



No. 234  
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# Old Huntsville

HISTORY AND STORIES OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY



## THE MURDER OF FLOSSIE PUTMAN

Flossie was young, beautiful and vivacious. She had everything going for her until she made one fatal mistake.

She fell in love with a married man and on one dark, stormy night in 1937, she paid the ultimate price.

*Also in this issue:* The Jordan/Howie Home

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# The Murder of Flossie Putman

At the sound of the car horn blowing, young and energetic Flossie Putman, who had been a beauty contest winner at the age of 16, jumped to her feet. Glancing in the full length mirror standing in the hall, she checked her makeup and shapely figure one last time. Her mother, sitting in a chair and watching, was agitated that her daughter was going out once again. It seemed to her that Flossie was always on her way to another date.

"Going out again tonight?" asked the mother. "Who are you seeing now?"

"My number one boy friend," replied the daughter gleefully. "The one I really love."

"Please don't stay out too late, honey," the mother pleaded.

Flossie kissed her mother on the cheek lightly, and pausing only long enough to tell her not to wait up, dashed for the door.

Mrs. Putman watched as her daughter departed. Her whole life was wrapped up in Flossie, an only child and her sole support. Mother and daughter lived in a modest house on O'Shaughnessy Avenue in the village of Dallas, a cotton mill section at the edge of Huntsville.

As darkness closed over the hills and valleys that night of April 30, 1937, angry clouds were gathering on the western horizon to swoop down on Huntsville and the surrounding countryside in one of the worst storms ever

experienced in the community. Within an hour after the daughter's departure from home, lightning flashed and thunder cracked with a fearsome fury. This was followed by a gale of hurricane proportions and then rain came down in torrents. As the storm increased in violence, Mrs. Mae Putman, alone in her house, felt deep concern about her daughter for the first time in her life.

Flossie, however, was safe from the elements of the night. She was comfortably seated in a darkened corner of the White Castle, a popular road inn four miles north of Huntsville. Opposite her sat a companion and on the table between them were two glasses filled with whiskey.

The popular tavern was almost empty of patrons on this stormy night. Besides Flossie and her date, there were only a few others present. No one paid any attention to the young couple until they began arguing in loud voices. The man seemed to be doing most of the talking, his voice thickened by the whiskey he had already consumed. As suddenly as the argument had began, it ended, with the couple leaving the bar holding hands.

For the next hour the remaining patrons of the tavern continued to drink and talk as the storm raged outside. Two of the customers were preparing to leave when suddenly the door flew open and Flossie Putman, her face and clothes splattered with blood, stumbled through the entrance.

The patrons anxiously gathered around the young girl offer-



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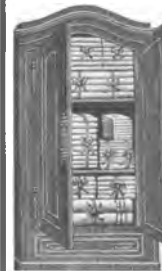
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ing to take her to the doctor, only to be met by a curt refusal.

"Leave me alone," Flossie cried angrily. "Please go away."

Just then the door opened and the girl's escort walked in. He, too, was splattered with blood and appeared to have been drinking heavily. Grabbing Flossie by her arm, the man angrily ordered her to leave with him. Neither spoke a word as they left.

Through a window, those in the tavern saw the couple climb into a pickup and drive away.

The following morning, when Mrs. Putman realized her daughter had not returned home, she became terrified. She began calling her daughter's friends only to be told that they had not seen her. One of them did tell her, however, that the man Flossie had been seeing was named Jim.

Mrs. Putman next notified H.C. Blakemore, Huntsville's Chief of Police. Anxiously she told the Chief of her daughter dating someone by the name of Jim, and of her concern.

Recalling the fact that Flossie had joked about getting married, Blakemore said there was nothing he could do in case of an elopement, but he would do what he could.

Blakemore began searching for the man who had been with Flossie the night she had disappeared. Finally after much hard work, he was able to narrow the list of possible suspects down to five whose first names were Jim. Four of the suspects were able to give alibis for the night Flossie disappeared. The fifth, James McNally, lived only a short distance from Blakemore's home. McNally was married and was known as a devoted husband and the father of eight children.

With attributes such as these, Blakemore was at first hesitant about considering McNally as a suspect. Despite his personal feelings, the Chief nevertheless decided to question the man.

During the course of the next several weeks, Blakemore visited McNally's residence several times, only to be told each time by McNally's wife that he was not home. Finally Blakemore demanded an explanation as to why McNally was never home.

**"Artificial intelligence is no match for natural stupidity."**

*Jerry Bevins, Athens*



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Obviously worried, the woman said Jim had disappeared. "I know I should have reported it sooner but I kept thinking that he would come back."

The woman said she had not seen her husband in almost a month.

Upon questioning the woman, Blakemore was able to establish that McAnally had disappeared the same night as Flossie Putman. Now the investigator was faced with two mysterious disappearances instead of one. As rumors began to spread across Huntsville, the general feeling was that McAnally had abandoned his wife and children and had run off with the beautiful Flossie Putman.

The whole case had stalemated when Mrs. McAnally appeared at headquarters one day, three months later, to tell the Chief that she had heard from her husband. He was working in Texas, had a good job and was about to send for her and the children.

"Did he say why he left so suddenly without telling anyone?" Blakemore asked.

"He just said that he had an unexpected job offer and he wanted to make sure it worked out before telling anyone." The look on her face showed that even she knew it was a flimsy excuse.

Then, as the woman was leaving the office, Blakemore said

he would like to talk to her husband about the disappearance of Flossie Putman.

Indignantly, the woman replied that Blakemore was mistaken in his assumption that her husband had anything to do with the Putman girl. "My husband has never, ever been unfaithful to me."

"Mrs. McAnally, I'd like permission to search your place before you leave for Texas."

Upset by the thought of police prowling about her home, and certain that her husband was in no way connected with the disappearance of Flossie Putman, she refused. She could not understand the Chief's attitude nor his request as she stalked out of the office.

The state of Alabama had a peculiar outlook regarding searching of private property, regardless of the nature or seriousness of the case involved. A legal search could be made only with the consent of the resident or with a warrant sworn out in his name whenever the consent was refused. When a search was made with proper warrant, should the officer fail to find what he was looking for, the resident had recourse against the officer and superiors in the courts of the state.

So Chief Blakemore refrained from searching the McAnally

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home and premises. He had no proof of his vague suspicions. Jim McAnally had turned up alive and there was the possibility that the girl whose name had been linked with him, might likewise be located. Until he had proof that the girl had not merely run away, the police official had no intention of subjecting himself to a costly damage suit.

There were many conflicting and baffling possibilities in the events surrounding that stormy evening. Had the Putman girl dashed into the roadhouse that night because she was fleeing the man who tried to kill her? If so, why did the man follow her into the bar where other people were bound to see him. And why did she leave with him again? Was it all just a night of too much drinking?

Every promising trail the investigating Chief followed seemed to lead to Jim McAnally, and then dissipate into thin air. Especially intriguing was his mysterious departure from home at the time of the girl's disappearance.

Surely Jim McAnally was not the "number one boy friend" mentioned by Miss Putman or the one to whom she referred in jesting about an elopement.


What attraction could there be in an insignificant married man of 41 years for the attractive and popular beauty with countless admirers? Yet, there seemed to have been innumerable clandestine meetings between the two.

After months of diligent work, Chief Blakemore believed the girl might be dead, the victim of a jealous suitor. But his investigation along those lines was stalemated until some evidence of the body, or the murderer could be located. To hunt for one involved dangerous financial risks and to look for the other was a colossal undertaking. The name of Jim and a general description that might fit hundreds of men was the only clue to his identity. Where to look for either was a mystery as dark as the stormy night into which the girl and her friend had disappeared.

Months and then years passed. Finally the summer of 1939 rolled around with still no trace of the

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missing Flossie Putman. In the long span of time the city of Huntsville had practically forgotten the former beauty and many changes had occurred in the lives of the principal characters of this strange drama.

Chief Blakemore had resigned his position as head of Huntsville's law enforcement body and had been elected Sheriff of Madison County. In his new capacity he had not forgotten the baffling Putman mystery, now more than two years old. The McAnally home was now occupied by the owner's father and mother who had moved in when McAnally's wife and eight children left for Texas.

Reports from Texas told of McAnally's success. He had acquired half ownership in a garage and had purchased a large home for his family.

Blakemore never heard from Jim McAnally though he still wanted to question him in regard to the missing Flossie Putman. He also still wanted to search the house in which McAnally had resided while in Huntsville but his repeated requests had been met with stern refusals from the new occupants. There was strong resentment of any thought anything could be wrong. And a search was still impossible with the meager information available.

On the morning of Aug. 13, 1939, Sheriff Blakemore received in his offices at the county courthouse a visitor with what appeared to be an important bit of information. This visitor was a neighbor of the McAnallys in West Huntsville.

"For the past few days," the man said, "my dog has been acting strangely around the McAnally house. He has been digging under the kitchen in the back. I watched him again this morning through the fence. He digs a while, sniffs the hole he is making and then digs again. I am sure there is something buried under that house."

Sheriff Blakemore decided to act immediately, to risk his judgement against a possible

lawsuit. After obtaining a search warrant and, accompanied by two deputies armed with shovels and digging irons, he went to the home which had previously been McAnally's residence.

There he saw where the dog had been digging, but the opening was too narrow to permit the entry of a human body. The Sheriff and his deputies then entered the kitchen and their attention was immediately drawn to a section of the flooring which had a different appearance from the remainder of the boards. The elder McAnally explained this section had rotted and he had repaired it several days after his son went to Texas. Sheriff Blakemore ordered his men to remove the boards.

Directly beneath the floor was a mound of earth; large and oblong in shape, which had partly caved in. The aged occupant of the house, still unaware of the purpose of the unusual procedure but asking no questions, explained that his son had started to excavate for a cellar with the intention of installing a furnace but had abandoned the plan just before he went away. The sheriff ordered his men to start digging.

Four feet down in the earth, which was loose and easily removed, Deputy Smith struck something hard with his shovel. Reaching down, he brought to the surface a small shoe, almost disintegrated, which contained

the bones of a human foot. The officers continued their digging with renewed vigor and soon uncovered the skeleton of a woman. The shoes and a few fragments of clothing remained among the bones. These were carefully removed to a mortuary, where an hour later Mrs. Mae Putman, torn with grief, identified the bits of cloth and leather as part of the dress and shoes worn by her daughter the night she disappeared.

Flossie Putman's strange disappearance was solved.

A long distance call to the Sheriff's office in McKillney, Texas requested the immediate arrest of Jim McAnally. Within an hour a call came from the Texas city stating they had arrested James



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McAnally.

When McAnally was returned from Texas he was brought before Solicitor Jeff D. Smith and Sheriff Blakemore for questioning. The man had made no statement since his arrest and the officials expected a continued denial of the murder.

Sheriff Blakemore addressed McAnally. "Jim," he said, "it looks pretty bad for you and we want to hear your story of what happened that night."

Calmly, and without any outward sign of remorse, McAnally began to tell his story of what had transpired that night. He admitted to being out that night with Flossie Putman, whom he said he had known about a year. He told how they rode around for hours talking and drinking whiskey.

When the storm was at its peak, he said he parked the pickup truck off the New Market Road. It was here, according to his story, that the girl fell out of the truck and cut her face.

"The next thing I remember," he continued, "a man was shaking me to wake me up and get out of his way so he could drive into his home. After moving the car I tried to arouse Flossie and she didn't answer. Well, the woman was dead."

"I didn't know what to do so I went home, took the body out of the truck, and carried it into the house, placing it in the closet in the downstairs room. I then fell asleep."

"I was wakened soon after daylight by my wife and children moving about in the house. I thought of the body, and knew I had to dispose of it. So I told my wife to take the children and go to the home of my parents.

"I had planned to dig a basement and had actually started it. So after the family left, I removed the floor in the kitchen and deepened the hole. Then I placed the body in it and covered it up, nailing down the floor tightly. When my wife and children returned

at 11 o'clock they were none the wiser. I left the following morning and finally landed in Texas. You know the rest."

Though the story sounded feasible, it was a lie. Medical evidence had already shown that the girl died from a gunshot wound.

The trial began Nov. 1, 1939. McAnally offered a plea of not guilty because of insanity. Solicitor Smith recounted the mass of testimony against the accused man and demanded the death penalty for a brutal murder.

Three days later a jury deliberated four hours and returned a verdict of guilty and fixed punishment at life imprisonment. Notice of appeal was filed at once but this was withdrawn two weeks later and McAnally was taken to prison.

However the mystery of the murder of Flossie Putman, was, to many, still unsolved.



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# The Big Baseball Tournament of 1956

by Dex Nilsson

In the summer of 1956 — 56 years ago — Huntsville was the scene of the Alabama Championship Semi-Pro Baseball Tournament. It was sponsored by the Junior Chamber of Commerce. It featured 16 teams. It started on Friday, July 13 — and that should have been an omen that things would not go smoothly.

Semi-pro teams were made up of players who got a few bucks for playing but had day jobs. Some teams had sponsors, many did not. Small towns were proud of their teams. Minor leagues had not yet expanded. And the major leagues were just eight teams each — American League still had the Washington Senators, National League the Brooklyn Dodgers

and New York Giants.

Teams played for a prize of \$1000 and a chance to meet the Georgia champion, with the winner going to the national tournament in Wichita. The Huntsville Parkers had won the year before and finished fifth nationally; they hoped to return and do better.

Over ten gold trophies were to be given out. Ten girls were entered in the beauty contest for Miss Baseball Belle of 1956. And the Jaycees were ready to serve barbecue dinners all day Saturday.

Then it rained.

Jaycee member Frank Gardner was the Alabama Baseball



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Commissioner and had to meet with team managers Saturday to develop a revised schedule — complicated because this was a double-elimination tourney, that is, a team that lost got a second chance. Teams in the tournament were Gadsden Bellevue, Robbins Floor Products of Tuscumbia, Attalla Pipe & Foundry, Weeden Heights of Florence, Jasper Veterans, East Limestone, Florence Central, Guntersville, Heflin, Anniston General Electric, Somerville Cotaco Indians, and Decatur Trade School. The Mobile Weinacher Bears came farthest. Huntsville's entries were the Boosters, the Parkers, and General Shoe.

Friday night, the Huntsville Parkers had defeated Guntersville, and on Saturday morning Tuscumbia Robbins beat East Limestone, but the ten other games had been washed out.

Five games were rescheduled for Sunday at Optimist Park and another five at Joe Bradley Field. Original plans to complete the tourney and have the award ceremonies Monday night had to be put on hold.

Then it rained again, cutting two games off the Joe Bradley schedule. The Optimist Park teams kept playing, with Weeden Heights of Florence beating the Jasper Vets in a game that ended at 3:10 a.m. The Miss Baseball Belle contest, however, went off on schedule. Monday night saw Miss Virginia Lipscomb crowned the winner; Miss Sandra McGregor was runner-up.

Major league scouts were in attendance. The Brooklyn Dodgers announced signing Billy Thomas Johnson, pitcher-outfielder for Florence Central.

Later they signed two more Florence players, identical twins Lendon Ray Jackson and Glendon Fay Jackson.

A major tournament cost was that of balls. Tuesday, a youngster ran off with a foul ball, pursued by Jaycees. A scuffle ensued until the boy's older brother intervened. The event made the newspaper, but who ended up with the ball wasn't reported.

The tournament limped on all week. Midnight games became common and playing went on until 2 and 3 o'clock in the morning. Players got tired and didn't play well. Somerville Cotaco knocked Jasper out of the tournament, committing nine errors; Jasper had ten.

But finally on Monday, July 23, the championship game took place. Huntsville Parkers faced Florence Central. A crowd of 1,200 was there for the game. Harold Hill was the Parkers' best pitcher, but was hit by a Lendon Jackson fast ball in the second inning. He got up, continued to play, and finished the game. The Parkers ran off to an 11-0 lead and went ahead 24-4

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before the game was stopped by mutual agreement after seven innings. John Thompson, The Huntsville Times sports editor, wrote "the game was just as dull as the score indicates."

Virginia Lipscomb, Miss Baseball Belle, presented manager Sonny Westbrooks with the championship Coca-Cola trophy. Hill was chosen most valuable player. It was ten days and 30 games from the tournament start. It would be the last tournament of its kind.

What happened afterwards? The Parkers received their \$1000 and went on to play Macon, Georgia, in what was to be a best-of-five regional playoff. Macon won the first game but Huntsville won the second, 20-3. With that one-sided loss, Macon refused to come to Huntsville to complete the series. By default, Huntsville was named to represent the region in Wichita.

In Wichita, Huntsville was given nationwide recognition by playing in the Mutual Broadcasting System's Game of the Day. This was a big deal; remember, this was 1956, and radio was still king. Unfortunately, the Huntsville Parkers lost the game to Grand Junction, Colorado, 2-1. They went on to beat Loring AFB (Maine) and Jasper, Texas, before losing to Greenville, Tennessee, Magnavox.

At that point, six teams remained in the tournament, giving the Parkers seventh place.

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Press down evenly. Bake for 30 minutes at 375 degrees. Cool and top with whipped cream before serving. Pie may be refrigerated for an hour before serving or frozen for several weeks. If you freeze, be sure and defrost before serving.

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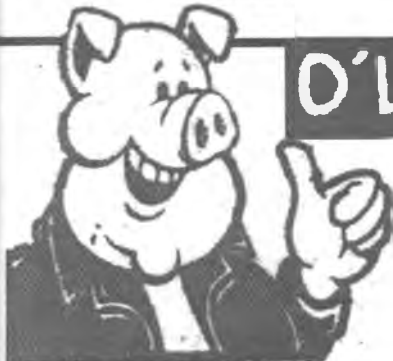
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# Tips from Liz

- To get rid of that fireplace soot odor, do the following. After you've cleaned the ashes out of the fireplace, place a shallow pan of baking soda in the fireplace for at least a couple of hours, or overnight.

- Storing stale marshmallows overnight in an airtight container with a slice of fresh bread will freshen them up.

- Snacks that mix carbohydrates with protein give you the biggest energy boost. Try fruit chunks dipped in yogurt, whole wheat crackers topped with peanut butter, or popcorn topped with Parmesan cheese.

- Keep a cardboard box in the trunk of your car. You can put your purchases or other items in it to keep them from rolling around on the way home.

- Before going to sleep at night, compile a to do list for the next day. You'll sleep more soundly and when you wake up you'll be ready to start solving problems instead of spending time remembering what you have to do. You'll find that you are more committed to tasks that are written down.

- If you have any plumbing repair, be sure and flush out your faucets and showers for 15 minutes immediately afterwards. Banging on old water pipes can reactivate idle bacteria that cause Legionnaires' disease.

- Refrigerating cherries will help keep them fresh. It also is a good idea to keep them away from onions and garlic.

- The terrible twos aren't that bad. Only 20% of parents with 2 year-olds said their toddlers had behavioral problems, one survey reported.

- Many complain of mental fatigue during mid-afternoon, even if you eat a hearty lunch. Start your day with a bowl of cereal with skim milk and a banana, a wheat English muf-

fin with peanut butter, or some fruit and yogurt.

- Feeling younger will make you feel happier. In a recent survey, 500 women said they feel young when they play with children, color their hair, sing out loud while driving, gossip with friends, and flirt.

- Many women in their thirties and forties begin to go through menopause and aren't aware that it's happening. If you experience unexplained irritability, feel very sad or depressed for no reason, snap at friends and loved ones suddenly and go through other unusual mood swings, you may be beginning menopause.

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# HUNTSVILLE MAN KILLED IN DEADLY DUEL WITH GAMBLER

**HE LOST HIS LAST FIGHT WITH THE GRIM REAPER**

*Birmingham, May 5, 1906*

A most sensational shooting affray took place last night at six thirty o'clock in the Peerless Saloon, corner Second Avenue and Nineteenth Street, the most prominent corner of the city, between Thomas G. Hewlett and Harry Haynes, two men who have been identified with the gambling interests of this city for some time. When the smoke had cleared away, Hewlett was found to be dead.

John T. Shugart, a well known criminal lawyer and former legislator was, it's believed, fatally wounded in the abdomen; Linton Poss was shot in the foot, and another man was shot in the leg. Haynes was not injured. City Detective George Rodeker, who was just across the street at the time, ran into the place and arrested Haynes

without trouble. Haynes had a pistol in his hand and one in his pocket. He offered no resistance and appeared calm. He had not been drinking, it is claimed.

It seems that there has been bad feelings between Hewlett and Haynes for some time. A gambling house in which Haynes was said to be interested was closed by constant raiding by the police, while the Alabama Club in which Hewlett was said to be interested was not raided. It was generally understood that when the two men would meet there would be trouble.

**"An onion makes people cry, but there's never been a vegetable that makes people laugh."**

*Will Rogers*

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**Hewlett and Haynes Meet:**

Hewlett was in the Peerless Saloon when Haynes entered; a big crowd of men were in the place including Shugart, who was near Hewlett. As Haynes came in Hewlett said, "Hello, Harry," to which Haynes replied, "Hello, Tom." Hewlett is said to have remarked, "Harry, have you your six shooter with you, or are you hooked up," to which an affirmative reply was given. "Then we might as well finish it up now," Hewlett is alleged to have said, and at the same time he drew his weapon. Haynes got his revolver and began firing and the crowd in the saloon began scattering. A dozen shots were fired. Some say that Shugart attempted to stop the quarrel and received a bullet in the abdomen. Three bullets struck Hewlett, one in the arm and two in the head.

Haynes was transferred from the city jail to the county jail and Zell Gaston and B .M. Allen, attorneys, were sent for. Immediately after the shooting hundreds of persons collected about the place. Shugart's wound was pronounced dangerous. He was carried to an infirmary and an operation was performed.

John T. Shugart represented Jefferson County in the Legislature a few years ago. He has been very successful in the practice of law in this section and has considerable property. He has a large family, two of his sons being attorneys.

**History of Hewlett:**

Hewlett was at one time a railroad special agent. He is said to have

killed several men in his life. Of late years, it is alleged, he has been connected with gambling houses. Haynes, a few weeks ago while on a spree, fired his pistol promiscuously in Al Campbell's saloon, for which the grand jury indicted him on two charges. He has a wife and two children. Several killings have occurred in the Peerless Saloon.

A few years ago two men were killed by Dump McDonald, and other shooting scrapes have taken place. It is understood that habeas corpus proceedings will be taken out by Haynes early next week. Hewlett was a man over fifty years of age.

**Hewlett Well Known Here**

Mr. Hewlett was well known in Huntsville, having spent many years of his life in this city. He was a Deputy Marshal under United States Marshal Joseph H. Sloss several years and his readiness with his gun made him a terror to the moonshiners and other law breakers.

One of the most sensational incidents in his career was the killing of Sandy Bynum, a negro politician, at a negro political meeting near the city a number of years ago. Hewlett is said to have gone into the crowd and shot Bynum for the insulting epithets he had used in his speech

and then invited the dead man's friends to continue the shooting if they did not like the way it ended. Although he was the only white man there, not a man among the several hundred negro republicans dared to make a motion. Mr. Hewlett was a remarkably fine shot and was known to be devoid of fear.

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"When things seem to be going against you, remember that airplanes take off against the wind."

*Henry Ford*

# Colorful Personalities

It's possible that each of us has a personality of a different color. Does any of this describe you or your friends?

**Reds:** These folks excel at logical thinking, they are committed to a productive lifestyle, are dynamic and direct, and thrive on independence and are natural leaders. They are highly resourceful, and usually are creative and inventive. Some famous people who may have Red personalities are: Hillary Clinton, Martin Luther King and Billy Graham.

**Yellows:** Highly optimistic, these folks like themselves and accept others easily. They love to volunteer for new opportunities, see life as an experience to be enjoyed. They are often flashy and spunky, adventurous and daring. Examples: Dolly Parton, Elvis Presley.

**Whites:** Quiet, reflective and peaceful, these people are sincere and appear to accept life as it comes. They are patient with themselves and others, enjoy life's simplicity, are compatible with others. They are genuinely kind to animals and people, and blend in to any situation. Examples: Jimmy Carter, Albert Einstein.

**Blues:** These people see life as a serious endeavor; they appreciate beauty and detail. They have a strong aesthetic sense, are stable and dependable. These people are very analytical and are usually high achievers, sometime perfectionists, and have a deep sense of purpose. Examples: Abraham Lincoln, Walt Disney, Dave Packard.

Gotta go - the kids chewed through their straps.



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# Heard On the Street

by *Cathey Carney*



Congratulations to **Ruth Rasmussen** who identified that beautiful little girl in last month's Photo of the Month. The girl was **Judy Smith (Mrs. M.D. Smith IV)** and Ruth remembers when Judy taught her son **John** how to swim, 40 years ago. She said she always remembers lots of kids playing in the Smith's back yard!

**Cecil Ashburn** built most of the roads in and around Huntsville, he's won lots of awards and even has a beautiful, scenic road named after him. But he was most proud of his family and his wife **Margaret**. I remember in 2002 when there were so many at the dedication of the road to him, the first thing he did when he stood up to make his speech was to point at his wife, who was up on the stage with him, and tell all in the crowd how proud he was of her. And at that time, Margaret was very sick with Alzheimers. Cecil died on July 20, at the age of 92. He absolutely loved Huntsville

and its rich history.

Cecil leaves his daughter **Judy** and her husband **Glenn Nayman**, grandsons **Andrew** and **James Reid**, **Josh Nayman**, all of Huntsville; and **Jeremy Farber** of Reston, VA; granddaughter **Margaret Hendon** of Athens, and his great-grandchildren; brother **Bill Ashburn** and sister **Rita Ashburn**, both of Huntsville. Cecil was a very special gentleman who will never be forgotten.

Congratulations to **Darryl & Linda Goldman** - August is the month they celebrate their 43rd wedding anniversary! I can't think of a better couple - you guys are the best!

Mark your calendars for Sep. 8 for **Trade Day around the Square for 2012** - it only happens once a year and there will be lots of vendors and food to eat. Also, for all of you

who have called trying to find back issues of "Old Huntsville" magazine, the **Golden K Kiwanis** (who distribute the magazine each month) will bring their old issues from their warehouse and offer many of the older copies for a donation. You don't want to miss it!

If you want to reserve a booth there, call **Harold** at 256 852-5378. There are still spaces available.

Sweet **Hannah Troup** is turning 12 on August 24, Happy Birthday to you! Also her parents, **Steph & John Troup**, will celebrate their wedding anniversary Aug. 15. Happens to be the same date that John has a birthday too. Happy Birthday to John! And a special hi to that handsome **Evan Troup!**

Another big anniversary is that of **Bobbie & Karl Peterson** - congratulations to you two sweethearts!

I loved reading in the Times about what's happening in the **Lincoln Village Community**

## 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 little lady is the local, well-known watchdog.



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in Huntsville. The group who bought and renovated the old Lincoln Elementary School, now called Lincoln Academy, is getting into the farming and fresh produce business. **Jeff Komara** and **Wendy Payne** want to teach residents how to grow & sell their own food. Their non-profit organization is called **Deep Roots of Alabama**, and donations and grants are helping to provide the funding. There are so many benefits from a program like this, and there's nothing like a young person looking at a plate of food and seeing what he/she has grown!

**Bobby Hayden** was the speaker recently at the **Historic Lowry House** and there was a huge crowd. His appearance was part of the continuing **Black Heritage Tour** that is designed to highlight many of the significant contributions made by African American people and events throughout the history of Huntsville, Alabama.

Downtown nightlife seems to really be on the upswing. **LeeAnn's Bar & Grille** is closed Sunday and Monday but the rest of the days you can get that fabulous food & drinks and listen to great entertainment. At **Kaffeeklatsch** downtown there are some really good blues bands. And if you want

to bring your dogs out drinking with you, the **Lone Goose Saloon** on Cleveland near the Dog Park is a fun place.

**Steve Burcham** of Madison is something of a superman. After having gone through a heart replacement at the young age of 49, in February, he ran the Cotton Row 5K run, then less than a month later, he was one of the people who repelled off the Times building to help raise over \$1,500 for the YMCA. He's just amazing and wife **Cindy** is SO proud of him. Their daughters are **Lindsey (24)**, **Brooke (22)**, and **Anna (19)** and they really love their Dad. Father-in-law **Ron Eyestone** just beams when he and wife **Barb** talk about Steve and what he's accomplished.

**Gale Nichols** spent many years in Huntsville but currently lives in Athens. One of her favorite neighbors has a very unusual name and is a sweet, active 88 year old. **Carnelle Thorn** goes to the Athens Senior Center each day, drives there, for their activities and lunch. Gale feels lucky to have such a good neighbor, and Mrs. Thorn feels exactly the same about Gale!

I met a really interesting lady recently - **Phyllis Neighbors** - who has a lot of interest in old pictures of Huntsville

and just the history of this area. Her husband is **Wes Neighbors**, her Dad is **Jack Priest** and her father-in-law was someone lots of people remember - **Billy Neighbors**. It was great meeting **Phyllis**.

Lots of sad things happening in the country these days - all you can control is your life and relationships so make sure they're good ones! Watch out for your older neighbors in this oppressive humidity - it makes breathing difficult for many people.

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## Hot Dixie Fixin's

### Vidalia Onion Casserole

1/2 c. butter  
 4 lrg. Vidalia onions, cut in rings  
 6 oz. butter-flavored crackers, crushed  
 1/2 lb. shredded Cheddar cheese  
 3 lrg. eggs  
 1 c. milk  
 Salt, paprika & pepper to taste  
 Saute onions in 1/4 cup butter. Combine remaining butter with the crumbs. Set aside 1/4 crumb mixture for topping. Pat balance of crumbs onto bottom of casserole. Spread with onions and sprinkle with cheese, salt and paprika. Combine eggs and milk and pour over ingredients. Top with crumbs. Bake for 35-40 minutes in 350 degree oven.

### Crisp-Tender Cauliflower

1 med. cauliflower  
 1/2 c. hot water  
 Salt  
 2 T. butter

2 T. heavy cream  
 Paprika and chopped chives  
 Wash cauliflower and remove tough bottom stalks. Separate upper stalks into very small flowerets. Bring water and salt to boil in skillet and add cauliflower. Cover and cook for 5 to 7 minutes until crisp-tender. Do not drain before adding butter and cream. Heat for 1 to 2 minutes, tossing flowerets to coat. Remove to warm serving dish and garnish with paprika and chives before serving.

### Cauliflower AuGratin

1 lrg. head cauliflower  
 1 qt. boiling water  
 1 t. salt  
 3 T. butter  
 3 T. flour  
 1-1/2 c. milk  
 1 c. Cheddar cheese, grated  
 1/2 t. salt  
 1/2 t. dry mustard  
 Paprika  
 Wash cauliflower thoroughly and remove tough bottom stalks.

Bring salted water to a full boil before adding cauliflower. Reduce heat and boil gently about 20 minutes until cauliflower is just done. Do not overcook.

Make cream sauce of butter, flour and milk until thickened before adding salt, cheese and mustard. Stir sauce until cheese melts. To serve, place the cauliflower on a warm dish, cover with cheese sauce and sprinkle with paprika.

To make a pretty presentation: Surround the cauliflower with pretty vegetables like cooked baby carrots or green beans with toasted almonds.

### Potato Cakes

2 slices bacon, cut fine  
 2 T. half-and-half  
 2 c. raw potato, grated  
 1 egg, beaten well  
 2 T. onion, grated  
 Salt  
 2 T. parsley, minced  
 Fry bacon over low heat until well browned. Drain and add to

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the potato and onion. Add other ingredients in the order given and mix thoroughly. Drop by spoonfuls onto a greased griddle and cook over low heat for about 10 minutes each side until cakes are golden brown.

### Pat Lutz's Rosemary Potatoes

- 5 T. olive oil
- 1 T. fresh rosemary, minced fine
- 2 lbs. new potatoes
- 2 T. white wine vinegar
- 3 T. mayonnaise
- 1 tsp. Dijon mustard
- 2 green onions, sliced
- 1 T. chopped parsley
- Salt and pepper

Mix olive oil and rosemary and let sit for 24 hours. Peel new potatoes or leave skins on. Cook until done and skins pop if you have left them on. Drizzle the olive oil/rosemary mix over potatoes. Mix other ingredients and pour over potatoes. Serve hot or cold.

### Sharon's Hashbrowns

- 2-lb. bag Ore-Ida hash brown potatoes
- 1 lrg. onion, chopped
- 1 can cream of chicken soup
- Cornflakes or potato chip crumbs for topping
- 1 stick melted butter
- 1 pt. sour cream
- 2 c. grated Cheddar cheese
- Salt, pepper and paprika

Thaw potatoes and frozen onions. Grease a 9 x 13-inch baking dish. Mix potatoes, onions, soup,

butter, sour cream, cheese, salt and pepper. Spread into dish. Top with cornflake or potato chip crumbs. Sprinkle paprika generously on top. Bake at 350° for 45 minutes or until contents bubble and are nicely browned on top.

### Yorkshire Onions

- 6 onions
- 2 T. vegetable oil
- 2 c. flour, sifted
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1 tsp. sugar
- 1 egg, beaten
- 1-1/2 c. milk

Mince or slice onions, but not too fine, and saute in oil. Let cool slightly. To make the batter: Beat egg and milk together and mix with sifted dry ingredients. Grease baking dish and pour batter over onions. Bake 25 to 35 minutes in 350° oven. Serve with roast beef and plenty of gravy.

### Roasted Peppers

- 1 red, green and yellow bell pepper
- 2 T. olive oil
- 1 T. balsamic or red wine vinegar
- 1/2 t. cracked black pepper
- 1 t. salt
- 1 t. rosemary

Cut peppers in 2-inch strips and toss with olive oil. Roast at 450° for 30 minutes, turning once. Remove to bowl. Mix vinegar and seasonings and pour over peppers.



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# THE TRIAL

by Chip Knight

It really wasn't much of a trial, but it remains well known in Madison County to this day, over 150 years later. The charges didn't amount to much, she had accused him of defamation of character, so it wasn't even a criminal trial. But it did pack the courthouse so that people were flowing out the doors and onto the grounds, and bets were being taken in at least one tavern on who would win. People in Madison County were about evenly divided in their support of Mrs. Elizabeth Routt, the plaintiff, and Abner Tate, the defendant. Things had gotten so out of hand that fist fights had broken out over the subject, and one shooting had occurred. There had even been talk of imposing martial law, but that was just talk, as there were no troops available for that.

Mr. Tate and Mrs. Routt had gotten into a disagreement which had begun as an argument over loose cattle. Unfortunately, the records do not show whose cattle were loose, but the argument had grown all out of proportion, as neither was the type who could back off once the disagreement had started and the accusations grew. There were claims of crop damage by the loose cattle, and each claimed that the other had shot, or permitted shooting over the other's fields, endangering humans and livestock alike. Whether it was related or not, Tate was injured at one point by a shotgun blast, supposedly fired by one slave or another who had, again supposedly, been hired by Mrs. Routt.

Tate had finally reached the point where he had openly and publicly accused Mrs. Routt of

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murder. She had married and buried six men over the space of a few years, and he claimed that a hat rack in the foyer of her home with six old hats on it was proof that she had done them in and was using the hats like notches on a pistol to maintain the count. He was so angry that he wrote a book which he had paid to have published, and which laid out his claims of her foul deeds of murder. When Mrs. Routt heard of, and then read the book, she drove her buggy from her farm near Hazel Green to Huntsville, hired an attorney and brought the charges of defamation of character against Tate.

The trial itself had consisted of insults hurled at each other by the plaintiff and defendant, and then, later, by their attorneys. The judge had not been able to maintain any semblance of order in the courtroom, despite banging his gavel and telling the parties involved of the penalties if they continued their misconduct. The judge realized that he had lost control of the case and that he could no longer keep order either in the courtroom or in the county. He finally ordered the case to be continued, hoping that time would permit all the parties to calm down enough to go ahead with the case in a reasonable manner.

Mrs. Routt's maiden name is not recorded, but as a young girl, she had married a man by the name of Gibbons; nothing more is known of him, neither his first name nor his occupation. Mr. Gibbons died a couple of months later under what were called "mysterious circumstances".

**"Government is the great fiction through which everybody endeavors to live at the expense of everybody else."**

**Frederic Bastiat, 1801**



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| Steak Philly        | Fried Potato Cakes |
| Catfish Fillet      | Calamari           |
| Chicken Cordon Bleu | Pork Chop Nuggets  |
| Monte Sano Chicken  | Fried Mushrooms    |
| Fajitas             | Jalapeno Poppers   |
| Cheese Sticks       | Chicken Fries      |
| Fried Zucchini      | Corn Nuggets       |
| Quesadias           |                    |

- |                |                      |
|----------------|----------------------|
| Chicken Philly | Sauteed Shrimp       |
| Classic Club   | Fried Green Tomatoes |
| Filet Mignon   | Fried Okra           |

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She then married a man named Flannigan, and again, nothing more is known of him, except that he died three months after the marriage.

Even today, these things would cause a fair amount of gossip to spring up, most of it rather malicious, gossip being what it is. But in the 1830s, in rural Alabama, and Hazel Green was definitely rural then, it was truly a miracle if one was alive at all. Life was cheap, and nobody knew how to change that. The horror of it was that you were perhaps worse off if you were under the care of a physician, medicine then being in a rather primitive state. Known diseases consisted of consumption, colic, and the like and the treatments were bleeding, usually with leaches, bed rest and various teas, some of which have been shown to truly have healing value and others to be rather poisonous. The basic truth of the matter was that if you survived long enough to produce children, then you had survived long enough to continue the race of man, and were basically successful in what passed for life in the mid-nineteenth century. Mrs. Routt had very bad luck.

Elizabeth's third husband was a man named Alexander Jeffries. He was an early settler of Madison County who had built a log cabin on a five hundred acre land grant in 1817. By 1837 he was a successful planter and had built a proper plantation house about a mile east of Hazel Green. He was quite a bit older than Elizabeth, who was still in her early twenties. Jeffries was, quite naturally, a slave owner, as you couldn't work 500 acres any other way, there being no machinery as we know it today. His house stood for years and, most unfortunately, burned not many years ago.

Elizabeth Jeffries became the mistress of Mr. Jeffries' plantation, enjoyed the role thoroughly and, with his teaching, learned

how to run the place efficiently and at a profit. She loved the lifestyle, living in a plantation house with its wide verandah and many columns, with its tall ceilings to help cool the rooms in summer, and with an adequate staff to run the place effectively.

This was perhaps the happiest Elizabeth had been in her entire life. It was not so much that she ran the estate - she was the boss - but that she had found a tranquil world away from town which was pretty much self-sufficient and this gave her a great deal of privacy from the gossip and other talk which she knew she generated.

Unfortunately, Mr. Jeffries died before they had been married a year, and was buried quietly on the property. With her marriage to Jeffries, Elizabeth's social status had increased a great deal, as had her monetary worth. That, unfortunately, increased her gossip value, for then, as today, those who have not tend to envy those who have. Even then, there were rumors about her having had three husbands, all of whom had died within a short period of time.

Elizabeth's fourth husband was a man named Robert A. High and he was a state legislator from Limestone County. He survived for about two

years and, of course, the local gossip held that he lived that long because he was often in the Capital and away from home and his wife. He eventually died at the Hazel Green plantation, and was quietly buried there.

She next married Absalom Brown, a wealthy merchant from New Market, a Madison County community not too far from Hazel Green. Almost at her wit's end, Elizabeth, who knew that she had done nothing wrong, was trying to find some kind of a man who would not die from just being around her. Brown seemed to be a perfect candidate; he was fairly young and he was a hard working and successful merchant. From all appearances he was in perfect health and was quite active.

Unknown to Brown, much less

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to pay the green fees."**

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Huntsville, Alabama

Harrison Brothers, Est. 1879

to Elizabeth, he had apparently damaged his liver at some point in his life, and upon his death, it was necessary to bury him immediately, as his body was grossly swollen. Needless to say, a considerable amount of gossip was generated over the neighbors not having even seen the body before it was buried.

Her next attempt at marriage was to Willis Routt. Routt's occupation is not known, so her last husband is nearly as unknown as Gibbons, her first. It is known, however, that he did not live long and was buried quietly.

Elizabeth gave up. However much a woman of the 1840s needed a husband, she finally realized that she was destined not to have one. She supposed that she could go on killing good men in the area by marrying them, but she didn't want to do that. For each man who had died a part of her had died. She knew that she did not have much more to give, and that she had better save what was left for herself and for her son.

She had gained greatly in material wealth and was, in fact a very wealthy woman with a successful five hundred acre plantation, numerous slaves to work it and a great deal of money in the bank. She was at the point where, without a husband, men would try to call on her who really just wanted to get at her money. She grew more and more bitter and more and more isolated. She began to concentrate on running the plan-

tation, getting the best crops, and giving her people the best care. She had learned that people well cared for were far happier and that they worked harder and longer.

Elizabeth listened carefully to her slaves, especially to those who worked in the house, with whom she had the most contact. She understood their plight to a greater extent, she began to understand that, although the law said that she owned them, she did not and could not really own thinking human beings any more than she herself could be owned. Her people were not just thinking human beings - they were smart, and had thought up all sorts of ways to run the place more efficiently. In fact, seldom did a week go by that an idea was not brought by a slave to the manager of the plantation.

She decided that she could afford to experiment since everything was running so smoothly, so she freed, legally, two of her house servants and offered them wages to continue doing the same work. She asked them to be quiet about it and they

were, but, nonetheless, the legal paperwork had to be filed in the Courthouse.

Despite the primitive communications of the 1840s, word spread immediately that Mrs. Routt had freed two of her slaves, and that generated rumors and more gossip. Madison County was really about evenly divided on the issue of slavery. There was a side that realized that slavery was inefficient; which looked forward to the recent inventions, such as the cotton gin, which would help replace human or other animal power with ma-

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chines. There was a side which put those thoughts aside and just cherished the legal right of actually owning another human being. Both of these sides were, of course, overshadowed by the increasing friction between the northern and southern states. Slavery was not really a primary issue between the two groups, but was often presented as the only real issue.

Elizabeth Routt's freeing of two human beings had just about the same effect as if she had buried a couple of more husbands.

Abner Tate had lived near Mrs. Routt's plantation for quite a few years, and he had seen the beautiful young woman over a number of years, both casually, in town, and socially at a Christmas party or some other gathering of those in the Hazel Green area who were of a certain social status. He had also noted with some curiosity the procession

of husbands into and out of her plantation home, which she had acquired with husband number three, Mr. Jeffries.

A married man himself, Tate had refrained from paying a great deal of attention to Mrs. Routt or to her affairs even though he knew that he was strongly attracted to her. He even tried to put aside his strong negative feelings when he learned that she had freed two slaves. As a slave owner he felt that all those who were owners needed to pull together to counter the forces, mostly from the North, which were trying to disrupt the way business (mostly farming), was done in the South.

Abner Tate's wife died about the same time as Mr. Routt. After a reasonable period of mourning, he began to find his attention turned increasingly toward his neighbor, the widow Mrs. Routt. Actually, he became

infatuated with her and believed himself to be falling in love with her, although they had actually had no contact since the deaths of their spouses.

And then some of his cattle got loose and into one of Mrs. Routt's cotton fields. She got into her buggy and drove to Mr. Tate's place and told him in no uncertain terms that his cattle



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were damaging her cotton and that he must immediately get them back on his property and that he might have to pay her for the damage to her crop. Tate felt that he had been rejected and began to brood and then to grow angry. He was the type of person who either liked you or hated you, or in the case of Mrs. Routt, loved her or hated her.

The incident of the cattle and her response to it turned his love to hate. He resolved to "do her in." His first claim was that her cattle had damaged his crop, never mind that the opposite was really the case. Mr. Tate was rather savvy, and he knew that local gossip would carry his story quickly, and that Mrs. Routt tended to be rather quiet so her version would likely not be believed.

Not satisfied with the switch in the cattle story, he zeroed in on Mrs. Routt's former husbands, all now dead, and began to tell tales about how she had actually murdered them. Although there was no evidence to support his claims, the "grapevine" still picked up the story and it spread throughout Madison County. Not yet satisfied, he began to openly accuse her of murder and, finally, wrote a book laying out his claims of her notorious murders. Those claims, he stated, were supported by her hat rack with six old hats on it. Needless to say, it did not occur to him that few men would accept the presence of former husbands' hats held out before them.

Elizabeth Routt finally could take no more of Tate's harassment and filed a lawsuit claiming defamation of character. She was normally a quiet person, but not one to be taken lightly when she spoke.

It really wasn't much of a trial, in fact, it was rather ridiculous, and she had found herself shouting in the courtroom like she was a fishmonger's wife. The judge finally continued the trial to her great relief and once again Elizabeth gave up. A short while later she dropped the charges against Tate.

The transfers of ownership of the plantation

may be traced in the Courthouse, but Elizabeth Routt and her son simply disappeared from any recorded history in the Madison County area. Rumor was that they had moved to somewhere in Mississippi.

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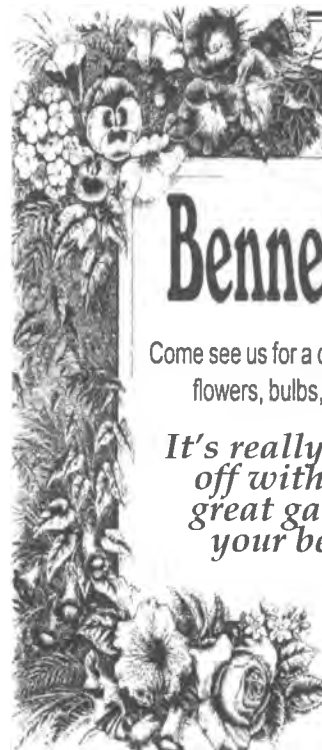
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# DR. PAT HAMM

by Nolan Myrick

I spent a lot of time at the old Huntsville Clinic when it was uptown. It was a 2-story building at the corner of Washington and Gates. I'm not too sure of the street names. My doctor was Dr. Pat Hamm, and he treated me until I was about 30 or so years old. He moved here from Arkansas and had four children and lived down the street from us on Beirne Avenue. I was the same age as his son Kenneth, and we got to be close friends. I was a regular visitor at their house. The telephone pole in front of their house was home base when we played hide & go seek. It had a street light on it so we could see at night.

Dr. Hamm got the first television set in our neighborhood. Sometimes they would put it out on the front porch on Saturday night and everyone would come sit in the yard and watch it. There wasn't a lot to do in the summer but work and play at night. Most everyone had a job to do.

I remember that they had a piano in the living room. It was pretty and it had a stick that held the top up. One time I took the stick out and the top fell on my hand. Sometimes Kenneth and I had to sit on the couch while he sang and Mrs. Hamm played the piano.

Dr. Hamm loved horses, too. He built a barn behind his house next to the back alley. His back alley had a road and the back doors of the barn opened into the alley. In the next block where we lived there wasn't a road - we had a ditch. I spend a lot of time at the barn. They had two horses - Sonny Boy was one and Tar Baby was the other. Sometimes when I see a black horse I automatically think of Tar Baby. I learned to ride on her because she wasn't wild. I was afraid of Sonny Boy because he often tried to bite people.

When the Huntsville Clinic moved to its new location down toward Humana Hospital, I helped Dr. Hamm move his office equipment. I was already married by then. The last thing I did at the old clinic was a blood test. When Joyce and I were to get married we had to have a blood test. Everyone at the lab in the old clinic knew I had a problem with blood tests. I was trying to impress Joyce, and I had on my black leather jacket and was trying to be and look tough. I had brought her to the clinic in my metallic blue 1967 Chevelle with its 4-speed, tape deck and mag wheels.

The nurse came in and asked what we wanted, and I told her we were getting married and needed a blood test. The nurse said, "Well Nolan, you better take your jacket off and lay down on this bed. You know how you always pass out when we take your blood and

I wouldn't want you to hurt yourself." All my acting and being tough went out the window when she said that. Even now, Joyce laughs a lot when she tells people about my blood test.

Later on, Dr. Hamm bought 60 acres from Mr. Kyle Elliott and built a big barn at Ryland. For a while he had about 52 brood mares and owned Go Boys Invasion. We had bought a farm from him and lived down by Central School. I was baling hay by then and I took hay to his horses. I even rented the farm when he quit having horses. He was around me most all my life in all those years. I watched him help a lot of people. He turned nobody away. He doctored me until I moved to Fayetteville. He kept me sewed up and healthy. I sure was proud of him and appreciate all he did for me and my family.



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# HUNTSVILLE IN THE 1950'S

by Don Broome

My first memory was of an old house we owned in Hattiesburg, Mississippi. I was around 4 years old. The house was about 145 years old and it had only been painted once but it didn't matter, cypress was pretty tough wood.

In 1951, my Dad got a job as a supervisor of a sheet metal crew at Redstone Arsenal and came home on weekends. We moved to Huntsville as a family on July 19, 1952. I remember that date even today because it is my birthday. I was 5 years old. It was about 6 p.m. when we drove over the Whitesburg bridge. Mom woke us to tell us we were almost to our new home and as I stood up in the floorboard, the whole sky was red. I screamed in my dad's ear because I thought the sky was on fire.

There were no houses available in Huntsville anywhere so we had stayed in those old cabins on Monte Sano. We were told that by mid-summer they would find a place for us to live. The state park was like heaven to my brother Joe, sister Nancy and I. We roamed all over.

They finally got us an apartment down behind Farley School. They were old barracks buildings, I think, with coal oil heaters. We lived there for a year and a half. Right after we moved in, school started so I was home alone while my sister and brother went to school. All year, I had to play by myself until school got out. As soon as the summer came, I got ring worms. Back then, they shaved your head and painted it with some kind of purple dye. Mom made me wear her old cut up hose like a stocking cap. No one would play with me. I think maybe it was because when they teased me I would duck my head and try and butt them. I wonder if my fondness for roaming the woods by myself was because of that time cut off from having any friends.

In January 1954, we bought a house in West Huntsville near the mill village. It was one of those

850 square foot houses on the west side of Drake Avenue. We walked to Joe Bradley School every day. We walked down the Boulevard in front of the mill. I was a grown man before I realized that "Boulevard" was not the name of the street. It was Triana Boulevard. In the fall, the maple trees would turn gold and I loved to hear the sound of leaves crunching under my feet. At the gates to the mill, people would sometimes stand around giving out little cards. I always took them but didn't know what they were. They were people handing out flyers because they were running for office. I don't know why but I always thought I was getting something special when I would get one of those cards.

It was a pretty tough area even back then and us new kids were not mill people. There was this one kid named Randy. He was a few years older than us and we

considered him a bully. One time he wanted something to eat and we didn't have anything he could have. My Mom shopped each payday and she planned every meal and so by the day before payday there wouldn't be anything in the house except tomorrow's supper. Well Randy spotted my Dad's pickles. Mind you, these weren't ordinary pickles, they were HOT. Dad like things that were HOT and he bought these pickles and then spiced them up.

Well nothing would do but that Randy had to have a pickle. We told him no, we told him they were hot but when he ate one his reaction was so funny that we had to laugh. After he got over the burn, he got mad at us and started chasing my brother and I knew that if he caught him, it might get pretty bad. So I cut between them and Randy started chasing me. In a few minutes, my brother did what I did

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and he was being chased. As Randy veered off to chase my brother, I spotted about an 8 foot piece of 2x2 laying in the yard. The next time my brother ran by, I picked up the end of the 2x2 lifting the other end into the air. By luck rather than by design, the airborne end was in the perfect position for Randy to run into it at full gallop. When Randy woke up, I was sitting on his chest telling him not to ever mess with my brother again. I told you that Huntsville Park was a tough part of town but we never had any fights after that. I guess word got around that if you messed with one of us, you got both of us.

My brother and I wanted an increase in our allowance from 10 cents to 25. Dad told us no, that they couldn't afford it. So my brother and I came up with a plan. We told Dad that we had an idea on how to make extra money and so after supper, we had a conference. We said we wanted to start mowing yards. Mom objected to using the family lawn mower because it was old and we would finish wearing it out. It was decided after looking at the ads in the paper to buy a 2- cycle mower from Montgomery Wards that was on sale for \$14.95. We were told how to mix the gas and oil and all that kind of thing. We had a 2 gallon gas can and when we refilled it we didn't add the oil to the gas so we had to go buy another mower for 19.95. We were mowing most yards for \$1.50.

That summer, we paid for both lawn mowers and my brother and I each were required (by my Mother) to buy a \$50 church bond. We still went to the movies every day and I spent an awful lot of time at the corner store. A giant, and I do mean giant, Baby Ruth candy bar was a nickel. For a dime, on Saturday you could go to the matinee at the Center Theatre and stay all day. There was a penny candy store next door and we'd buy a big sack full and buy a drink in the theatre. Tarzan or The Lone Ranger would play over and over again. They would show several cartoons, then the newsreel and then

the movie. Sometimes, we would go to the end of Triana Blvd. and walk down Clinton to go downtown or take the bus if we were in a hurry. We could go to the movies downtown, go to the library, or go swimming in the coldest water I've ever been in at the Big Spring Pool. The water flowed through the pool so it never got a chance to warm up. It flowed pretty swiftly and you could drift with the current. I didn't like the cold water and rarely went. I liked going to the Downtown YMCA instead. The basement had a pool and it was always warm. My brother and I both took swimming lessons from B.J. Allison.

At some point before 1958, my great-great Aunt died and, along with a

little money, my mother brought home an old country school bell. You could hear it for a couple of miles. We were supposed to come running for supper when we heard it. If you don't believe it's that loud, come to my house and I'll prove it because I was given it by my mother.

The rule was we had to be home by Supper. A rule I often broke. I can't say why, just out wandering and lost track of time. My mother told me years later that she finally realized that I couldn't keep track of time and instead of the spankings, we changed the rule to have to eat it cold or sometimes not at all. Not much punishment for someone stopping by the country store all day long and eating junk.

**"Dear God, I am American.  
What are You?"**

*Hazel, age 7*

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# Basic Rules for Cats who have a House to Run, Part IV



by Harold Reynolds

## Supervising Humans

It is well known that humans are incapable of performing even the simplest of tasks without feline supervision and/or assistance. This supervision is absurdly known by the humans as "Hampering." If one of our humans is engaged in some important activity and any others are idle, stay with the busy one. It would take a very large book to describe all of the activities which need to be supervised, so only a condensed list is presented below.

a) When supervising cooking, sit just behind the left heel of the cook. You cannot be seen and thereby stand a better chance of being stepped on and then picked up and comforted. You might even get a special snack if you cry loudly.

b) For book readers, get in as close under the chin as you can, between the eyes and book, unless you can lie across the book itself, which is best.

c) For knitting projects or paperwork, lie on the work in the most appropriate manner so as to obscure the maximum amount, or at least the most important part. Pretend to doze, but every so often reach out and slap the pencil or knitting needles. The worker may try to distract you but ignore it. Remember, the aim is to hamper work. Embroidery and needlepoint projects make great hammocks in spite of what the humans may tell you.

d) For people paying bills (a monthly activity, so this provides a lot of regular fun) keep in mind that the aim is to hamper!

First, sit directly on the paper being worked on. When you are dislodged, watch mournfully from the side of the table. When the activity proceeds along again, roll around on the papers, scattering them to the best of your ability. Tax papers

are great fun to scatter if you really want a good reaction. After being removed for the second time, push pens, pencils and erasers off the table, one by one.

e) When your human is holding the newspaper in front of him/her, be sure to jump at the back of the paper. They just love surprises like this.

f) As often as possible, dart quickly and as close as possible in front of the

human, especially on stairs, when they have something in their arms. This is great to do in the dark as well, and when they first stumble to the bathroom in the morning. Remember, you are helping them with their coordination skills.

g) Always sleep on the human at night so he/she cannot move easily. Act very hurt if you get pushed off. The closer you can get to the face, the better.

h) When a human is attempting to make the bed, hop on it and curl up in the middle, or pounce on the sheet the hu-

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man is trying to rearrange. If the human tries to ignore you by covering you with the sheets, move around and try to mess things up. Protest loudly when you're evicted.

i) Laundry presents many opportunities to hamper (hence the other name for the laundry basket - the laundry "hamper"). Laundry fresh from the dryer is a perfect bed, since it is warm and soft. As soon as it is put on the bed for sorting, arrange yourself for a nap. If the human removes you, keep on returning until the laundry has cooled off. Now it's play time. Pounce on anything the human tries to move around for folding, especially socks and nylons. For added fun, grab a sock or some pantyhose and hide with it under the bed.

j) When a human is working at a computer, he/she isn't paying attention to you. The Internet thing is taking up alot of their time now. So you can easily obstruct the human's view of the screen with your beautiful tail, or if it's low enough, with your gorgeous body. Trampling on the keyboard is always good for some attention as well. Pay special attention to the keys marked "Esc", "Del", and "Backspace."

If you need to nap while supervising your human, some excellent places are the keyboard, on top of the plastic thing with the cord that the humans laughably call the "mouse", or on the human's arms. If the human insists on removing you from these choice locations, there's always the lap. If possible while in the lap, try to drape part of yourself over the human's arms.

**Doors**

Do not allow closed doors in any room. To get a door opened, stand on your hind legs and hammer it with your forepaws. Your humans will point at you and tell all in the room how cute you are. Once the door is opened, it is not necessary to use it. After you have ordered an "outside" door

opened, stand halfway in and out and think about several things. This is particularly important during very cold weather, rain, snow or mosquito season. Swinging doors are to be avoided at all times.

**Humans**

Humans have three primary functions. To feed us, to play with us and give us attention, and to clean out our litter box. It is important to maintain one's dignity when around humans so that they will not forget who is the real master of the house.

One way to keep your human healthy is through agility training. You can do this by running ahead of

your human, maintaining a distance of about one and a half of the human's paces, and suddenly stopping to clean yourself. If the human doesn't trip over or boot you (a very real hazard, especially from a beginner human), he/she is fit and able to avoid all sorts of danger in his/her world.

A bonus from this exercise is that seeing this clumsiness in your human will be very amusing and you can share the experience later with your friends on the back fence.

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# LOCAL NEWS FROM 1911

## Cockleburr in Throat for Years

Gurley, Ala.  
 Four years ago a 10-year old daughter of Thomas Sanford, near Gurley, swallowed a cockleburr that lodged in her windpipe. Physicians said it could not be removed without endangering her life. An orifice was made in her throat and a tube inserted through which she has breathed ever since. When talking, in order to articulate distinctly, she would place her finger over the tube. She has had splendid health until recently, when she took measles and also had pneumonia. Yesterday while coughing violently, she dislodged the cockleburr.

## Success of the Butler School

Huntsville is blessed with good schools, both public and

private and especially in this regard we desire to call attention to the remarkable success of the Butler School with S. R. Butler, principal.

Mr. Butler is a good man. He is known as such throughout this section, which is giving a liberal and appreciative support to the school that bears his name. We expect to see the Butler School soon outgrow its present quarters. It is nearly impossible to house the present student body here. The Butler school is a prominent factor in our educational development and fully deserves the flattering encouragement and support it is receiving.



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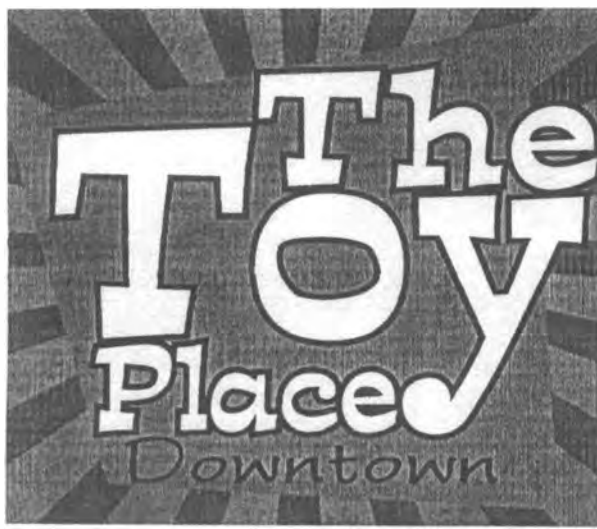
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## INTERESTING CITY NEWS - 1911

\* We have a good heavy draft horse in good work condition for sale cheap. Address "Horse" care of the Times.

\* P. Hay, proprietor of the Huntsville Hotel News Stand this afternoon moved in his new quarters in the building adjoining the north side of R. E. & W. E. Pettus' wholesale house on Jefferson St. in front of the McGee hotel. Mr. Hay is elaborately fitted up for business and invites all of his friends and the public to come and see him.

\* I have 2 good houses for sale both desirably located. Paul Speake, Elks Building

\* Wanted - board in private family, for young couple, central location desired. Phone 208

\* New 4-room cottage corner 6\* St. and Pratt Ave. for rent cheap apply to J. E. Pierce

\* Three nice upstairs rooms furnished or unfurnished for gentleman, preferably. Location central and on car line. Apply to W care of the Times.

\* Wanted - good nurse and housekeeper, white or colored. Address in care of the Times.

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

\* It is a great pity that the Hotel Monte Sano will not be a reality this summer. Our people should come together and help complete the car line to Monte Sano, that being one of the necessary adjuncts to Huntsville's future success.

\* R. Lee Penney, aged 46 years, died yesterday at 1:50 o'clock at his home on Madison Street after a short illness with a complication of diseases. He was buried this afternoon, the funeral having been conducted from the residence at 2 o'clock by Rev. H. E. Rice, assisted by Rev. R. S. Gavin and Interment was made in Maple Hill cemetery. A widow and three children, Misses Julia Mae and Josephine and one son, Richard survive. Following were the pallbearers: Lee Ford, George Wilson, Will Macon Strong, T. W. Jones Frank Power, Dr. Bushong, S. R. Butler and W. E. Pettus.

\* Mr. Theo. Hereford, Deputy

Sheriff, had a very exciting race last night after a negro 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 after him all night.

\* Handsome 2-story, 7-room residence with all modern conveniences within 5 blocks of public square, price \$2500, part cash and balance in 1, 2, and 3 years or terms to suit the purchaser.

\* A fine business lot within 3 blocks of public square. Pays interest on \$3,000. Will sell at a sacrifice.

\* 11 choice residence lots close in; will sell at a bargain as a whole or will sell as many lots as you want on your own terms.

\* A brand new cottage and 2 lots worth \$1,500. Will sell all for \$1,250. Will take \$500 cash and balance on as long time as you want.

\* Half interest in a 200-acre farm near New Market, will be sold cheap.

\* Several pieces of well located business property that will produce a net income of \$1,000 annually, will also be sold on terms to suit purchaser.

\* Interested parties please address care The Daily Times

\* Prohibition made many home owners in Huntsville. As a direct effect of the doing away of both the saloon and dispensary in Madison County, we have positive evidence that at least 250 new homes have been built with money that would otherwise have gone to the dram shop. Investigation also reveals the fact that probably had its effect in lessening our population within the corporate limits to this extent:

Probably 100 to 150 families who were renting cheap houses in the city limits have moved out into small humble cottages built by the earnings that they have been able to accumulate. These homes represent maybe 1,000 in population, It speaks well for prohibition any way you take it. This is just a thought that may enlighten our people and will mean for a continuation of the present laws regulating the liquor traffic.

\* Next time you drive into town, you'll be wanting during your stay a real good drink. Something to quench your thirst to stay quenched. Drink Coca Cola. No matter how thirsty you are or how particular you are, you'll like Coca Cola because it hits that dry spot - relieves fatigue and tickles the palate all the way down. Delicious - refreshing - wholesome. Send for our free booklet "The Truth about Coca Cola" tells all about the company, what it is and why it is so delicious, wholesome and beneficial to you.

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# BOOTS

By Malcolm W. Miller

Six of the seven brothers in our family were all standing out in the yard at the wood pile. Some of the older boys were splitting and cutting up the wood for the fire place and Mama's cook stove. Papa would buy so many standing cords of wood usually from Bob Gipson, then it would be cut and dragged off the mountain down to a bench road where it could be loaded on the wagon and hauled home and either cut into wood for the fire place or stove wood.

Suddenly one of the boys looked down the gravel country road and the excitement began. There coming down the road was our oldest brother Robert with his new bride Beulah Isabel (Boots) Campbell Miller. I had never before in my short life experienced such carrying on. I said short life because it was nineteen thirty-five and I was only seven years old. Suddenly all five of the older boys took off running down toward the creek and I just stood there alone looking at what to me was a real spectacle, some woman besides Mama was going to be living in our house. Little did I know then this was one of the best things that could happen for all of us especially my Mama. Mama had been doing all the cooking, cleaning, washing clothes and everything else that had to be done around the house because she only had sons and no daughters to help her.

**"If you get a spanking at school and I find out about it, you'll get another one when you get home!"**

*What you DON'T hear anymore*

Boots had to have a lot of nerve and a lot of love for Robert to move into a house full of men and boys that was already so crowded that there were two or three beds in every room with from two to three people sleeping in each bed. The legendary country singer Little Jimmy Dickens had a classic song out called "Sleeping at the foot of the bed". One line in the song says "With the cold toe nails scratching your back and the foot board scrubbing your head, I tell the world you ain't lost a thing never sleeping at the foot of the bed". Well friends, I know well what he was talking about in that song because after Boots came to live with us that's where I wound up for about a year until Papa rented the farm bordering the Flint River. After that things changed for the better for all of us. Robert and Boots got their own house to live in, my brother Gib joined the Army and the house we lived in was

larger.

From day one Boots was a welcome addition to our family, she seemed to love everybody and everything. It seems she was treated bad at home and she was so proud to be where

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she was appreciated and loved. Boots and I would do things together like picking black berries and bringing them home for Mama. We also sold some for twenty cents a gallon and took the money to the country store to buy candy.

Something tragic happened that almost destroyed Boots early on. She and Robert had a beautiful baby girl named Barbara June who was everyone's pride and joy. At three months of age, Barbara Jean came down with a terrible sickness and died of dehydration in probably twenty-four hours or less.

Boots went to work at P. R. Mallory and saved up enough money to buy three acres of land in Ryland and built a Jim Walter-type home and paid for it. Robert lived in it until he died at age 93. The property is still in the family today.

Boots was always real religious and after the death of her baby she seemed to turn to God more than ever. She and Robert later had two fine children, Faye and David, and she made sure that they went to church. They did not have a car to go in but she would drag those kids to any church that was having services and she loved to go to gospel singings. I believe she would walk five miles to go to a singing. Robert didn't attend church regularly but he had joined the Shiloh Methodist Church as a youngster. In nineteen eighty-five, Boots came down with incurable cancer. Robert began attending church with her and later became a pillar in the Fellowship Baptist church, the last church that Boots attended.

Boots passed away on June sixth, nineteen eighty-six at age sixty-eight, she and Robert had been married forty-eight years. This could have been written as a love story, because they just about had to tie Robert to keep him from taking a sleeping bag and sleeping next to his beloved Boots' grave.

To some folks this may not

seem to be much of a story, she wasn't a famous person, she never won any awards that I know of, but she left a legacy for her children and grand children and family and friends that will last through the ages.

I for one believe Boots, whom I loved dearly, is reaping her well-earned rewards throughout eternity.

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**"Dear God, If we come  
back as something  
please don't let me  
be Jenny Horton  
because I hate her."**

**Denise, Age 8**

# Remembering Downtown Huntsville

by Louise Manning

Recently, I read in the newspaper of the plans and efforts to revitalize "Downtown Huntsville" and bring more people into the "Downtown" area.

As I sit here in my "rocking chair" and close my eyes, I see a very busy "Downtown" with people everywhere! You see, I am 86 years old and, in my mind, I can see the "Downtown" as it was in the 1940s, 1950s and early 1960s. The streets were so crowded that at times you could not find a parking space. But parking spaces were not as important then as they are today, because many people walked to "town" or rode a bus.

As I recall, Downtown Huntsville was the "hub of the business world" for the citizens of Madison County, as well as the citizens of Huntsville. Situated around "The Square", and adjacent streets such as Washington, Jefferson, Holmes, Clinton, Madison, Greene, etc., were businesses of any kind you can name: hardware stores, department stores, five-and-ten cent or variety stores, cafes and/or restaurants, shoe stores, gasoline or service stations, a newspaper being published, grocery stores, banks, hotels, movie theaters, drug stores, specialty clothing stores, dry cleaners, jewelry stores, furniture stores and, at one time, a funeral home. What did I miss?

There were also doctors' and lawyers' offices, the YMCA located on Greene, the old Carnegie Library located on Madison, City Offices and the Police and Fire Departments on Madison, the Post Office on Holmes, people living in apartments over some of the stores

and beautiful churches that brought people "Downtown."

And, of course, people always had business at the Courthouse; some just to sit on the benches under the shade of the trees and visit.

Today, the churches still remain, but I can only remember two businesses that remain today, Harrison Brothers and Lewier's Hardware. (Do you recall any others?) Even the Courthouse that I remember during this period of time is no longer there.

The Courthouse I am picturing was torn down in 1964. It was a two-story building with columns on all four sides and a tower on top containing a four-faced clock that could be heard all over "town" when it struck! One thing that does remain is the Old Soldier on the Courthouse lawn. He still stands guard! (He did have an accident between leaving the grounds in 1964 and being

placed on the lawn of the present Courthouse, but that is another story.)

On Saturdays, "Downtown" was usually crowded. Many farmers brought produce and other farm products to "town" to sell and to conduct other business while here. The "Farmers Market" (or what most people referred to as the "curb market") was located somewhere between Gallatin Street and the Von Braun Center in what is now Big Spring Park.

The Courthouse stayed open until noon and the stores stayed open later on Saturday nights. Many working people were off on Saturday so it was the time to go "Downtown" (or "Uptown" as some of us called it) to shop, meet friends and neighbors and "visit." It was fun to just window shop!

In the summer, most of the stores closed on Wednesday afternoon. All the stores closed

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on Sunday except the drug stores and movie theaters (in the afternoon and evening). Here again, people often came "Downtown" on Sunday just to window shop or enjoy Big Spring Park. As long as I can remember, we have had a Big Spring Park, just not as large as it is now.

There were ALWAYS people "Downtown."

I worked in offices around "The Square" for many years. Some are still standing, but a row of old buildings where I once worked on the West Side of the Square was torn down so that Big Spring Park could be seen and entered from "The Square."

When Huntsville started to grow, "Downtown" became very congested and, with more automobiles being driven, parking became a problem. It became difficult to conduct business. When Memorial Parkway was built, there was land along the sides making it ideal for stores to be built with their own adjoining parking lots. This was the beginning of businesses moving from "Downtown." As businesses moved, so did the people!

Some of the more "personal" things that I remember are: ice cream cones from City Drug, hamburgers from Sno White, the lunch counter in Grants variety store, the row of old buildings on the West Side of the Square in which the cotton brokers had their offices thereby giving that block the name "Cotton Row," the cotton patch in the side yard of the Bank building on the West Side of the Square, Alfred Clark's concession stand in the lobby of the Courthouse, shop-

ping on my lunch hour, working upstairs in a building with a cafe beneath that had a "juke box" and the fire department across the street (we had music and excitement), the giant sign above T. T. Terry's Dry Goods Store proclaiming "Great is the Power of Cash," watercress salad at the Russel Erskine, going to the movies, running out to put another nickel in the parking meter so you would not get a ticket. Most of all I remember the nice people I met on the streets and those working in the stores and offices.

Well, I "reckon" I have done enough remembering for this time. There is so much history connected with this area of the country. Those who take the time to study the history of Huntsville, the surrounding towns and all of Madison County are pleasantly surprised!

I realize that the "Downtown" that I remember would not fit into today's lifestyle. From what I have read in the newspaper and seen, it seems that those given the responsibility of revitalizing "Downtown" are planning and working hard and are making progress! My sincere hope is that they continue to be successful in bringing more businesses and people into the downtown area and make it the BUSY place it once was!

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**Why are hemorrhoids  
called "Hemorrhoids"  
instead of "Assteroids"?**

**Jesse Collins, Arab**

# The Story of Rusty

by Cathey Carney

Marilyn had been married for about five years when she and her husband divorced. It was a bitter time in both their lives, and a year dragged on until, both miserable, they decided they couldn't live with each other any longer. The fight over possessions was lengthy, but finally it was over. Marilyn got most everything, even their beagle, Rusty.

At the time Rusty was about four years old, but still acted like a puppy. He was a friendly, outgoing dog and especially loved going after anything that was thrown to him and bringing it back. His coat was shiny, his eyes bright and expressive. He loved both his "parents" immensely.

When Marilyn and her husband began having troubles, Rusty was sometimes caught in the middle. He was the victim of a broken glass one drunken night after an especially bad fight and had to be taken to the vet's with cuts. He cringed at the shouting and got to where he hid under the bed when he heard yelling.

The divorce finally over, Marilyn got over her grief fairly quickly and began to date other men. She worked during the day, so the long walks she used to take with Rusty at night became very infrequent.

And Rusty began to try less and less to get her attention. He didn't run to meet her at the door anymore. He began to eat less and less and seemed a little listless. Marilyn noticed all of this but was so caught up in her new and exciting life that she just didn't take the time to pay attention to him. He got to the point where he spent a lot of time just sleeping. His eyes were no longer bright but had a dull glaze over them. His coat became dry and dull. He gave up, and in just a short while, he died.

Marilyn could not forgive herself for her neglect. She had real-

ized that something was wrong, but didn't do anything about it. She couldn't bring him back. The sweet animal who had lived only for his owners' attention died because of the lack of it. Marilyn cried herself to sleep for weeks. She asked me to write this story because someone out there, who may not be paying attention to their pet, may still have the chance to show love and give it the attention it deserves.

Your cats and dogs have feelings and memory, just like you. They will love you no matter if you punish them or hurt them. They need you to take good care of them, and especially to show atten-

tion to them. Most of all, they need your kind words and touch. Please don't make the same mistake Marilyn did. Show your pets your affection for them every day. You surely won't regret it.

- SINCE 1934 -

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## SHOCKING NEWS FROM ACROSS THE STATE

### Strange Suicide In Marshall County

On Tuesday of last week, the body of Joseph Godsey was found in Marshall County, about four miles from Vienna, under circumstances that left no doubt that the deceased had come to his death by his own hands.

Godsey had taken his hoe that morning and gone to the field as usual. He hoed four short rows of corn and failed to come to dinner, but nothing strange was thought of his absence from dinner. About sunset a Mr. Saint went to the field to look after him and, finding his track, followed it across the field and found the body hanging to a limb just as he had hung himself, with hickory-bark. He had deliberately tied the bark around his neck, gotten up on the fence and jumped off, breaking his neck.

The deceased was about 21 years of age and had recently separated from his wife of three years.

From 1878 newspaper

### Corpse "Winks" at Undertaker -

In Birmingham a local undertaker received a telephone call, telling of the death of an old woman, who has for years been an object of charity here.

On entering the door of the room the undertaker's assistant went first, but he remained only a very short time, for the "corpse's" eye winked at him. There was an open door near, and he didn't stop to tell his employer of his astounding discovery, but took advantage of the opportunity for getting out of the room.

But the undertaker made the same discovery himself, and instead of bolting, he made a hasty examination and found the woman indeed alive.

Then he decided that the woman's condition was critical, believing that she was in the last throws of death, and he decided to sit down and wait.

He waited about two hours and on discovering that the woman was breathing stronger he made another exam and found that her strength was rapidly returning. She was not

even dangerously ill. He has since learned that she has been guilty of "dying" a number of times before in order to get sympathy from the people.

Now this young undertaker (who has many friends here) is looking for the person who sent in the telephone call.

From 1915 Newspaper

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# AMERICAN BABIES WILL VANISH BY THE YEAR 2015

*Special to the Times - 1911*

There will be no children in the United States under 5 years of age in the year 2020. Babies, accordingly, will have disappeared from this country as early as 2015.

This is the mathematical conclusion of Prof. Walter F. Wilcox, of Cornell University, when it was announced to the American Statistical Assoc. at its concluding session on Saturday.



The only hope of seeing babies in the U.S. after 2020, according to Prof. Wilcox's calculation, is in possible importation from France. France, he says, will continue to have babies eighty years after the U.S. has quit the business.

"There is proportionately more race suicide in the U.S. than in France," the

Professor added.

An endowment for the stork was recommended to the American Sociological Assoc. by George Elliott Howard, Professor of Sociology in the University of Nebraska. In an address of "The Social Control of Domestic Relations," he declared the state should honor motherhood by endowing all mothers.

"Parents who raise families," he said, "are entitled to payment, and security from the state the same as the soldier or the judge, or any other public servant. The woman who gives a child to the state should be allowed an income by the state for taking care of the child. That would make the mother the ruler in the home. That would ensure social justice."



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# Tweetie's Pet Tips

## Cat Safety Tips



\* The greatest risk kitties have from eating or playing with cockroaches/bugs is from ingesting the poison you put out to kill the bugs. You can accidentally poison your kitty when she eats a bug or mouse that has eaten some of the poison.

\* It's hard to believe, but you may need to keep your black cat in the house the weeks prior to Halloween. You'd be surprised how many people would harm a black cat around Halloween.

\* Your outdoor cats will really appreciate a shady place these hot days. You can choose one section of your yard and let it grow up, don't cut the grass or weeds and once they are 2-3 feet tall they will provide a fun and shady place for your cats. You could also add a large board leaning against or tree or side of the building to create shade. Add catnip for some serious fun.

\* You want to donate to help stop animal abuse but you don't want to start getting requests from every animal charity because you're now on a list. Best thing is get a money order and send it to the shelter with no return address - problem solved.

\* When it's hot, many pet owners keep their cats inside - just spend a little more time playing with them. You might want to keep the bird feeders full so that the cats can have fun just watching.

*(Tweetie's OK with this as long as there's no actual contact with the birds or parakeets!)*

\* If you keep your cats outside, be SURE and provide lots of fresh water during these hot days. Animals can survive a while on no food, but can't last more than a couple of days on no water. And if they have to drink stagnate water, they can get very sick.

\* Avoid kitty toys with small bells or parts that may fall off. It's amazing what can fall out of these toys when they're played with, even feathers & stuffing!



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# From the Desk of Tom Carney

## Peter Daniels, a Forgotten Hero

by Tom Carney

For Peter Daniels it was just another day. An ex-slave who had purchased his freedom, Daniels had built up a good business in a little shop off the courthouse square where he worked as a barber. Although quiet-spoken, he was well respected by both the black and white communities in Huntsville.

He was probably cutting hair, or maybe sweeping up his shop when he first noticed the excitement outside. Quickly finishing his chores, he made his way to the square to see what was happening.

A large crowd had gathered. Word had just been received of the massacre at the Alamo in a far-off place called Texas. A pall seemed to settle over the crowd as the news began to sink in. All the defenders had been slaughtered. Even Davy Crockett, who had visited Huntsville so many times in the past, was dead.

As is true with all major events of this nature, once the horrible news was realized, the citizens began to get angry. Immediately, talk began to circulate of forming a company to go to Texas and avenge the fallen dead.

One young man in the crowd, with a loud whoop, yelled, "All for Texas!"

The cheer was taken up by the other young men in the crowd and within minutes it seemed as if the whole population of Huntsville was about to

march on Santa Anna. Fortunately, cooler heads prevailed.

Several old-timers, who had seen service in the War of 1812 and in the Indian wars with Andrew Jackson, convinced a local businessman by the name of Peyton White to organize a military company. White had experience in the military and he was also fairly prosperous, a major qualification for anyone who wanted to raise a company. In those days, the officers were expected to contribute to the expense of supplies, clothing, weapons, and various other things.

Peter Daniels, like everyone else that day, must have felt a surge of pride as the young men flocked to enlist. But what could he do? He was black and lived in a society that condemned men to perpetual servitude for the color of their skin.

Slowly he made his way back to his shop. It was probably best to just put it out of his mind. Besides, there were a lot of other things to think about. It seemed as if everything in the world was happening right here in Huntsville. His thoughts raced:

"They are erecting a bank building on the square; people say the marble came all the way from Nashville. James Bierny



is running for president on the abolition ticket; he used to live right here in Huntsville, and they got government troops over in Guntersville. People say they're gathering up all the Indians over there and sending them out west... and besides, I've got my fife."

Daniels was known far and wide for his ability to play the fife, a flute-like instrument. Probably self-taught, he was an attraction whenever a crowd gathered in Huntsville. On muster days or when the local militia would practice marching in the town's dusty streets, Peter was often seen at their head urging them on with his fife. People claimed that he had a God-given talent with the fife, and though many people tried, no one could ever produce the stirring martial music the way Daniels could.

Over the next few weeks, the town was a flurry of activity as men prepared to embark

**"A diplomat is someone who can tell you to go to hell in such a way that you will look forward to the trip."**

**Ginger Stenson, Scottsboro**



for Texas. Women and children both were kept busy making the Lindsay hunting shirts that the men preferred to wear. William Wilson was kept busy drilling the new recruits, while Peyton White was huddled with the shopkeepers every day, trying to raise the necessary supplies. Daniels, like everyone else, must have been caught up in the patriotic fever that had engulfed the populace.

Today, it is impossible to know how Peter Daniels became part of the company. Possibly some of the troops saw him sitting outside his barber shop, playing the fife, and approached him. Or maybe he spent so much time playing the fife for the troops as they drilled that people just automatically accepted him.

We do know for a fact that he did not enlist as a regular soldier, as blacks were not allowed to carry guns or enlist in service. The most they could hope for was a job as a servant, or a teamster, or maybe, as in Daniels' case, a job that no one else could do.

Regardless of how or why, when Captain Peyton White and his small band of volunteers marched out of Huntsville early one morning in the spring of 1836, Peter Daniels was at the head of the company, blowing mightily on his fife.

From Huntsville, the troops marched to Ditto Landing where they boarded a boat that carried them to Muscle Shoals. There they were transported around the dangerous shoals by a horse drawn railway that had just been completed, saving the soldiers from a long, hot march.

After boarding another boat at the foot of the shoals, life for the volunteers must have settled down to an every day routine of boredom. It was a long trip and as the flatboats slowly drifted down the Tennessee to where it met with the Ohio River and then over to the Mississippi,

there wasn't much for the troops to do.

The men would occupy their time by cleaning their rifles, sharpening their Bowie knives, and of course, telling tall tales. Most likely, Daniels was not afforded the privilege of having much spare time. Even though he was the fife player, he was still black, and blacks were the people who did the chores.

Occasionally, they might meet with another flatboat carrying more volunteers to Texas. When this happened, it was a time of rejoicing and bragging, with each boatload trying to outdo the other with their boasts and achievements.

And finally, as always, after the men had exhausted every excuse for a conversation, someone would call for Daniels and his fife. It's easy to imagine now, over a hundred and fifty years later, how it must have sounded as the boats floated slowly in the current down the river with both banks covered by lush foliage. Men silently lying about the deck, lost in thoughts of home, or maybe, the approaching battles, while listening to the soulful music of Daniel's fife.

By the time the group reached New Orleans, word of Peter Daniels' musical ability had preceded him. Fife players were rare and every self-


respecting military company was expected to have one. One musician, Justin Jeffries of Mobile, was actually kidnapped by members of another unit. When the members of his company realized what happened, they armed themselves and went after the kidnappers with a vengeance, resulting in a near-riot.

Daniels was recognized as one of the best and he was besieged by generous offers from many companies. But Peter Daniels was not for sale to the highest bidder, and accordingly, when the small band of Madison County volunteers marched out of New Orleans, Peter Daniels, with his fife, was again at their head.

The war in Texas was entering a terrible period. Santa Anna, faced with ever-increasing swarms of American volunteers, hoisted the black flag. As with the Alamo, Goliad, and countless other places, there would be no surrender. If the volunteers failed in battle, they would be massacred to the last man.

It is hard to imagine what must have been going through Daniels' mind as he marched across the barren plains of Texas with the volunteers. Everyday brought fresh reports of atrocities committed by the Mexican troops, and yet they kept marching bravely on.

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The war consisted mostly of small skirmishes; small bands of men constantly harassing their opponents. Hit and run; hide for a while and then hit again. With few men, and fewer supplies, this was the only military tactic the Americans could employ.

It was during one of these skirmishes somewhere on the plains of Texas, the exact location has been forgotten for over a century, that Daniels was taken prisoner.

The Mexicans immediately recognized Daniels as the wonderful fife player they had heard so much about. The Mexican army was renowned for its military bands, so any prisoner with musical ability instantly became a topic of discussion at headquarters.

Santa Anna believed men fought better when inspired by music. Months earlier, at the Alamo, four regimental bands played constantly throughout the final battle, and even during the massacre that followed.

Daniels was taken before the Mexican officers, who after confirming his identity, offered him a position in their regimental band.

"No," replied Daniels. "I can't do that."

The Mexican soldiers explained to him that the only other alternative was death before the firing squad. Still, Peter Daniels refused.

The soldiers must have been impressed by Daniels' courage, for instead of ordering his immediate execution, they placed him under guard for the night. Likely, they were hoping that after having time to reflect on the matter, Daniels would change his mind.

A thousand thoughts must have played on him during that long, dark night. Thoughts of home and family and friends. Thoughts of the injustices that he had known. Thoughts of

Huntsville that now seemed so far away.

And yet, he never wavered. His loyalty was not for sale ... not even for his life.

As the sun began its slow climb over the bleak desert floor, the Mexican officers sent for him. Standing before them, likely with his fife in hand, Daniels was once again offered the choice. Join the Mexican band, or refuse and die.

And like other men, whose likenesses are carved in stone all across our nation, had also chosen, Peter Daniels resolved to die as an American.

Peyton White and the rest of the volunteers returned to Huntsville at the end of the conflict. Daniels was the only casualty of the company.

For awhile, whenever men would gather, they would talk about Daniels and his heroic choice. But then, as the years passed by, people began to forget and within the span of a hundred years he had become just a footnote in an old, dusty book locked away in the archives of the public library.

Today, visitors in Huntsville are shown the fine antebellum homes of yesterday and they learn of the hardy pioneers who built them. They are

told tales of the trial of Frank James and numerous other accounts of Huntsville's legendary figures, but not a word is ever mentioned about Peter Daniels....

No one remembers, until now.

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# My Memories

by Polly Bailey

I had been working on Drake Avenue at a dry cleaning and laundromat business for Charlie Pierce for 10 years. Benny Medlin from West Huntsville Cleaners had a cleaners open and wanted me to run it. On February 4, 1974, I went to Modern Dry Cleaners on Governor's Drive in the Kennamer Shopping Center. Mr. Kennamer was still alive. After three days, I was ready to leave. I hadn't been around all that dirty talk that high school kids did. They would stop for me to sew up their caps and gloves. I never charged them. I told them to clean up their mouths and they never talked like that around me again.

I made lots of friends from the neighborhood. I sent all their clothes out for HEAVY starch.

The machines were old and needed lots of repair. Benny wanted to sell, so I bought it from him for \$18,000. I borrowed \$20,000, so I fixed all of the machinery. I kept one presser, Carrie Jasper, and one sewing lady, Sugar Lou Davis. Sugar Lou was so much fun. I loved her very much.

My granddaughter, Beth Bailey Luft, would come and visit. She spent a lot of her childhood in the cleaners. Terry would act like a mean old lady and try to scare Beth. Terry ended up being one of the best parts about growing up in the cleaners. She would always walk to the store at the end of the strip and pass by Slim at Bill and Jerry's Barbershop. They all gave her a hard time and teased her. She came to love them all.

Gene Tuck, aka Quarter Man, would see Beth sitting at the counter when she was little. She was young and shy and would hide from him when she would see him coming. He would always come in and try to get her to talk. By the end of the visit, he would always leave her a quarter.

Business was growing. I got another cleaner's to do the laundry. Sneed's wanted to buy me out. So I sold the business and made a good profit. I still worked all day and into the evening. I was divorced and had two children in high school. I sold it in a year

and a half to Benny Medlin at Sneed's.

About then I started doing the Huntsville Stars sewing on the uniforms. I repaired and sewed patches.

Six months later, rent was raised. The shop was full with the Baptist bookstore, H&R Block, an ice cream shop, Bill and Jerry's Barber Shop, and a grocery store. One time we even had a shoe shop in there. When the rent was raised Sneed's couldn't pay anymore. He wanted to close it and have me come there.

About a month later in 1990, I rented a space next to the barber

shop from Wells Johnson. I didn't do the cleaning there. I had it sent out to Sneed's. All my loyal customers came back. This was my cleaners. I had worked part-time as crossing guard when I was at Drake. I had lots of friends at the Police Department that would bring me their clothes. Everyone was glad I was back.

I was there 32 years when gas went up so high people couldn't clean their clothes. It was time that I got out. No money coming in, but lots of clothes. I was drowning with clothes. I sold the business to Benny Medlin and I continued to run the cleaners until I retired. Work was my life. I enjoyed what I did and all of the people that I met. I sure do miss it.

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# FLY ME TO THE MOON

by Barbara Wilkinson Corazzi

My father, Clarence Otway Wilkinson, was born in Tennessee in 1907. He moved to Huntsville as an infant, and attended East Clinton School. As was the trend in those days, when he finished the 7th grade, he had to quit school and help out at home.

He worked as a sheet metal worker most of his adult life. In the early 1950's he took a job at the Redstone Arsenal. Over a period of time he continued his education by taking classes in various fields, receiving a number of certificates including one in Electronics Technology.

In 1956 suggestions were requested for in relation to the Saturn V Rocket vortex problem. The Rocket was propelled by liquid fuel. The problem was as the fuel left the fuel tank it created a vortex, sucking air into the engine, and the flow could not be controlled. My father learned of the problem but did not know what a vortex was. He soon learned that vortex was a general term for a whirlpool.

He remembered when he was a child, while playing in the creek, small whirlpools would form at the sides of the creek and he would put his finger in the center and the whirlpool would disappear. He thought about this for a while and decided he might have a solution ,but first he had to make sure his

solution would work.

His experiment called for a simulated fuel tank. He used a gallon glass water jug and made a wooden stand for the "tank." He removed the bottom of the jug (don't know how) and installed a simulated finger made of aluminum, shaped like a rocket pointing up. This simulation had four fins at the bottom for support. It worked well and NASA adopted the idea. He received a signed letter of appreciation and commendation from Dr. Wernher Von Braun and a monetary award.

The Saturn V Rocket was launched on Nov. 9, 1967 which went to the moon and was part-

ly due to the efforts of my father.

He loved Huntsville and Monte Sano mountain. He loved to go into the mountain and sit under a tree with a good book, most likely a Zane Gray Western. His dream when he retired was to move out West to prospect; unfortunately he passed away in 1973, never fulfilling his dream.

This story is written with the help of sisters Brenda and Diane and brother Ken Wilkinson, with great appreciation. Ken gave me many of the details since I have lived out-of-state for many years. Thanks, Brother.

The family is very proud of our father for his participation in this monumental event and proud that he was our father.



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Lynda Montgomery

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# THE JORDAN/HOWIE HOME

by Austin Miller

On a warm June evening a few weeks ago Ryland almost lost one of its oldest landmarks, the 168 year old Jordan House. I first knew it was on fire from posts on Facebook. There were pictures of fire and smoke coming out of one of the top bedroom windows. The pictures were upsetting because I knew it was a historical building as well as the home of Mitch and Debra Howie.

Many things have changed in Ryland since I was a child but one of the things that had not changed was the Jordan house located on Jordan Road about two hundred yards from the intersection of Homer Nance Road. I felt a strong sense of regret for the Howies and what looked like the loss of an important landmark.

The house is on the National Register of Historic Places as Flint River Place. It is not far from Flint River and a tributary to the river known as Jordan Branch runs behind the house. The spring-fed creek runs clear and cold year around.

Years ago my friend Bill Gossett's parents lived next to the creek. I remember visiting there with my parents on Sundays; one of the things that still sticks in my mind about those visits is Mr. Gossett cooling watermelons in the creek. Several big watermelons floating in that crystal clear water was a beauti-

ful sight to me, especially when I knew they were slated to be our afternoon snack.

The Jordan House is not the oldest house in Ryland. The Kelly Plantation House on Ryland Pike was built in the 1830's but the top was blown off by the tornado that hit Ryland in 1974. About three fourths of the old structure remains but the top fourth is new. It was not restored

to its original shape and the alterations keep it off the National Register of Historic Places.

Another old house still standing is the Carl Moring home off Dug Hill Road. Mr. Moring was a large landowner with a number of share croppers farming his land, one of these was my grandfather. The other Ryland houses of my youth were either destroyed by the 1974 tornado or replaced by modern, nicer homes.

The France and Consta Par-ton House at the end of Ryland Gin Road in Ryland was torn

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- 2 large earthen bowls
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- 2 cake boxes
- 1 candlestick
- 1 ash bucket
- 1 gridiron
- 1 wire toaster
- 1 large flour box
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- 8 dozen clothes pins
- 1 flour sifter
- 1 tea kettle
- 1 step ladder
- 1 meat saw
- 4 stone jars
- 1 stove
- 1 coal shovel
- 2 granite-ware stewpans
- 2 wooden chopping bowls, 2 sizes
- 1 large tin pail and 1 large wooden pail
- 4 milk pans, 1 milk strainer
- 2 scoops - 1 for flour, 1 for sugar
- 2 sugar boxes, 1 for fine and 1 for coarse sugars
- 1 wash boiler, 1 wash board



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Virginia Esberg's grandmother



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down this summer. I believe it was the last average size old house left. All my life I could see it from our front yard. It was about to fall down and a tree was growing up through the front porch but many of us hated to see it go. Judy Parton Reed grew up in the house but she and her husband Carl still own the land and have a home nearby. There is a funny story about the house; it sat very close to the railroad track that was literally in the front yard. Mr. Parton had a bunch of Guineas; one day a freight train came through and all the Guineas simultaneously flew out of the yard and lit on top of the box cars. They sat up there as pretty as you please and rode away on the train, never to be seen again.

The Jordan House was built in 1844 when John Tyler was President. To put this in perspective; there have been 34 U.S. Presidents since John Tyler. It has stood through almost 3/4 of our country's history. It was 17 years old when the Civil War started in 1861 and 74 years old when the war to end all wars ended in 1918.

It boggles the mind to think of all the history and changes that have occurred in the world since 1844. As you might expect it is called the Jordan House because it was the long time home of the Jordan family. The last Jordans to live there were Dr. Frank Jordan and his wife Ethyl. Dr. Frank died in 1963 at the age of 79. He was a prominent Huntsville physician as was his father before him. Both doctors are buried in the Jordan section of Ryland Cemetery.

When I was little we lived about a mile down Flint River from Dr. Jordan. My parents would walk and carry me up the river to see him when I was sick or needed a checkup. But I don't ever recall being inside the house before last Thursday. Bill Gossett and I were riding along Jordan Road and when we got

to the house, Bill said, "Let's turn in a minute." Bill spent his early years on the Jordan farm. We pulled off on to the circular drive out front and got out of my truck.

While we were standing there looking, Debra Howie waved from one of the upstairs windows and invited us in. The inside is burned or water-damaged throughout. But it looks to be structurally sound. I was impressed with the way the workmen were building everything back in fine detail like it was before the fire. It was good to know that the house belongs to a family that appreciates its historical value and the importance of restoring it properly. Also it is important to note that from all accounts the Central Volunteer Fire Department did a professional job of fighting the fire and protecting what furnishings they could. In the end, their skill and dedication saved the structure and contained the fire to the interior of the building.

While standing inside the charred walls, it occurred to me that destructive events become part of history too. In 50 years or maybe less, owners of the house will likely be telling visitors about the history of the house and how it survived the great fire of 2012. Also by that time I expect it may be known as the Jordan/Howie house or maybe just the Howie House. I think the Howies are earning the right.

**A Message from G. W. Maynard**

**"A heartfelt thank you to the readers of Old Huntsville magazine who called and emailed the magazine to help me in my search for my mother's grave."**

**(G. W.'s story "A Huntsville Street Kid" ran in the June issue.)**

**"Although my story was depressing to write, you all made it worthwhile. I thank you very much.**

**I have found the cemetery where my mother was laid to rest. Although I have not yet been able to locate her grave site, I will continue to work on that. I am very thankful to all who wrote and offered help in locating the graveyard that turned out to be the old King Cemetery at Rt. 2, Hillsboro, in Lawrence County. In years past it was renamed the Elliott Jackson Cemetery on a road behind the Volunteer Fire Department.**

**Sincere Thanks,  
G.W. Maynard"**



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