



No. 229
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Old Huntsville

HISTORY AND STORIES OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY

THE CLOCK



If this clock could talk, what a story it could tell. It was in my grandparent's house for most of their married life and remained with my grandmother after my grandfather died to the end of her life.

In a period of 60 years, there were only a very few days that she did not hear the clock strike. She sometimes heard it all night during World War II and Korea when her sons were at places like Normandy, St. Lo, the Ardennes, Inchon and Kunri.

All seven of her boys learned how to tell time on the clock, and I heard them all say that they were given medicine by the clock's chiming.

Also in this issue: The "NuWay" Restaurant

Lewter's Hardware Store



In 1928 our great-grandfather, D.A. Lewter, and our grandfather, J.M. Lewter, started the family business in a small store on Washington Street. They believed in offering fair prices, treating each customer with special respect and hiring great employees.

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**A Hardware Store....
The Way You Remember Them**

*Domie Lewter
Mac Lewter*

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The Clock

by Austin Miller

Around 1900, my grandmother paid \$2 for a second-hand New Salem eight-day clock as a gift for her mother. For a number of years the clock resided at my great grandparent's house at 1602 Toll Gate Road. The house is no longer in the family but it still stands.

For more than a century the clock has faithfully struck once for each hour on the hour and once on the half hour. The base is about eighteen inches across; above the base, a glass door about a foot tall and six inches wide covers the mechanical works. Above the door it has a white round face about six inches in diameter. The face and hands sit under a carved wood crown that circularly flares out seven or eight inches above the face like an old-fashioned bonnet top.

The base, the glass door, face and crown all give the clock a height of about two and a half feet. The wood on both sides of the glass door has hand carved flowers; a long stem of roses is carved on each side of the crown. The glass door is covered by a design made of gold show-

ing a picket fence at the bottom and two large vases, to scale, on each side of the fence.

The vases contain flowers that obstruct a view of the clock's works but not the swing of the pendulum. It has three keys; one for the clock, one for the strike and one for the alarm. I have never heard the alarm.

On a cold, clear January day in 1910, my grandparent's house burned to the ground. According to the stories handed down, my grandfather (Papa) got up early that morning and walked to town. Huntsville was less than two miles away. To make the trip from where they lived, you took McClung, past Maple Hill Cemetery, across California Street, up Echols for about a quarter of a mile and then down the hill to the Square.

It was said that my Great Uncle Curt Miller might have accidentally started the fire because he liked to smoke a pipe in bed; this was never confirmed and they really never knew for sure what started it. In those days a lot of old houses burned during cold weather because people heating with wood or coal had to stoke much hotter fires to keep warm. This was true even in the fifties; on cold winter days it was not uncommon to see, from our yard at Ryland, a high column of black smoke in the distance.

The smoke cloud from an old frame house burning was distinctive and you knew it was a house even if it was several miles away.

Any politician will tell you that the trick is to hit the taxpayer without hitting the voter.



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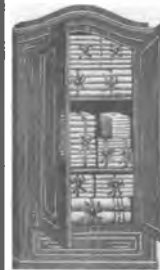
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My grandmother noticed the smoke when she was outside doing morning chores; when she saw the fire it was already well under way and she had to run in quickly to rescue Uncle Robert who was three months old. There was no time to save any of their belongings.

She was burned in the rescue and told me when she was in her seventies that she still had burn scars on her body. She also told me that there was an old black woman in the yard praying that the barn and livestock would be spared.

Papa said he was walking back from town when he met a man who told him his house had burned to the ground. I asked him how he felt when he heard the news and he said, "Not good, because everything I ever owned was gone."

My grandmother lost all the furnishings she had bought with money earned as a teenage girl and a young woman working at Dallas Mill. One of the things lost in the fire was a much nicer and more expensive clock than the one she had given her mother. What appeared to be the best clock was not destined to become the family heirloom.

I was amazed when my

brother Berns found a 1910 newspaper story about the fire in the Huntsville Mercury, the name of the town paper at that time. The article described the location as a house "on the little mountain east of town." Our family always referred to it as the Spragins' place. Mr. R. L. Spragins, the landowner and President of the First National Bank in Huntsville, built them a new house at the same spot.

The bank was in the old bank building located on the southwest side of the square above the Big Spring. Until recently it housed Regions Bank and is one of the oldest, if not the oldest, building in Huntsville.

Mr. Spragins' home was on Echols Hill where the city's wealthiest people lived. My Uncle Gib talked about going to the house (still a residence) with my grandmother to work in the garden. Evidently, he made quite an impression because a rich lady without children who lived near Mr. Spragins serious-

"A good reputation is what usually makes people wonder what you're hiding."

Ron Eyestone

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ly tried to buy him. I asked him once if he ever wondered what it would have been like to grow up in a family of wealth and privilege. He said there was no amount of wealth or privilege that he would prefer over the family he was born into.

The new house was a very nice, spacious frame house that stood for many years. When my grandmother took me there in my early teens, the house was vacant but in good repair, a long concrete vat that Papa used to dip cattle was also still standing.

The house was also where my father and several of my uncles were born. Uncle Robert and his older sister Lucy, who died as a child, were born in the old house that burned.

Where the house once stood is now the site of the Mountain View Baptist Church.

In 1907, when Teddy Roosevelt was President, my grandparents started their married life at this location. They farmed the land that is now Fagan Springs subdivision. My grandfather raised cotton and corn along Fagan creek; hay in the higher elevations and tended a sizeable herd of Black Angus cattle. The farm had two large barns for storing corn and hay, stalls for

the mules and horses as well as space to park farm equipment. One of the barns was close to the house and the other was some distance away.

I remember when I went to Mountain View Church in 2008 to put out campaign signs for my friend Fran Hamilton. While I was on the church grounds, I couldn't help but think about what it must have been like at that location almost a hundred years ago when my grandparents were young and my father and uncles as children ran and played freely in the yard. In the still of the early November evening it was almost like I could feel their presence. The feeling was so strong that I lingered for a while after my work was finished.

Fagan Creek, then, as now, runs out of the mountains through the hollow. When the family lived there, an eerie phenomenon was often seen from the house. During big rains, water converging from the slopes turned the creek into

"Making marriage work is like operating a farm. You have to start all over again each morning."

Jim Henry, Arab

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a raging torrent making it impossible to cross until the water subsided. On rainy nights, when the creek was up, a strange light that looked like someone walking side by side with two lanterns would come through the hollow, cross the raging creek, move up the creek and disappear into the mountain.

Despite numerous attempts to investigate, the source of the light was never determined and remains a family mystery until this day. When I think about the clock, my grandmother always comes to mind. She bought it with hard-earned money and it was part of her daily life for more than sixty years.

One day I was complaining to her about how hard my life was as I was going to school full time and having to work almost forty hours a week at the old downtown A & P store. She told me that I didn't know what hard times were; at that time I didn't appreciate what she was saying but as I grew older I realized that she was right.

Anna McCay Miller was born September 18, 1886. She had eight children. The first, a girl named Lucy, died as a baby and is buried in Maple

Hill cemetery. Before her burial they bought six lots situated in a prime location in the oldest part of the cemetery. Considering that one lot in Maple Hill, if available, now sells for over \$1800, I have often wondered what they paid for the six in 1909. For sure it was far less than \$1800 per plot.

After Lucy and Uncle Robert, she had six more children, all boys. The second son was my father, Joseph Houston Miller.

Anna didn't go to school because she had to help take care of her younger brothers. In 1900 at age 14 (before child labor laws) she went to work at Dallas Mill. Her work hours were from 6 A.M. to 6 P.M. six days a week. In addition to the hard work, she had to walk about two miles both ways to the mill from her home at 1602 Toll Gate Road. The walk, added to her shift, totaled a fourteen-hour day.

Imagine a teenage girl making this walk in the winter six days a week. In winter it was dark both ways and sometimes it would be snowing, raining or freezing cold.

Before her family moved to Toll Gate Road, they lived on Monte Sano Mountain at what

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Anon.

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is now Monte Sano State Park. They got water out of a spring that still falls down the cliff next to the overlook on the south end of the park.

She told about sitting on a quilt while they lived there tending her younger siblings when a big rattlesnake appeared. Although she was little more than school age, she killed the big rattler with rocks and a stick. Her Daddy (Archie McCay) worked for the Monte Sano Hotel, a resort for the wealthy. After they moved off the mountain they ran the Toll Gate on what is now Toll Gate Road. The Toll Gate was located a short distance to the east of where Wells Avenue intersects Toll Gate Road. There is a picture of the Toll Gate house in a book titled, "Historic Photo's of Huntsville." There is a photo of a young woman on the porch of the house, it is almost certain that the lady is either my grandmother or my great aunt Lucy.

She worked at the mill for seven years until she married at the age of 21 in 1907. All the prime years of her youth were taken in exchange for long hard days and very low wages. When she married my grandfather, who was fourteen years older, she could not read or write. She taught herself using the books her children used as they moved through the grades at school.

She was eventually able to read and write at a college level and assist high school students with their homework. From self-taught experience gained from doctoring her own family, she became the community nurse and was often called on day and night, often in the middle of the night, to help neighbors who were sick.

She must have been good because a prominent Huntsville doctor from Ryland, Dr. Frank Jordan, asked her to work for him as his nurse despite the fact she had no formal training or classroom education. I believe

that if she had grown up two generations later, she would have become a doctor.

One of the furnishings for the new house was the second-hand \$2 New Salem eight-day clock. Her mother gave it back after the fire. If this clock could talk, what a story it could tell. It was in my grandparent's house for the rest of their married life and remained with my grandmother after my grandfather died to the end of her life.

In a period of 60 years, there were only a very few days that she did not hear the clock strike. She sometimes heard it all night during World War II and Korea when her sons were at places like Normandy, St. Lo, the Ardennes, Inchon and Kunri. All seven of her boys learned how to tell time on the clock, and I heard them all say that they were given medicine by the clock's chiming. I too am connected to the clock; we lived with my grandparents the first two years of my life. I don't remember hearing the clock strike during my early years but there is no doubt that it is embedded in my subconscious. Even now, when I hear it strike, it stirs my soul.

The family lived at the Spragins' place for about thirteen years. Mr. Spragins was a fair, generous and honest man

as well as a mover and shaker in the city. There is a Spragins Street in downtown Huntsville.

The years in Fagan Hollow were the most prosperous time of my grandparent's life. But the work got to be too much and they had to move, this was circa 1920. I think this move was hardest on my grandmother. She had to leave one of the best houses in the county and move to a dilapidated shack in Ryland. During the remainder of their lives they moved six or seven times to tenant houses that weren't fit to live in and suffer landlords, many of whom were not as kind, fair and generous as Mr. Spragins. But wherever they lived the clock



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was always there. It was a part of the aura of their lives and, like them, it was as reliable as the rising and setting of the sun.

Today the clock still keeps good time and strikes with unerring precision. The works of the clock are tarnished to the color of rust but they are strong and sturdy. When you look inside, you believe it will run faithfully for another century.

This clock is much more than an heirloom; it is a symbol of the Miller family. It has all the traits attributable to Mose and Anna Miller and their descendants. Like the clock, we are sturdy and reliable. We can be counted on to live up to our responsibilities and do what is right. We are an unassuming, humble people but there is no other family who has served their country with more bravery or honor. We may be quiet and easygoing in our daily lives, but we have deep loyalties and are quick to take

issue on important things. We are not prominent in business or government and we are not leaders in our communities, but we are the salt of the earth. I think we are God's people.

The clock is about all of material value that Mose and Anna Miller left their seven sons. I expect even it has very little intrinsic value. The real value is in the symbol and what it represents. It intrigues me to know that Daddy and my uncles routinely heard this clock strike as babies and children. You can't look at the clock or hear it strike without feeling a connection to the family and the past. This to me makes it a great treasure far beyond material value.

A few years ago my then three surviving Miller uncles agreed to pass the clock down to my nephew, Nathan Lee Miller. Nathan is now keeper of the clock and in my opinion, a very good choice.

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The NuWay Restaurant

by Buddy Esslinger

I was born and raised in Madison County, just east of the Big Cove Community. My two older brothers, (Bobby and Neel) and myself, lived with our parents, Marvin and Bessie (Sherrill) Esslinger on the farm located on what was then called Gurley-New Hope Pike. We raised cotton, corn, wheat, and chickens and had several dairy cows. We basically provided our own food but occasionally went to town (Huntsville) to

purchase staple goods and take care of other business.

Most of the time going to town was done on Saturdays. This was in the 1940's era. We all (five) would pile in the truck and would be gone most of the day. Sometimes Dad would drop Mother off at her mother's,

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(Maude Sherrill, "Big Mama") home. She lived on Whitesburg Drive, where "Old Bull Dog Antiques" used to be located.

Dad, my brothers and I would go downtown to get haircuts, etc. I remember Dad would give us fifty cents or maybe a dollar with instructions not to spend it all in one place because there wasn't any more, so we learned to spread it around. Also we were told what time we would meet to go back home. This was usually somewhere around the old Courthouse.

There were two movie theaters ("Lyric" on Washington Street and "Grand" on Jefferson Street) that we could go to for ten cents each. We would get to see the main feature, cartoons, serial (to-be-continued), news around the world and previews of coming attractions. I would go over to "Tom Dark Drugs" and sit on the floor and look at comic books (usually I would buy one or two for five cents each) and get an ice cream cone.

The one special place I enjoyed going to was my Grandfather Sam Sherrill's (Big Daddy) cafe, called the "NuWay". This was located on the north side of the Square.

When Big Daddy opened the "NuWay", hamburgers and hot dogs were seven cents each; coffee, coke, sweet and chocolate milk were five cents each; and two fresh eggs with bacon, toast, and coffee was thirty-five cents. Later prices had increased to ten cents for hamburgers and hot dogs.

As you entered the "NuWay" there was a pay phone on the left that cost five cents to make a call. The counter was lined with stools from one end to the other that were stationary to the floor and would swivel.

I remember my Big Daddy would take his long enamel pan over to Hill's Grocery Store on the east side of the Square to buy fresh ground beef. This

was 100% pure beef. He would go back to the "NuWay" and sit down in his office taking an ice cream scoop to form balls of ground beef, stacking them on a tray. They would put the ground beef on the grill and flatten them with a spatula.

He also served some of the best homemade chili prepared by Mr. Russell Bennett. People working downtown would frequent his cafe, because service was pretty quick, food was real good and reasonable. Others coming into town to do business would also eat there. I never went there when it wasn't busy.

When Big Daddy retired he sold the "NuWay" to his son, Glenn Sherrill of Chattanooga, who co-owned the Krystal Company chain, and the name changed to "Krystal".

Several years later, the "Krystal" in Huntsville was sold to Mr. Means and thereafter became known as "Snow White". It was where the "Wild Rose Cafe" was located. At that time two hamburgers and a coke were only twenty-five cents.

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Memories

by Judy Fudge

My family moved to Huntsville from Arab in 1950 when I was about three years old. We moved to Huntsville for my dad to go to work for Max Luther, at that time he, (Mr. Luther) was a cattle farmer who was raising sheep. My dad was brought to Huntsville to try to figure out why all of his sheep were dying. My folks had been farmers from Arab and moved to the "big city" to try to do better. My mother decided that we would take a baby lamb and raise it in the house to try to figure out what was going on.

We did and the lamb we raised in the house survived and was very healthy.....I of course do not remember exactly what was wrong, but there was something about the mother's milk and I guess that was caused by what they were feeding the sheep. The baby grew up and was very aggressive and had to be put back with the other sheep, it would knock me down every time I went outside to play with it.

Another memory I have of that farm was the maid who worked for the Luthers, her name was Leelia, she was a wonderful black lady that I spent a lot of time with. I would go visit her at the big house, but I was afraid to go in so I would sit on the back porch with her.

When we moved, my mother and I would go visit her on Saturdays when she was not working at her home. After I married, my husband and I would go visit her, she lived on Dallas Street downtown. There was another black family that lived next to us, Walter and Georgia, we stayed in touch with them until they died... wonderful folks.

I can remember cracking walnuts on the sidewalk with a hammer, there was a big walnut tree, my mother would not let anything go to waste so we had to crack all those and save them.

I remember going to the barn when my brother was running the cows in, and I decided to cross the path of the cows, just to get to the other side, and the cows ran over me. My brother picked me up and ran to the house, screaming to mother that I was dead.....thank goodness it had rained and it was just mud, they had squashed me in the dirt and I was covered with it, but fine.

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The Last Gallop

by Leo Larkin

I was visiting my uncle in Kentucky and had been there less than twenty-four hours when I received an emergency telephone call from my oldest son. With despair in his voice he said, "Mama, Rebel broke out of the barn, came home, and fell in the backyard and he can't get up. If anybody in the world can get him up it's you. Please come home." I replied, "Well, you know he's come home to die. I'll be home as soon as possible."

I remember the first time I saw him; it was a dark night and his heavy black mane and tail lay in waves, glistening with the falling rain. His bluish colt eyes were wide with fear as his owner cracked a whip to make him step around. I fell in love with him then.

I had moved to Alabama from Kentucky as a teenager. I came to love the countryside and the people. When I finished high school, I went to work, fulfilled my greatest dream....! I bought my horse!

Rebel was a bay Tennessee Walking Horse, a yearling, and I broke and trained him myself. He was high-spirited and it took an excellent rider to control him. My boys were brought up in the saddle with me; but, due to his nature, I would not allow them to ride alone. By the time they were big enough to handle him, he was old and I was afraid they

would injure him by riding too roughly. My husband rode him for a couple of years, but lost interest. So, he remained completely mine.

Many stories could be written about him; some of them humorous, some frustrating and some heart-warming. The last chapter of his life is indeed heart-warming and used by God to bring love.

I had participated in trail rides or ridden with a friend for years. It was hard to just ride alone. But as my searching for Jesus and the Holy Spirit in my life increased, I discovered that riding alone and praying was most fulfilling; and soon I preferred to ride alone, thanking the Lord for my magnificent animal, the lovely countryside

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"Angels have a lot to do and they keep very busy. If you lose a tooth, an angel comes in through your window and leaves money under your pillow. Then when it gets cold, angels go south for the winter."

Sara Ann, age 6

and all of the many blessings I had in my family. Having experienced the baptism of the Holy Spirit in my life, riding became a beautiful and more meaningful time for me.

My husband left us after nearly eighteen years of marriage. In my grief, Rebel and I must have ridden five hundred miles that year. I thanked Jesus for His blessings and prayed for strength. While riding, I saw the blue skies turn to gray and the winter coming on. I was keenly aware of the last butterflies; and, as the color of summer faded, the Alabama red dirt became a deeper red and dotted with white cotton. I knew that this part of my life was like a death, but that there would be a spring and new life. I knew that Jesus had something special for me. Daily I prayed, "Somehow, Lord, let this mess glorify your name."

My sons were nearly thirteen and fourteen when their father left us. The normal trying times of teen years were complicated by the frustration of divorce.

My family was deceased with the exception of two uncles and a stepmother. I lacked emotional support from family but I held onto my faith as much as I could. From time to time, however, it wavered. There were times that my home was like a war zone.

As a music evangelist (this was evidently God's plan for my life), I was ministering with my harmonica music at the United Methodist Congress on Evangelism in Orlando, FL. When I returned home, I found that there had been an ice storm. But the weather had warmed and Rebel was all right at that point. A day or two later, I felt led to check on him. I found him flat on his back on a steep hill leading to the creek. With his backside against a tree, he could not move. I called my minister, Rudy Guess

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(a horseman), and the neighborhood country store (where men usually gathered), for help. It took five men and me to get him up. He was trembling and I let him rest before taking him to a neighbor's barn.

I would care for him early in the morning before leaving for work and then again in the evenings. He was twenty-four years of age. The mischievousness and the antics of his youth were gone. A look of total dependency and love for me was in his eyes. I fed, watered, petted and talked to him for six weeks. He would appear to be better and then would get worse again. He would often collapse, and I exercised him by walking and leading him in a futile effort to gain strength in his legs.

He loved for me to sing to him and, as I sang, his ears would twitch with pleasure. I remembered how singing to him calmed him while we rode. Amazing Grace was always just the right choice to calm his dancing and prancing. Whatever I was singing, his gait would change to keep time with my voice. Now, I cried and asked God to bring him home, if he had to die, so that he could be buried on our property; knowing I couldn't take him home because he would fall and be exposed to the weather.

During one of his better times, I left him in the care of a friend, also a horsewoman, and went to Kentucky for a weekend visit. When Shane's call came, I knew Jesus was answering my prayers.

My youngest son, Dan, was sitting on the front porch when Rebel came

running up the long driveway, went to the backyard and collapsed. He literally ran a mile home after breaking through brand new barn doors and crossing over an electric fence.

Then came the blessing I hadn't expected. My neighbors confided that my sons were worried about their mother accepting this possible death of

her beloved animal. They had called Bob Bentley, our friend and veterinarian. He came to treat Rebel and give instructions for his care. Both boys petted him and tried to get him up. They tried all sorts of ways to get him on his feet. Rebel would try to get up, but his strength was gone. We were in the month of February and the days were unseasonably warm. I pulled cars around him to shield him from the cold night wind, and covered him with a bedspread and blankets to keep him warm. I lay on the ground with my head on his neck and wept.

The morning of the third day arrived and the weather forecast was not good; a front was moving in. That day I called Dr. Bob and we made the decision to put him down. That night, he and his wife Luci brought the necessary medicine and we began to put him down. As the last bit of life left his body the rain began to fall softly.

The next day he was buried on our place in his beloved pasture. Years have passed and the frustration of those teenage years has disappeared. I still miss Rebel, but I am reminded of the first glimpse of my boys' love that I had needed for so long that came with his passing from my life.

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Pigeon Homecoming

by Billy Joe Cooley

A few weeks ago, when the weather was cold, Jerry Lee kept a dozen or so red birds and blue birds well fed in his huge back yard.

He would go down to the picture show late at night and get all the leftover popcorn, put it in a garbage bag and haul it home, sprinkling it across his yard so the birds would have special treats next morning.

He did the same with leftover cornbread from cafes around the area, especially in deepest winter.

But, as one could expect, pesky blackbirds started recognizing Jerry Lee's backyard as a good thing for freebies and pushed their way in, thus pushing the pretty redbirds and bluebirds out.

Jerry Lee has always been a hard worker and didn't take kindly to the black demons flocking to his yard. He much preferred the beautiful colorful birds.

Somebody gave him the solution: bring a bunch of pigeons to the neighborhood.

He went to Chattanooga, rounded up a half dozen pigeons and brought them home. Behold! He was just in time. The yard was full of blackbirds. The pigeons flew in on the unwanted birds, pecked, flogged and generally made life miserable for them. The blackbirds took flight.

Then the pigeons became pesky.

The color birds wouldn't return to the yard. Jerry Lee, now confronted with a new problem, consulted his city cousins about how to get rid of the pigeons, which by this time were attracting other pigeons.

He decided against poisoned corn and other drastic measures. He thought about using roman candles to "fireball" them out of the area. He thought better of that, however, remembering how such a tactic against crows had caused a neighbor to lose a haybarn to flames a few years back.

Traps proved useless. The pigeons were wary of objects they didn't understand. Meanwhile, neighbors complained that the pigeons were "blessing" their car windshields and window awnings.

Something had to be done, so he took his .22 rifle and started shooting one afternoon, picking the pigeons off one at a time as they poked their strutting bodies into view.

That's when it happened. One of his bullets ricocheted, striking his car's gas tank and setting off an explosion that could be heard all the way to town, more than a mile away. Unfortunately, the car was parked in the carport and there weren't enough unfrozen water pipes in the area to extinguish the blaze.

His family managed to escape the fire. So did the pigeons. And that's the truth.

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Heard On the Street

by *Cathey Carney*

Our Photo Winner from last month was **Rita Dupree**, of Huntsville. She was the first caller to identify the beautiful young girl as **Liz Hurley**, of Channel 48, who does indeed love animals. Rita is retired from Benchmark Electronics where she worked for 30 years. She takes care of her sweet mama, **Bertha**, who is 93.

The landscape mystery winner who was the first to call was **Tom Pack**, of Hazel Green. The picture was taken outside Harrison Brothers on South Side Square. Tom told me he was raised on Williams Avenue and is a retired truck driver for Nationwide Express. Congratulations!

Arnold Hornbuckle was a name that most all Huntsvillians were familiar with. He founded WAHR-FM radio station in 1959 and started Hornbuckle Record Shop in 1952 that lasted for decades. Arnold was a true Southern gentleman, and at the end of January he passed away at the age of 84. We send our deepest condolences to his two sons, **Ronnie Hornbuckle** and **Guy Hornbuckle** of Huntsville, and his brother **Austin Hornbuckle** of New Hope as well as his many friends and colleagues.



It was so good to talk with that handsome **A.J. Casey**, of Satellite Beach, FL recently. Mr. Casey was Dad to **Liz Waggett** of Huntsville, whom so many people loved and still remember. Liz passed away a couple of years ago of pancreatic cancer, and worked for Beason & Nalley. Mr. Casey reminds me so much of my Dad, **Chuck Owens**, who died on Valentine's Day of '09. I know we all have to go sometime, but it sure is hard for the loved ones left when it happens. I love you Mr. Casey!

Sam Huffstetler passed away recently and leaves so many family and friends who are just heartsick over his loss. He was a big teddy bear and one of the most gentle men you'd ever meet. We send our love to his wife **Glenda**, the love of his life, as well as their family: Daughters **Susan Howell & husband J.T.**, **Sandy Carter & husband Jimmy**; son **Sam Huffstetler, Jr. & wife, Kimberly**; stepdaugh-

ters **Cindy Horton & husband Tommy** and **Dana Smith & husband, Greg**. Sam leaves 9 grandchildren, 8 great-grandchildren, 7 sisters and two brothers. Sam was in a family of 12 children. He will be so missed.

Judy Fudge wants to send a very special "Hello" to her beautiful mom, **Alma Light**, who is 94 and lives at the Donalson Care Center in Fayetteville, TN. Alma loves reading about history and remembers living near Dallas Mill on Forest Circle by the old Lee High in Huntsville. Judy said she and her family moved to Huntsville years ago, her Dad was a carpenter and came here to work for **Max Luther, Sr.**

Rosemary Leatherwood of Ole Dad's BBQ wanted to wish her Dad a Happy March 10 Birthday - **Billy Richardson** is her Dad and is still a young man! His 5 daughters take good care of him - they are **Dot, Susan, Rosemary, Lynn** and **Angie**. They say they spoil him rotten, and he deserves it! **Billy Leatherwood, Jr.'s** Dad **Billy, Sr.** would have been 79 on March 17, and the family misses him every day.

Photo of The Month

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

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Hint: This boy knows all about the old Airport that used to be on Airport Road



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He passed away in 1998.

We are so proud of **Madison Academy**, who recently won recognition from Apple in the form of the Apple Distinguished School award, for technology, excellence and leadership. This is a huge honor, and it was accepted by **Dr. Robert Burton**. Dr. Burton is one of the nicest men you'll ever meet. Congratulations to Madison Academy!

The **annual Dog Ball** was a huge event that was just packed with pet lovers. The annual event is presented by the Greater Huntsville Humane Society and is always sold out. It included a silent auction, dinner and presentation of the VIDs (Very Important Dogs.) Truly a very fun night and I'll be back next year!

John Bzdell and **Margaret Watson** want to wish Margaret's Dad a very happy 90th birthday that he had on Feb. 16. **Russ Watson** said about his birthday, "The first 90 birthdays are the hardest, it gets easier from here on out!" Happy birthday to you!

Joella Bradford lived in Huntsville from January of 1964 til April of 2005, when she moved to Texas. Joella loves and misses Huntsville, and remembers shopping in Lewters, Hoppers, Big Brothers, Dunnavants, Pizitz, etc. in the 60's and 70's. Her good friends **Betty and Jay Kea** began sending her copies of newspapers and magazines from Huntsville and she just loves hearing about what's going on here. She's now too sick to travel to Huntsville but she promised to send some memo-

ries of living here. She absolutely loves Alabama Crimson Tide and said we could probably hear her yelling her team to victory all the way from Texas!

Shelli Maroon works hard with **Forgotten Felines** and they do so much good work for feral and homeless cats. They are non-profit and every weekend in front of Petsmart on Bailey Cove. If you're in the market for a sweet kitty or dog, you will find them on Fridays from 6-8pm, Saturdays from noon to 5pm, and Sundays from noon til 5pm. Forgotten Felines does so much to take care of abandoned cats. They receive no local, state or federal government funding and rely on the generosity and kindness of our community.

Tony Farmer was a good friend and our State Farm agent for many, many years. He passed away recently at the very young age of 66, and we send our deepest sympathy to all of his family & friends who remember him. He leaves his daughter **Millie Farmer Savage**, sisters **Pat Hall** and **Gay Farmer**, brother **Gary Farmer** and wife **Trish**, his grandsons **Mack Savage** and **Zackery Savage** and family friend **Jim Lumpkin**. We will miss Tony.

We were so happy to read in the Times recently that crime is down a bit in Huntsville, including home burglaries and commercial break-ins. It's due in great part to the fact that people in general are being much more watchful, including the police. So just keep it up, don't let your

guard down, always be aware of what's going on around you, in parking lots, outside your home, just walking, etc. Many more neighborhoods are seeing the good that **Community Watch groups** do in reducing crime, and more groups are forming every month.

Happy Birthday to **Jimmy Tolin** - I've known him for years and he gets better looking each year! He didn't say exactly how old he was but I think it's somewhere between 68 and 70.

Have a great March, Spring is on its way! Keep an eye on your older neighbors, too.

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Deep South Fried Chicken

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- 1 c. flour
- 1 t. paprika
- 1 t. dry mustard
- 3/4 t. nutmeg
- 1/2 t. garlic powder
- 1 t. salt
- 1 t. pepper

Cut a washed chicken up into serving pieces and drop each piece in the bag til evenly coated with the flour mixture. In a large, deep skillet, melt about 3 inches of vegetable oil til a drop of water sizzles in the skillet. Drop in your chicken pieces and fry til golden brown. Drain on paper towels.

Fried Chicken Gravy

Put two tablespoons of the fat you used to fry the chicken in a skillet. Add two tablespoons

flour and 1 teaspoon onion powder. Stir over medium heat til brown. Add salt and pepper to taste and 3/4 cup milk. Pour over chicken, rice or potatoes.

Sweet Potato Puffs

- 4 sweet potatoes
- 1 c. brown sugar
- 1/3 c. butter
- 1 c. pecans, ground

Boil potatoes til tender, peel and mash. Add brown sugar and butter and form into balls, like large marbles. Roll each ball in the nuts til completely covered. Place in a 250 degree oven for 30 minutes. Serve with ham or poultry.

Eggnog Pie

- 9 inch graham cracker pie shell
- 1 env. unflavored gelatin

- 1/3 c. sugar
- 1-1/3 c. milk
- 3 egg yolks lightly beaten
- 3 egg whites
- 1/4 c. sugar
- 2 T. dark rum
- 1/2 c. heavy cream

Combine gelatin, sugar, milk, and egg yolks in a saucepan. Over medium heat, cook til mixture comes to a boil and remove from heat.

Chill for 20 minutes, stirring a couple of times.

Beat egg whites into soft peaks and gradually add 1/4 cup sugar.

Beat til thick, add rum to the chilled egg yolk mixture. Whip the cream and fold it along with the egg whites into the egg mixture.

Pour into the graham cracker pie shell and don't serve until you've chilled it for at least 3 or 4 hours.

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Red Cabbage with Bacon

- 4 slices bacon
- 2 T. olive oil
- 3/4 c. white wine
- 1 head red cabbage, cored, quartered and sliced into 1/3" strips
- 1 t. dried thyme
- 2 t. salt
- Black pepper
- 2 t. red wine vinegar
- Blue Cheese, crumbled

Cut the bacon into very small pieces. Saute it in the oil for 4 minutes, add wine. Heat just to simmering. Add cabbage slices to the skillet, sprinkle with all spices above. Cover pan and cook over low heat for 40 minutes, stirring a couple of times. Add the vinegar, stir, and cook for 3 more minutes.

When ready to serve, crumble the blue cheese over the cabbage (this is optional).

Fried Ham with Red-Eye Gravy

- 4 large slices country ham
- 1 T. plain flour
- 1 c. cold water
- 2 T. strong black coffee

Add your ham slices to a tablespoon of grease in a Medium-hot skillet and fry, turning a couple of times. Cook for 10 minutes til browned. Remove ham from the pan and keep warm on a platter. Leaving just a tablespoon of fat in the pan, toss in the flour, raise the heat

and stir til it browns. Pour in the cold water and coffee. Bring to a boil, stirring well to get all that good stuff off the pan. Lower the heat and simmer for about 5 minutes. Throw your ham back in if you'd like. Get some really fresh biscuits and start soppin' up that good juice.

Hot Cheese

- 1/2 c. butter, softened
- 2 c. cheddar cheese, shredded
- 1 c. flour
- 1/4 t. salt
- 1/2 t. paprika
- 1 t. garlic powder

Cream your butter and cheese, add the flour, salt and paprika. Add garlic, mix well. Shape into balls and freeze on a cookie sheet covered with aluminum foil. When frozen put them in a Ziploc bag in the freezer. When ready to use, bake on a cookie sheet at 350 degrees for about 15 minutes.

Best Turnip Greens

Cook ham skins til done. Wash greens and put them in a large pan of boiling water. Have enough water in pan to just cover your greens. Cook the ham and greens together for about 40 minutes. When almost done, add about 1/2 tablespoon of Tabasco Jalapeno green sauce and lots of freshly ground black pepper. Salt to taste.

Collard greens can be prepared this way as well.

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A Union Soldier's Diary of Life in Huntsville

Tens of thousands of Union soldiers were either stationed in, or traveled through, Huntsville during the Civil War. While a few left brief accounts of their experiences here, none detailed the everyday life of a soldier.

Recently Old Huntsville came into possession of the diary of Jenkin Jones, a private with the 6th Wisconsin Artillery Battery, who was stationed in Huntsville from January to June of 1864. The record he left stands as one of the most detailed accounts in existence of a soldier's life in Huntsville. The diary consists of over three hundred pages of which excerpts appear below.

Dec. 25, 1863 - Bellefonte - Christmas night. Awoke to the notes of the bugle calling us to get ready to move. Struck tents at 8 A.M. Roads much better than those we have passed. Marched fast most of the time, having to go much out of the way to avoid swamps or bluffs. Marched quickly along, thinking of home and what they were doing on this Christmas day. Came into camp late in the near the county seat of Jackson County (Scottsboro). The buildings burned and gone to ruin. No crackers for supper, so we made up the Christmas supper on parched corn and coffee. During the night it rained heavily.

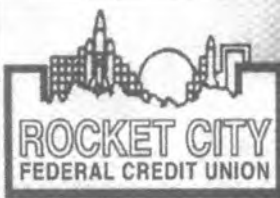
Dec. 26 - Larkinsville - Four small crackers for breakfast. Struck tents in drenching rain. Warning given not to enter houses as smallpox was prevalent. One house had five patients, another a corpse.

Dec. 30 - Cold and cloudy day. Dressed the two hogs brought yesterday and salted them. The chickens hung up for New Year's. Women and boys in camp trading cornbread for coffee and salt, etc. with the soldiers.

Jan. 2, 1864 - Dance held in town by Alabama girls and Yankee soldiers. Running rumor afloat that we are to leave for Huntsville. Don't like it.

Jan. 7 - Leaving for Huntsville. The roads are frozen and very rough, the weather extremely cold covering our clothes with ice and sleet. The troops marched fast and kept warm but the (wagon) train moved slow, wagons sticking in ruts, mules giving up and lying down in the road, to receive beastly oaths from the impatient wagon masters. Came upon the officer's wagon on side of road, axle tree broken, where we had to stop and take on the load and it followed in the rear with a pole for a wheel.

Jan. 9 - Huntsville - Natives say it is the coldest day known for years. Animals and wagons covered with ice. Coming around the point of the



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bluff we could see Huntsville in the valley three miles distant. Marched through the town with colors flying and bands playing, much to the satisfaction of the large crowds of contraband that flocked at every corner. Came into camp a mile north of town on Russel Hill.

Jan. 10 - Not withstanding that all were tired from the march of the last three days, camp reverberated with the sound of ax, saw and lumber, erecting quarters for the third time this winter. Our tent is back with the boys on the R.R.

Jan. 11 - Worked quite hard all day building fireplace. Had to carry much of the bricks on our shoulders but we completed it by night and had the satisfaction of sitting in front of a fire in the evening. Draws well.

Jan. 12 - Pleasant in the middle of the day but freezing at night. Busy most of the time completing our shebang (hut). It is 6 ft. by 8 ft. Very small but quite cozy for two soldiers. Door is in front, 18 in. by 30 in. Bunk is in the back, 4 ft. wide. At the foot of it is a hardtack box for cupboard, etc.

Jan. 13 - Wrote letter home. Mail arrived. None for me. Sadly disappointed.

Jan. 16 - A ball was announced to be held tonight in town and many of the boys attended, but found to their chagrin that it was a Negro dance. Some returned crestfallen, others enjoyed tripping with the colored sisters.

Jan. 17 - Walked over town. Visited the waterworks of the city, which is the largest of the kind in the South with the exception of the one at Columbia, S.C. A large stream gushes from the solid rock under the courthouse, which is dammed about four feet and propels a large water wheel which works a powerful force pump that forces water all over the city, furnishing a hydrant at every corner.

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Pump is enclosed in a neat stone house. Returned to camp for supper and evening roll call, then we walked back again. The (Presbyterian) church was very neat and filled with soldiers, but one woman in the audience. Good to be once more listening to an earnest speaker and hear old fashioned tunes.

Jan. 18 - An idle day in camp. Nothing of interest. Griff and myself went to town on pass, made a few purchases.

Jan. 20 - Health good. Plenty to eat and nothing to do. Foragers brought in several hogs. Gave us a piece of ribs which we roasted before the fire. A fine dinner. (Two men) in our Battery in jail in town for robbing an old gray haired Negro after dark while on his way home from camp, where he had been to sell corn cakes.

Jan. 21 - Drill call sounded at 9 A.M. and we fell in. Lieutenant Clark drilled us in infantry drill for half an hour and then had the chief of the platoon take over. The same in the afternoon. Rather awkward at first, but it is easier to remember than to learn.

Jan. 22 - Arose with a slight cold and swollen face from the inflamed nerve of defective tooth. On fatigue all day hauling rubbish from front of Battery.

Jan. 24 - My face much swollen yet and exceedingly painful. Was on guard first relief. The weather was warm and I felt unwell, sick headache and aching limbs, but I stood my guard. Clothing inspection by Captain Dillon. He was very particular,

found much fault with the service worn clothes in which we have marched through rain and mud, sleeping on the wet ground, etc. He seemed to have little sympathy with his Privates, but is determined they shall look well.

Jan. 25 - A delightful night to stand guard. Mail came in while I was on. I received one from brother T.L., which I read by the pale light of the moon while walking my silent beat, contrary to military rules.

Jan. 26 - Another beautiful day full of sunlight and comfort. Drill call sounded as usual but instead of drilling we policed about three acres of ground by order of Captain Dillon. Teams sent to Flint River and returned at night with the remaining four guns. Rumors of a Rebel Cavalry advancing. Two regiments gone out, others under orders.

Jan. 27 - Reveille sounded at 5:30 A.M. Blankets to be hung out for airing, quarters to be swept out and clothing brushed for inspection at 9:00. Train cars came by this afternoon for the first time, the whistle of the train responded to by a hundred cheers by the boys. Cavalry came in, reported rebels repulsed.

Jan. 28 - Notified I was to go on foraging detail. Fell in with long (wagon) train under Quartermaster of 18th Wisconsin. Went on turnpike and traveled about eight miles on winding road but beautiful country. Obtained plenty of corn on a large plantation which all the whites had left, leaving a large flock of Negro women and children unprovided for. They seemed delighted to see us until some of the boys took un-allowed privileges with the chicken coop.

Jan. 29 - Drilled in forenoon and afternoon. The Captain drilled us for about thirty minutes and appeared well pleased. He is getting very strict. Put one of the boys on extra duty, all day for slight mistake at guard mount this morning. Rebel cavalry still reported very active.

Jan. 30 - No drill and rain prevented parade in afternoon. Dr. Coleman sent for J.D. and myself and presented us with a can of condensed milk for building up his chimney.

Feb. 3 - Instead of the usual drill this morning, was general

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policing, ground to be swept, about five acres. Guard house and kitchen to be whitewashed. A well started. I climbed Russel Hill for evergreen boughs for brooms in company with a couple of others and managed it so as not to return until nearly roll call. That is the soldier's strategy - Do no more than you can.

Feb. 7 - Attended church (Episcopal). Gothic style, poorly arranged for sound. The civilians were apparently of the aristocratic class, mostly women equaling the military in numbers ... careful always to omit the prayer for the President of the U.S.A. - Collection plate was passed which was returned well laden with soldiers "greenbacks." The money of the government they will not pray for is very acceptable.

Feb. 8 - Several articles were stolen from camp lately and a guard was detailed to watch the quarters. At 3 P.M. assembly was sounded and all men prevented from entering their quarters while they were searched. One revolver was recovered. Dillon was very angry.

Feb. 9 - Called on before finishing my breakfast to go foraging. Two wagons from the Battery fell in with a train of 150 wagons. Drove fast nine miles

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south, where there were 100 Negroes at work for the government, husking corn, protected by infantry. Soon loaded and started back at head of train. Arrive in camp not very tired but exceedingly hungry, having had nothing since morning.

Feb. 13 - No drill or parade but we did not get paid off. Camp unusually active during the day, ball playing and the boxing gloves in constant use. At night a merry dance went on in the open air with music from the fiddle and bow. Ladies dispensed with from necessity.

Feb. 20 - As soon as breakfast was over I hitched up a new team and drove out to a confiscated fence a mile off, for a load of lumber as the Hungerford brothers were desirous of coming in with us, and we must build a bigger hut. After we were all loaded, a guard commanded us to unload but after some talk allowed us to leave in quiet with our lumber.

Feb. 22 - On foraging detail. Traveled in south westerly direction for 15 miles. Walked most of the way. Jerked our corn from a 500 acre field. Returned by sundown, awful tired and with severe sore throat. Evie was mounted and procured four chickens and a hog in exchange for coffee. Also got a mutton. At night a grand ball was to be held by shoulder straps (officers) in town, but they failed to find but four ladies to join in the festivities. They ended in a drunken carousal, their maniac yells rending the midnight air.

Feb. 25 - Reported at sick

call and was excused from duty. Four desperate big powders of quinine, opium, etc. to be taken. Returned to quarters, burned the powders and went to bed. Could eat nothing all day.

Feb. 28 - Went to the Presbyterian church. A sermon fraught with southern principles. P.B. Moss, after a short illness, died very suddenly. It was unexpected by all and spread gloom over the camp.

Feb. 29 - Rained heavily all night and continued through the day without interruption. Funeral ceremonies for Moss. In charge is Sergeant Hood ... followed by a caisson on which the coffin was placed. The procession marched about two miles passing through town. Chaplain offered short prayer before the burial. It was a solemn but tearless scene. Comrades paying the last tribute of respect to a fellow soldier.

March 1 - A dreary rainy day. Huddled indoors all day. Whiled away the heavy moments as best we could, dominoes, etc.

March 4 - Evans and myself went to the city on pass. Visited the Christian Commission rooms. Bought stamps. Also went to the colored school under charge of Chaplain of 17th

Colored. Had school teachers, being volunteers from the ranks. One class of youngsters was taught by a large Negro. All seemed attentive and anxious to receive the instruction but poorly imparted to them.

March 5 - Smallpox quite prevalent. Lieutenant Clark is down with it. Paddleford was sent off last night to smallpox camp. His case is quite advanced.

March 8 - Henry Robson taken to smallpox camp having been sick in camp for nearly a week. On duty hauling wood for the cooks both morning and afternoon.

March 9 - Rainy evening. Privates had a grand ball tonight at the Alabama Hotel. I under-

I went to a seafood disco last week and pulled a mussel.

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stand they had a grand time. No officers allowed. Forty ladies attended. Lieutenant Clark a little better with the smallpox.

March 13 - Delightful Sabbath morning, T.J. Hungerford very sick, heavy fever and hard breathing. Bathed him, towels kept around him. Afraid he is going to have a fever. In the afternoon walked to town where in a crowded house of soldiers and citizens I listened to an excellent practical sermon on the ten virgins, wise and foolish.

March 14 - Was on detail of 20 men to go foraging with two days rations in haversacks. Fell in at 9:00 A.M. to go with Brigade teams, thirty in number. A ride of 30 miles brought us to the corn field at 3 A.M., two men to a wagon. Jerked it from the rows and in about an hour started back. Drove hard until sundown. It was very cold and blustery and not in the least enticing to sleep outdoors but necessity compelled it.

March 15 - Teamsters and boys up early. Went into a citizen's house to procure my breakfast. Had warm biscuit, buttermilk, etc., for 50 cents. Walked nearly all the way to camp where we arrived at 11:00 A.M.

March 16 - Tommy Hungerford continues quite ill. Fever has left him but he suffers from inflammation of the lungs. Confined to his bed all the time. Byrom Babcock taken to the hospital last night and M. Murphy today. Hauled wood in the afternoon.

March 18 - Formed funeral procession and marched to the funeral of M. Murphy. Chaplain officiated at the grave.

March 22 - All were surprised this morning upon looking out to find the ground covered with snow. Many were the thoughts of sleigh rides, hills, girls, etc. by those that are to enjoy such. One party I saw, as I went to water. They had rigged

up a sled with young mules hitched to it, and a sonorous cow bell for music. They paraded the streets of Huntsville and were looked upon by the native fair as crazy.

Hungerford apparently a little better but very weak. Set up long enough to make his bed and bathe him. No mail.

March 25 - Four more recruits arrived from Wisconsin, having been left behind sick when the others came. Two horses died today, which is the same every day.

March 26 - The train from Nashville today came by way of Decatur. Generals Sherman and McPherson were on board and are now in town where the headquarters are to be established.

March 29 - Our

camp was visited today by Mother Bickerdyke with four mule teams loaded with good things from the North for the



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soldiers. Left us three barrels of potatoes, turnips, carrots, etc, one barrel of sauerkraut with one of dried apples. May God bless her noble, self sacrificing spirit.

March 30 - Turned my sick horse out to die this morning. Obtained a pass to go to the city. Called at shoemaker's shop, fixed my boots, and took a ramble through town to the cemetery and spent a half hour in meditation among the sacred dead. Here are coward, patriot and traitor. Truly all earthling passes away and leaves no faint traces behind. At dress parade we were looked upon by four Northern ladies.

April 1 - Although the day was wet and dreary the boys played well the part of April Fool and it was one continuous jest all day. The bugler blew the breakfast call half an hour early, calling out the men in the rain to awaken to the fact it was April Fool.


April 8 - 59th Indiana went out to reinforce Whitesburg. Deserters say that the enemy is making preparations to throw a pontoon bridge across the river. Rumor says John Morgan was in town with a load of wood.

April 11 - A little after noon we were startled by a terrible explosion near the depot. A caisson of the Illinois Battery had exploded while returning

from drill, killing six men instantly and wounding two. A very sad affair. Bodies torn to shreds. Drew clothes. I got a new blouse and pants.

April 18 - Rained very heavy all night 18th Wisconsin Infantry broke camp at the public (courthouse) square and came up on our left.

April 20 - I was rendered half crazy all the forenoon by the greatest of plagues - toothache in back tooth. After dinner Dr. Griswold laid



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siege to it. After taking a hitch on it, it came out and bothered me no more.

April 26 - Reached Whitesburg by noon. Found the boys well and in good spirits, very neatly quartered in Ft. Hall with one company of infantry with them. After supper Evie and I went fishing in the Tennessee River, dropped our lines and watched the rebels on the opposite side on picket. Breastworks are to be seen but apparently vacant.

April 29 - Took box to express office this morning to send home, had to obtain permit from Provost Marshal. The express office was crowded so I had to wait nearly two hours. Boxes, barrels and bundles - no end to them.

May 3 - Broke up camp early this morning and went into camp nearer to town. Our Battery near the depot on the race course, a large open green, very pretty for summer quarters but rather low for wet weather. Teams hauling down lumber, etc. for quarters.

May 5 - Our camp is very nicely located. A pretty brook runs in front of the battery which the boys have dammed up to make deep enough for a pleasant bath. Water to cook and drink is hauled from the big spring.

May 8 - Grazed horses in the afternoon near a Negro meeting which I attended. After an earnest discourse from an old gray haired Negro and a prayer which would compare with many a white man's, the sisters got happy which was truly amusing and I could not help but laugh although I should not have.

May 9 - Sent to work on the fort (on Echols Hill). The hill being so rocky, very tedious work. Forrest said to be moving on this place, hence the haste to complete the works. All the Negroes in town pressed in and put to work.

May 11 - Started early to the fort, worked hard in the forenoon loading wagons with dirt to be hauled to the wall. After dinner helped lay foundation for heavy guns.

May 12 - All Army followers, sutlers, correspondents, etc. were ordered out this morning to work on the fort, a tough pull for them but justifiable

and highly acceptable to the soldiers. Let them dig alongside the but slightly darker complected baker and hotel waiter. Another sprig of chivalry working with the Negroes under guard for saying "No damn Yankee could make him work." They did it, though.

May 17 - Packed up in great haste with the report that Madison Station is in the hands of the rebels. Battery ordered aboard train, three days rations, one

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blanket. At dusk we halted by the smouldering ruins of Madison depot, burned down and occupied by stragglers from the 13th Illinois.

May 18 - Awoke before daylight, numb with cold (at Madison). Sought the fire around the ruins. Picked up my breakfast from scraps of hard tack scattered. Started for Huntsville at noon. Arrived at 5 P.M., being gone twenty-four hours.

May 22 - Very warm. Traded sugar for milk. Made a fine bread pudding for dinner. A train of thirty cars loaded with grey-backs captured by Sherman passed north, very dirty and filthy looking clothes.

May 24 - The boys as of old are doing steep jay-hawking, breaking into gardens, cheating sutlers, etc. Guards stationed on every corner.

May 29 - In the evening a bevy of staff officers visited camp, but were so beastly drunk as to be unable to carry themselves with propriety, racing their horse after men, etc. Their conduct would be disgraceful to a Private, one of the staff officers of Sherman among them.

June 7 - A squad of eight men under Sergeant Dixon went as escort to a picnic party composed of "shoulder straps" and Southern ladies to Bird Spring, six miles distant. Had a good dinner, champagne in plenty and dancing. Enjoyed themselves well.

June 10 - Abraham Lincoln nominated for President. Drilled under Lieutenant Hood. Condemned horses turned out. Drew rations, hard-tack instead of flour. What does this mean?

June 14 - All the wounded and sick sent north from hospitals here. Long awaited order received this afternoon: Hold ourselves ready to march at any time.

June 15 - Weather fine. Health good. Green peas for dinner. Division concentrating at this place. Two soldiers, 2nd Brigade, married to girls they found at Scottsboro.

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June 19 - Relieved from guard at 9 A.M.. Stayed in camp reading papers received by mail. Four hundred rebel prisoners passed through on their way north. One train stayed at the depot most of the afternoon. Citizens and soldiers flocked around to see the sights. Some ladies tremblingly inquired for friends and relations, others pressing to bestow a smile upon those they sympathized with.

June 21 - Enoch Johnson died at 10 A.M. His disease was congestive chills and typhoid fever. Was one of the detachments that late in the evening followed the corpse to the grave. Silently, without a word of prayer, we buried him in a rude coffin and without a thought, hastened back to camp to prepare for the morrow.

June 22 - Reveille sounded at 2:30 A.M. and quietly we broke camp and marched at 5 A.M., with but one regiment ahead of us in the column. Marched through town in fine style and soon beautiful and dreamy Huntsville was placed among the past. Bathed in the clear waters of Flint in the evening.

Private Jenkins was discharged at the end of the war and returned to his home in Wisconsin where he became a minister. Although Jenkins was patriotic and supported the war, he was later proud of the fact that he had never "Pulled the trigger of a gun aimed at a fellow man."

He died in 1916.



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THE CHAMPION MAPLE OF WELLS AVENUE

By Andy Myers

The distant thundering had shaken the loose panes of glass through the night and the lavender skies mingled with dark clouds anxious with precipitation. There was no sunrise, merely a shift of hues in the sky, from night into a white-skied morning with rolling pockets of rain clouds arriving from the west. In the dusty attic shrieks of wind streamed through the drafty windows. The old frame clapboard house felt the fear in its piney bones. Around noon the sky fell through, forming rivers of runoff to roll down the sloping streets and the wheelbarrows in the gardens overflowing with the bubbling nectar of life.

It was a nearly useless day, a day of waiting and listening as the thudding hum of rain drops fell onto the tin roof like dried peas. The rain barrel filled up with ease and was soon overflowing from the top; my toes sunk deep into the silty mud as I walked into the downpour to open the spigot and unleash the water to ease its condition.

As the day rolled on into afternoon, the rotating howl of tornado sirens began blasting from the cemetery, their harsh pitch belting down the alleyways and through opened screen doors. Soon the televisions would be on, their screens glowing and casting an eerie blue light amid the early darkness. Manic bursts of wind bolt down the empty streets and the tops of trees bend. The old trees stand in bold defiance to these forces, their roots anchoring them as deep as they grow tall, reaching down to latch onto the marrow of earth.

The day was nearly a grey-

ing preamble to the blanketing darkness of night. The rain continued on, washing layers of silt and hummussy earth from the fresh spring soils, stripping young green shoots of their leaves. An old maple, its arms stretched heavenward, forms a faint silhouette against the blasting of wind and rain. Sometime before midnight the street is awoken by a tumultuous pop and a bluish flash of electric light. The kinetic energy of a century of thunderstorms is suddenly released onto the cooled, saturated pavement.

All eyes rushed to the front windows of their prospective houses, their heads swimming with images of panic. There in a neighbor's driveway lay the bulking arm of the ancient maple, having drug a tangle of power lines with it to lie on

the limestone gravel in the rain. Several people emerge to watch and ponder and soon emergency vehicles and some city workers have arrived to do their work. They work into the night, clearing the mangled wires and hauling debris away; the repetitive dull yellowing flash of their trucks casting a stark image in darkened living rooms.

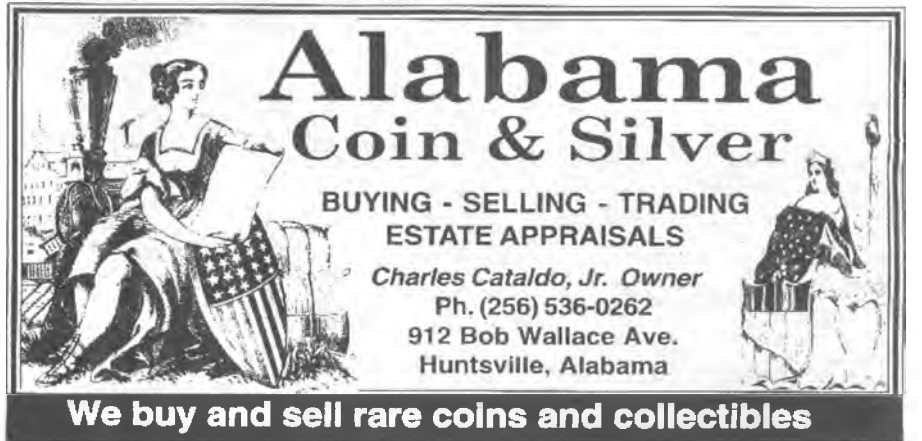
Morning comes, with the coppering sun washing out the grey skies into deep shades of blue that grow richer as they crown the horizon. Miniature ravines have formed along the driveways, dry now and clotted with leaves and twigs from last night's downpour.

The weekday begins and cars start to jet down Wells Avenue like any other working day, some slowing to survey the damaged giant Maple. In the yard next door, the massive limb boldly lies among the grass. New shoots of vibrant green leaves bud out from the twigs, the ground's nutrients still rushing through its woody



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veins. As the day shoves on, city workers return to shred the mighty arm into thousands of pulpy shards, and the buzz of the machines shrieks as it is fed. I see several neighbors standing in front of my house and so I venture out the front door, hoping to learn of the tree's fate.

"Well, the tree's gonna have to come down," she explains, holding a photocopy of an older image and motioning with her hand, "It's completely rotten on the inside. I tried for years to repair it but these things happen." A man is standing next to her, he adjusts his glasses and wipes his brow. He explains that he grew up on the street and had supplied the old picture.

The image is black and white, around the time of World War II or before, and for a second the whine of the buzz saw is drowned out and my mind shifts back seventy years. Two young girls, dressed in Sunday clothes stand on the very sidewalk on which we reside, the picture is taken from my front porch and in the corner is the tree, younger perhaps but still as mighty as today. On the other side of the photograph is a wooded area where the cemetery has now spread, a thick tangle of brush. Further back, a now abandoned farmhouse looks vibrant and people can be seen on the front porch.

The neighborhood of Five Points is new and still full of empty lots, the edge of town. At one time, Wells Avenue was the main road up to Monte Sano mountain, the numerous grocery stores selling provisions for the visitors on weekend getaways to the mountain of health. All the while, the Champion Maple stood watch, observing the world from its majestic vantage point.

A week passes and thunderstorms are again predicted for the weekend and I wonder how long the tree has. From my living room couch the tree puts on a daily show as it gestures with the breeze and the leaves flutter and curl. In the fall, it's hand-shaped leaves are dyed rich hues of red and yellow like some alchemical process. It's a sense of beauty the human race has yet to decipher.

On Friday night another storm passes through and the tree creaks and moans and sheds more twigs and leaves. And again Saturday arrives with a fresh wash of blue skies. Around ten o'clock the familiar droning note of a city truck in reverse is heard and soon the street is filled with cherry pickers and helmeted employees armed with oversized chain saws. They ascend high into the tree traversing its limbs and gauging their work. Sections of the tree begin

to come down, crashing onto the pavement in dead weight.

The dismantling takes all day and as night falls I think of the vision trees have and of the human frivolity they are silent witness to. In the morning, the tree is gone, the massive trunk is sectioned off and trucked out. All that remains is an empty sky and a lonely breeze searching for another heaven-reaching treetop to caress for eternity.

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Local News in 1913

- 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.

- 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 with you, it is absolutely safe.

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

- Deputy Sheriff Pierce late yesterday arrested Ike Lee of Dallas Village on a charge of an assault with a knife.

- The Jabber-Jabber Club meets on Tuesday evening with Miss Lula Lockerd on Meridian Street.

- Mr. Theo. Hereford, Deputy Sheriff, had a very exciting race last night after a man who stole a cow in Madison some time ago. He had the good luck to capture his man about

4 o'clock in the morning after running him all night.

- It is remarkable how some people can wear good clothes, sport around and enjoy life and not work. We were never able to work that combination. If our city fathers would take action against the gambling that is running rampant here, we feel sure that many of these young men would seek respectable employment.

- The Delp property at the corner of Washington and Clinton Streets, one of the most valuable building sites in the city, has been purchased from Delp-Ware heirs by the Struve Brothers and will be improved at once. The frame buildings standing on the lot will be sold and taken away and the brick store will be torn down. The deal that has just been closed has been under negotiations for several years and it has finally been carried through successfully. One of the handsomest business blocks in town will be erected there.

Mr. W. F Struve informed a reporter that he has already rented the proposed building and it will be constructed according to the lessee's plans. It will be two stories high and the ground floor will be a store 50 by 100 feet.



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Felix Leon Rodriguez Johnson

by Steve Johnson

I heard through my cousin Phil that some fellow Leighton, AL natives and people that grew up around it, were in the process of sprucing it up and trying to revive it. Of course I drove over from Huntsville and had a look see. They have done a good job of restoring some of the buildings and just breathing a little life back into a town that pretty much died in the sixties. I got caught up in it and thought about buying an old house near one I lived in on Highway 20 as a kid to maybe fix up and try to use as a retreat.

Leighton is on the way to where Daddy was in the nursing home near Red Bay, so I was going by it pretty often to check on him. One day I was coming home, and drove through town to look at the house I was thinking of buying. I had meant to get back on the new Highway 20 by way of County Line Road, but absent-mindedly wound up staying on the old road.

It is very rural, nothing but cotton fields, train tracks, and a few old houses. We used to hunt dove, quail, rabbits, squirrels, ducks, and arrowheads out there east of town. As I drove along, lost in the flood of memories, something jumped out in front of my truck. Afraid I had hit an animal, I turned around and pulled off the road. I didn't see or hear anything, so I was about to get back in my truck and move on. Then I heard a faint rustling in the tall grass.

I parted the grass and there was a tiny kitten, about the size of my fist. He was black and white, with a huge tail and black

legs. I picked him up, and he was purring to beat the band. Feeling that he had been abandoned, I put him in my truck and drove on. His front left leg had duct tape and a popsicle stick on it, but I was in a hurry and didn't give it much thought.

There is a truck stop in Courtland on the way to Huntsville that sells the best catfish fillets in the known universe. I stopped and got some, and threw a piece in the floorboard in front of the passenger seat. The kitten had crawled under the seat, and the fish had not been touched for a while. Then he nailed it. By then, I had decided to keep him and make him the new Aluminum Can Buyers cat.

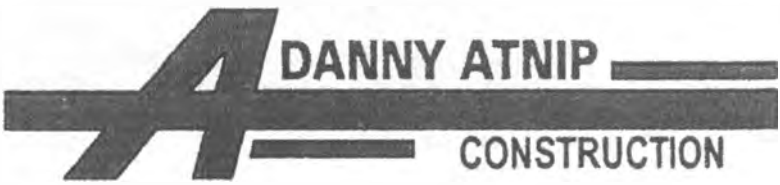
The vet that takes care of my dog Lucy agreed to see him that day to check for feline leukemia and other health issues. Also, to neuter or spay, since I could not determine his gender. Before I stopped at the vet, however, we went to Salon Bella. Audra,

the owner, cuts my hair. Her daughter, Olivia, took right up with my new kitten. She said he hopped like a kangaroo, and wanted to name him Hoppy. He took over the salon, and that thrilled me. The news I got from the vet broke my heart.

The kitten's left front leg was lame, the nerves dead. She said that it was important to amputate it, so he would not eventually gnaw it off. I had been leaving him in my office, and fixed him up with a bed and litter box. Also, since I love old cartoons and he was black and white, I named him Felix. I begged off on making the decision for a couple of weeks. Felix, like Lucy, had won my heart.

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The next few days I watched in amazement as this active little kitten took over our office. Like Lucy, he was a bit much for the elderly Chin Chin. This became a problem, and I had to lock him in my office whenever Chinny was there. He also started bolting out the door in the morning when I opened up. This consumed a lot of time as none of my men wanted to run over him. It tied up a lot of our time finding and catching him. As fast as he is, and able to get around so well, it became painfully obvious there would be no miracle for Felix's leg. I made one of the toughest decisions of my life, and had his leg removed.

When I went to pick up Felix after the surgery, he looked like a little softball. I am a hard bit person, but when the vet handed me Felix, I nearly lost it. He never missed a beat, and when he got his stitches out, the hair grew back quick. The leg was useless to him, but still for a long time, I was consumed with guilt. Over time, it has abated. I feel I did the right thing.

I have heard that animals don't suffer like the human who has had the unfortunate loss of a limb. This is because the animal does not have the human type ego. True or not, I feel for Felix like I would a human in the same sad situation. Felix walks and runs with a kind of lope, and jumps and plays pretty normal. He still has a few mishaps, but not many. He is a wonderful creature.

After a while, the guilt of leaving Felix alone at night and weekends got to be too much. I made the decision to bring him home, one the vet said I would regret. She did not know how much chutzpah Felix possesses. I brought him in the house for the first time and Lucy went crazy. Felix ran and jumped to the top of my couch and bowed up. I scolded Lucy and they

went into a Mexican standoff mode.

The next day I went to work and worried all day. When I got home, I held my breath and went into the house. I could hear Felix meowing over Lucy's God awful barking. Their coexistence is not perfect, but Felix is a fixture in our home now. He has staked out his territory. He has a

home, and is, like Lucy, a lucky rascal. I wish he could tell me how his leg was hurt, and how he wound up beside a road that means so much to me.

But Felix, being the smart cat he is, ain't talking. He's purring away.



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STYLE ELEGANCE FUNCTION

The Seagull

by Cathey Carney

Harry Parker was just minding his own business, that day in Florida. He had been looking forward to his fishing expedition for two months now - a welcome escape from his construction job. It was sure good to get away from all that hassle.

It was early morning, and he had just gotten settled on the rough pier with his pole in his hands. He was glad he had brought his jacket, there was definitely a chill in the air. Harry just knew he was going to catch a tub full of saltwater fish.

When he first glanced around to see if anyone had joined him on the pier, he noticed a small seagull, just standing on the pier, about 30 feet away. It looked cold, like him. When he glanced back at it, a few minutes later, the bird had edged closer to him, still looking out to the water.

Harry felt a tug on his line and gave it all his attention for the next few minutes, but it proved to be just a waterlogged sandal. When he looked at the seagull again, it was no more than 5 feet away from him. "You must be a hungry bugger," he thought. He wondered vaguely what seagulls ate in the winter-time. The wind was really beginning to blow, and he could feel the cold through his thin jacket as he pulled it tighter around him.

When he looked at the bird again, the seagull was only a foot away from him. That's when he saw it.

There was monofilm fishing

A remark generally hurts in relation to its truth.

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line wrapped around the bird's beak. There was no way he could open his mouth to get any food. Without even thinking, Harry reached down, and with a slow and careful movement, began to unwind the line. Carefully, slowly, until the bird's beak was no longer encircled with the fishing line.

It all seemed like slow motion, and it seemed to Harry, later, when he recounted the event to his wife, that he and the bird were the only two beings on the beach that cold and overcast day. He was very surprised that the bird, being a wild animal, had not been startled or tried to fly away when Harry reached out for it. He would always remember the look in the bird's eye - very steady but not afraid. When the line was removed from the bird's beak, it just flew away.

Harry just sat there afterwards, almost hoping that the bird would come back. Checking his line, he saw that the bait was gone. He started to bait his hook, then really looked at the hook, felt the sharpness of the tip. He remembered reading in a conservation magazine that the most sensitive part of a fish was its mouth, and thought how much it must hurt before it dies.

He pulled up his pole, broke it down, and removed all the line. He put the line inside his tackle box, and carefully closed the box with a snap. Walking to the end of the pier, he dropped pole and tackle box into the large, filthy trash can that stood on the far end. He just walked away.

Harry always remembered that day, and when anyone asks

him about that story, he says that the bird came to him because it needed help, was starving to death, and knew that he would help.

As for his fishing, Harry says the last time he went back to that pier he just hung an empty line into the water, and read a good book he had brought along with him.

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The Babysitters

by Sonya Teague

I've worked several different jobs during my lifetime. I didn't work during my high school years. It's not that I didn't want to be gainfully employed like my high school counterparts, I wanted to have spending money and save up for a vehicle, just like every other red-blooded American teenager. Both of my parents worked, so I had to fill in as a baby sitter. We've all heard stories about unemployed relatives who live in your attic or spare room for room and board, and free baby sitting is thrown in for good measure.

I did have baby sitting experience, to a certain degree. I baby sat my neighbors' children during my high school years. I did earn some money, not a substantial amount, but enough to pay for a "perm". I also probably went to the mall, or the local movie theater like the Martin or the Lyric, on my meager earnings. Even though I didn't receive an allowance, or get paid for baby sitting my little sister, I would like to think I earned valuable life skills. Skills that enabled me to function as a productive member of society. Yeah, right!

I'm sure that was going through my head, as I was pleading and begging my little sister to take a bath, eat her dinner, do her homework, etc. I can remember having to bodily move out of a chair, off the sofa, because she wanted to sit in that spot. There was certain food we couldn't eat because it was all

she would eat. I can remember in freezing cold weather, pushing her in her swing. I guess she couldn't take her little princess feet and push herself. It's hard to believe that years ago, children actually played outside.

My parents were older and wiser by the time my little sister was born. They were probably tired too, so that's the reason my sister and I were allowed to baby sit our younger sister. I'm sure there were a lot of things she was allowed to do, that we never were.

I think parents get more lax in the rules department. As each child is born, they are so stressed out they probably don't realize what they're giving them permission to do, just kidding, folks. I can remember my Dad telling me, "Because I said so, that's why"- after I had asked permission to go somewhere, or let someone come over. I found out, No means No, not maybe, not yes. But, no, I'm not going to change my

mind, no.

I can vividly remember coming home from school and finding my 45 record collection all scratched up. Why she was allowed in my room is anybody's guess. No doubt, with no supervision. So much for me retiring off my record collection. Somebody owes me, big time.

Another incident I can recall is my little sister being allowed to take a black magic marker and mark our Madame Alexander dolls all over. What I can remember is we were never

"The man who complains about the way the ball bounces is likely to be the one who dropped it."

Lou Holtz / Notre Dame

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allowed to play with our dolls. We could look at them, laying on our beds, on our parent's beds, or in their doll beds, but we could not play with them. Sometimes we could even pick them up, change their outfits, and quickly lay them down again.

After she had autographed our dolls, she decided they needed a makeover. She cut off all their hair, we could only brush it. But, she was allowed to cut it all off. I guess you would call it a buzz cut, or maybe a mohawk, would be a better term. So, much for my retiring on my Madame Alexander doll collection. Second fortune lost.

And who can forget the time when she flushed my watch down the toilet? It's funny, when we broke something, like a statue, terrarium, or ashtray, we were punished. We were grounded or put in time out. When my little sister did something, it was always, "She's little, she'll outgrow it, she's just a baby."

Enough about my little sister. My oldest sister and my cousin were in charge of baby sitting my cousin and yours truly. I can remember walking to the store, cooking on the stove, no microwaves back then. We ate fried eggs every day, that's all we could cook, besides Chef Boyardee.

Once, we slipped outside and started the old Rambler in the driveway. Then, another time, we broke my aunt and uncle's feather bed, by jumping up and down repeatedly. No trampoline back then, either.

One time, we had a food fight, using our silverware to launch mashed potatoes and

green peas onto the dining room wall. And who can forget the time when we ate those purple berries in the back yard, by the swing set?

Well, if I can forgive my Mother for spending my silver dollar collection, and for throwing away my Chatty Cathy doll - third fortune lost, I guess I can forgive her for making me baby

sit with no pay, and for leaving me with inept baby sitters. Gee, thanks, Mom. Good Luck getting a present on Mother's Day! Just kidding, Mom.

Note: No children were harmed while being raised in these households. We survived, didn't we?



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- 3 Tbsp. flour
- 1/4 tsp. pepper
- 2 Tbsp. chopped parsley
- 1 c. water
- 1 c. sour cream
- 1 tsp. paprika
- 1/2 tsp. grated lemon rind
- 1 tsp. salt
- 2 Tbsp. cooking sherry

Wash and dry chicken thoroughly. Sprinkle chicken on all sides with 1-1/2 teaspoons Accent. Let stand about 15 minutes. Melt butter in heavy skillet over moderate heat. Add chicken and brown slowly on all sides. Remove chicken pieces as browned and place in 2 quart casserole. Cook onion in remainder of butter over low heat until soft. Stir in flour, water and sour cream. Cook, stirring constantly until thickened.

Add paprika, lemon rind, 1/2 teaspoon Accent, salt and pepper. Blend and pour over chicken.

Cover and bake 1 hour at 350°. Add sherry and parsley. Stir to blend. Serve with rice.

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SATURDAY, MARCH 3rd, 2012 @ 4:00pm (*This sale date was originally scheduled for March 10th.): Tony from Ohio will be back in town with another great load. Local and Out-of-State Estate Items and Consignments. Over 600 lots including China Cabinets, Breakfronts, Corner Cabinets, Cupboards, Bookcases, Sideboards & Servers, Several Chests & Dressers, Sets of Chairs, Beds & BR Suites, Dining Room Suites, Miscellaneous Tables & Stands, Stained & Leaded Glass Windows, Architectural Pieces (Doors, Windows, etc.), Advertising Items, Glassware, Mirrors & Frames, Lamps, Lots of Smalls, and other Miscellaneous & Unique Items.

SATURDAY, MARCH 31st, 2012 @ 4:00pm: Eddie from PA will be hauling for this date. Over 600 lots in this sale as well. Other Local & Out-of-State Haulers and Consignors will also be featured. Eddie is currently on a buying-trip, so we don't have a specific listing as of yet. But, you can count on Eddie's usual selection of a wide variety of lots including Lots of Furniture--Sideboards, Chests, Dressers, Tables & Chairs, Beds & BR Suites, Sofas, Dining Room Suites, China Cabinets, etc. Also included will be Lamps, Frames, Glassware, Tray Deals, Lots of Smalls, and many other Miscellaneous Items.

*For pictures and directions, log onto www.auctionzip.com ~ Auctioneer I.D. #5484

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Tweetie's Pet Tips

* If you have an outside pet, don't use metal food/water bowls. On cold winter days your pet's tongue could stick to a frozen bowl, and in summer the bowls can get much hotter than glass or plastic bowls.

* If your dog runs away from you and you finally catch him, no matter how mad you are, DON'T yell or smack him because he'll remember that and never come to you when called for fear of being punished.

* A good friend has a young cat and while throwing wet clothes into the dryer turned away for a minute, just long enough for her cat to jump into the dryer. A few more wet clothes on top of her and Blossom would have had quite a ride in the dryer! So make sure you always keep an eye on your young cat, they are very curious by nature and very quick!

* In the cold weather, outdoor cats sometimes crawl under the hoods of cars to get warm. When the car is started the next day, there can be disastrous results. So if there are outdoor cats in your neighborhood, bang loudly on the car hood before starting the engine to give the cat a chance to escape.

* Never leave your dog




unattended on a choke chain. The chain could get caught and strangle your pet.

* When you get a new dog be sure and check your home for dangling phone cords, drapery cords or other items they may strangle on.

* If you have a digging dog, try putting cayenne powder in the holes - they don't like the sensation when they go back to dig again.

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From the Desk of Tom Carney

MONTE SANO CROWDER, THE KING OF THE SNUFFDIPPER'S BALL

by Tom Carney

Stories have been written about most of the historic places in Huntsville, but one you will never see in the history books is a place that carved its own niche in this city's history for over a quarter of a century. It was a place that a lot of people will never forget – and some people would like to forget. During this time Monte Sano Crowder reigned supreme, as King of the Snuffdippers' Ball.

Monte Sano Crowder was born on the mountain that he was named for in 1914. When Monte was only six years old his mother died, leaving his father with a whole house full of kids, with very little money. Monte's father was a natural musician and often, when times were especially hard, would wrap his Sears and Roebuck fiddle in an old flour sack and "take off fiddling for a week or two, in order to keep food on the table."

Monte began fiddling when he was about ten years old. His dad kept his fiddle lying on the bed and while he was fixing supper, Monte would slip into the bedroom and saw very quietly on the fiddle. His dad came in one day and told him to "go ahead and play it, only don't break anything." From that day on, Monte was a fiddle player.

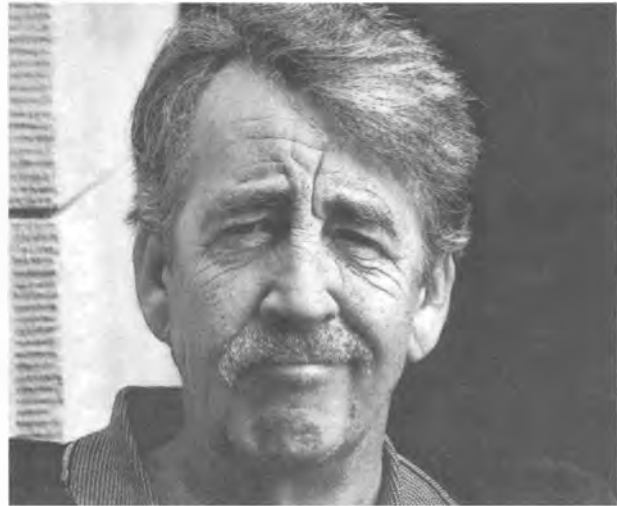
Like his father, Monte and his brothers were all natural born musicians. In 1928, Monte and his brothers began playing together as the Crowder Brothers. The oldest brother, A.P.,

was the manager of the band. A.P. Crowder later moved to Illinois where he became known as the top fiddle player in the state.

Monte recalls that back in those days people would plan barn dances sometimes a year in advance. There would be cold drinks and ice cream and the street would be roped off with sawdust spread down for people to dance on. Sometimes the dancing would go on til the wee hours of the morning. The band tried to charge \$15 a night for the entire group, three or four dollars each was pretty good money in those days.

"Times were gettin' kind of lean back then and I was gettin' tired of chopping cotton, so one day I tell Leon, my brother, I say 'Let's go to Texas or someplace where we can make music and make a little money, too.' Leon, he looked at me and laughed and said, 'We can't play that good!' Well, by golly, we can at least try, I told him. The next day we took off for Texas."

"We were hitchhiking and didn't have no money so we carried our cotton sacks with us. We figured that if we didn't make no money making music, we could still pay our way by picking cotton. It's a good thing



we had them sacks, 'cause when we got to Texas, they had mosquitoes as big as birds and we had to crawl into those sacks to sleep, otherwise they would have eat us alive."

"Well, we got to Texas and we started making music on the sidewalks. We would stand there and play all the tunes that we knew and if we were lucky someone would put a little spare change in the hat, and then we could eat again. We had been doing this for a couple of days when this guy with a medicine show hires us to play for his show. We would make music, people would gather around, and then this medicine man would sell his goods. We spent that whole summer in Dallas making music. That's when we got to thinking that we were genuine musicians."

Monte returned to Alabama, convinced that he could make a living playing the fiddle. In

"When an angel gets mad he takes a deep breath and counts to ten. And when he lets his breath out again, somewhere there's a tornado."

Reese, age 8

1937, Slim Daniel gave Monte his first job in Huntsville. Word of the young man and his fiddle-playing spread throughout the Tennessee Valley, and it wasn't long before he was in great demand.

"Those were the days when a man put his heart and his soul into his music. I remember back in 1939, or maybe '40, when some guy by the name of Hank Williams called me and wanted me to make music with him. I played with him for a while, but he wanted to go to Louisiana and make some records. I told him that I didn't care nothing about being famous, I had everything I wanted right here in Huntsville."

Hank Williams went to Louisiana where he auditioned for the "Louisiana Hayride," the show that was to propel him into worldwide fame within a few years.

In 1941, a man appeared at Monte's door and asked him to take a job playing for a square dance. The man told Monte that they weren't making much money and couldn't afford to pay anything except a percentage of the gate. The square dance was commonly known as the "Snuffdippers Ball" and Monte was to play there for the next thirty-two years.

The Snuffdippers' Ball was located upstairs at the old Temple Theater, in a room normally used for union meetings, on Jefferson Street. The lot on which it stood is now a parking lot for the old Heritage Club. Walking down the street years ago, the only evidence you would see of the Ball was a narrow doorway and a long, steep set of stairs. No signs, no neon lights. You had to know what you were looking for in order to find it.

You had to climb the steps, pay a fifty cents admission, and then you'd be in this big room. The room itself wasn't much to look at, it was just a big room

with a few chairs on the side, had a place to sell potato chips and soft drinks, and yes, back in the old days it even had spittoons for people that dipped snuff or chewed tobacco.

"But it wasn't the room that made the Ball, it was the people. Used to, most everyone lived out in the country and they had to work hard for a living, and Saturday night was the only night they had to have a little fun and let off a little steam. There would be people dressed in their Sunday best, their hair slicked down, and a Sunday-go-to-meeting shine on their shoes. And over there, against that wall, would be the boys that picked cotton all week, still dressed in their overalls. Grandpa would be back in a corner holding court with all the other men while his Missus would be sitting there clapping her hands to the music. There'd be so many people packed in that smoky room that it was a wonder that the old wooden floor didn't just cave in with all that stompin' and dancin' going on."

"Lord, if that old building was still there, and if those walls could talk, there would be a thousand ghosts in that room, and they would all be tapping their feet to the memories of all the music that was played

there."

With the new fiddle player taking the lead, the Snuffdippers' Ball became an instant success, with throngs of people lining up in front of the door hours before it opened. Its success created a new entertainment district downtown. No alcohol was served on the premises of the Ball, so bars began to spring up around it to cater to the thirsty crowds. An old-timer claims that "you could always tell when Monte took a break. When the music stopped, the people would swarm out of the Ball, like bees on honey, headed for the bars, but when Monte picked that fiddle up again, the bars would empty out and the sidewalks that were crowded with noisy people a few minutes earlier would grow silent."

By this time the Snuffdippers' Ball had acquired such a reputation that it was posted "Off Limits" to military personnel, as far away as Nashville, Tennessee. Ironically, this was one of the few places of entertainment downtown that did not serve alcohol, but a lot of people had bottles of "cough medicine" in brown paper bags, sticking out of their back pockets.

Monte recalls, "There was never no trouble inside my place. Trouble was all outside.



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I would tell those boys that if they wanted to fight they could go outside and do it. I wouldn't put up with that in the Ball. Why, there were folks that would drop their kids off with us while they took off to the bars!"

The fact that Monte was a professional wrestler undoubtedly helped persuade some of the local rowdies to keep the peace. He first stepped into the ring in 1937 and over the next 15 years would wrestle as a professional in over 200 matches, under the name of "The Break-down Wrestler." Asked if he was any good, Monte replied, "I didn't win very much, but I made me a little money."

Earl Frazier, a retired Madison County Deputy Sheriff, recalls working Jefferson Street in front of the Ball every Saturday night. "We never had no trouble in the Ball itself, but whenever the band took a break we got ready. A lot of those boys would go outside and try their best to see how fast they could get drunk. Most Saturday nights, we would arrest forty, fifty or maybe sometimes even sixty people on the sidewalks in front of the Snuffdippers' Ball. It wasn't really as bad as it sounds, most of them were the same people every week. The Sheriff's department had regular customers back then."

"One night, me and Bulldog Daniels was working the sidewalks in front of the Ball. We had already arrested one drunk and had him in the car and we were putting the handcuffs on another one, when a third drunk staggered by. When I saw the third one, knowing that we didn't have any more room

in the car, I reached over and tapped him on the shoulder and told him that he was under arrest. 'Just walk on down to the jail,' I told him. 'We'll be down there directly to take care of you.'"

"Sure enough, in about 15 minutes, when we got to the jail to drop off another load of prisoners, there the guy was, sitting on the curb waiting for us to put him in jail. Something like that would never happen today."

Life was treating Monte pretty good in those days. Monte recalls, "I was married and had a son. I was making a little money and only had to work one night a week. Somewhere around 1947 or 1948 some guys come to me and asked me if I wanted to do a radio show. It was W H B S , and was d o w n t h e r e where we pay our utilities at now. So I

asked these guys, what was in it for me?"

They told Monte, "We are going to sell twelve sponsors at \$3 apiece, and you'll get \$12 and we'll get \$24."

"That didn't sound like too bad a deal to me so I became a radio announcer. I'm making twelve bucks an hour for sitting there talking just like I been doing all my life for nothing. I had this show called 'Crowder's Corn Crib' and I talked and played music. Only thing I didn't like was doing the weather. Most of the time the weather forecast back then was wrong, so they would give me this sheet of paper with the

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Tallulah Bankhead



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weather on it and I would go on the air and say, 'I don't believe a word of it, but this sheet of paper says that the weather is gonna be....'"

"Only thing was that this job was interfering with my fishing. Got to where every time they wanted me at the station, the fish would be biting. Well, anyway, they call me in the office one day and tell me that I have to choose between fishing and doing radio. That was a dumb thing for them to do, 'cause I had my fishing rod in the car all ready to go."

In 1972, progress caught up with the Snuffdippers' Ball. Nightclubs began selling drinks over the bar, a practice not allowed until the late sixties, and most had free entertainment. People who had been going to the Ball for years slowly began to drift away, and Monte was forced to close it down.

Monte Sano Crowder, the King of the Snuffdippers' Ball, became one of the most well-known fiddle players in the Southeast, recording numerous tapes and records, with his music being used in two movies produced here in Alabama.

The man who claims to be able to play six types of music on his fiddle says, "There still ain't no music like mountain music. Most of the young kids coming up today, they make a lot of noise, but they don't make much music. You got Tony Mason, maybe one or two others that can still play good music like my Daddy taught me, but there ain't many of us left."

"When you get old, there ain't much to do except sit under a shade tree and drink Double Cola and remember. You try to remember all the things you've done and all the people you've met."

"And I've loved every minute of it."



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Crust:

- 1 stick butter
- 1 c. plain flour
- 2 T. confectioners sugar
- 1 c. nuts (chopped fine)

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Filling:

- 8-oz. pkg. cream cheese (room temp)
- 1 c. confectioners sugar
- 1 sml. container Cool Whip

Mix cheese and sugar. Add Cool Whip. Pour on top of crust.

Topping:

- 1 large instant chocolate pudding mix
- 2 1/2 c. cold milk
- 1/2 c. chopped nuts

Mix pudding and milk, add chopped nuts. Pour on top of cheese filling. Refrigerate at least 2 hours before serving.

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THE SALESMAN

by Dale Cassidy

Early entertainment in Huntsville, as in most towns of the 1800's, was limited. An occasional dance, a town picnic, or a church social seemed to be the recreation highlight of most citizens' lives.

A peculiar amusement of the 1890's, however, was listening to the medicine men, who plied their trade with abundant vigor and enthusiasm. They ranged from small-time fakers, who peddled their wares from the back of a wagon, to more pretentious phony "doctors" who enlivened their programs with elaborate stage setups and a considerable troupe of entertainers and workers.

One of the most colorful of this type to come through Huntsville in those days was the self-styled "Yellowstone Kit." Kit carried a tent and actually charged for the choicest seats during his program which consisted of song and dance, banjo picking and general gaudy entertainment. As soon as the crowd was warmed up and lively, "Yellowstone Kit," (in his magnificent ten-gallon hat, make-up and fringed clothing, which he thought made him look like Buffalo Bill), would jump up on the stage and exalt his cure-all elixir, which he generously offered for only one dollar a bottle.

The band played loudly and diligently as Kit continued to entice the enthralled patrons with the results which his amazing tonic promised to provide. He would prance along a platform, built out into the audience, and exchange bottles of his

"priceless" elixir for one dollar each, held up by willing and hypnotized spectators. There were very few times that Kit failed to "pack 'em in" for one of his shows.

"Yellowstone Kit" continued to brandish his wares throughout the South for many years during the late 1800's and early 1900's, stopping and staying

often in Huntsville.

When he reached the end of his days, in spite of his own "marvelous" medicine, a New Orleans reporter quoted him as saying, "At least I had one satisfaction in my long career - I never actually harmed anyone."

The mixture he had sold far and wide as a miracle potion had been simply canned milk!

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Delivering Mail in Booger Town

by Malcolm Miller

After spending almost ten years of my young adult life working at the shoe factory in Huntsville my brother Frank and I were hired, in the Fall of nineteen fifty-five, as substitute letter carriers by then postmaster Louie Collier. This brought about great changes in both of our lives because we had been struggling to pay our bills on low wages and doing sweat shop labor.

When you went to work at that time as a substitute carrier you filled in for the regular carriers when they were off. You did whatever was necessary to get work, like going all over what was then Huntsville, collecting mail out of all the collection boxes all over town. There was even a night collection run. Since I was in bad financial straits, I tried to get all the extra hours I possibly could, although there was no such thing as over-time pay for substitutes.

I had not been at the Post Office very long when I was assigned to a route out in West Huntsville that included the Booger Town community. I had only been to Booger Town twice in my life, both times were when I was sixteen years old hanging

out downtown with my good buddy James Erk Bolden. Erk had relatives living in Booger Town and since it was late one night and we couldn't get home, he suggested we spend the night with his brother Eugene in Booger Town.

It was very dark when we arrived in Booger Town and I couldn't tell anything about the place til morning. We were undressing for bed and in the dark I knocked over a big bird cage. You never heard such a racket with the bird squawking and Eugene's wife cursing.

Finally it all settled down and we went to sleep. The next morning when I awoke I was shocked when I went outside, I had never seen such a run-down trashy place. Believe me, I had lived in some run-down houses growing up as the son of a share cropper, but this was much worse.

On the first day I delivered mail in Booger Town it was the day the welfare checks were delivered and I was doing pretty good until I got to the corner of Ninth Avenue and Eleventh Street. I looked down Eleventh Street and there in the middle of the road was a water faucet standing about four foot tall and gathered around it was most of the citizens of Booger Town. When they saw me turn the cor-

ner they charged! I didn't know what to do so I stood there in the middle of the street by the water faucet and called out names just like they do in the military and passed out all those checks. I found out later I could have lost my job for that, but at the time I didn't know what to do.

After that day I delivered the mail several times in Booger Town and it was always an adventure; for instance there was no order in the box numbers. One unit had a store-bought box and the price on the box was the house number. Some places I just threw the mail through a broken window; there were cigar boxes, tin cans, etc. and you really had to watch your step because there were loose and broken boards everywhere.

In all my thirty years delivering mail, my first day going into Booger Town on welfare check day will always stand out as the most memorable event of my career. I also became very proud of having worked with the United States Post Office and being able to better myself and my family for the first time.

"They told me I was gullible and I believed them."

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