. Acklin for the great evil I have done to him in this matter in accusing John and telling tales on him in regard to the matter. Whatever I have said in regard to him and John has been false, spoken from a desire to save my own life. Though I made almost all believe John was guilty, yet I could not fool Mr. Acklin. For he said, John was innocent all the time and he was right."

On April 10, 1846, a large crowd of all sizes, ages, sexes and complexions were out to see the hanging. Messrs. Walker and Laird of the Methodist and Episcopal churches attended Martin to the gallows and officiated in the services there performed for him.

His last look was taken of the sun, the sky, the green trees, and the assembled masses. The sheriff adjusted the fatal noose, and Martin's body dropped and hung suspended.

Martin's trials were not yet over. The following article from the April 17, 1846 "The Southern Advocate" relates what happened next.

After the hanging, Martin's body was given over to the medical community. Many interesting scientific experiments were made upon Martin's body with a galvanic battery by the physicians of our town, assisted by Professor Batsford of North Carolina. Mr. S.N. Batsford who was at the time lecturing on electricity in Huntsville conducted a series of galvanic experiments upon the dead body.

The object of these experiments was not to gratify mere curiosity for indeed there was nothing at all pleasing in them except to the psychologist, and to him they were intensely interesting. The results are as follows:

"One pole of the battery was applied as near the origin of the principal distributed to the face as possible and the other armed with a copper plate placed with a wire was placed over the chest, the wire being forced through into the lungs.

"The result was laborious heavings of the chest and singular and expressive motions about the throat and mouth of a dying person gasping for breath in which motions have doubtless taken place but a few

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minutes before under the departing influences of life.

'The poles of the battery were changed to a lower extremity. The limber was convulsed to the very toes but the battery not being very powerful, these movements were not very accurate. The facial nerve was again brought into contact with one pole and by means of a damp sponge, the inside of the month, throat and tongue were connected with the other.

'Mr. Batsford desires to thank the medical men for the promptness, skill and tact that they displayed upon the occasion and should be congratulated upon the entire success of this experiment.'

"When I was born the doctor told my father, 'We did everything we could, but he pulled through anyway.'"

Rodney Dangerfield

Polk Salat

1 good-sized garbage bag of young poke salat leaves (no stems)

1/2 cup bacon drippings (or more to taste)

water

1 chopped onion

4-5 eggs

Cook your greens in boiling water til done. Drain water

and put back on stove. Cook some more on low, then remove greens from pot. Add chopped onion to small amount of water in pan, add greens. Cook till onions are done. Squeeze out the water with your hands, tenderly. Heat up some bacon drippings in pot.

When hot, put greens and chopped onion in pan with grease. Add salt and pepper to taste, serve with pepper sauce.

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Puttin' Food on the Table

by Cecil Mitchell Carroll

These days people often assume there was always a wide variety of food on the farm. This is an error born of our familiarity with a worldwide transportation system and electric refrigeration. On the farm without electric power there was no way of keeping food cool. Fresh meat had to be eaten within a couple of days. Milk would sour overnight. Fresh vegetables and fruit were available only for the short time of their particular season. Oranges were a special treat for Christmas, shipped by train from Florida. Vegetables and fruit for the rest of the year were either canned, preserved, or dried.

The problem of food variety was compounded at our farm because, looking back, I can see that neither Mamma nor Daddy were good managers. Both of them worked hard and with a family of eleven children they certainly needed to work hard. But Daddy was always intent on making a money crop, growing cotton even when there was not a good market for cotton. He farmed as had his father and his father before him, without considering the changing world.

**"My wife's such a bad cook, the dog begs for Alka Seltzer."
Rodney Dangerfield**


Of course there was a need for a money crop because we had to have money for clothing, food staples we couldn't grow, and farm equipment. Especially there had to be money to pay the rent on the farm.

After I was 16, Daddy bought a farm but each year he had only enough money to pay the interest on the loan. Once, Daddy did raise some peas because a portable pea thrasher was brought to the house to thrash the peas. There were many more peas than we could eat, so I suppose he sold the rest. Usually, however, cotton was the only money

crop. So, like it or not, Daddy was locked into a system where each year he had to, with back breaking labor, raise enough cotton to obtain money to stay even with his obligations.

One problem was that the price of cotton fluctuated rather wildly and sometimes it was hardly worth picking. Once, just before World War I, cotton was only three cents a pound. That year Daddy was renting the farm from his father and he had to borrow money to pay the rent. There was a jingle that summed up the situation.

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cent meat...

How in the world can a poor man eat?"

It would be nice to say that Daddy was able to overcome all adversity and make a success of farming but, after Mamma died, Daddy seemed to lose heart. During the Great Depression of the 1930s he, like many other farmers, didn't make enough to pay the interest on the farm loan and the bank foreclosed. Daddy was able to make a meager living farming until all the children left home.

When Daddy died of a sudden heart attack in 1944 while he was visiting me in Birmingham, his entire estate was the money in his pocket, just barely enough to pay the emergency room bill. In the larger sense Mamma and Daddy were a great success; they raised eleven children who all were hard working, honorable members of society. I don't think anyone could achieve higher honor than that.

After the money crop, the next concern was food for the livestock, hay and corn. The garden to grow vegetables for the family was considered to be the job of the women and children. Outside of plowing it in the spring, Daddy more or less ignored the vegetable garden. Daddy never seemed to realize that with only about an hour's work each week he could have had a large productive garden. The money saved by the better garden would have been more than the tiny loss on the money crop.

Vegetables that could be preserved for the winter had to be a first consideration. Of course we ate the fresh vegetables in season, but often the time span when they were ready was fairly short. Turnip greens, poke salad, and radishes were the first fresh vegetables of Spring and we were all hungry for fresh greens.

I should point out that 'poke salad' was the old English terminology where 'salad'

means green leaves. The leaves of the poke-berry plant are poisonous, as are the berries of the plant. In the spring the young tender leaves were picked and then boiled in water. The water was discarded, new water was added and the leaves boiled again. This process was usually repeated three times so as to leach out all the poison. You may be assured that if you just took the fresh leaves and ate them with a

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salad dressing you would become deathly ill.

English peas and onions were in season soon after the turnip greens. During the hard times after the Civil War Grandma ate dandelion greens but we never ate them at our house.

There was home canning to put up surplus vegetables but, since there was no pressure cookers, the effort to sterilize the canned vegetables was a hit or miss affair. At least half of the home canned vegetables spoiled.

Sauerkraut was made by putting shredded cabbage into a large stone crock; a layer of cabbage and a layer of salt. Water was added to cover the cabbage and a stone was placed on the cabbage to press it down below the water level. A cloth was placed over the crock. I always liked the home-made sauerkraut.

Pickles did not spoil as often as the other vegetables because they depended on the liquid to prevent the bacteria from growing. We used pickled cucumbers and beets. Pickled peaches were a great favorite. We made our own pepper sauce by soaking little red peppers in vinegar. The peppery vinegar was used to spice up the greens.

Onions were tied by their tops into strings and peppers were threaded onto strings. The strings of onions and peppers were suspended from rafters wherever they could be protected from the elements.

Dried fruits and vegetables were a

staple for out-of-season use. Dried beans and peas were a big item. The peas and beans were allowed to dry on the vines. I hated to pick the dried peas - mostly whippowills and black-eyed - the pods were hard and cut my hands. I was really delighted when we got a hand pumped pea thrasher. Of course dried corn was a mainstay for both man and beast, we ate the ground corn meal as bread and the livestock ate the kernels from the cob.

Potatoes were an important crop. We ate fresh potatoes all during the growing season and then stored them for the winter. Potatoes were plagued with potato bugs. The potato bugs crawled on the leaves of the potato plant and ate the leaves. The plants would soon die if the bugs were not removed. If we wanted potatoes to eat then the bugs had to be removed, so we removed the bugs by hand.

We did not have a root cellar to store potatoes for the winter. Daddy dug a hole in the garden and the potatoes were placed on a bed of hay or corn shucks and covered with sacking. Then the potatoes were covered

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with about a foot of dirt. This was enough so they could keep cool but would not freeze. This kept the potatoes fairly well, but it was a chore to replenish the potato bin.

I should point out that there was no straw for stock bedding or insulating potatoes. Straw is the stems of wheat after the wheat is thrashed. Wheat was not considered practical for our area and we raised no wheat, and thus we had no straw. The flour for our biscuits was purchased from the store.

Corn was picked from the stalk after the corn had dried

and, still in the husk, it was placed in the corn crib.

When we wanted corn for meal, we opened the small door and raked out about a hundred or so ears. The husk was stripped from the ears and the kernels were broken from the corn cob by twisting the ear with one hand while holding it with the other. Your hands had to be tougher than the corn to shell corn this way. When we finally got a hand cranked corn sheller I thought I had died and gone to heaven. The kernels were put into a bag until we had about a bushel of shelled corn. The shelled corn would then be taken to the grist mill and ground into corn meal. The word 'grist' is another old English word, it simply meant 'grain'.

Corn was also used to feed

the stock animals. Then we just removed the husk and let the animal (pig, horse, cow, mule) eat the kernels from the cob.

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They were able to crush the kernels with their teeth and the corn was a treat. The left over corn shucks were used the way wheat farmers used straw. Sometimes mattresses were stuffed with corn shucks. The corn shuck mattresses were noted for the loud rustle every time you shifted position in bed.

Peaches and apples were sliced and dried in the sun on flat surfaces. Often the dried slices were strung on strings and suspended from rafters in the house.

Apples were stored in barrels and would keep for several months if the barrel was sorted through ever so often to remove the bad apples. The variety of apples that seemed to keep the best was a small apple variety called 'Yates'. The Yates was a tart apple and I always liked them. Since all the family were staunch Baptists and opposed to drinking alcohol in any form, apples were not pressed to make cider.

Another way of preserving fruit was by cooking it with sugar to make jelly and jam. Pears were sliced and cooked in sugar to make preserves. Very tart apples, such as crab apples made the best apple jelly. Wild blackberries were used to make jam.

A standard sweetener on the farm was homemade Sorghum molasses. The molasses was obtained from the Sorghum sugar cane that was grown in the fields like corn. It was always a big

time for the farm children when molasses was being made.

Molasses time was in September and it was especially a fun time for the children with nothing to do except to play and keep out of the way. And enough sweets to satisfy everyone.

The women of that day would have revolted at the thought of buying a dead chicken. The birds were small enough to be consumed in a single day so they were killed and eaten the same day. There was a reluctance to eat a young egg producing hen, so the prime candidates for the pot were the young roosters and old hens.

But chicken was an expensive treat on the farm, reserved for company and holidays. Anticipating the treat made it a pleasure for the farm children when the mother said "Go kill us a chicken for dinner".

If you think you would rather go hungry than kill and prepare a chicken, then you have never been hungry.

On the farm there was a direct connection between the live animals you fed and the dinner you ate. We didn't make pets of the farm animals, and most of them were not at all lovable. When I was about five we had a big turkey gobbler that would attack me every time I went into the

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yard. The turkey was as tall as I was and it would peck and hit me with its wings. It terrified me and I would run screaming into the house with the turkey flapping at me all the way.

By way of comfort, Daddy told me to pick up a stick of firewood and hit the turkey the next time it bothered me. The next time I left the house I was carrying a piece of split firewood. As soon as I was well into the yard the turkey came running toward me, neck outstretched and squawking at the top of his lungs. I swung the stick of wood with all my might and connected with the turkey's head. The turkey fell over backward, gave a few convulsive twitches and lay still with blood running from its head.

I ran screaming toward the house, sure that I had killed the turkey, but when I returned with Mamma the turkey had staggered to its feet and outside a bloody head seemed none the worse for wear. The turkey never attacked me again. It wasn't that the turkey was a fast learner, it was just that nobody had ever before explained it like that to him.

Another source of food was from hunting and fishing. The larger animals such as deer and bears had long since been

hunted out and the only game animals were rabbits, squirrels and Bob White quail. Since rabbits also ate the food that was grown for us, killing rabbits served to protect our food supply as well as to provide fresh meat. There was a hunting season, fall and winter, but a rabbit in a garden was fair game at any time. There was little concept of

sport in either the fishing or the hunting, the idea was to obtain food and if there was a little enjoyment in the process that was a bonus.

"The patient was to have a bowel resection, but he took a job as a stockbroker instead."

Seen on local hospital chart

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New Market, Its Beginning

by Herman Humphrey, Esq.
(taken from The Advocate - 1877)

The first settlement made where New Market now stands was that of two brothers, George and Jacob Broiles. They came to this county in the year 1806 and selected that spot as a home. They at first employed themselves in deadening timber and clearing land and in the course of a year or two had a pretty little farm.

Settlers came in rapidly, and other industries than farming were demanded. George Broiles built the first blacksmith shop in that part of what is now Madison County. Being a capital smith, his services were worth a vast deal to the pioneers. Plows, axes, hoes, and the various other necessary farm utensils were made by those early smiths, who worked with no other tools

than the simple anvil, hammer and tongs, found in the frontier shops. In the year 1808 the first tan-yard ever established in the county or state was begun by one Trump, in the vicinity of Broile's farm. This was of great use to the country.

The hides of their beef cattle were a dead loss to the settlers before the opening of this enterprise. Leather was very costly, owing to the great distance the wagons from Baltimore were required to haul it. The process of tanning in those days was the same as that followed by the country tan-yards of the present time. Lime and water were used to clean the hides from the hair and grease, and common red-oak bark furnished the tannic acid that changed the fleshy fiber into leather.

The method of obtaining tan-bark proved

very destructive to the forest timber in the county. The largest and straightest of the red oaks, which are the monarchs of our forest, were cut down in the spring "when the sap had risen" and entirely stripped of their

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rough coats of rich bark, and left naked to wither and rot in the solitude of the wilderness. One could not help feeling something akin to sympathy when looking at the prostrate, naked, bleeding body of the fallen giant veiling himself with his foliage of withered, crumbling leaves.

Many of the trees that were cut down for tan-bark were split into rails for farming purposes. The trunk was cut into sections ten feet in length and then split by means of wedge, glut and maul, into pieces of the required size. As the land was more extensively cleared up, rail making became an important part of the work of the farmer. This was another use to which our finest forest trees were put. All over the woodland you could hear the clang and ring of the axes chopping their way through the huge bodies of the trees; ever and anon the crack of breaking splitters, limbs and twigs, and then the fearful thunder of the fall.

From the year 1808 up to the year 1818, the first inn or tavern in this section of the country was kept by one Rowan. The old-fashioned inns were the place of most importance in the country, as being the places of general resort and sight-seeing, and frequently formed the nucleus around which saloons, then called groceries, and blacksmith

shops and muster grounds were established. Of these inns we shall yet have something to say.

One George Smith bought the land extending from what is now the main street in New Market (the Huntsville road) eastward to the old Indian boundary line and built the first store house in the village; next came one Moses Poare, an old soldier of the revolu-

tion, and built a cabin where Dr. Tallaferro now lives. Fred Jones made a settlement at the Berry (Fagun) Spring, and did a good service for the county by planting out an orchard of fruit trees, the first ever planted in the county of Madison. His experiment was eminently successful and showed to the settlers that fruit would grow and ripen lusciously among the de-

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lightful hills and vales of North Alabama. After this, all the old settlers had a score or more of fine fruit trees and revelled in the luxury of delicious peaches, pears and apples. It is greatly to be regretted that this branch of profitable and pleasant industry is neglected by the farmers of the present day.

Dudley Day established the first saddler's shop, and for a long time supplied the wants of the community in this line; many of our early saddlers were fine workmen, and experienced men pronounce some of the old country-made saddles superior to those of the present time. One James Browning opened the second store in the town of New Market but was unsuccessful in business and soon closed up and betook himself to other business.

About the year 1818, at the instance of George Smith, a man by the name of Burns was employed to survey the land now forming the site of New Market and to lay it off in lots of various sizes. This was the first establishment of the town. The lots were put upon the market and sold as represented in the reported survey. Inducements were offered to persons who would permanently reside there and to mechanics and artisans. A number of settlers came in and purchased lots on the easy terms of credit, then customary, and began improvements.

After a short time it was discovered that the lots did not hold out with the reported survey, and quite a number of the buyers at the sale became dissatisfied and relinquished their purchases. Many left this section of the county altogether. Good surveyors were scarce in those

days, and much trouble resulted from the incorrect plots and inaccurate lines established by unskilled individuals. County surveyors in subsequent years were compelled to do a vast deal of tedious and difficult work in order to accurately fix permanent landmarks for future use.

About the first of the year 1819, New Market received a very useful citizen in the person of John Miller. This gentleman was the ancestor of the Miller

family now owning property in and around New Market. Miller bought the inn and other property of Rowan, and built the first mill ever erected in that neighborhood, at a point near the spot where Davis' and Rogers' mills now stand. The "old mill race" was constructed by him.

There were but few mills in the county during the first ten years of its existence. These were at such inconvenient distances from many settlers that it was

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better for them to make their own meal at home. This was accomplished by mortar and pestle. The mortar was made by cutting off the end of a log about two feet in diameter, forming a block three feet in length. This was placed to an upright position and a fire kindled on the end. In this way the concaving of the mortar was formed. A small, well seasoned ash or hickory maul constituted the pestle, and then the "homegrist mill" was completed. When the rich kernels of Indian corn had been well beaten and sifted and were made into ash-cakes or Johnny cakes, it was found that the natural sweetness of the grain still remained to give its delicious flavor to the bread. A person who has never eaten an ash cake made of beaten meal can form not even an approximate idea of the true excellence of cornbread.

John Miller constructed the first framed house ever built in New Market, and perhaps the first in the county of Madison. This was the large framed build-

ing where Dr. Hall now lives. Most of the homes built in the early days of our county were like the pioneer house of John Hunt, heretofore described. These spacious log houses, with wide halls, were convenient, comfortable and safe. Many persons now remember with unfeigned pleasure the old style country homes of their friends and relatives. The music of the rain on the board roof, the daylight smiling you awake through cracks and crannies, the fresh air whispering health to your cheek, the grand old fire-

place and jam, with half a cord of wood in its great black jaws blazing, sparkling, crackling; the lid ovens, the pewter spoons, all tell of a rural simplicity contentment and happiness long since departed.

George Smith built the house in which Mr. Greenlee now lives. About the year 1825 W.D. Hayter and John W. Estell opened the third store house. In 1833 Staples and Patrick came to New Market with a stock of goods and did business in a house they had erected on the spot where Laxon's store now stands.

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Holden and Echols built the Criner store and sold goods there in the year 1834. The same year, William Mill built a residence near the Miller house, and on the north side of the creek. He also built the second blacksmith shop ever opened in the town, at the place where Turner's shop now stands.

A man by the name of Drake first lived where A. Hambrick now resides and had a shop near the large gate. Drake lived here a short while, and when he left John Williams built the house near the well and dug the well on Mr. Hambrick's lot, and established workshops along the front part of the lot. At this time Dr. Humphries came to New Market and opened an office.

The offices of physicians in those days were well supplied with drugs and medicines, and filled the place of regular drug stores. Dr. Norris and Dr. Cabaniss arrived soon afterwards. These gentlemen were the first physicians who established themselves at New Market.

The first machine shop belonged to Messrs. J. and D. Sibley who built and lived where Turner now lives. The shop was situated at the north end of the bridge. The first drinking saloon stood where Dr. Hall's store now stands and was used by one A.B. Brown. The first tailor's shop was opened by Joseph Brown. The first house of worship erected in the village was a union church, built by the Cumberland Presbyterians and Methodists jointly and stood where the brick church is currently situated. The Baptist denomination built the church they now use. Furn and Hackney were the first dancing masters.

Much more could be written about our beloved town and its stalwart citizens of yesteryear but it will have to wait for a more able pen than mine.

Perhaps someday, someone will finish the task.


A Flying Snake

From 1875 Huntsville Newspaper

A few days ago a lady living in the southern part of the city reported seeing a flying snake near her home. At the same time there was a statement from an aged woman, a soothsayer, who predicted that in a short time the air would be full of flying serpents. Yesterday we were met by a friend, who inquired in an excited manner if we had ever seen a snake that had wings, and "flew through the air with the greatest of ease"!

From his statement we learn that while two boys, named Remington and Jenkins, the former from this city and the latter from Atlanta, were hunting in the woods, a serpent was seen approaching them about four feet above earth. Jenkins took off his hat and throwing it over the snake, ended in capturing it. It is over one foot in length, spotted, and has wings the size of a man's hand. The boys have the serpent preserved in alcohol.

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The Lady Painted on Spider Webs

by Butch Crabtree

In 1900, Madison County Probate Judge Stewart lived on a farm southwest of Huntsville, south of where the Merrimack mill was being built. Since only a few farms occupied the area, there were no schools in the region. Farmers wishing to school their children had either to send them away to boarding schools, or hire a private teacher to instruct them at home. Judge Stewart hired a young teacher named Annie Bradshaw to come to his home each day and teach

his children as well as children from surrounding farms.

The City of Huntsville, anticipating the building of the new mill, had extended the streetcar line to Spring Street just north of the mill site. Miss Bradshaw rode the streetcar to Spring Street each morning and was picked up by one of the Stewart boys in a buggy to cover the additional distance to the farm. The school had fourteen pupils, and operated for about seven months, which was probably considered a term.

When the Joseph J. Bradley school opened in 1919, Mrs. J. B. Clopton was among the early teachers. Mrs. Clopton was the former Miss Annie Bradshaw of Judge Stewart's home school.

Though a fine teacher, Mrs. Clopton became best known for a unique hobby she conceived as a child. Mrs. Clopton's hobby was painting. What made her

hobby unique was the fact that she disdained canvas or wood or other conventional materials and painted instead on cobwebs. The incredibly beautiful works brought Mrs. Clopton international fame.

The paintings varied widely in size as well as subject. There were portraits of family members, landscapes, and nature studies. Some of the paintings were small enough to be enclosed in a watch case.

The work of Mrs. J. B. Clopton was shown at the New York World's Fair and the Pacific National Exhibition in Vancouver, B.C., Canada. Two of her paintings are on display at the Smithsonian Institute.

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News from the Year 1922

News From Huntsville and Around The World

King Tut's Tomb Found

Nov 26. In Egypt today, archeologists Lord Camarvon and Howard Carter opened underground doors that had not been opened for 3,300 years and found an extraordinary, priceless collection of antiquities in what's believed to be the tomb of King Tutankhamen. The Pharaoh was buried in 1337 B.C.

The British Egyptologists, working in the Valley of the Kings near Luxor, discovered the riches in two rooms next to the crypt of Ramses VI.

At the bottom of a flight of stairs was a door stamped with the seal of Tutankhamen. The men gasped when they opened it.

The first objects they saw were three gilt statues carrying beds carved from wood and inlaid with ivory and semi-precious stones.

Inside a box they found embroidered robes, precious stones and sandals crafted from gold and painted with hunting scenes.

The pharaoh's throne stood regally in one of the rooms.

Nearby were two life-sized statues of Tutankhamen, four chariots and more furniture, most of it exquisitely carved and inlaid with stones. Word of the discovery spread quickly.

Local Woman Wins Mexican Lottery

Huntsville - Mrs. E. D. Kimbrough received word yesterday that she had won 27,000 pesos in a lottery drawing held in Mexico City.

Mrs. Kimbrough's brother had purchased the ticket several weeks ago while on a business trip to San Petros, Mexico and gave it to her as a token of the trip. He learned of the winning number while in Memphis and telephoned his sister immediately to inform her of the good fortune.

She had just lost her job and didn't know what she was going to do, as she supports her mother, brother and a very young niece.

Mrs. Kimbrough is now planning a trip to Mexico.

Saved from Fire

Huntsville - Widow Adams and her tiny grandchild were saved from a certain death Saturday night when their bulldog Sam began barking incessantly until the woman woke.

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No Liquor On Ships

New York - To the dismay of those in New York shipping circles, the administration has issued orders banning the sale and transportation of liquor on all American ships, public and private. The controversial ban, announced by President Harding, also applies to all foreign ships that enter American ports or sail within the nation's three-mile continental limits. However, the liquor ban will not apply to foreign embassies within the country.

The United States officially became dry in 1920, a year after adoption of the 18th Amendment to the Constitution. The Harding administration order, however, is quite likely to prove a boon to Canadian ports, where no such liquor ban on domestic or foreign ships exists. The city of Quebec, for instance, can

now handle vessels as large as those that now use New York City ports, but the Canadian city currently has only a modest amount of shipping traffic.

First Woman Senator

Atlanta - Rebecca Latimer Felton, an 87-year-old Georgia widow, received credentials today as the nation's first woman United States Senator. While her appointment to succeed the late Senator Thomas E. Watson of Georgia is a historic first, it is uncertain whether she will ever be sworn into office. By the time Congress convenes, an elected successor to Senator Watson will have been chosen. President Harding may call Congress back into session so that Mrs. Felton can take her oath.

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The Parade

by Eugenia Pitsinger

It was in the early 1950s, when the children of Hermitage Street had a Fourth of July parade.

We had a large back yard with a tree house, large swing set and slide. This was the gathering place for the neighborhood children. One morning when they had all gathered, our daughter Sara and her friend Nell both six years old came running in saying "Mother, we are playing circus and want to ask Cora (our older daughter) if she would help." We had lived on West Holmes when Cora was young. She played with the Bryant children. Once they staged a musical, with Mary Ann Blanton (a teen ager) making beautiful crepe paper costumes for the musical.

Later at a get together with neighbors, Kate and Walter Esslinger who had a daughter, Drucilla, eight years old and Nell's parents, Olen and John McArthur, we asked if they would like to have a real parade on the Fourth. Olen volunteered to be in charge and the older children would help.

The children were excited when asked. Plans got under way.

The children asked if they could include dogs. My children did not want their dog Spot left out. We agreed to dogs on leashes but no cats. They made red, white, and blue ruffled collars for their dogs.

They decorated bikes, wagons, and tricycles with red, white, and blue crepe paper.

The city agreed to close off our street for the parade.

Early on the morning of the Fourth, the children gathered to finish the decorations they had started the day before. Children from nearby streets had heard about the parade and wanted to join. By ten the morning of the Fourth they were lining up and at ten thirty they started down the two long blocks of Hermitage that were paved.

A motorcycle policeman led the way with his siren wailing. Then came the late Joe Van

Valkenburg, riding his red bike, and carrying a large American flag. Since all were told to bring noise makers, there was lots of noise. Olen, Nell's mother, brought up the



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**"The sooner you fall behind,
the more time you'll
have to catch up."**

Steven Wright

rear clanking two garbage can lids. The noise brought all the neighbors out to line the street. Others sat on their porches and clapped. Joe Payne pulled a wagon with his little brother, Kelly. David Wayne Holmes wore his white sailor suit and Uncle Sam hat.

Wade Russell and Raymond Wilensky walked, carrying flags. Also Betty Caroline Smith was in costume. Sara and Nell wore dance costumes and walked behind Sara's brother, Benny, who was on his tricycle. A girl who had recently moved to the next block joined the parade. She brought her friend, Iris, who lived on Big Cove Road. Later we found Iris was the daughter of Werner Von Braun and attended Blossomwood School with the others.

Sara and Benny's cousins, who lived across town, were in the parade also. They were

David Patterson and his sister Patsy, also John Green Jr., Randy and sister Gennie. Their father, the late Judge J.W. Green, made a movie of the parade that day. The Huntsville Times wrote an article on the front page with a large picture of Joe leading the parade.

They turned around when they reached the second long block and came back with their parents help. Olen was still enthusiastically clanging the garbage can lids.

The parade was a wonderful, memorable and fun day for the children.



"Once I'm done with first grade, I'm going to find me a wife."

Joey, age 5

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Pleasure Palaces To Close

from 1913 Huntsville newspaper

The so called segregated or red light district of Huntsville will go out of existence tonight at midnight and by tomorrow, practically all of the occupants of "the houses of our midst" will have departed from the city or changed their mode of making a living.

When the question of abolishing the district was brought before the City Commission in November by a committee representing the Men and Religion Forward Movement, proprietors of the houses agreed to-close up quietly and get out provided they were not molested by the first of January.

The commissioners entered into this agreement and the action of the police will not be necessary. The women declared their intention of keeping their promise to move away.

Several of the inmates of the houses have already left the city, but a majority are still here, however. A few will go to the homes from which they have long been absent but most of them will make their way to other cities and continue their life.

Other cities have driven the red light districts out before this and the outcome of the experiment in those cities as well as here will be watched with a great deal of interest. There was great happiness among the various church groups who have vowed to make bootleggers their next target.

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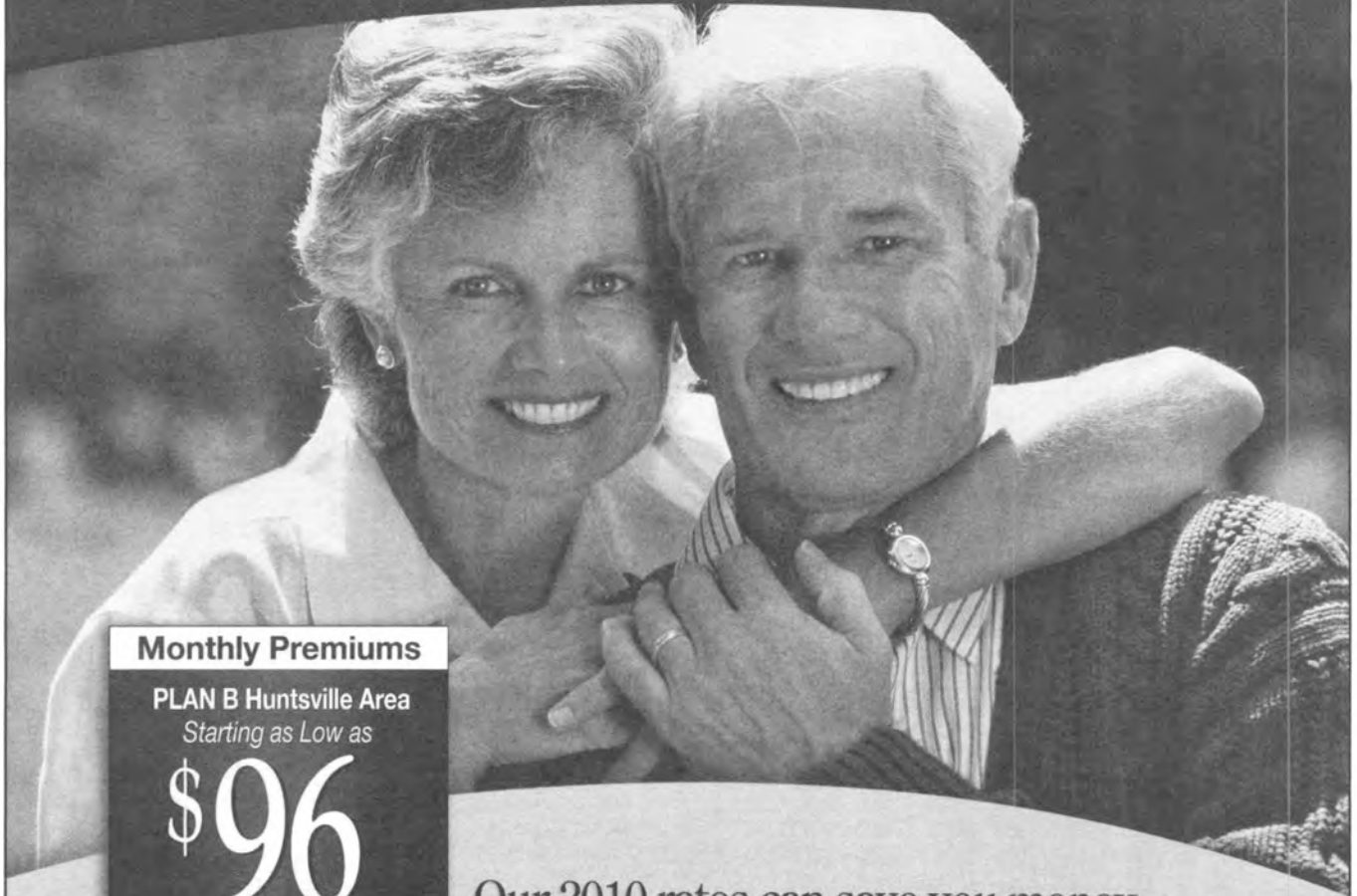
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Old Country Lore

- * Prior to a storm, guitar strings will tighten.
- * To cure deafness, drop a mixture of onion juice and ant eggs into the ear.
- * To promote healing on a cut, remove the inside skin from the shell of an uncooked egg. Place its moist side on the cut.
- * If your husband has a bad earache, place a brass button in his mouth. Surprise him by discharging a gun at his back. This will cure the pain.
- * The best time to go fishing is when the cows are up and grazing.
- * To treat lockjaw, place moistened tobacco on the patient's stomach. Remove immediately when a cure is effected.
- * A solitary crow in flight signifies bad weather; a pair of flying crows means good weather.
- * For a bad case of poison ivy, apply milk that has been heavily salted to the area and allow to dry.
- * To heal sores, apply a poultice of powdered Comfrey root.
- * When birds stop chirping, listen for thunder.
- * To relieve the congestion and pain of sinus trouble, chew honeycomb.
- * For the removal of splinters or thorns, apply raw bacon as a poultice.
- * For stiff joints, massage them 4 times a day with olive oil in which camphor gum has been dissolved.
- * A rainy May foretells a dry July.
- * Remove warts by making a paste of vinegar and hickory-wood ashes. Use as a daily application.
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Emergency Landing of Squadron 17

by Walt Terry

In the fading evening light of March 15, 1938, my mother, father and I were listening to our living room radio when the program was interrupted by a totally unexpected and dramatic message - and an urgent appeal.

Eighteen Seversky P-35 Army pursuit planes, forerunners of the famous World War II P-47, under the command of Capt. D.T. Allison, were enroute to Tampa, Florida, with a planned refueling stop at Maxwell Air Force Base in Montgomery, Alabama. The planes formed the 17th Pursuit Squadron out of Selfridge Field, Michigan, and were to join maneuvers in Tampa.

Caught in stormy weather near Birmingham and bucking strong headwinds, the planes became low on fuel. Unable to make contact with the Birmingham airport, Capt. Allison decided to backtrack to Huntsville, Alabama, and try for a landing there, where the weather was reported to be less severe. The landing facilities there however, were somewhat of a question mark.

Dark was setting in when, approaching Huntsville, the pilots spotted a huge lighted sign reading, "HOTEL RUSSELL ERSKINE." The twelve-story structure was the city's tallest.

But Huntsville, a cotton mill town with a population of only eleven thousand, had little to offer for landing - an unlighted grassy field with a shed, a tattered wind sock; certainly no control tower.

In the gathering darkness amid rolling sky the planes be-

gan circling the area, following a prescribed, military procedure. Two state troopers, who had been observing the presence and behavior of the military planes, recognized their problem and rushed to notify a local radio station. The station, immediately interrupting its regular program, issued an emergency appeal for townspeople to get in their cars and drive without delay to the airport.

Our family was among the first to arrive. All of the drivers were directed by the police to encircle the field and train their headlights on it.

As a teenager already enamored with every element of

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flying, I could hardly control my excitement as the first P-35, spitting blue fire from its cowl exhaust manifold, came swooping out of the darkened sky into the pool of car lights, touched down its unfolded wheels, bounced skyward, settled back to the ground, braked, then, engine roaring, taxied to the edge of the field. "By gosh, those are fighter planes!" I yelled to my mother and dad, hoping they would appreciate my aeronautical wisdom.

That first plane, as it turned out, was Capt. Allison's. He could now act as radio ground control for the others. The remaining seventeen planes, following his lead, peeled one at a time out of their circling formation through the gusty winds. All landed without incident except the last. We held our breaths as the plane, yawing wildly, could not be straightened and the pilot was forced to make another circuit. In the second attempt he was able to bring his plane in for a bumpy but successful landing.

We all breathed a great sigh of relief. Then, as one, we exploded into a resounding cheer. Mine, I'm sure, rose well above all the rest. If I had not been sure before that night I would someday be a pilot, I was sure beyond any doubt after virtually living those landings.

In the crowd-surge following the landings I managed to shake most of the pilots' hands, including Capt. Allison's. I was to keep the hand that had shaken those of the gods unwashed for days.

The pilots arranged their planes in smart military alignment along the field and secured protective covers around the engines.

City police and others volunteered to stand guard overnight. I would have, too, except for my parents reminding me of school the next morning.

Capt. Allison lavished praise on his "boys" for their courage and flying skills. He told our mayor, "Thank God for Huntsville. I don't know how we could have survived without you people." I heard one of the pilots say, "I'm just thankful we all came down right-side up."

The pilots were given a hero's escort to the Russel Erskine Hotel whose bright beacon had called to them in the darkness. The hotel's staff offered them libation in the locally famous "Blue Room."

A friend since high school, Jimmie Taylor, who served as bellhop in the hotel at the time, told me one of the pilots, an "obvious Yankee," told one of the patrons in the Blue Room he'd been worried they might have had to land in one of those stubby "grits fields." It was not clear, Jimmie said, whether the pilot was a bit in his cups or the victim of a Southern wag, perhaps a fellow pilot who had told him on some fall overflight of the area that that was what those rolling white fields were.

After the Blue Room the pilots were fed a sump-

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tuous meal in the banquet hall and given the best hotel rooms for the night. Jimmie told me that grits were not served to them at dinner.

An order had been sent to Birmingham for aviation gasoline to be delivered by tanker truck by early the next morning. By two p.m. the refueling had been completed and the squadron had taken off for the remainder of their trip.

In days to follow I was not only to relive those daring P-35 landings, but my first flight at age ten out of that same grassy field. It was an "autogyro," a queer mongrelized forerunner of the helicopter. My grandfather, a "City Father," had been given a courtesy ticket for a ride. An ardent non-flyer, he had happily passed the ticket along to his grandson. Not so glamorous was the tin-lizzie, wind-milling autogyro as the sleek P-35s but still fascinating to this aspiring birdman in his first departure from Mother Earth.

There's no doubt the P-35 landings had been a dramatic event for our normally quiet little town. We heard that some of our citizens without benefit of radio had taken the noise of the circling planes to be an approaching "cyclone" and had rushed to their cellars.

But a good number of the town's citizens had witnessed, indeed been a vital part of, the most exciting event, some said, since 1863 when Confederate General Nathan Bedford Forrest and his calvary had run off a Yankee general and his staff.

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