

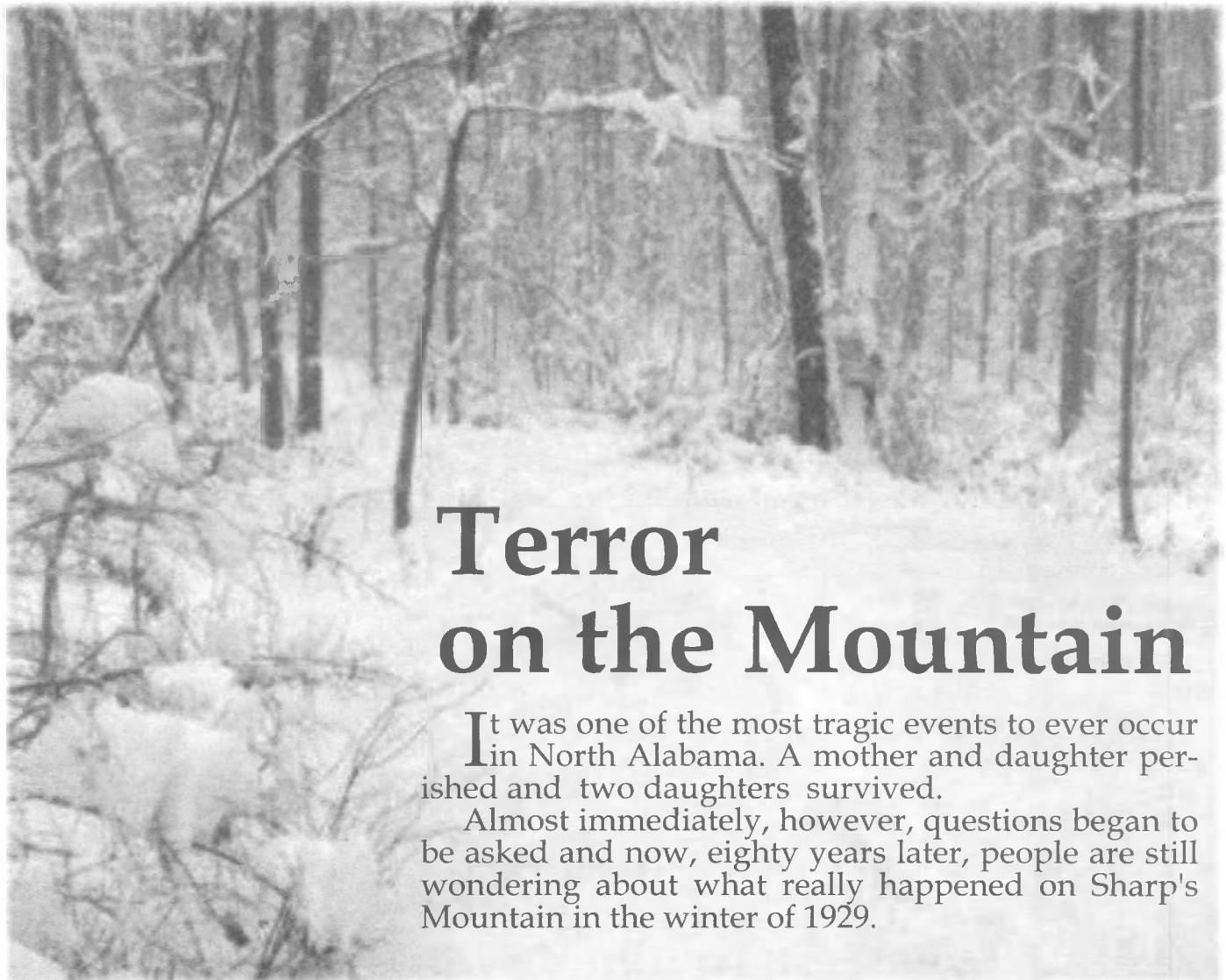


No. 214
Dec. 2010



Old Huntsville

HISTORY AND STORIES OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY



Terror on the Mountain

It was one of the most tragic events to ever occur in North Alabama. A mother and daughter perished and two daughters survived.

Almost immediately, however, questions began to be asked and now, eighty years later, people are still wondering about what really happened on Sharp's Mountain in the winter of 1929.

Also in this issue: Mr. Coot's Store

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Domie Lewter
Mae Lewter

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Terror on the Mountain

by Linda (Herring) Kapes

For the residents of Lincoln Village, the Christmas season of 1929 was one of mixed emotions. The mill had cut back to a skeleton staff, laying off hundreds of workers at the very time the paychecks were most needed. For many people, despite the financial uncertainty, it provided a rare chance to spend time with family and friends.

Mary Markham was planning to spend the holidays with her husband, James Markham, on Sharp's Mountain in northeast Madison County. Their home, a small rough-hewn cabin, was located high on the mountain at the end of a wilderness trail, miles from a road or any neighbors. The reclusive family had lived there for years, eking out a living by trapping, making whisky and gathering ginseng.

As their three daughters began to grow older, the family decided that Mary would move to Huntsville where she would

work at the mills and the children could attend school. As often as possible, Mary and the children returned to the mountains.

On December 19, a Thursday, the public schools closed early for the Christmas holidays. Mary had borrowed a car from her father and as soon as her daughters returned from school they set out on the twenty-mile trip to Sharp's Mountain. The weather had been unseasonably warm, in the high fifties and sixties, and despite the children's protests, Mary made them wear sweaters.

That evening, about 3:00, the family reached the home of Harvey Allan who lived at the base of the mountain. Mary was anxious to continue on up the mountain but Harvey and his family beseeched her to spend the night. The children, excited about being around other children, begged their mother to stay. Reluctantly, Mary agreed.

The next morning, December 20, after a hearty breakfast, Mary and the children began the trek up the mountain to the cabin. The weather was overcast with the temperatures hovering in the fifties. A strong wind blowing out of the northwest made Mary aware that she and her children were not



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dressed warmly enough for the changing weather. Although it was a long and difficult walk, almost four miles, the family always looked forward to it. The rough wilderness had a certain fascination that only one who had been raised in the mountains could understand. About a quarter way up the trail the weather began to change drastically.

The dark clouds that had been hovering in the distance now enveloped the mountains in a cold mist, bringing with it strong gusting winds that made walking difficult. The temperatures began to drop - in fifteen minutes the temperature dropped by 20 degrees. At the end of the hour the temperature was below freezing and still dropping. The mist changed to sleet with the pellets being driven sideways by the hurricane force winds.

The once beautiful wilderness trail was suddenly becoming a nightmare as ice began

wrapping the mountain in its freezing embrace.

The sleet quickly gave way to a wind-driven snow so thick that within minutes a heavy white blanket covered the mountain. Mary pushed and urged her daughters to walk faster but the task had become almost impossible. Every step became a test of their strength and endurance as the family fought their way up the icy slopes. Bruised knees and elbows gave silent testimony to the treacherous ice and snow. The two youngest girls began crying as the bitter arctic wind made a mockery out of their light cotton dresses.

The snow began falling harder and the trail grew more obscured. Any semblance of a footpath was now hidden beneath the snow and landmarks once familiar and comforting could no longer be recognized. The family was adrift just like the snow. When the evening darkness began to cast

"Looking at the way some people live, they ought to obtain eternal fire insurance soon."

Seen in church bulletin

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its long shadow on the mountain, visibility became even more difficult as Mary began to realize that they were going to have to spend the night outside, exposed to the elements. They found a large, hollow tree, with an opening just wide enough for them to crawl inside. All night they huddled together, taking turns rubbing each other in a feeble attempt at warmth. At one point Mary passed out the cookies and oranges the children had saved from their school Christmas parties the day before. There was little sleep that night as the family listened to the terrifying sounds of the storm whipping more snow across the mountain. Ice laden branches snapped from trees throughout the night, sounding like gunshots in the darkness.

This freak winter storm that would paralyze North Alabama for days had caught Mary totally unaware. Temperatures set records as they plummeted to below zero and the snow created blizzard conditions not seen in almost a hundred years.

The next morning, a Saturday, did not bring the sunshine they had prayed for. Instead, the snow was falling just as heavy and the temperature was hovering around zero. Mary, who had placed herself at the opening of the hollow tree in an attempt to block the wind from

her children, was suffering from hypothermia and was too weak to walk. It was decided that Jane, the eldest daughter, would take Pearl and together they would try to find the trail. After hours of searching in vain they returned to the tree where Mary and the youngest daughter, Viola, were still huddled. Another night was spent in the bitter cold praying for miracles that were nearly beyond hope.

The next morning, Sunday, Mary was worse, barely able to talk or move. Jane and Pearl set out again to try and find the trail that would lead them home to their father. All day was spent criss-crossing the mountain and retracing their footsteps in the snow. Finally, at about three o'clock that afternoon, they stumbled onto the trail. It was barely two hundred yards from the hollowed tree and less than a half mile to the cabin. Relieved and excited, Jane and Pearl rushed back to the hollow log where their mother and Viola were waiting. Excitedly, Jane told of how they had found the trail and it was just a short walk on to the cabin. She was sure, she added, that they could make it before

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Maxine



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dark. But spending two nights in the unrelenting cold had taken its toll on Mary and so she pleaded that they wait until the following morning when surely the weather would be warmer. Jane reluctantly gave in to her mother's wishes.

The following morning they began the short journey with Jane carrying Viola and Pearl helping her mother. They had not gone very far however, when it became apparent that Mary's weakened condition would not allow them to continue. Mary begged them to help her back to the hollow tree, saying she did not want to die out in the open. A saddened and disheartened family returned to the hollow tree that had become their safety and refuge. Nature's shelter would now become a coffin for two.

That night, with her head lying in Jane's lap, Mary succumbed to the cold. Jane, knowing she had to protect her sisters from the same fate, placed her mother's lifeless body in the opening of the tree as a shield against the arctic

wind. Hours later, Pearl joined her mother in death. With a determination born of necessity, Jane removed the sweaters from the cold bodies and placed Pearl in the opening beside her mother.

The next day, Christmas Eve, Jane and Viola once again attempted to find their way to the mountain cabin. By this time they had spent five nights and six days lost in the wilderness with zero temperatures and no food.

That afternoon, around four o'clock the two girls finally arrived at the end of their long and sad journey. As their bodies warmed before the open fireplace, they tearfully relayed the events of the past week to their father. That night James Markham returned to the hollow tree and retrieved the bodies of his wife and daughter.

As word of the girls' miraculous survival spread they became almost instant celebrities. Their pictures appeared on the front pages of newspapers throughout the country, with detailed accounts of their

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harrowing life and death experiences. The following Sunday Mary Markham and her daughter Pearl were buried at Cameron Methodist Church. A charitable fund was established for the care of Jane and Viola.

It was a story that tugged the heartstrings of everyone who heard it.

Within days of the rescue, however, a story quite different from the first was being told. One that was steeped in local suspicion and mystery.

It went as follows: James Markham was well known as a man who loved his whiskey. From the day he first appeared on Sharp's Mountain, sometime around 1915, he had the reputation of a rough-talking, whiskey drinking man who didn't like people "meddling in his business."

The few people who ever visited Markham's cabin all came away with a sense of pity for the family. Markham, his wife and three daughters all lived in a one-room cabin barely 12 by 14 foot wide. The cabin was almost devoid of any type of furnishings. The mere basics, such as soap or combs, were a rarity and the girls' only bed was a pallet on the floor.

The stories that were told by neighbors about Markham's temper when he was drunk defy belief. Many people in the valley told of seeing Mary and the girls walking off the mountain late at night in attempts to escape Markham's drunken rages. Other stories were told of the mother and three daughters hiding in the woods for

days at a time waiting for him to sober up.

In the summer of 1929, Mary Markham finally found the courage to leave her husband and move to town where she went to work at Lincoln Mills. Like so many other women in her situation, she was torn between wanting a better life for her family and loyalty to a husband she had sworn to love, honor and obey.

That December Mary decided to return to Sharp's Mountain and her husband's home. Mary and the children spent the night at Harvey Allan's house before walking up the mountain early the next morning. The weather was unseasonably warm, making the walk even more pleasant than usual. Even allowing for loiter-



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ing along the way the family, at the latest, would have reached the cabin by 11:00 that morning. No one noticed the heavy clouds that were beginning to cover the sky.

That afternoon James Markham was seen walking along the road with a sack over his shoulder. When Kenneth Pitts stopped to give him a lift, Markham explained he had been to the store to purchase more supplies. Pitts got the impression that Markham's wife and children were waiting at home. He said Markham was intoxicated.

What happened next can only be conjecture. As evening approached, it started sleeting and then changed to snow. By the next morning the mountain was completely snowed in, making any kind of travel impossible. Six people - James, his brother Robert, Mary and three children - were trapped

in a small room barely large enough for two. James was drinking, along with his brother. The cramped quarters and the whisky led to arguments. At some point, as many people believe, Mary decided to take her daughters and walk off the mountain as she had done so many times before.

On Christmas Eve, a neighbor who lived about a mile from the Markham cabin heard three shots, placed closely together. This was an age-old sign of distress. His first thought was of fire as he scanned the horizon for signs of smoke. Seeing none, he started to go back into his house when he heard three more shots. Quickly he saddled a mule and began cautiously making his way through the ice and snow toward the Markham cabin where he thought the shots originated.

When he reached the cabin he found the blackened bod-

ies of Mary and Pearl lying on the floor. Jane and Viola were huddled, terror stricken, in a corner of the room while their father was trying to boil a pot of coffee.

After listening for a few minutes as the girls told a story of spending 5 nights in the freezing wilderness, the neigh-

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bor rode his mule on down the mountain and called the authorities. No one knows what story he told the authorities, but the next morning two officials from the County Health Department, along with three armed deputies, appeared at the cabin with a warrant to take the girls into custody. The girls were taken to town where they told their story again. The next day Judge Thrasher signed an order appointing himself as guardian. The newspaper said, "Mr. Markham agreed to stay in the background for his daughters sake."

Almost seventy-five years later the tragedy of Sharp's Mountain is still being debated. Did the family perish going

up the mountain or leaving it?

Records prove it did not start snowing until that night, long after the time the family should have reached the cabin. A puzzling question probably never to be answered is, "How did two of the girls live while the other two froze to death?" Most medical authorities insist that it would have been impossible for the girls to survive the bitter temperatures dressed only in light cotton dresses. Did Jane and Viola return to the cabin earlier than people thought? Was it possible that they never left the cabin? What did the neighbor see or hear that made armed deputies arrive with a warrant? Why did the judge remove the girls from their father's home? Could

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it be that Markham's reputation as a drunkard and brute prompted them to take this action? Most importantly, why did the two girls relate the story as told above? A story that was passed on to their children and children's children for 75 years. A story that from outsiders' points of view contradicts the accounts told by neighbors and some historical records regarding the timing of the snow storm of the century. Was it loyalty for their father, fear, or shock that would block their memories? Or could it be that the truth lies somewhere in between the accounts as told by Jane and Viola and the stories passed down as legend by old timers of Hurricane Creek?

My mother was the youngest survivor of this mountain tragedy, but her story does not end the winter of '29. She lived for two years with Mary's brother and wife. When the funds that had been donated by the kind citizens of Huntsville ran out, my mother was placed

in the Alabama Children's Home in Troy, Ala. There she grew to adulthood. During the summer of '41 she met a soldier who would become the love of her life, and in the spring of '42 they were married. The tragic story of being in the snow and cold for days, and the trauma of having to leave her mama behind produced deep fears in my mother that she never overcame. She had a fear of storms and snow that would affect the way she raised her children. When we had the occasional snow or severe storm my mother would not allow us to go outside to play. We had to stay indoors until the snow melted.

Viola's older sister Jane was able to go to school from the donated funds. Although

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nominated for the Carnegie Award for her heroic action, nothing ever transpired. She became a schoolteacher and later married and became a mother of two children. She and my mother kept in close contact throughout their lives. However, they did not ever talk about the tragedy.

James Markham, my grandfather, had an emotional breakdown, but later remarried and had other children.

Although two stories emerged from the tragedy, one factor cannot be ignored. The good people of Huntsville joined together to assist the survivors. From the many volunteers who carried the stretchers containing my mother and aunt, down the mountain to the ambulance; to those who donated money to provide for my mother and aunt; to the flowers dropped on their cabin by the airmen from Robert's Field.

I speak for the children of these two survivors when I express our heartfelt thanks to Huntsville for their help.

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Jenny Thompson

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* To prevent mildew on your shower curtain, soak it in a solution of salt water before hanging.

* Have ring around the toilet? Rub that ring with vinegar & baking soda.

* Eggs should be eaten, but not by the hens that lay them. Remove the tip of the beak once, and if that does not stop the trouble, then eat the hen.

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News from 1885

- The case of J. R. Stegall, against the city for impounding his hogs, was tried before Justice Figg yesterday but the justice withheld his decision until today. This case involves a nice point in law. The defendent's counsel, Oscar R. Hundley, Esq., holds that the city has no right to take possession of the hogs without due process of law, it being in contravention with the constitution of the state. And if the city had such a right it could not prevail in this case as the hogs escaped from the owner's premises or were let out, without the owner's knowledge.

- Decatur, Al - The quiet of the Sabbath was somewhat disturbed at the report being circulated on the streets Sabbath morning of an assault made by Rev. L. Hensley Grubbs, editor of the Decatur News, upon one Mr. Bennett, his printer. The particulars of the matter are somewhat concealed and as a result, quite a number of reports are in circulation. The best we can gather are these: The printer was on his usual Saturday night drunk, and made some demands on Mr. Grubbs for money which he could or would not comply with. Words passed, and finally the printer was collared and shaken up a bit. Being too drunk to resist, he submitted as best he could.

- Will Weaver entered the offices of the Mercury this morning with a huge rattlesnake which measured four feet three inches in circumference. The snake had been killed a few hours previously by Squire Cornelius on A. J. Esslinger's place. It was adorned with

thirteen rattles and a button.

- Mr. J. C. Dilworth, a highly estimated and generous citizen of Huntsville, died at his residence on Meridianville Pike, last evening at 6 o'clock. The deceased was beloved by all who knew him. He bore his painful illness with the fortitude and resignation of the Christian soldier, and it is a grand consoling thought for his family that he is finally at peace.

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Huntsville News from the Year 1911

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

- Mayor R. Earle Smith stated today that no whiskey shall be sold in Huntsville while he is mayor. He stated that a few bottles may occasionally change hands but that there

will be no general or even restricted sale, and that the law shall be enforced as it appears on the statute books.

- For sale - genuine O.I.C. brood hogs and pigs, just the thing for quick money and best meat producers. Address Bruce Moring, Ryland, Al or phone 522 Ring 2.

- The prettiest gasoline table lamp in the world is sold here by Harrison Bros., 214 Washington St. You can carry it from room to room will you, it is absolutely safe.

- For rent - The Alberta Taylor residence on McClung

Street. The house is handsomely furnished & possession can be at once. Apply to Mrs. E. Ezell.

- West Holmes street concrete bridge is nearing completion. Its opening to public travel has already relieved the West Clinton St. congestion.

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

Seen on accident report

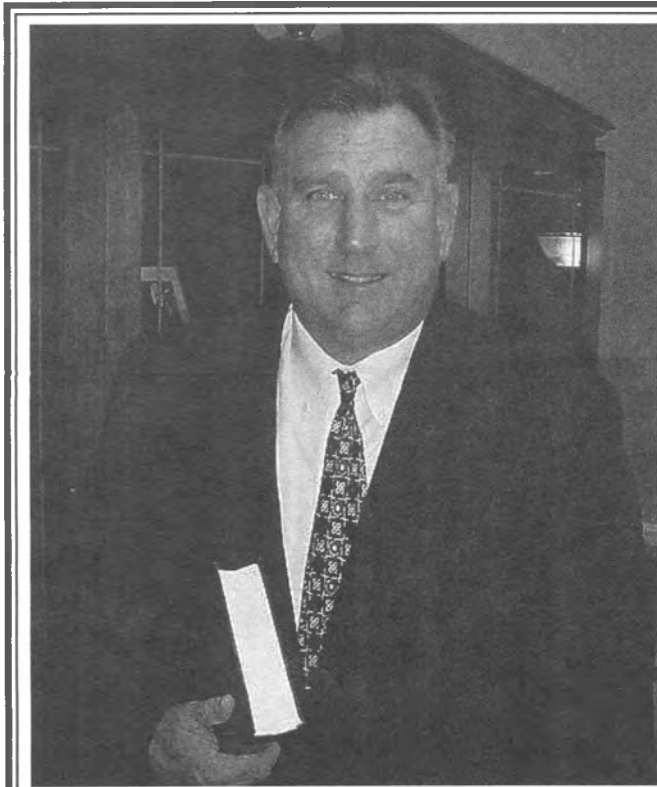


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Strictly Business

Charlie P. Lyle

Back in the 1930's there were some businessmen of the same creed who owned clothing stores down town just a block from the courthouse square.

These stores sold mainly to workers and farmers both black and white.

The best time of the year for these merchants was in the fall of the year. This is when the cotton crop was harvested as well as other crops. There was money jingling in everybody's pockets.

There were three of these stores in a row. The two stores on each side of the middle store had sales galore. There were clearance sales, going out of business sales, overalls sales, shoe and boot sales, coat sales

and many other sales, just to mention a few.

The man who owned the store in the middle of the other two stores was desperate. After much thought, the merchant went out and bought a very big sign and placed it on top of his front door.

It read "MAIN ENTRANCE TO ALL SALES".

Angel Food Pudding

2 egg whites with pinch of salt
 1 tsp vanilla
 1 tbl flour
 1 cup English walnuts chopped coarse
 1 cup powdered sugar
 1 tsp baking powder
 1 cup dates cut fine

Beat eggs whites stiff; sift flour and baking powder with sugar; add to beaten eggs gradually; add fruits and pour into a buttered baking dish; place dish in hot water with several thicknesses of paper in pan of water; bake in moderate oven for 30 minutes, or until firm; cool and serve with whipped cream.

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Farmer Killed While Getting Water from a Well

from 1902 Huntsville Newspaper

News of the killing of John Byrd, a farmer, by Robert Johnson and Fred Stevens, reached the city from the Monrovia precinct Monday morning. The two men came to the city after the killing and surrendered to Sheriff Rodgers, who had no warrant for them at the time. The sheriff told them to appear for preliminary trial before Judge Stewart in the early afternoon, which they did.

It seems that Byrd has for sometime past been getting water from a well on Johnson's place and last Saturday afternoon when Byrd's boy went for the water, Johnson told him that he could get no more supply as the well was getting low and it was liable at any time to go dry. The boy returned home and told his father what Johnson had said. Byrd then got a bucket and a double-barrel shotgun and said that he would go and get the water anyhow as he must have it. He was accompanied by his wife, son, father and two or three others.

Johnson and his brother-in-law, Stevens, saw the party coming and armed themselves. When Byrd came within hailing distance they told him he must not come to the well. Byrd came on anyway and leveled his gun at the two men who were standing in the door of Johnson's home. Johnson opened fire with a pistol, none of the bullets taking effect. Stevens then fired the shotgun and Byrd fell immediately dead, his chest riddled with shot. Some of the shot struck Mrs. Byrd in the arm and badly wounded her. Byrd was shot twice.

Warrants for arrest of Johnson and Stevens were sworn out by the dead man's father and a preliminary trial was held before Squire David Phillips, who held the men for further investigation.

Their regular preliminary hearing was held by Probate Judge Stewart Monday afternoon and Judge Stewart bound the defendants over to await the action of the grand jury. Their bonds were fixed a \$1,000 and were made easily.

All of the parties to the trag-

edy are well known in the Monrovia neighborhood. They have many relatives in that locality and were all known as peaceable citizens.

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Seen in Military Manual



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Heard On the Street

by *Cathey Carney*



Congratulations to **William McMillan**, who was the first caller to correctly identify the Photo of the Month for November. We had lots of calls thinking the photo was that of a young **Tony Mason**, but it was actually **Charlie Lyle**! So CUTE! William knew Charlie back in the old days but hasn't seen him for a while and misses talking with him. William is a retired Arsenal employee and now works as a volunteer at **Harrison Brothers** downtown, delivers Meals on Wheels and volunteers at the hospital! William is one busy man.

The **Veterans Day** parade was attended by thousands of people and the weather couldn't have been better. What I especially liked was watching the older veterans in the crowds saluting the younger soldiers as they marched by. It was a moving experience and the bands were great as well. We are SO proud of all our military for their service to our country and appreciate them EVERY day!

We are really proud of the expansion of **Star Market** to the old Southern Family Mar-

kets location on Bailey Cove. It is their largest location to date and will offer pharmacy service, Madison County License Dept. satellite office and a U.S. Post office to be open first of the year.

Mary Dudley wants to wish **Peggy Hutson** a Happy Birthday! In 1967 they met at Pirmasens, Germany where they had accompanied their husbands on a tour of duty and have been best friends ever since!

John & Peggy Richard (John is with Rise Real Estate - Team Richard) were honored by their children with a Golden Anniversary celebration at the Huntsville Country Club. The couple were married 50 years ago November 12 in Huntsville. They have two daughters - **Janie Herrin** and **Margaret Clouser**. They have two grandsons, a granddaughter and one great-granddaughter.

Congratulations to both John & Peggy!

We were so sorry to hear of the death of **Doyle Ramey**. Doyle was a Lincoln School graduate and a U.S. Marine. He lived in Elkhart, Ind. at the time of his death but always loved Huntsville. We send our condolences to his son **Benjamin**, daughters **Lucinda Lowe**, **Amanda Ramey**, **Melissa Ramey** and **Vanessa Nobley** and all the family and friends who loved him so much.

Bill & Rosemary Leatherwood want to wish a very happy Birthday to their son, **Bill Leatherwood, III**, who turns 30 on Dec. 18. Also to their handsome grandson **Austin**, who will be 12 on Dec. 28. Austin's brother **Chase** is 10, and proud Mom of both boys is **Jamie Woods**!

We love it when we hear from Huntsvillians who have moved to other places but never forget their home town. One of these sweet people we heard from recently was **Nolan Myrick**, who now lives in Fayetteville, TN. One of Nolan's

Photo of The Month

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

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cousins is **Johnny Johnston**, who writes about his memories of Huntsville. While growing up in Ryland, one of Nolan's good friends was **Austin Miller** who also writes stories. Another of Nolan's cousins is **Floyd Frazier**, owner of Jackson Way Styling Salon. And a really good friend from his old days was **Dudley Powell** of Big M Farms. We want to send a special hello out to Nolan, and keep on writing us!

We also heard from **Alice Karas** who now lives in New York! She was born in 1927 and lived here until she moved to Buffalo in 1947 to be married.

Happy Birthday to our good friend **Louie Tippett!** His sweet daughters planned a surprise party for him and his wife **Jane** was there too to celebrate.

Here's some interesting trivia. In 1933 in Huntsville, a musical group that was popular with Huntsville High students was made up of **George Torrence** on saxophone, **Hilding Homberg** on drums; **Raymond Monroe** on violin; **Maurice Stevens** on tenor sax; **John L. Hays** who played the organ. A sax group was composed of **Cecil Rainey**, **Joe Brooks**, **Jessie Wilson**, **Howard Rainey**, soprano and **Bunny Irvin**, tenor.

And some school trivia - in 1949 there were 52 schools in the **Madison County School** system - 387 teachers and 13,600 students. Huntsville's school system had 4 elementary, 1 junior and 2 senior highs, with a total count of 97 teachers.

John and Sue Shaver (John is the owner of Shaver books at the Railroad Station Antiques) are so proud of their beautiful grandkids, **William** and **Annie**. William just turned 4 in November and Annie turned 1 in October. Parents **John Shaver, Jr.** and **Shannon Shaver** are looking forward to a great Christmas celebration.

The leaves have really start-

ed falling, we've had some windy days and the leaves are covering the roads. I know not everyone will agree with me but I like that look of **lots of leaves swirling** around the streets - it reminds me of the old days before the city trucks went out keeping everything neat. Especially downtown, where we have the huge trees - it feels like we've gone back in time 50 years and we're in the good old days! In my opinion, having every thing swept and orderly is not especially appealing nor charming.

The **Surgery Center** in Huntsville is where **Tom** went recently to have cataract surgery in both eyes, a week apart. We were SO impressed with the employees there and how they manage so many patients on a daily basis smoothly and at the same time treat everyone in a friendly, helpful manner. The two gorgeous ladies who welcome you at the reception desk most mornings are **Donnis Halburg** and **Karen Ball**. Donnis keeps the coffee pot going and both ladies do a great job! **Dr. Don Derivaux** was the doctor responsible for the surgery and both eyes turned out perfectly!

While waiting at the **Eye Center on Meridian Street** several weeks back, to talk

with **Dr. Derivaux**, we met the sweetest lady who was there with her two daughters. They were all Huntsville natives and just the nicest people to talk with. Unfortunately I lost the piece of paper I had their names on so PLEASE call me and I'll put your names in the January issue!

Have a wonderful, warm & safe Christmas with your loved ones! And Happy New Year!

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Gifts from the Kitchen

Hazelnut Butter Crunch

- 1/2 c. plain flour
- 1/3 c. chopped hazelnuts
- 1/4 c. packed brown sugar
- 1/4 c. butter, softened

Mix all til crumbly, distribute evenly in a greased 8 x 8" baking pan. Bake at 400 degrees til golden brown, 7-10 minutes. Stir & cool, store in covered container or give as a special gift.

Best Dark Fudge

- 3 c. semi-sweet chocolate chips
- 1 dash salt
- 1 1/2 t. vanilla extract
- 1 can Eagle Brand sweetened condensed milk
- 2 c. walnuts or pecans, chopped

In a heavy saucepan over low heat, melt the chips with the Eagle Brand and salt. Re-

move from heat, stir in the nuts and vanilla. Spread evenly over waxed paper-lined 9 x 13" pan. Do this quickly because it will harden as it cools. Cover and chill overnight - next day turn fudge onto cutting board and remove waxed paper, cut into small squares and store in fridge.

Forgotten Crispies

- 2 1/2 c. powdered sugar
- 4 egg whites
- 1 t. cream of tartar
- 1 t. vanilla
- 1 c. chopped pecans

Beat all ingredients except nuts as long as it takes for the egg whites to hold their shape. Fold in nuts and drop by teaspoonfuls onto greased cookie sheet. Bake at 225 degrees for an hour, turn heat off and leave in oven another hour.

Coconut Meringues

- 4 egg whites
- 1 1/4 c. sugar
- 2 1/2 c. sweetened coconut, shredded
- 1 t. vanilla extract
- 1/4 t. salt

Preheat oven to 325 degrees. Lightly grease a cookie sheet. Beat egg whites in a deep glass bowl til foamy, then beat in the sugar and beat til stiff and glossy.

Fold in the remaining ingredients, drop mixture by teaspoonfuls about 2 inches apart onto your cookie sheet.

Bake for 20 minutes and meringues are lightly browned. Immediately remove from cookie sheet and cool. Store in a tightly covered container.

You may use parchment paper on the cookie sheet rather than greasing the pan.

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Toasted Almond Brittle

- 2 c. sugar
- 1 c. slivered almonds, toast-
ed
- 3 T. butter
- Pinch soda

Cook sugar in an iron skillet over low heat, stirring constantly til it forms a syrup. Be careful not to burn it!

Remove from stove and stir in the almonds. Add butter and soda, pour into greased cookie sheet to cool, break into pieces when cool and store.

Chocolate Nut Truffles

- 1 c. Eagle Brand sweetened
Condensed milk
- 4 oz. chocolate chips
- 2 1/2 c. powdered sugar
- 1 t. vanilla extract
- 1 c. chopped pecans

Melt the chocolate in the top of a double boiler or in the microwave at 30-second bursts, stirring after each time til chocolate is melted.

Add the condensed milk, let it cook over medium heat in a sauce pan, stirring constantly. Remove from heat and add the sugar, blending thoroughly.

Add the vanilla and nuts, shape as desired. Dip in melted chocolate or roll in coconut or cocoa powder.

Grandma's Lace Cookies

- 2 sticks butter, softened
- 3 c. brown sugar, packed
- 1 egg
- 1/4 t. salt
- 1 t. vanilla or almond ex-
tract

4 c. quick rolled oats

Blend the butter and sugar. Add egg, vanilla, salt and blend in the oats. Spray a light coating of oil on a cookie sheet. Make small bundles on the sheet with a teaspoon about 2 inches apart and bake at 325 degrees for 8 minutes. These will completely flatten out, thereby the name. Don't overcook! Cool completely before removing them from the cookie pan or they'll stick together.

Macaroons

- 1 16-oz. pkg. angel food
cake mix (1-step)
- 1/2 c. water
- 1 1/2 t. almond extract
- 2 c. flaked coconut

In a bowl beat the cake mix, water and extract, use low speed for 30 seconds. Scrape, beat on medium speed for another minute. Fold in the coconut, stir. Drop by teaspoonfuls onto parchment-lined baking sheet and bake for 10 minutes at 350 degrees. Cool & remove.



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Early History of Huntsville

By Brig. Gen. E. C. Betts - published in 1909

As an introduction to this chapter, the author asks leave to quote briefly from a letter written in 1815 by John W. Walker, later United States Senator, to his friend at Washington, W. H. Crawford, then Secretary of the United States Treasury: "Huntsville is situated around the finest spring in the world; the spring forms a semicircle 100 feet wide, and at a trivial expense the stream can be made navigable for batteaux to the Tennessee river; which is only ten miles distant. The market house is of brick; the jail of wood. In its immediate vicinity are five cotton gins. The average land in the county will produce 1,000 pounds of cotton to the acre, and 800 bales will be this year's crop. The land is also admirably adapted to tobacco raising. Besides the gins in Huntsville, there are twenty in the county."

Such expressions as these reflect the spirit of the times. An exhilarating air of buoyancy and hope pervaded every phase of life in the community. The atmosphere was electric with ardent optimism for the future, which was so abundantly warranted, as is eloquently attested by history's narration of that future.

As the beginning of this, the second era in the growth of the settlement, is the ending of the first at which lands were bought, the inhabitants were primarily engaged about the business of establishing their homes. Most of the wealthier citizens built houses along the south of the town, just out of the town limits, ranging from Pope's - now Echols' - hill on the east, to the spring bluff on the west, along what is now Williams street, which was

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lined with towering oaks and stately poplars; while others erected their houses along what is now Maiden Lane, just south of a rugged and picturesque bluff, upon which was later situated the home of Leroy Pope. From time to time residences were changed from one part of town to another, and from the country to town, and the reverse. Thomas Bibb and Henry Minor being among the most noteworthy of those who moved over to the south side of town.

After the matter of housing the settlers had been properly disposed of, the attention and energies of the entire community seem to have been directed to the development of the economic interests of the town; not to the exclusion of, however, but with due and commensurate regard for its proper political development as a factor in the governmental life of the territory.

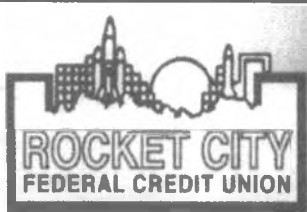
Some time during the year 1810, Alexander Gilbreath opened a mercantile establishment at the corner of Gates and Henry streets, and about a year later formed a partnership with James White. This firm enjoyed a large and lucrative business for many years. John Brown erected two storehouses on Exchange Row, being the first on the north side of the square. Near these J. O. Crump built one.

In 1810 John Read came to Twickenham and erected the first house on the old Schaudies property, at the southwest corner of the square. This house was later purchased by A. Jameson, who ran a hotel there, and some time thereafter it was acquired by Allen Cooper, who continued to operate the hotel. The first storehouse on the east side of the square was built by Neal B. Rose, Leroy Pope and John Hickman.

For a number of years the first and only paper in the territory was the "Madison Gazette," published at Twickenham by Mr. Parham, having been established in the early part of 1812, as a weekly. Later,

in 1816, this paper changed hands and was thereafter published by T. B. Grantland, under the name of "The Huntsville Republican."

As early as 1803 the Territorial Legislators conceived the idea that taverns were institutions peculiarly subject to governmental control, even to the extent of fixing the rates to be charged; however, notwithstanding this, hotels or taverns were numerous in Twickenham. On the west side of Jefferson Street, just off the square, on the site of



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the old Huntsville Hotel, C. Cheatham owned and operated a tavern, and just across the street, in the center of the block, Archibald Madera ran his tavern, which was headquarters for the delegates to the Territorial Constitutional Convention held at Huntsville in 1819.

Between these years, the population of this, the oldest English settled town in the State, was of slow growth, notwithstanding that Madison county then held within its limits more than one-half the entire population in that scope of country which later became the State of Alabama. Nevertheless, during this period the business and commercial interests of the settlement grew by leaps and bounds. Many cotton gins and mills of various characters were located in and around the town.

The author will be pardoned for here digressing, and recording the fact that the first cotton gin in the county and

A Decatur man claims there are two reasons why his wife won't wear last year's dresses - she doesn't want to, and she can't.



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| Cheese Sticks | Chicken Fries |
| Fried Zucchini | Corn Nuggets |
| Quesadias | Fried Squash |
| Chicken Philly | Sauteed Shrimp |
| Classic Club | Fried Green Tomatoes |
| Filet Mignon | Fried Okra |
| Shrimp Jammers | Bourbon Glazed Salmon |
| Popcorn Shrimp | Loaded Potato Skins |
| Fried Oysters | Fried Pickles |

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probably in the State, referred to by a chronicle of the times as a cotton factory, was erected by Charles Cabaniss on Barren Fork of Flint river, soon after the land sales in 1809.

When the court house was completed in 1816, it was flanked about on all sides by handsome brick storehouses, and in all parts of town many elegant and costly homes had been erected and many more were in the process of completion. This material growth of the town represented the skill and handiwork of two brothers, Thomas and William Brandon, who came into the community in 1810, with nothing but their mason's tools, and in these few years had transformed the crude log hut settlement into the brick and mortar metropolis of the territory, it had by this time become.

Though engrossed in and busied about the reclamation and development of their own wonderful county, the fires of patriotism still burned brightly in the souls of Madison's men and women. On October 13, 1813, General Andrew Jackson, and his command, after marching from Fayetteville to Huntsville in five hours, halted at what is now the intersection of East Holmes and North Lincoln streets, for rest over night, having learned on arriving here that the report of the "rapid approach of the Indians was exaggerated."

General Jackson and his command the next day continued their march through the country of hostile Indian tribes to Horse Shoe Bend, where that sanguinary battle was fought with the Creek Indians. Nor was their departure unattended, for the county had contributed liberally of its men; four companies from Huntsville, one the "Mounted Rangers," under the command of Capt. Eli Hammond and a fifth company from Ha-

zel Green, with Captain Jack Mosley as its commander, had joined General Jackson's forces here.

In those strenuous times, when safety lay in one's ability to shoot a muzzle-loading-flint-lock-squirrel-rifle, "military preparedness" was not merely a fad to be indulged according to political exigencies, and universal military training, in a measure, was a reality. The duty of every male citizen to bear arms in defense of his country and be subject to its call, was not a myth. To the ac-

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complishment of this end, laws governing the same in the territory had been enacted, which, we have observed, were made to apply to Madison county, on February 27, 1809.

It was required of the commanding officers of the companies that they enroll "every free white male who shall have been ten days in their respective beats—each beat in the county having one or more companies and who shall be above the age of eighteen and under the age of forty-five, and shall give notice to such person of his enrollment. Thereafter militia duty or service was compulsory upon males so enrolled.

The regiment was required by law to hold a muster once a year, and the company once every two months and oftener, at the discretion of the commanding officer.

During the war of 1812 the settlement had furnished its quota of men to defend the country. Two companies, one under the command of Capt. Jack Mosley, and the other with Captain Gray as its commander, went forth from Huntsville; however, both companies were mustered out without having seen service in actual war.

At the end of this era, between the years 1815 and 1816, there was a pronounced inflated condition of affairs. Land val-

ues, which, in some instances, had increased tenfold, bear unmistakable evidence of this forward tendency of things and events in the life of the settlement.

The southwest corner of the square known in later years, as the Schaudies corner sold in 1811 for \$715, and without having been improved with a costly building, brought \$7,500 when sold during the last year of this period; and it is said by a narrator of those times, that this instance of the rise in property values, is a fair index to the advance in the price of all property.

Not alone did these conditions prevail immediately in the town, but throughout the county as well. Farm lands approximate to the town brought \$100 per acre.

Our fair city was well on its way to prosperity.

Cantaloupe Sorbet


- 4 c. frozen cantaloupe, slightly thawed
- 1 frozen banana, sliced
- 1/4 c. Splenda
- 1 T. creme de menthe liqueur
- 1 T. lime juice
- 2 T. grated lime peel
- 1/4 t. ground cinnamon

In a blender or food processor combine all ingredients and process til smooth.

Scrape into a shallow metal pan. Cover and freeze for 4 hours or overnight. Using a knife, break the mixture into chunks. Process briefly in a food processor before serving. Garnish with a mint sprig.

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News from 1886

- Two days ago the "stick-ringing" man took possession of the corner of Randolph St. and the square, and he has done a thriving business. Yesterday the "Electric Shock Battery" man installed himself on the other corner and his machine attracted a large crowd all day long.

- In the case of H. W. Binder, the man who placed a cross tie on the track of the M & C Railway, three miles below the city; it was yesterday decided by Judge Richardson to send him to the State Lunatic Asylum at Tuscaloosa.

Binder, it will be remembered, was the party who attempted to hew down the flag staff at the National Cemetery in Chattanooga, and also raised considerable Cain at the engine room of the Bell Factory a while ago.

- For rent - The valuable plantations belonging to the Estate of the late Josiah Springer, deceased. Apply to Allen R. Campbell, Lawrence Cooper


- Yesterday while Mack Keener, colored, was cleaning out a hog pen at the Fair Grounds, the vicious occupant of the pen turned on the unlucky man and severely tore a ligament from his arm.

Cockle-Burr in Throat

Gurley, Ala - Four years ago a 10-year old daughter of Thomas Sanford, near Gurley, swallowed a cockle-burr that lodged in her windpipe. Physicians said it could not be removed without endangering her life. An orifice was made in her throat and a tube inserted through which she

has breathed ever since. When talking, in order to articulate distinctly, she would place her finger over the tube. She has had splendid health until recently, when she took measles and also had pneumonia. Yesterday, while coughing violently, she dislodged the burr.

Each day is a gift.

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The Pioneers

The following account of Huntsville's early days was written in the late 1800s by Judge Thomas J. Taylor, a probate judge of Madison County from 1886 until 1894.

As more settlers moved into what we know today as Madison County, they were greeted by a vast untamed wilderness. From the year 1805 to 1809 transportation of supplies of all kinds was laborious and difficult and what few supplies did come into the county were often so expensive as to be out of the reach of the common settler. Forced to do without many of these necessities, the pioneers had to improvise.

During the first year, far from other settlements, they had to bring corn and salt on pack horses through the wilderness. The first settlers in Madison County had no mills for bread nearer than the neighborhood of Winchester. In those days this involved a tedious journey, and frequently the settlers would be without bread or salt for many days, subsisting on jerked venison.

The first priority for every new settler, after building a shelter, was to plant and cultivate a corn patch and raise corn for bread. There were no mills convenient for the first two or three years, and each family constructed a hominy mortar by burning or digging out a large bowl in the end of a large piece of hard, tough timber, in which they pounded their corn by the use of a large pestle worked by a sweep. Many families living at a great distance from mills

subsisted for many years on bread pounded in these mortars.

Clean wood ashes were easily procured, and after they raised a corn crop, lye-hominy was a favorite substitute for bread. Bread from wheat flour was seldom seen, as the roads to Tennessee and Virginia were not yet opened. For many years little or no wheat was raised in the county.

When the county had largely increased in population, flour was brought down the Tennessee River in considerable quantity, and Ditto's Landing was the rendezvous for the



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flatboats that supplied the area. A flour inspector was appointed at the landing to inspect, grade, and stamp the flour offered for sale.

Parched corn was the portable food of the explorer and hunter, on which, together with the game found in the forest, they were able to live for long periods of time during their hunting and exploring excursions. They had great abundance of meat and a variety of fish, flesh or fowl, but were frequently without salt, which first was brought from Nashville on flatboats, then over the roads in wagons.

After boats were used in carrying cotton down the Paint Rock and Flint rivers, salt was frequently brought back, though it was hard work propelling the loaded boats against the current.

Iron was scarce and expensive, and many of the first houses built did not have a particle of iron used in their construction. The doors swung on wooden hinges and were fastened, if fastened at all, with wooden locks. The floors of the rooms were dirt or made of puncheons; the boards were laid on the roof and held fast by weight poles laid on each course, the lowest pole pegged down and the others separated and kept in position by timber pieces between them.

The settlers dug their bread trays and turned bowls and tableware out of the buckeye, basswood, and other soft timber, but some of the more pretentious made a display of pewter table service.

China and delphware were not in use, and the neat housewives scoured their pewter plates until they shone like silver and set them edgewise on shelves. The tinkers, pliers of a profession now obsolete, traveled from house to house, repaired

and mended the family pewter, and received in payment a little money and a great deal of barter in the way of family supplies.

At first they depended on game for a supply of meat which was shot or trapped, and in every family were two or three good steel traps. In hunting, the old-fashioned long rifle with flint lock was the universal weapon and as lead was essential they never wasted it and generally managed to keep a supply.

Powder was also scarce and dear, but the settlers, when they could not buy it, were equal to the emergency. Sulphur was easily procured

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and they constructed hoppers in the mountain caves and made saltpetre. They burned willow for charcoal and made gunpowder. Though it may not have been as good and reliable as that made at the present time, yet it answered their purpose.

These men were expert in the use of the rifle, and it was not considered an extraordinary feat to bring down a deer at full speed at a distance of seventy-five or eighty yards.

When our forefathers located in this county, they depended largely on dressed buckskin for clothing. From it they made covering for their beds, garments of every de-

scription, moccasins, sacks and hunting pouches, and it was cut into thongs for sewing purposes and twisted into ropes. Many of the families had flax wheels, and with the flax, made cloth from it of excellent quality. Cotton was soon introduced, patches were planted for spinning purposes, and the old spinning wheel and cards, the loom and winding-blades and reel soon

became common in every settler's house.

As there were no gins to clean the cotton, the family in the long winter evenings would pile it before the fire and all hands would clear it of the seed by picking them out with their fingers. In this way they would prepare enough of the snowy fabric for a year's supply for the wheels and looms of the family.

"Old age is like flying through a storm. Once you're aboard, there's nothing you can do but hang on."

Golda Meir

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Suspended from pegs inserted in the walls of the room were usually to be seen bunches of "shanks" of homespun thread ready for warping, bars, and loom. The cloth made from this material was of a coarse nature and well-suited to the rough wear to which it was exposed.

From the bark of various forest trees and by the use of coppers and indigo the cloth was dyed in a variety of colors. Calico was almost unknown and was worth fifty cents a yard, much too expensive for the average settler.

House furniture was of the rudest character. Shelves were used for cupboards, their dining tables were made of puncheons. Their cabins were without glass in the windows, and cooking utensils were few in number. Tallow and rosin and beeswax furnished them light. First they used bear's grease in their lamps, which were homemade, but when cattle became common they had moulded or dipped tallow candles with a cotton wick.

In summer they retired early and seldom used a light except in sickness. In some places they would construct a cotton wick fifteen or twenty feet long, dip it in beeswax and rosin and wind it round a corn cob, making a taper that lasted for a long

time. In those primitive times houses were generally small and families generally large, and they generally managed to divide sleeping spaces when it was time to retire by the use of curtains of buckskin. The little children were stowed randomly about on pallets on the floor, while the larger boys would normally sleep in the loft.

Such were the lives of our ancestors, apparently full of privation and hardships, yet they were a cheerful and contented lot who managed to carve their homes out of the wilderness and leave a great legacy behind them.

Old Huntsville Trivia

1811 - Residents of what is now Madison County pass the first Water Pollution Law, making it unlawful to pollute Indian Creek.

1818 - The first library in Alabama is formed in Huntsville. The library was organized and set up at John Boardman's printing office, on the East side of Madison Street.

1821 - Fifteen prisoners break out of jail.

1839 - Lillian Malone, a local madam, is asked by city officials to leave town.

1857 - Browns Grocery advertises eggs for 12 1/2 cents per dozen.

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News from 1911

- Pick Rhoden, the king of moon shiners of Marshall county, was yesterday sentenced to five years in the penitentiary and fined \$700.

- For sale - my residence on Walker street, or will exchange for farm property. Price reasonable Apply to Robt. L. Adair, care of Henderson National bank.

- Lost - Pair kid gloves at the Elks building during dance Tuesday evening. Finder phone 418 or return to Miss Donnie Dillard.

- For rent - two cozy little bedrooms at reasonable prices. Gentlemen preferred. Mrs. James Lines, 207 East Holmes St.

- For sale - a secondhand 2 horse wagon in good running order; also 2 sets double harness. Apply to Mrs. S. E. Sibley, east Randolph St., opposite Butler's school.

- For rent - 7 room modern cottage on Walker Street - apply to J. N. Mazza

- Wanted - a good nurse and house keeper. \$10 a month in addition to board and room.

- For rent - my residence on Adams Ave. - furnished or unfurnished. Possession given at once. For terms apply to Mrs. Chas. P. Lane

- For rent - two upstairs rooms or one large room down stairs. Suitable for light housekeeping within a short distance of the square. Apply to 314 Randolph St.

- The Queens Daughters of St. Mary's Catholic


Church will have their regular market at De Stefano's store Saturday. The menu will consist of Lady Baltimore, Grand Duke, Caramel and Pineapple cakes. Also available will be snow balls, mince meat pies, salt rising bread, light bread, beaten biscuit and home made Italian spaghetti. They would be pleased to have you call.

- For Sale - the brick residence now occupied by Mrs. George White on Adams Ave. Anyone interested is at liberty to call and examine the place.

- Mr. Knott had to pull a Huntsville-bound auto out of the Mill Creek at Fisk Friday morning. Water too deep.

- Will Land, aged 15 years old, died at the Lowe Village yesterday evening at 6 o'clock. The remains were carried to Hurricane for burial. The deceased leaves a sad widow.

Law of the Bath: When the body is fully immersed in water, the telephone will ring.



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Mr. Coot's Store

by Richard (Dick) Yarbrough
and Susie L. Black

The year was 1932. It was the third year of the "Great Depression." U.S. Highway 231 did not exist. The C.C. Clay toll bridge connecting Morgan and Madison Counties had just been built. Rural electrification had not yet arrived in northeast Morgan County. The ferry still operated at the end of Lower River Road. There were very few paved roads. Edna Mae was thirteen and Susie was eleven years old respectively. Mr. Coot saw an opportunity.

Lower River Road came from Decatur closely hugging the "river" to Lacey's Spring then turned north ending at the new C.C. Clay toll bridge and the ferry. The toll was twenty-five cents per axle. If you walked across the bridge, the toll was ten cents. Let's talk about the bridge and the ferry for a few moments. You had a highly traveled gravel road ending in your choice of a bridge or a river borne ferry. If your choice was the ferry, the gravel road turned into hard packed dirt on the bank of the river. Heavily laden wagons drawn by strong mules or horses packed the dirt hard and made deep ruts in the ground. At this point the teamster began to negotiate the steep decline or incline, depending on your direction, onto or off of the ferry. Now, let's add buggies and automobiles to the mix. Mr. Ford's Model T's and Model A's were transforming the rural south. All of this worked fairly well in dry weather. Now let's add a summer thunderstorm or a cold winter rain to the scenario. Ingress and egress to and from the ferry was a challenge, even for the most hardy. Susie says getting on and off the ferry was scary.

Although touted as being a two lane bridge, the C.C. Clay Bridge was woefully narrow. By today's standards, the bridge was barely one lane wide. Many vehicles became entangled while trying to cross the bridge at the same time. Susie recalls many times when law enforcement had to be called because of a wreck on the bridge. Remember too, telephones were not common in those days. It took a long time to get the lawmen on the scene of an accident.

Dannie was Mr. Coot's first wife. Sadly Dannie passed away at the very young age of

twenty-five from TB. Thank goodness diseases like TB, typhoid, Polio, the list goes on and on, have been largely eradicated in the United States. Mr. Coot and Dannie had two pert, pretty, and petite girls, Edna Mae and Susie. Mr. Coot married Mattie McCutcheon in 1927. Life never skipped a beat. Today Edna Mae is ninety-one and Susie is eighty-nine years young. Yes, the "girls" are still pert, pretty, and petite.

We have all known people who had a "gift" or maybe the ability to "see" an opportunity or were possibly at the right place at the right time. Mr. Coot may have possessed some of these talents. In 1932, with twenty-five hard earned dollars in his pocket, he bought the right piece of property, at the right

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place, and the right time. Mr. Coot opened a small grocery store/filling station alongside what was to become U.S. Highway 231. His business was the last one when leaving Morgan County toward Madison County and conversely the first one entering Morgan County from Madison County. "Gasoline Alley" was open.

The original structure was log and wood framed. The business was definitely a "mom and pop" operation. There was Mr. Coot, Mattie, Edna Mae, and Susie. Mr. Coot possessed a warm, gregarious, caring persona. He truly cared about his customers, their families, crops, and livelihoods. The "store" was a success from the git-go! The store became a welcoming gathering point for the community.

Power for the original store

was supplied by large direct current (dc) storage batteries. Standard Brand gasoline was dispensed from a "visible" gas pump. For those who do not know, the visible gas pump was a manually operated pump. The customer would push and pull a lever built in to the side of the pump. This action removed the gasoline from storage tanks "pumping" the fuel into a large clear glass bowl sitting atop the pump. Various methods were used to display the amount of gasoline within the bowl.

The fuel, once pumped, would be gravity fed into the vehicle or container at hand. The customer could visibly inspect the gasoline within the bowl. "Bad gas" was a common occurrence in the early days of transportation. I refer to the "glass bowl" atop the pump, some

people might prefer "glass cylinder" instead. Very few visible gasoline pumps remain. They have become highly sought after, highly prized collectibles. In this day and age, the visible

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gasoline pump demands a high price. Mr. Coot carried a variety of Standard Brand oil products but none more important than coal oil. Lighting for many homes was provided by coal oil lamps. Today, we call this product kerosene. A steel grease rack was installed. The front end of the tracks normally extended out over a dirt bank drop-off. The customer could drive onto the grease rack, exit the vehicle, walk down the bank then up underneath the vehicle in order to perform "lube jobs" and other minor repairs. Many of the old "grease racks" are still in existence and in use today.

Mr. Coot's commitment to family, customers, and friends was absolute. He varied his merchandise selection to have something desired by men, women, and children. Going to the "store" was a family affair. I would be remiss if I did not mention commercial and sport fishermen. He had a complete selection of poles, floats, sinkers, worms, crickets, jigs, and flies to attract the most bashful fish. Mr. Coot hand crafted seine nets in sizes small to large. These truly rare works of art are in the possession of the sisters today.

Times were changing. Rural electrification brought modern day power to the valley. There was a new wider bridge over the Tennessee River. U.S. 231 was built, the business continued to grow. You have probably figured out that Mr. Coot is not the real name of the business

owner. Mr. Coot was the nickname fondly bestowed upon the business owner by his many friends and customers. We southerners seem to be especially adroit at giving those people we like, trust, or admire a nickname. His real name was Leon Lipscomb. Eventually Leon would own some two hundred acres of one of the finest river bottoms in the world.

The modern block building seen today was built in 1946. The building featured twelve foot high ceilings with large windows placed just below the ceiling top. This feature along with fans kept the store tolerably cool in summer. Just ask Susie and son Steve how hot it was in there this past summer. Yes, just tolerably comfortable. In winter when the windows were closed, the centrally located "pot bellied" stove was fired up. The smells which emanated from the stove (heater) were wondrous. In the late days of fall through early spring people would gather around that stove heating first one side of the body and then the other. Within the new store building, an apartment was built in the rear. "Mom and pop" lived on the premises. A modern "gas island" was built paralleling U.S. 231 featuring overhead lighting for the nighttime

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customer. Leon kept his long-time commitment to Standard Brand gasoline.

Leon's store was the largest in the Lacey's Spring area. Ladies could purchase Fly's Brand blue jeans. There was a huge selection of notions. The store even featured a limited line of ladies shoes. Going to the doctor in those days only happened in the event of serious injury or one did not recover from a malady using "store bought" medicines. The four most dreaded words in a young person's limited vocabulary were mercurochrome, merthrotate and castor oil!!! Leon stocked these and many other over-the-counter medicines. Remember Red Salve?

The grocery store was well stocked, anything from soup to twenty-five pound bags of flour and corn meal. There were soft drinks galore, and of course plenty of candy. There was a meat section with items such as bacon, bologna, souse, pork chops, and sausage. No store was complete without "Hoop Cheese". Buy a "chunk" of cheese and crackers, normally sold in 5oz. "tins", were free.

Many children climbed onto those large soft bags of flour and cornmeal and took a nap. The tobacco offering was extensive. Leon had packaged cigarettes, chewing tobacco, snuff, and roll your own cigarette tobacco. Cigarette brands included Old Gold, Phillip Morris, Chesterfield, Lucky Strike, Camel, Pall Mall (pronounced Pell Mell), and many more. Among the "roll your own" crowd, Prince Albert was extremely popular. There were many men who could roll a perfect cigarette while driving a car with the windows down!

Snuff was a favorite of both men and women. Many farm families had a complete set of drinking glasses by purchasing Tube Rose snuff in those glasses. Garrett snuff had that unique brown bottle with the



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STYLE ELEGANCE FUNCTION

cork stopper in the top. Other snuff brands included Tops and Brewton.

Men could purchase Fly's Brand overhauls, work shirts, t-shirts, and of course fishing and automotive supplies. Soft drinks were kept up to their necks in a cold water drink cooler. Remember Newt's, bottled in Gadsden? We all looked on the bottom of the Coca Cola bottle to find out where it was bottled.

Let's discuss ice. In the very recent past, we were not able to drive to the nearest corner store and buy a bag of crushed or cubed ice. Crushed ice for a picnic, a day at the river, or the making of homemade ice cream required a trip to the "ice house". Upon arrival, you got into a line with other folks who had similar plans. The ice was sold in blocks of five pound increments. The block ice you purchased was placed in the top of the crushing machine, crushed in the machine, then dropped into a heavy gauge pa-

per bag attached at the bottom. The trick was to get that bag of ice into a proper container as quickly as possible. How big was your cooler? Many folks, unsuccessfully, placed a bag of ice on the floorboard or in the trunk of the car. Even though the bag was made of heavy gauge paper, the ice would melt quickly leaving behind a wet, cold, mess all over the contents of your car. Leon sold block ice stored in saw dust. Many homes still had ice boxes.

Men sat on wooden nail kegs surrounding the pot belied stove. A checkers game was

never far away. One of Leon's regular customers was Werner Von Braun. Just imagine one of the world's most renowned experts in rocketry sitting on a wooden nail keg discussing fishing with locally renowned fishing expert Leon Lipscomb. The mental picture of Dr. Von Braun sitting on that keg shows us a side of Dr. Von Braun few people have considered. Susie has searched many business records looking for a receipt signed by Dr. Von Braun. Her quest has not been successful. Many of the store's business records have been lost or thrown

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

away over the years.

In the late 1940's and early 1950's television was new. Many people in Northeast Morgan County saw television for the first time at the Leon Lipscomb Grocery. There were only three channels to begin with, then later a fourth. Remember the Friday night fights?

Maybe you liked Saturday night wrestling. How about the great live programs such as Milton Berle, Sid Caesar, Jack Benny, or the Honeymooners? We loved Queen for a Day, I Love Lucy, Groucho Marx, Name that Tune, and Arthur Godfrey just to mention a few. Ed Sullivan owned Sunday night. He would even let "the fat lady" (Kate Smith) sing. We thought the \$64,000 Question was honest. We could still laugh at ourselves. Political correctness had not reared its ugly head.

We believed Douglas Edwards, Edward R. Murrow, Howard K. Smith, and (before he became a watch salesman) John Cameron Swayze. Then there was the great Saturday morning lineup. The kids brought to the store would climb up onto the sacks of flour and cornmeal and watch Mighty Mouse, Howdy Doodie with Buffalo Bob, Bugs Bunny, and many more.

Alas, time marches on. Edna Mae married, Susie married. There are kids, grandkids, great grandkids, and cousins galore spread across several states. This is a wonderful legacy to a fine decent man full of warmth, humor, and love of family and community. It may have been said best by grandson, Tom

Black, "Many less fortunate found help in the friend they called Mr. Coot."

The Leon Lipscomb Grocery and filling station closed in 1979. Today as you travel south on U.S. 231 over a modern bridge spanning the Tennessee River entering Morgan County, the first building on your left is the Leon Lipscomb Grocery. Conversely, if you are north bound,

this vintage building is the last one on the right as you leave Morgan County.

Please know there is a rich, warm, loving, wonderful history surrounding this store. Entering the building today, one gets the feeling that this is a special place. The incomparable qualities of Leon Lipscomb are alive and well today in daughters Edna Mae and Susie.

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As of November 19th, 2010, the "spot" prices for the three primarily traded metals are: Gold \$1350 per ounce, Silver \$27.50 per ounce, and Platinum \$1660 per ounce.

Silver is traded in several forms, including old .900 fine dimes, quarters and half dollars minted before 1965. Silver dollars minted from 1878 to 1935 are highly desired. It is also available in bar and medallion form, from 1 ounce .999 pure, to the 100 troy ounce bars. Also, it is available in .999 fine non-circulating American Eagle Silver Dollars.

Gold is primarily traded in gold coinage of the various world mints, including the American Gold Eagle coins that have been minted since 1986 in four different sizes. It is also available in different sizes from Canada (Maple Leaf), South Africa (Krugerrand), China (Panda), and several other countries. It is also available in bar form from Switzerland and Germany.

Platinum is usually purchased in coin form, with the four different sizes of the American Platinum Eagle being the most popular.

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Christmas 1954

By Austin L. Miller

Nineteen fifty four was a lean year for our family. It was one of the hottest and driest summers on record. When it did rain it was at the wrong time or too late for the cotton crop. With two mules and a two horse wagon, we were farming and trying to make a living on twenty acres of cotton. About twelve acres were our own and we rented another eight from Mr. Will Thomas. Mr. Will's property bordered what is now Norfolk Southern railroad and Dug Hill Road. That year, due to the drought, we made only six bales of cotton. This did not bring near enough money to pay what we owed the bank not to mention what we needed to live on for the next year. The cotton was so knotty and opened so slowly that it took Daddy, my brother Berns and I all fall to get it picked. To his great credit, Berns who was only eight, worked like a grown person without complaining. Even though he was five years younger, he beat me at the scales every time. This brought me much grief from Daddy and considerable gloating from Berns. About Thanksgiving, we finally got the very last swiveled lock gathered. That's when Mama told us, "there wasn't going to be much Christmas this year." An obvious conclusion, but hearing it from her brought the stark reality of it home. Christmas was my favorite time of the year and I usually looked forward to it for weeks before but in the late fall and early winter of 1954, I just wanted it to come and go.

In the last part of 1954 and most of 1955 we qualified for commodities. This was surplus food given to needy families by the government. Each eligible family came to a designated location and got a monthly ration of cheese, beans, rice and canned meat. Some said the meat was horse meat but that was not the case. We enjoyed and needed the food but having to get it was a hard pill to swallow. What made it so bad was they gave it out at Central School and all the other kids and teachers knew that I was so poor that my family had to get commodities. It may not have been true but I felt everybody was looking down on us and I took it as a personal affront.

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When Christmas came it was not as bad as I expected. Using money she had saved from selling butter and eggs, Mama went to the store on Christmas Eve and bought some loaf bread, sandwich spread, apples, oranges and a little candy. This brightened all our spirits considerably. On Christmas day she killed a big fat rooster and made chicken sandwiches for lunch. We all ate until we were stuffed. Even now, I consider it one of the most delicious meals I ever ate. But the best part came when we finished eating.

Daddy announced that he was selling the mules and buying a tractor. To me, getting rid of those cantankerous old mules was reason enough to celebrate. He told us he had rented more land and gotten a loan from the FHA. He said the loan would cover our debt to the bank and give us enough to live on until we raised a new crop.

The Christmas that had seemed so bleak before hand had taken a most pleasant turn. Things started getting better right away and when the 1955 crop came in we quit getting commodities.

"Ladies, come to our rummage sale. It's a chance to get rid of those old things not worth keeping. Don't forget your husbands."

Seen in local church flyer

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Dear Sons

The following letter was written by W. P. Nance who enlisted in the 10th Alabama Cavalry. He was captured near Huntsville in December of 1864. He was sent to a prisoner of war, Camp Chase, in Ohio where he died of Pneumonia three months later.

March 5, 1864
Walter & Frank

Boys, I am gone from home and do not know when I can come home and depend on you Boys to make a living for Lou and the children. You must work well and make plenty of corn to feed every thing. Plant your corn early and work it well. Plough deep and close. Drop what corn you want to stand so you will not have to thin any.

Walter you and the boys must obey what Lou tells you. Be good Boys. Keep out of town and do not keep bad company and go to church every Sunday.

Frank, if you have 2 Plow Horses you must plant 30 acres in corn and plant the best ground you get. Walter when you write send me 3 or 4 fish hooks so I can catch some fish. I can get lines. Cousin William is 6 miles from here. I see Brice one time.

My horse stands it well. I think he is improving. Boys I will write you again.

Be good Boys for you are the only ones to protect Lou and the small children. I remain yours.

W. P. Nance

"Baby conceived naturally. Scientists are stumped."

News Headline from 2030

Civil War Remedies

These remedies are presented for entertainment only. Please consult your doctor for proper medication.

Cure For Chills:

The plant, commonly called hoarhound, is said to afford a certain cure. Boil it in water, and drink freely of the tea.

For Dysentery:

Dissolve as much salt in pure vinegar as will ferment and work clear. When the foam is discharged cork it up in a bottle, and put it away for use. A large spoonful of this in a gill of boiling water is efficacious in cases of dysentery.

Sore Throat, Diphtheria or Scarlet Fever:

Mix in a common size cup of milk, two teaspoonfuls of pulverized charcoal and ten drops of spirits of turpentine.

Soften the charcoal with a few drops of milk before putting into the cup. Gargle frequently, according to the violence of the symptoms.

For Sick Headache

One teaspoonful each of pulverized charcoal and soda mixed in very warm water.



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News from the Year 1865

News From Huntsville and Around The World

Lee Surrenders

Washington - News has been received here that General Lee has met with General Grant and has agreed to surrender the forces under his command and to work toward a complete surrender of all Confederate forces still in the field.

As news of the surrender began to spread across this city joyful celebrations have begun. A crowd of about seven thousand gathered in front of the White House while tens of thousands more have taken to streets. The situation is dangerous in that so many guns are being fired into the air as the celebrants throw all caution to the wind. It is feared that peace may bring more casualties to a city already devastated by four long years of war.

The terms offered by Grant are generous. He will take no prisoners, but simply secure the paroles of officers and men not to take up arms until properly

exchanged, for while the principal Confederate army has been vanquished, the war is not over yet. Officers are permitted to keep their sidearms and officers and men can keep their horses and personal effects. Everyone will be permitted to return to their homes unhindered by Union authorities as long as they observe their paroles.

Richmond in Turmoil As War Ends

Richmond - President Jefferson Davis has fled the capitol of the Confederacy along with many of his principal advisors. Reports are that he was attending church when word was received from General Lee that the situation appeared hopeless. He immediately left the church and convened a special meeting with his military and political advisors. At the same time

workers at the War Department and Treasury were seen hastily packing crates of government papers.

As news of General Lee's surrender spread throughout the city mobs have begun looting commissary supply depots. Mass desertions from the ranks are taking place in all military units as soldiers lay down their arms and prepare to return to their homes.


Reports of Federal Units on the outskirts of the city has caused wide spread panic among the citizens as they make plans to flee. At last report Richmond was fast becoming deserted.

Writers


Send us your memories to be published in Old Huntsville magazine.

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General Lee Issues Message to Soldiers

General Order No. 9

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them to their countrymen.

By the terms of this agreement, officers and men can return to their homes and remain there until exchanged. You will take with you the satisfaction that proceeds from the consciousness of duty faithfully performed; and I earnestly pray that a Merciful God will extend you his blessing and protection.

With an unceasing admiration of your constancy and devotion to your Country, and a grateful remembrance of your kind and generous consideration of myself, I bid you all an affectionate farewell.

R.E. Lee, Genl.



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A Letter

Huntsville, Ala. March 14th, 1862

My dear Mother,

As time and opportunity present themselves now better than they have in a month I will write.

A great many sick are at this place from our Company. They are sent here in the cars, and very often box cars with no accommodations or seats of any kind are placed. They come with the intentions of entering the Hospital - but such a one as I have seen here I would sooner remain in my tent and risk all chances than enter one.

George Riley, brother to Frank, now lies in one of those houses, dignified by the name Hospital.

It consists of three small rooms, with about twenty or thirty sick, in chairs - no beds except their blankets on the floor and in fact no conveniences of any kind. Riley is lying at the point of death with pneumonia and has no one even to nurse him or attend to his wants except his sick comrades around him.

W. Malone and myself succeeded in getting a private house and we are fixed as well as we could wish. I am staying with Mr. Leftwich of this place, who is a hardware merchant.

He kindly invited us to his house and promises to cure me. Having some business to transact for the Company we slept in the gentlemen's store and in the course of conversation he found out our circumstances and offered room and cheer at his house.

So you see I am well attended to, even if I am on the sick list. The citizens are doing their best for the sick. They have been going to the hospital every day and are carrying them to their homes. I did not intend entering one (hospital) when I came if there was any possible chance of doing otherwise.

Your affectionate son,
Burton

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SCHEDULE FOR SPRING 2011

January 31	6:30	Clint Mountain	Tort Law
	7:40	Kerri Johnson Riley	Sex in the Workplace
February 7	6:30	Phil Price	DUI Law
	7:40	Ed Gentle	Justice in America
February 14	6:30	Amy Tanner	Consumer Bankruptcy
		James Ezell	Social Security Disability
	7:40	Mike Wisner	Estates and Taxes
February 21	6:30	Don McKenna	False Claims
	7:40	Judge Lynwood Smith	The Federal Court
February 28	6:30	Jacob Maples	Injuries in the Workplace
	7:40	Jim Richardson	An Insider's View on Insurance
March 7	6:30	Perry Shuttleworth	Nursing Home Litigation
	7:40	Mayor Tommy Battle	City Government
March 14	6:30	Josh Hayes	Technology in the Courtroom
	7:40	Greg Allen	Automobile Crashworthiness
March 21	6:30	Matt Glover	Roll on 18-Wheeler
	7:40	Connie Glass	Elder Law
March 28	6:30	Robert Prince	Products Liability
	7:40	Courtney French	Trial Tactics
April 4	6:30	Billy Hall	Divorce Law
	7:40	Allen Brinkley & Charles L. Brinkley	Corporate Litigation
	8:40	Graduation	

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All programs will be taped and televised throughout the year on Comcast Channel 3 on the following schedule: Monday, Wednesday, Friday at 6:00 am, 2:00 pm, 6:00 pm, 10:00 pm, and Sundays at 2:00 pm.

Memories

by Nolan Myrick

I grew up in Huntsville, and even though I now live in Tennessee my heart will always be in Huntsville. We lived in a house at 1312 Beirne Avenue off and on until I turned 15, when we moved to Old Gurley Pike.

This was in 1959 and we built our home. It connected to the old Myrick Motel property. My grandfather, C. W. Myrick, built, owned and operated the motel for many years. I used to keep my horse and pony in a pasture where the motel was. The cement blocks comprising the motel came from Scottsboro.

I can remember helping granddaddy when he first built the motel. My father was C. B. Myrick and he and I and friends all pitched in to put in the plumbing. We dug a ditch on the back side of the motel and put in all the pipes. My dad was sure proud of that water system and the fact that you could have instant hot water in the bathrooms!

Before the motel was built, we had a store in that spot. It was a Wavaho and had signs with rabbits on them up above the pumps, causing some people to call it "Rabbit Gas." I don't remember highway 72 being four lane at that time. I remember when the motel was built, Ashburn and Gray built the road. Every day I got on the bus to go to school at Gurley, in front of the store. I remember drinking Double Cola every day and got really heavy, I was up to 220 pounds when I transferred to Buckhorn and I blamed it on the Double Cola!

Being young back in those days was great, I had lots of good friends. When I was 16

I got my drivers license and I remember meeting lots of Alabama Highway patrol men - some names come to mind are Tate, Johnson, Burgess. The truck I got from my granddaddy was a 1960 Ford and it was red and white, I was so proud of that truck. Mr. Porter, a sign painter, painted a Black Angus Bull's head on each door of that truck.

Around this time we bought a farm from Dr. Pat Hamm, next to Central School. This move changed my life forever. I met Mr. Bill Mitchell who lived across the road. He was a farmer and also worked at Ashburn and Gray. Bill was one of the most honest and Christian men I ever met. He really enjoyed working at Ashburn and Gray and always admired Cecil Ashburn, who was a very fair and kind man.


We lived there for the next 16 years or so and Bill was my mentor. He taught me how to live and work, and I could have gotten into bad trouble back then but I have to say he saved my life. I still remember sitting on the swing in the yard under those huge oak trees listening to his stories. I've never forgotten them.

There are so many good people between Maysville and Ryland who were my friends - men like Joe Miller and Joe's son Austin; also David Miller

and Berns Miller and Gregory Miller.

Granddaddy eventually sold the Motel to a man named Henderson and soon after that I got married. In 1976 we moved to Fayetteville, Tn. There aren't a lot of Myricks left but there weren't many to start with. But after all of it, my heart will always be in Huntsville, Alabama.

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Black Velvet

By Judy Chandler Smith

I'm awakened this morning with a start, as M.D. is shaking me saying get up now and drive me to the emergency room, I'm having a heart attack. What time is it? It's 3:30 a.m. and I've only been in bed two hours. I had been working on designing a new outfit for Chandler, my 4-year-old granddaughter, who is named after me and who loves to dance even more than I do.

It's December 19, 1959 and the phone rings. It is my cousin Mickey Townsend from Birmingham, Alabama. He wants me to come to a fraternity dance tomorrow in Birmingham. He will come to Huntsville and get me, then bring me back. I'll be glad to be his date if I'll have time to make a quick trip to the Town & Country Shoppe, located on North Side Square. I call Phyllis McAnally and she has her mother on the lookout for the perfect dress. It will be waiting for me to try on when

I arrive. It's black velvet with a straight skirt and cording run to a piece around the neck. I have shoes to match and a black velvet headband to match, like the ones Hillary Clinton used to wear.

Mickey is to arrive by afternoon. We will leave for Birmingham as soon as my size three dress is finished being altered. Mrs. McAnally is hurriedly put-

ting the finishing touch on the dress. I promise coach Milton Frank, the owner of Rose Jewelry Company where I work part time this Christmas season, that I'll be on time for work on the 22nd, 23rd and 24th of December. He has given me a Christmas job between Semesters where I'm a first year student at the University of Alabama. I like working there. I started several


"I'm so old, I remember when the Dead Sea was only sick!"

Bill Drake, Huntsville

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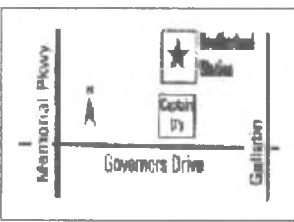
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REFILL DRN TIMES

Michael Oddo PharmD

years before when I was 15 years old. I polish silver, wrap gifts, and work as a sales person. I'm paid .50 cents an hour.

As we ride to Birmingham, Mickey and I reminisce of old times his grandmother and my grandmother were sisters. They were two of the Brantley children from Troy, Alabama. Bessie Brantley married Francis Scott Key we remember. Oh, those were the days.

I'm on the dance floor dancing as I always danced every dance, when this extremely handsome guy cut in, saying, "may I have this dance," and "where did you get that good looking dress?" We danced several dances; one of the songs was "I'm Just A Dancing Partner" by the Platters. Then Mickey cut in and away we whirled. He really knew how to cut a rug, if you know what I mean. Later I remarked about the handsome guy, but I forgot his name.

The next day Mickey drove me back to Huntsville and I was at the Jewelry store at 8:00 a.m. in time to welcome the first customer. Later that day I looked up and there he stood, Mr. Handsome, wanting to take me next door to Mr. Tom Drake's City Drug Store for a Coca-Cola and chips. He said that he was a disk jockey for WAAY Radio, and that he had moved to Huntsville the year before, but was attending the University of Virginia. He inquired of several people at the dance who was the blonde in the gorgeous black dress. Finally he found out who I was and where I lived. When he called, he was told I was at work at the jewelry store and came down to meet me again. When the bill came for the cokes and chips, I picked up the tab, knowing that probably disk jockeys didn't

get paid very much and that I could afford the treat since I had such a good job paying .50 cents an hour. We had our first date on Christmas Eve 1959. He transferred to the University of Alabama in January of 1961 and we became engaged in March and were married on Thursday, June 8th. Everything possible was in yellow for the wedding. It was the color of the rising sun and a new beginning of a new day, and a new couple.

We now have eight children - seven sons and a daughter. No, she was not the last one born and we are not Catholic.

Now I race down the stairs to get dressed and get my jacket and then race to the hospital and as I looked up before I left, I see the black velvet dress still hanging in my closet, and wonder if I'll get to wear it one more time as the handsome guy puts his arm around me and says, "May I have this dance," and "Where did you get that good looking dress?"

"Shake your hips and hope for the best."

Cassie, age 8, on what you have to do to find love.

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Playing Santa Claus

by Chuck Owens

In my early years, and before I had my own family, I was asked by my friend if I would be willing to come to his home on Christmas Eve and play the part of Santa Claus for his two children; Carol, 4 1/2 years old and Janet, 3 years old. He told me that he had the necessary costume and everything else to do the job. I agreed, though I was a bit apprehensive since I had never played this merry old gent before.

I arrived at their home at 9 PM as I had been requested. The children had been in bed for a couple of hours so they were deep in dreamland. Henry, my friend, and his wife Carol had a very elaborate costume with boots, the long beard and even some pillows to help fill out my more sparse areas. With their help I got into my regalia and must admit that I made a pretty good Santa.

I was given a big chair on the porch, next to their decorated Christmas Tree, and it was very bright with some extra lamps that had been added. At 10 PM Carol went into the bed room and awakened the two children. She came out with a big smile on her face and the two children in tow, one at each hand. Henry stood at the side com-

pletely elated with the scene he was watching.

The two children came up to me and I gave them my best "Ho Ho Ho" and they looked absolutely terrified. I put my arms around each one of them and helped them sit on my lap. I continued with my "Ho Ho's" and talked to them in my best Santa voice and they just sat there - rigid. They were shaking so much that it was difficult for me to keep each one perched on my knees. Finally, I helped them slip off my lap and they ran back to their mother and her protective arms. Carol carried them back to bed.


The next morning I was back to wish the family a Merry Christmas. When I arrived the two children ran up to me and excitedly related their experience the night before. They told me that they had seen Santa and they had hugged and kissed him and told him all the toys that they wanted for Christmas.

I thought to myself that there is no end to the imagination of a little one.

Eggnog - Very Old Recipe

10 egg yolks
1/2 lb. powdered sugar
2 pints spirits
1 pint heavy cream, whipped
Nutmeg
3 c. cold milk


Beat yolks until light. Add sugar and beat til dissolved. Add spirits slowly, while beating. Spirits can be rum - light or dark or all bourbon. I like 1 1/2 pints bourbon to 1/2 pint dark rum. Let mixture rest for 10 minutes, then add milk and chill for a couple of hours. Just before serving, fold in the whipped cream and beat thoroughly. Serve in punch cups with a sprinkle of nutmeg.



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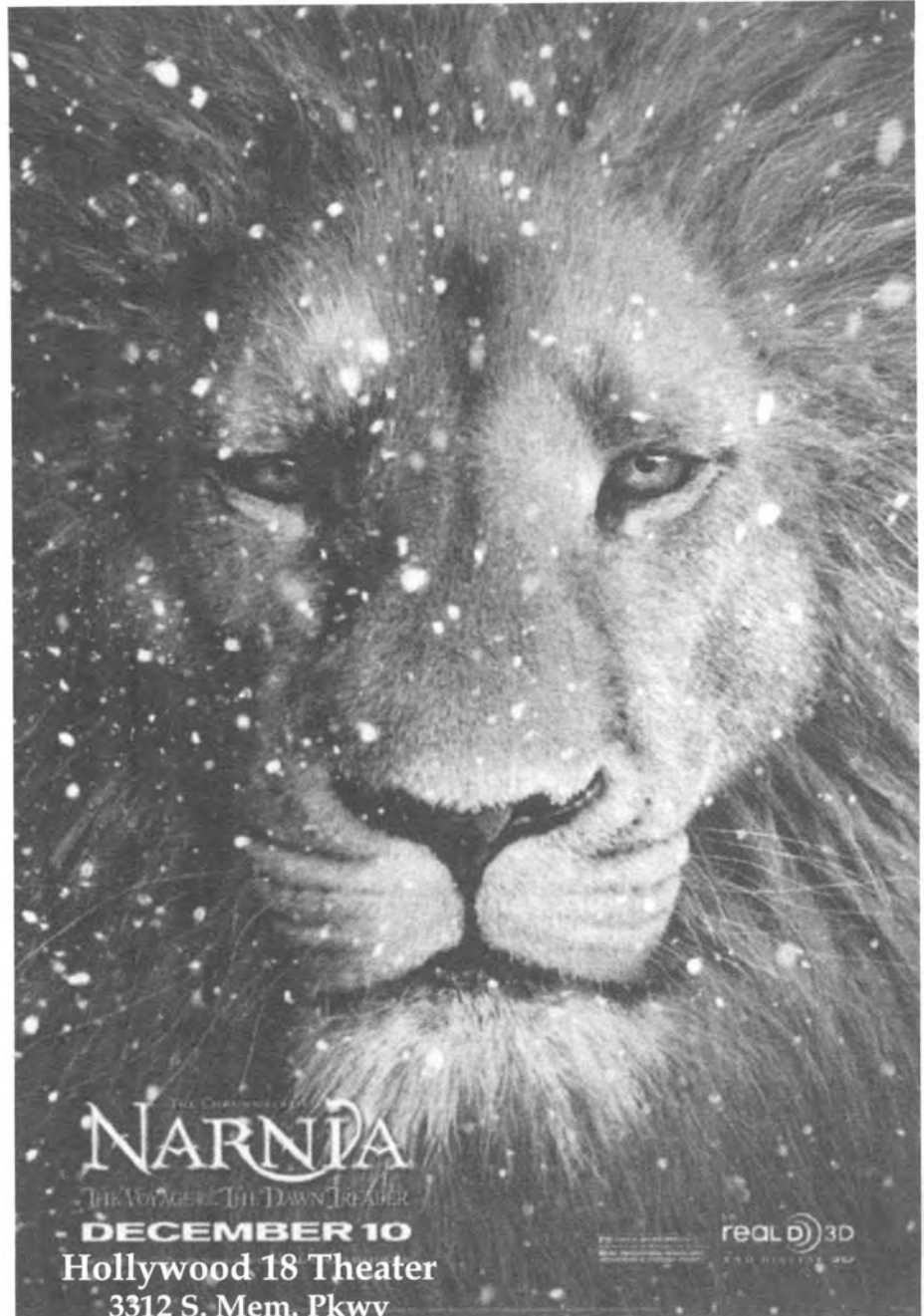


Fuller's Folly

Just a few miles up Pulaski Pike, well within the city limits, is a cave that was once heralded as the most popular nightclub in this area. The early history of Shelta Cave is lost in the clouds of history, but some of the earliest stories tell of Confederate soldiers hiding in the cave to escape searching Union soldiers.

These remained just legends with no basis in fact until 1888 when a Mr. Bolen James sold the land to a Mr. Henry Fuller. Not much is known about the early life of Mr. Fuller but judging from his actions he must have been a born entrepreneur. Immediately after taking possession of the cave he hired a team of carpenters to install steps down into the main chamber.

Next he assembled a crew of craftsmen to install a dance floor in one of the great rooms with large stand-up bars at each end. He made no secret of the fact that



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he intended to open the grandest, fanciest and most unusual dance hall in Alabama. Huntsville had seen its share of weird wacky ideas; but a dance hall in a cave? Even for Huntsville's standards that was too much. Town people began to call the yet uncompleted dance hall "Fuller's Folly." As is true in many a new business, Fuller soon found himself facing a slight problem-- too many lofty ideas and not enough money. Reluctantly he let himself be talked into forming a corporation called, appropriately enough, Shelta Cave Corp.

With this new influx of money from investors came new ideas and it wasn't long before Fuller heard of a new attraction in Nashville that he thought would be perfect for the business. There had been much talk in Huntsville about a new invention called "electric lights," but while

most people dismissed it as just another crazy idea, Fuller was determined to light his dance floor with the "marvel of modern technology."

Within days of Fuller's visit to Nashville, workmen arrived to begin stringing wire throughout the cave. Although few people realize it today, when Fuller pulled the switch on his new lighting system, he earned himself (and the dance hall) a place in Huntsville's history as having the first electric light bulbs in Madison County. Even this was not enough for Fuller, for as he cast his eyes upon the vast underground lake he began to see another possibility for potential profits. Within the week neighbors watched in amazement as workmen unloaded three large boats from a wagon and awkwardly maneuvered them down the steps. The citizens of

Huntsville must have had a good chuckle when he announced his intentions of providing "Underground Boat Rides." And, as if that was not enough, he purchased hundreds of Japanese lanterns to hang overhead!

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

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interest. Desperate for money, Fuller began to travel throughout the South promoting Huntsville and Shelta Cave as a convention center.

Evidently he had some success as the "Huntsville Mercury" in 1889 ran an article about a gathering of the press association: "The entertainment of the Press Association by the citizens of Huntsville closed today with a grand barbecue in Shelta Caverns and nearly one hundred delegates and their ladies were in attendance. The affair was gotten up in a delightful manner and the beauties of the place were fully investigated by the astonished guests."

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

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

Although there is no documentation to support it, natives of Huntsville that can remember the 1920s and 1930s swear there was once a speakeasy located in the cave. Other sources claim that moonshine was produced in the cave at intervals all the way up to World War II. Another persistent rumor claims the cave was used as a liquor and beer warehouse during prohibition.

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

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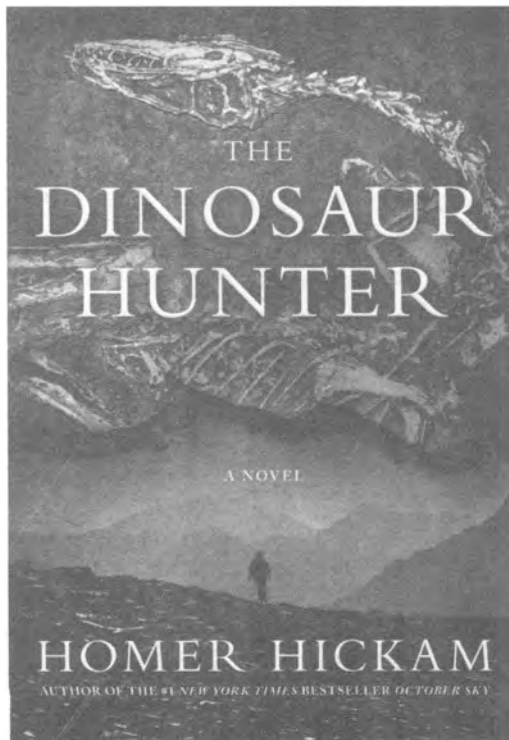
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