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Old Huntsville

HISTORY AND STORIES OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY

An Everlasting Love



Though a war was raging in Europe and almost every able-bodied male in the community of New Hope had received his draft notice, Lucille had still hoped that her husband would not be called.

Silently, she placed the envelope in her apron and walked back to their home. It was a typical share-cropper's house; two rooms, heated by a wood burning stove and an outhouse in the back.

Regardless of their surroundings, Lucille and Kenneth still considered themselves lucky.

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An Everlasting Love

by Tom Carney

Lucille Ensley leaned tiredly on her hoe in the cotton field and watched the mailman come to a stop in front of the mailbox. Lucille and her husband, Kenneth, rarely received any mail so whenever the mailman stopped it was a cause of great anticipation.

In this case, as Lucille looked at the official envelope, she felt a sense of gloom descend upon her. Although Kenneth and she had talked about it almost every day, it had done nothing to lessen the impact of actually receiving the news.

Though a war was raging in Europe and almost every able-bodied male in the community of New Hope had received his draft notice, Lucille had still hoped that her husband would not be called.

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1943 was promising to be a bumper year for cotton and even after giving the land-owner his share and paying the bills, hopefully, there would be enough left over for the down payment on their own land.

Lucille stoked the fire in the stove as she thought about what to fix for dinner. Kenneth would still be in the fields for another couple of hours and she wanted to prepare something special for him.

When they married she had thought her husband was the kindest and best man in the world. Now, a year later, she was even more in love with him. Several times she had wondered what life would be like if he were gone, but the thought was so devastating that she immediately put it out of her mind. Life without her husband would be unbearable, so she refused to think about it.

That evening, after they had completed dinner, and she was clearing the table, Lucille took the envelope out of her apron and placed it on the table in front of him. The look on Kenneth's face after he hastily read the notice confirmed her darkest fears.

He was being called up and had to report for induction into the Army in ten days.

That night, lying in her husband's strong arms, would be the most memorable of their brief marriage. They spoke of their dreams and of their love, and of how soon the war would

"Love is like an avalanche where you have to run for your life."

John, age 9



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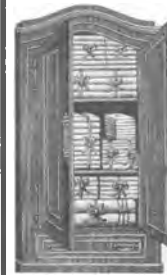
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be over. Two young people, madly in love, dreaming of the future but with a fear of the unknown lurking in the back of their minds.

Kenneth had always been a hard worker but the next ten days saw him working harder than ever. Up hours before daylight, he would already be in the fields when the first glimmer of a new day began to peek across the hills. And every evening, after working in the fields all day, would find him chopping wood for the upcoming winter by the light of a kerosene lantern.

Often, late at night, Lucille would carry a fruit jar of tea out to the woodpile where he was working and implore him to quit for the day.

Laughing, Kenneth would take her in his arms and tell her that he wanted to be sure that his wife would be warm that winter.

On the morning Kenneth was scheduled to appear for induction, they got up even earlier than usual. After breakfast they began the trek to town. Not owning an automobile and

declining to ask neighbors for a ride, they chose instead to walk.

They had already talked about his departure and both had agreed it would be easier if she did not accompany him all the way. Two blocks from the bus station, they paused and after setting his bag down, Kenneth took his wife in his arms one last time to tell her how much he loved her. Then abruptly, while choking back tears, he grabbed his bag and was gone.

During the long walk back home Lucille's mind was a frenzy of plans and ideas. She would finish the cotton crop and save every penny she could so they could buy their own farm when he came home. She would write every day and send pictures and clippings from the newspaper. Everything would be all right. She just knew it.

After returning home, Lucille spent the day working in the fields hoeing cotton. As she thought about the cruel war that had separated her from her husband, she attacked her work with a vengeance. The young

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cotton plants became Nazis and her hoe became the instrument of their destruction.

Unfortunately, the hard work was only a temporary relief. When she returned to the house late that evening, she was instantly surrounded by silence. The kind of silence that only one who lives alone can understand.

And Lucille did what millions of other wives did that summer of 1943, she sat down on the edge of the bed and cried.

Although she worked from daylight to dark, seven days a week, it was impossible for her to keep up with the growing cotton by herself. Where there had once been neat orderly rows, more weeds began appearing weekly. The harder she tried, the farther behind she got. It quickly became apparent that she would be unable to finish the crop.

Late one evening, as Lucille trudged tiredly home, she saw the landlord sitting on the porch waiting for her. Apologetic and with hat in hand, he told her that he was going to have to take over the crop. He had too much money invested he said, to take a chance on losing it, "Of course," he said, "if you can get someone to help you, maybe we can do something. If not, I can pay you a little for your trouble."

Lucille knew there was no hope in hiring any farm help. Even Redstone Arsenal, where they were paying top wages, could not find all the hands it needed.

Reluctantly, she began to make arrangements to move. During the war, with gas rationing and overcrowded conditions, even a simple task like moving became a major chore. Finally after days of trying, she found a neighbor who was willing to move her to town

with his horse and wagon in exchange for some farm implements she no longer needed.

Lucille went to work at the cotton mill and after several months of living with a relative, was fortunate enough to be assigned a house in the mill village. The previous occupant had been fired for allowing Arsenal workers to board with him, a practice the mills discouraged for fear of losing workers to the to higher paying jobs on the arsenal.

Lucille's life soon settled into a regular routine. Up at 5 o'clock every morning, work all day, and back home by 6 that evening. Run to the mailbox to look for a letter from Kenneth, and then write another letter describing her day.

Although a slow reader, she forced herself to read the newspaper every day to keep track of the war news. On her kitchen wall she had taped a map of

Europe and every week or so she would laboriously trace the advances of the Allied Army. Every foot the Allies advanced meant the sooner Kenneth would be coming home.

Finally after almost two years, Lucille received the letter she had been waiting for. The war had been over for months and the army was beginning to

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discharge its soldiers. Kenneth wrote to say that he would be arriving home by bus in a couple of weeks and he missed her terribly.

A friend later said that she had never seen Lucille look so happy and radiant as she did when she received the letter from her husband.

Two days before his scheduled arrival, Kenneth called a friend to say he was in Fort Benning, Georgia being discharged and would be home in a few days. "Tell Lucille," he said as he hung up, "that I love her."

On the appointed day Lucille was at the bus station. Bus load after bus load of soldiers arrived to be welcomed home by their families, but Kenneth was not among them. Late that night after being assured that no more buses were scheduled to arrive that evening, Lucille finally returned home, only to return at first light the next morning.

Again, buses arrived and buses left all day long but Kenneth was not on any of them. The same routine was followed for almost a week until she was threatened with losing her job if she did not return to work.

Kenneth and Lucille had been given a lamp by a relative when they first married and now she placed it in the window so he would be able to find the house if he arrived home at night. Every night she would rush home after work to wash,

do her hair, change clothes and then spend the evening sitting on the edge of a chair next to the lamp, waiting patiently for her husband to come home.

Her neighbors began to grow concerned and finally talked her into writing the War Department. Several months passed until she received a reply. Kenneth had been discharged at Fort Benning and given a travel voucher to Huntsville. The department was sorry but it had no further information.

Neighbors began to speculate on the fate of Lucille's husband. "Surely," they reasoned, "something must have happened to him. And it's not normal for a woman to keep waiting for so long and acting like nothing is the matter."

Finally a delegation of neighbors approached her. "Lucille," they said, "we've known you for a long time and we just want to help. It's time you realized that maybe your husband is not coming home."

For what seemed like an eternity, Lucille stared silently at them, as if she was looking through them. When she finally spoke it was with a deliberate calmness. "My husband said he

would come home and I believe him. Now if you will please excuse me."

Weeks turned into months, and months into years and every night the lamp was turned on, a silent beacon to a long ago memory.

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Periodically, over the years, friends or neighbors would take an interest in the fate of Lucille's husband and try to discover what had happened to him. Letters were written to various organizations and inquiries were made of police departments and hospitals. The answer was always the same. "I'm sorry but we have no information." Whenever someone would relay the latest inquiry to Lucille, she would scornfully reply that they were wasting their time with such foolishness.

"My husband," she would always reply, "is on his way home."

In 1956, some of the mill homes were torn down and Lucille moved to a small cottage at the foot of Chapman Mountain. Immediately, before her belongings were even unpacked, the lamp was once again placed in front of the living room window where it continued its lonely vigil.

When she lived in the mill village most people had been familiar with her story and had been sympathetic. Many of the residents, probably having seen enough suffering of their own, went out of their way to be nice to her, always asking if she had any word from her husband.

"No," she would reply. "He's

on his way home and probably hasn't had time to call."

Now, living in a new location, she soon became known as "the crazy woman." The neighbors knew nothing about her except that she lived in a fantasy world, turning the light on every night for the memories of a love she could not let go.

She rarely ventured out of her house, and when she did, she was often greeted by taunts from the neighborhood children. At Halloween her yard would be rolled with toilet paper and rotten eggs would be thrown at her front door. Every few years some neighborhood woman would visit for a few minutes, more to satisfy her curiosity than anything else.

Ignoring her neighbors, Lucille continued to live in her dream world, turning the lamp on every night and waiting for a knock that never came.

More time passed and the friends who had sympathized with her began to die off. Every year there were fewer people who knew the story behind the lamp in the window. By this time, Lucille had become a virtual recluse and though able to take care of herself, her family still decided it was a good idea for someone to check on her

every day.

In 1992, almost a half century after Kenneth had left for the service, Lucille's nephew stopped by one evening to see how she was doing. After knocking several times and not

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getting an answer, he used his key to enter the house.

After searching the rest of the house first, he discovered Lucille crouched in a corner of the bedroom, with a sheet wrapped around her, sobbing. Looking up and seeing her nephew, she cried out, "He's not coming home is he? Kenneth's not coming home."

It was all the nephew could do to not cry himself. Sitting on the floor he wrapped his arms around his aunt and tenderly assured her that everything was all right.

"Don't worry Aunt Lucy, he's on his way home. He'll be home any time now."

Carefully he tucked the frail old woman into her bed. As she drifted off to sleep, a gentle smile played on her lips, the smile of a woman who still believed that love was everlasting.

Sometime that night, in the wee hours of the morning,


Lucille died. Her body was found on the living room sofa, fully dressed and with her hair done up neatly. It was apparent from the calm and serene look on her face that she was finally reunited with the love she had waited so many years for.

As the hearse pulled out of the driveway Lucille's nephew, Kenny, went back in the house and got the lamp. That night he placed it on a table in front of his living room window and turned it on.

A silent and heartbreaking symbol of an eternal love.

The mystery of what happened to Kenneth has never been solved. Though it was later established that he definitely boarded the bus in Columbus, Ga. for the trip to Huntsville, he was never seen again.






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My Mama, the Midwife

by Malcolm W. Miller

One of my earliest memories as a small child happened many times over. There would be some man standing outside our house usually in the wee hours calling to my Mama saying that his wife was sick. It wasn't until I grew older that I found out what was going on.

You see back in the nineteen twenties and thirties there was very little money and most babies were born at home with the help of a midwife. Even though Dr. Frank Jordan lived in the Ryland neighborhood and didn't charge very much for his services, it was still more than most of the poor share croppers could afford.

Some times I wouldn't hear the men calling for Aunt Anner or Miss Anner saying my wife is sick because I was asleep. But when I woke up hearing Papa rattling pots and pans and fussing I knew what I was in for - Papa biscuits. You see my Mama rolled the dough out real thin and used a tin can to cut out perfect biscuits but not Papa, he would mix up the dough and just pour it out in piles resulting in biscuits usually larger than a saucer.

As far as I know my Mama never in all those years ever

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received pay for all the work she had done delivering babies; however, she was one of the most loved and respected members of the community. Dr. Jordan often said that he wished there was some way she could be his nurse and believe you me she was a good nurse.

With nothing to work with but things like coal oil, turpentine, castor oil and warm salty water she could do some amazing things. Her loving hand placed on a small boy's head really made them feel better when his head was burning with fever. I know because I was fortunate to be one of those boys.

At Mama's funeral, many of the people there had been brought into this world by her.

My Mama was born Eunice Anna McKay, September 18th, 1886 and much of her childhood was spent living in a house by the side of the toll gate on the road up the mountain to the Monte Sano Hotel. She and her younger sister, my Aunt Lucy, operated the toll gate while their father Archie McKay worked to keep the road in good enough shape for the many tourists to be able to travel back and forth to the hotel.

Later on as a young girl Mama went to work in Dallas mill and after working twelve hour shifts would walk to the home her parents had bought on what is now Toll Gate Road. It was originally called Monte Sano Pike.

Finally at age twenty-one she met and married my Papa and

together they raised seven sons, of which I am the youngest. Their first child was a girl but only lived ten months.

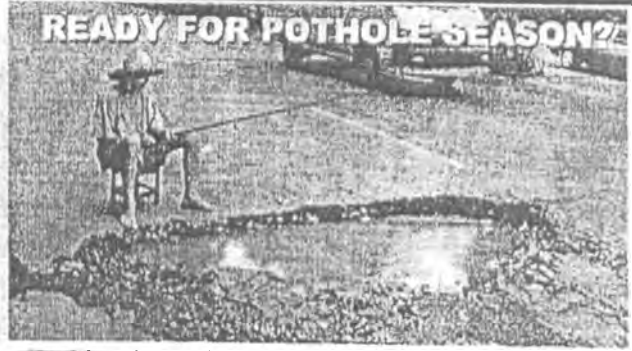
Loretta Lynn recorded a hit song titled "They don't make men like my Daddy any more." I would like to say that they don't make women like my Mama any more. She had a very hard life as a share cropper's wife. I don't believe that in her whole married life she ever had a store-bought dress. She would make her clothes out of flower sacks or on occasion she would sell enough eggs and chickens to the rolling store man and he would bring her material from town for a dress.

My Mama never attended church regularly. She really

didn't have nice clothes to wear and she was busy taking care of seven strapping boys but I can assure you my Mama was a godly woman.

After spending a life of hardship and misery living in one sharecropper's shack after another she must surely be residing in a mansion now and throughout eternity.

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Tecumseh, Native American leader of the Shawnee

TOWN GOSSIP FROM 1899

- One of the best known men about town, who is reported ill with La Grippe, is really laid up from the effects of injuries received in a fight at a gambling house. The melee occurred several nights ago and the gentleman in question was badly beaten over the head with a chair. One of the others present was a traveling man from Augusta, and the balance, as far as I can ascertain, were mere card sharks.

- I questioned not long ago to the open liaison of a beautiful young society woman, who is encumbered with a hubby somewhat her senior, and a young clerk in a downtown business house. About two days ago somebody notified a male relative of the frisky matron and he came to Huntsville at once to see the lay of the land. He called on the clerk and notified him that he would fill him full of holes if he continued his compromising attentions and is supposed to have read the riot act to the madame. His visit has certainly had a restraining influence upon the couple and they have refrained from scandalizing the public since.

- A young man who poses as a leader of local society and who is as a matter of fact about as contemptible a cad as one could find in a year's travel, boasted at the Huntsville Hotel the other night of his intimacy with several women who move in the right circles, mentioning them by name. A gentlemen present mentioned the matter to the brother of one of the ladies and he promptly went on the warpath. When cornered the young puppy denied everything and declared the informant was a liar. This

stirred up the man who carried the news, and he also started out looking for gore. The society gent has been laying low ever since and hasn't been found. It is a wonder, by the way, that this fellow hasn't had the top of his head blown off long ago. He makes use of the names of women in a manner that would mean certain death in some communities.

- A very shocking story is going the rounds at present relative to an elderly physician who is well known to almost anybody in town. If false, it is a horrible situation that no one should tolerate and there may be some after developments.

- I understand that a very warm reception is awaiting a certain drummer when he next turns up at New Market. He engaged in a flirtation with a well known married lady, and chancing to see her pass, he wrote a very tender little note on the back of a business card and sent it to her by one of the servants. The lady's husband

was out of town at the time, but when he returned she gave him the missive. Meantime the drummer has left town. The husband swears that he will thrash him within an inch of his life when he reappears.

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The Birthday Present

by Judy C. Smith

It's been many years ago that my father asked his little princess what she wanted for her 16th birthday. I was so excited; The only thing I had been dreaming of was a four-poster canopy bed.

The next day I ran out of our house at the top of White Circle all the way to town to Mason Furniture Store on Clinton Street looking for the perfect bed. I stayed in the store all morning lying in every bed; day dreaming of what it would be like to have a real canopy bed. At dinner that night I announced that I had been to Masons and found the perfect bed. Now all I had to do was wait to see if Daddy was really going to have it sent out on August 30th.

My friend Anne Walker Forgey had me over for lunch and I must have called home about 50 times to ask Mother if my special birthday present had arrived, but she said no. Finally I walked all the way home from Ward Avenue to White Circle rather disappointed. I was on the verge of tears, but consoled myself thinking, maybe next year.

Upon arrival home, Mother and Anne had a surprise

The average person who quits smoking requires one less hour of sleep per night.

birthday party waiting for me, with all of the fixings outside for a BarBQ.

As I ran inside to change my clothes, there it was all set up in my room, the bed I had dreamed of. I don't know how Daddy afforded it, but he certainly did make his princess' dreams come true.

Three generations have now slept in the bed. Their names are carved on the back of the headboard. Maybe I'll be lucky enough to carve the fourth generation on it before I die.



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TIMELESS HOUSEHOLD HINTS

- Preserve your fine china plates and saucers from scratches by putting paper doilies between each one when you stack them.

- Half a lemon in a cup of water before you eat breakfast will prevent a headache and really helps with your daily regularity.

- Turning saucepan handles away from the front of your stove will prevent hazardous accidents.

- So you want to demonstrate growing plants to your children? Try this - get a bag of dried lima beans and soak 3 of them in water overnight. Plant in soil using a clear pot or glass, so that the beans are visible from the outside. Water and place in a sunny place. Growth should begin in about 24 hours.

- Heat travels rapidly through wet materials, so don't use a wet cloth to handle any hot utensil.

- Olive oil is great for your face, ladies. Just rub a drop of the oil over your face and neck each night and in no time you'll see a reduction in those fine wrinkles.

- Rice has a better flavor if washed in hot water prior to cooking.

- If you awaken at night, and can't get back to sleep, try drinking a cup

of hot water mixed with a teaspoon of lemon juice and some honey.

- Anything made with sugar, milk and eggs should never be allowed to reach the boiling point.

- To thrill your kids at bath time, add a few drops of food coloring to their bath bubbles.

- If you have a chenille spread that you would like to stay fluffy, wash it in your washer as usual, then hang it outside, folded in half inside out. The tufts will rub against each other and fluff them out.

- A big blotter makes a good lining for a bureau drawer. It is practical and will retain the scent of your favorite cologne.

- Squeaky floors can be made silent by dusting a little talcum powder between the boards.

- Line your kitchen shelves with colorful oilcloth. It looks good and will keep a lot cleaner than paper.

- To keep your linens white while storing them, wrap them in blue paper. The paper prevents them from turning yellow.

- To remove a grease spot from your wallpaper, hold a piece of blotting paper to it and iron over it for a few seconds.

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News From the Year 1921

News From Huntsville and Around The World

New York Passes Law on Dancing

The New York State Legislature has passed a law giving a state commissioner the right to censor dances. In Utah, a statute is pending providing for the imprisonment of women wearing skirts higher than three inches above the ankle. And in Virginia, it's the décolletage, front and back, that lawmakers are going to shrink.

Across the country, American youths are kicking up their heels and indulging themselves in what seems to be a frenzy of rebellion against the standards and values of their parents and grandparents. And according to a recent survey by the New York-based Literary Digest, a majority of college officials and reporters believe that the burgeoning youth revolt of our times is a sign of a serious moral crisis.

New styles of dress and dance have been singled out as the chief culprits. "There is a minimum of clothes and a maximum of cosmetics, head decorations, fans and jewelry," according to the New York University News. "It is, indeed, an alarming situation when our 20th century debutante comes out arrayed like a South Sea Island savage."

The New Mexico College of Agriculture and Mechanical Arts newspaper writes that gliding smoothly over a dance floor while keeping in rhythm

with music is pleasing to witness, "but to jig and hop around like a chicken on a red-hot stove, at the same time shaking the body until it quivers like a disturbed glass of jello, is not only tremendously suggestive, but it is an offense against common decency that would not be permitted in a semi-respectable road-house."

But the respected nation offers a less alarmist view. "The rank and file of the virtues have not greatly changed," it reports reassuringly. "All that appears is a certain pendulum swing from one repression or indulgence to another, reaction setting in whenever the virtues or vices of an age begin to bore it."

Immigrant Act Sets National Quotas

Too many refugees from war-torn Europe have purportedly denied American-born workers their rightful employment. Heeding labor's complaints, Congress has instituted restrictions on immigration.

The quota limits immigration to three percent of each nationality that lived in America in 1910.

Northern and Western Europeans are favored; about 200,000 will now enter each year. Russians, Italians and Greeks will be admitted at one-fifth their previous number.

Can Female Freedom Lead to Divorce?

The St. Louis Court of Domestic Relations attributes the increase in local divorces to the growing economic independence of women.

Nearly 700 divorce decrees were granted by the court during one of its last terms. Statewide, Missouri has experienced a 100% increase in divorces since 1896.

Statistics both confirm and refute the board's contention. A record eight million women are now employed nationwide, and the average number of children to support continues to decrease.

However, their pay would not encourage women to divorce: they often receive half the salary of a man doing equivalent work.

The income may be a helpful supplement to a husband's salary, but can hardly sustain a family.

You Gotta Be Kidding

In one of the most unusual elections in Huntsville's history, the winner could not be found to be sworn in! Erwin Wallace, in 1850, was running for the position of Mayor, when sensing he did not have enough votes to win, decided to move to Mississippi. When the votes were counted, Wallace was declared to be the winner and a search party was formed to try to locate and induce him to return.

MY SMART DOGS

by Billy Joe Cooley



I love animals and always try to keep one with me. They can sure brighten one's day.

When I was in my sporty years between 20 and 30, those who build fancy cars came out with a newfangled auto which had headlights set on a timer, they'd cut themselves off when adjusted properly.

I bought such a car, a big Chrysler. A few days later I took my cocker spaniel 'Rummy' with me on a visit high in the Cumberland Mountains of East Tennessee. There apparently had never been a snazzy car like mine in that vicinity.

It was shortly after dark when we stopped at a country store and immediately a group of mountain men sitting on the porch started admiring the machine. Almost instantly one of the men called out to me that I had left my lights on, not knowing that I had set the lights on a 30-second delay.

I yelled back to the car at Rummy and instructed him to "turn them lights out."

Of course two seconds later the lights went out and those men were amazed that a dog could be taught such a chore. I was an instant hit in the hinterlands.

That was many years ago. Rummy has long gone to where the good puppies go. My current dog, a Chinese Red Wolf named Jenny, is getting along in years and likes to stretch out on the back seat and snooze.

The other day I pulled into the crowded parking lot at the Super Walmart Shopping Center and rolled down the car windows to make sure my precious friend had fresh air.

She was stretched full-out on the back seat and I wanted to impress upon her that she must remain there!

I walked to the curb backward, pointing my finger at the car and saying emphatically, "Now you stay. Do you hear me? Stay, Stay!"

The driver of a nearby car, a pretty blonde young lady, gave me a puzzled look and said, "Why don't you just put it in 'park'?"

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Heard On the Street

by Cathey Carney



We had so many calls identifying **Erin Dacy** of WAAY Channel 31 as the little girl in the January Photo of the Month. She is just as beautiful now as she was as a young girl and hasn't changed a bit! Congratulations go to **June Mann** of Huntsville who was the first correct caller. June is retired from working on the Arsenal and loves to play golf. She's married to her sweetie **Jimmy D. Mann** and they have watched Erin on TV for years. June saw Erin at the Space & Rocket Center while she (Erin) was giving a talk and still remembers it!

Special Note: the **Pilot Club of Huntsville** is hosting their Basket Bingo for Project Life-saver at **St. Stephens Episcopal Church**, not at St. Thomas as reported. St. Stephens is located at 8020 Whitesburg Dr. and it is being held on Saturday, Feb. 22 at 9am. If you want breakfast come a bit earlier. This is their annual fund raiser that goes to help clients if they wander away from their caregivers. It's a great cause and always gets a good crowd!

Sam Keith coordinated the annual dinner for his Hot Rod Friends close to the holidays and the location was perfect. It was held at Terra Nova near Providence on University Drive and, even though there were several large parties going on at the same time, the service & food were excellent. Some of the folks enjoying the evening with Sam and I were **Clay & Gwynn Johnson, Tom & Ann Schuman, Phil & Georgie Bailey, and Mike & Linda Robinson.**

Sam & Liz Zeman had breakfast with me recently at Gibson's restaurant and you sure can't beat those fresh biscuits & gravy & sausage! Especially on a cold dreary morning!

OK, that person you saw at the store **stockpiling incandescent light bulbs** was me. I refuse to be told what kind of lights I can burn in my own home. Won't do it. Also, the bulbs that are now replacing the incandescent contain mercury, which is

not good to get on your hands.

In last month's column I mentioned that there were a couple of streets off California Street in northeast Huntsville that were real names spelled either backwards or forwards. The one I had heard about from a reader was **Tunlaw**, which, sure enough, is **Walnut** in reverse. Thanks to **Butch Adcock** who came up with another one - **Retlaw** in reverse is **Walter!** If anyone has another one, email or call me! I'm not sure how many there are total but it's interesting!

The BB&T Bank main office on Church Street would like to give a big welcome to **Tara Barch** who is a new Relationship Teller. She joins the team made up of **Margaret Riethmaier, Bethany Frazier, Sean Campos, Jane Eller and Mishelle Ross.** It makes you feel like you're in a small family bank (even though there are many branches in this area), all because of this group.

In the January issue we ran a story entitled "Why is it Named That?" by **Dex Nilsson.** It was about 3 main roads in Huntsville and how they got their names.

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 knows all about final resting places.



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At the end I noted that Dex's book contains stories behind 250 places in Huntsville & Madison County and that the book is available at **Shaver's Bookstore**. Well, it isn't. The book has been out of print for 5 years and is no longer available at Shaver's. I apologize for that and would suggest that you Google the book if you're interested in finding a used copy.

Derry Kearns, who works at the Downtown Y on Church Street, gave me an amazing idea for a different kind of dessert the other day after my workout. She sprinkles instant espresso or coffee granules over a bowl of good vanilla ice cream! That sounds Heavenly cause I love coffee AND vanilla ice cream. I'll add some toasted almond slices & toasted coconut too for a really gourmet treat.

I recently spoke with **Martha Miller Tomb** of Knoxville, TN who has Miller family relatives all over the north Alabama area. She wanted me to send out a special Hello to her brother **Paul Miller** of Leeds, AL and let him know she loves him SO much!

I had not heard of "**Ollie**" at the **University of Alabama/Huntsville** until I saw a presentation given by **Linda McAlister** at a recent Golden K Kiwanis meeting. Linda is the Chairwoman of the Publicity Committee for Ollie. Ollie stands for Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at UAH and they are

celebrating their 20th year this year! It only costs \$15/year to be a member and you are able to take courses (at varying costs), visit new places, see presentations, etc. Too much to put here but it's perfect if you're looking to continually learn new and fascinating skills or facts and want to socialize with new and interesting people. Check out www.pcs.uah.edu/Join OLLI for more info.

We're trying something new this month to see how detail-oriented our readers are. Somewhere in this magazine is hidden a **small heart** (for Valentine's day of course) and whoever finds it and calls first gets a free subscription to the magazine!

Here was an interesting message that folks in the Old Town & Twickenham neighborhoods recently received. If you see a bee swarm (something like a bundle of bee's holding onto a branch tightly formed into a large mass), don't try to know it down or remove or spray them. Contact me at Old Huntsville and I'll put you in touch with the gentleman who will come to your home and remove them and place them in a hive. Here's what he says:

"DO NOT HARM THEM.

Bees are incredibly important to our ecosystem and just last year we lost (nationally) over 32% of all hives to Colony Collapse Disorder.

Think about this... every 5th bite of food you eat is pollinated by bees. We need them.

When bees swarm they are not aggressive. They are looking for a new home. They've stocked up on honey and are following their queen. I've held thousands of bees in my hands with no protection when they are swarming. They don't sting unless YOU provoke them.

Contact me and I'll come and capture them. Heck... I'll even get honey for you out of the hive later."

Hug the one you love for Valentines Day and all through the year. Have a warm and safe February!

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RECIPES

Food for Love

Cocoa Kiss Cookies

- 2 sticks butter, softened
- 2/3 c. sugar
- 1 t. vanilla extract
- 1/4 c. cocoa
- 1-2/3 c. plain flour
- 1 c. finely chopped almonds
- 9 oz. Hershey's kisses, unwrapped

Powdered sugar

In a large mixer bowl, beat butter, sugar and vanilla until creamy. In a separate bowl, stir together flour and cocoa, blend into butter mixture. Add pecans, beat on low speed until well blended. Refrigerate dough about 1 hour or until firm enough to handle.

Heat oven to 375°. Mold scant teaspoonful of dough around each unwrapped chocolate piece, covering chocolate piece completely. Shape into balls,

place on ungreased cookie sheet. Bake 10-12 minutes or until set.

Cool slightly, remove to wire rack and cool completely. Roll in powdered sugar.

it. Pour into pie shells and put in fridge for several hours.

Lemon Teaser

- 1 c. boiling water
- 3 T. fresh lemon juice
- 16 oz. whipping cream
- 8 oz. cream cheese
- 1 c. sugar
- 1 t. vanilla extract
- 2 pkg. Lady Fingers

In first bowl mix jello with boiling water til dissolved. Add lemon juice. In second bowl whip cream til stiff. In third bowl mix cream cheese, sugar and vanilla. Mix in the jello mixture, then fold it into the whipped cream. Arrange Lady Fingers around a spring form pan and on the bottom. Pour in the mixture and refrigerate for 5-6 hours.

Millionaire's Pie

- 2 graham cracker pie shells
- 8 oz. crushed pineapple
- 8 oz. mandarin oranges
- 8 oz. Cool Whip
- 1 can Eagle Brand condensed milk
- 1/3 c. toasted coconut
- 1/2 c. chopped pecans
- Fresh Lemon Juice

Drain crushed pineapple and mandarin oranges. Cut oranges in two. Mix ingredients except lemon juice. Add just enough lemon juice to thicken it, not enough that you can taste

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Hot Fudge Pudding Cake

- 3/4 c. sugar
- 1 c. flour
- 3 T. cocoa
- 2 t. baking powder
- 1/2 c. milk
- 1/3 c. melted butter
- 1 t. vanilla extract
- 1/2 c. sugar
- 1/2 c. brown sugar
- 4 T. cocoa
- 1-1/4 c. hot coffee

Combine first four dry ingredients in a medium bowl. Blend in milk, butter and vanilla, beat til smooth. Pour into 8" or 9" square pan. Combine sugars and 4 tablespoons cocoa and sprinkle over batter in the pan. Pour hot coffee over the top and DO NOT STIR. Bake at 350 for 40 minutes. Let stand 15 minutes. Spoon sauce from bottom of pan over the cake when serving and garnish with whipped cream or ice cream.

Date Night Bread

- 1 c. chopped dates
- 1 t. baking soda
- 1 c. boiling coffee
- 1 c. sugar
- 1 T. butter
- 1 egg
- 1-1/2 c. flour
- Pinch salt
- 1 c. chopped nuts
- 1 t. vanilla extract

Pour boiling coffee over chopped dates and soda. Allow to stand. Combine remaining

ingredients and mix well. Add coffee/date mixture and mix again. Bake at 300 degrees for one and a half hours.

Love Muffins

- 2/3 c. melted butter
- 1 c. light brown sugar
- 2 eggs
- 1/2 c. flour
- 1 c. chopped pecans
- Whole pecan halves for garnish

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. In a medium glass bowl, melt butter in the microwave and mix in the sugar. Mix in eggs, then flour and chopped nuts. Pour into buttered mini-muffin pans filling cup 2/3 full. Add a pecan half on top of each. Bake for 12-15 minutes. Stick a clean broom straw in to make sure they're done.

Sweetheart Hot Tea

- 4 lemons
- 1 c. sugar
- 3 tea bags
- 2 c. pineapple juice
- 1/2 gal. boiling water

Cut lemons in half. Put in large Pyrex bowl. Add sugar and tea bags. Cover with boiling water and let stand 3 hours. Stir well to dissolve sugar, then strain. Do not squeeze lemons. Add the pineapple juice and serve hot or cold over ice cubes.

If you like it a bit stronger, just add a couple more teabags.



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Heard Around Town in 1907



- Charles Hawk, a young painter of Huntsville, about 24 years old, while attempting to jump on a running freight train that was passing Dallas Mills Sunday afternoon, missed his footing and fell with his right leg under the wheels. It was so badly crushed that it had to be amputated three inches above the knee.

- On Thursday last, Mr. John Hertzler was riding in a buggy on Clinton Street in this city. His horse took fright near the Baptist Church, ran away, and ran the buggy against a tree on the opposite side of the street, throwing Mr. Hertzler out and breaking loose. The horse ran off. Mr. H. was knocked insensible, was taken into Mr. Thos. Jamar's house, remained there for two days and so far recovered enough to be taken home.

- In search of Mrs. Frances W. Gerkin, a music teacher, nearly blind, who left Norfolk, Virginia some years ago and is reported to have been drowned while crossing the Tennessee River, four or five nights ago.

- A son of Lira Elliot, of Lincoln Village, aged ten years, was ill for a year and although having a ravenous appetite, grew emaciated. His physician gave him some medicine that produced nausea and he was choked by the appearance of a snake which required all the doctor's force to draw from his mouth. It was striped and eighteen inches in length. The lad recovered and is feeling better.



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On July 10, 1875 Mary McLeod Bethune was born to former slave parents in Mayesville, South Carolina. She was the fifteenth of seventeen children. She would become one of the most significant forces of her era in the emerging struggle for civil rights.

One day when Mrs. Bethune was traveling on a train during the early days of segregation, she was seated in what was called the "Lower 13", where any black traveler with a first class ticket was placed. It was also a time when there were those who would not call a black woman Missus or address her with respect.

The conductor came up to her and asked, "Auntie, can you make good biscuits?"

Mrs. Bethune said that she looked up and replied, "I am an advisor to President Roosevelt. I am the founder of a four-year accredited college. I am an organizer of women. I am the organizer and founder of the National Council of Negro Women. I am considered a leader among women. And yes, I do make good biscuits."

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Fried Potato Cakes

Calamari

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The Red Dress

by Elizabeth Edwards

As a young woman Susan would lie in bed, early in the morning while it was still dark outside, and wonder what it would feel like to be in love. She knew it would make her feel warm and giddy all over. She could even visualize feeling light-headed as she fantasized about an imaginary beau who would sweep her up in his arms before carrying her off to a never-never land where they would live forever.

Unfortunately, most times her dreams would be interrupted by the crying of a baby or the loud snores of her husband. As she pulled herself out of bed to begin preparing breakfast, she would once again come face to face with the stark reality of her life.

She was a married woman, with a child, and love was something she would never know.

Susan Baxter was born in Huntsville in 1919, the daughter of a God-fearing man who made a living delivering coal to homes around town. He and his wife were solid pillars of the community; never raising their voices, always paying their bills on time and attending church every time the doors were open.

The church they attended, Brother Sharp's "Welcome All Congregation", was located on the fringes of a neighborhood in Huntsville known as the Honey Hole, a notorious area where gambling, bootlegging and prostitution flourished openly with little interference

from the authorities. The church was a small frame building that had probably once been a store but had grown into such disrepair, the owner was willing to rent it for the few dollars a month Brother Sharp paid.

The Welcome All Church was in many ways typical of the small independent churches that were a phenomenon of the southern culture. Part Baptist, part Holiness and part Pentecostal, the congregation usually focused on a charismatic leader who interpreted the "Word" according to personal "revelations" he received

from God.

The services were conducted in the typical "Hell, Fire and Damnation" manner with all the women and girls sitting on one side and the men and boys on the other. All the women wore long black cotton dresses, with the hems brushing the top of their shoes, and their hair tied up in tight buns on top of their heads. The men wore white, long-sleeved shirts with the top button always fastened no matter how hot it was. Adornments such as hair bows or suspenders were frowned upon, and public displays of affection were thought of as being scandalous.

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ing up," Susan later remembered, "I never saw a husband hold his wife's hand."

The Welcome All Church was not as inclusive as the name might suggest. Brother Sharp taught that the world was a sinful place and that true believers should limit their contacts with outsiders. To have any social contact with someone not belonging to the church was considered improper. Children were sent to school for only a few years, just long enough to acquire a crude understanding of the basic skills, before being pulled out so they would not be corrupted.

Despite Susan's meager education, she became a voracious reader, eagerly devouring everything she got her hands on. As a young teenager she discovered the "Dime Romance Novels", a popular series of romantic novels that sold for a dime. All the novels had the same basic theme; boy meets girl, boy and girl fall in love, boy and girl get married and live happily ever after.

Susan had to hide the novels as her parents would not allow any book except the Bible in the house. The one time she was caught reading one she was forced to "confess and ask for forgiveness" in front of Brother Sharp.

The first inclination that her life was about to change came when she was fifteen years old. One Sunday morning as she was about to leave the church and walk home with her parents, her father told her to wait; Edwin Sharp, the son of Brother Sharp, wanted to walk her home.

Edwin Sharp was a young version of his father. Tall, rail thin, never smiling and always with a Bible in his hand if he was not working. At twenty-two years old, he was considered to be one of the most eligible bachelors in the church.

For the next several weeks Edwin walked Susan home every Sunday. There wasn't much conversation; they really didn't know one another enough to feel comfortable talking about everyday things and they had

nothing else in common. Mostly they just walked in silence.

One afternoon Edwin and his father suddenly appeared at Susan's home. Her mother, quickly sizing up the situation, took her into the kitchen where they remained until the visitors had left. When Susan entered the room where her father was, he motioned for her to sit down.

"Brother Sharp's boy has asked for your hand in marriage."

One look at her mother, sitting with hands folded and a smile on her face, told Susan that



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her future had already been decided.

"I don't want to. I don't love him! I don't hardly even know him!"

Mother tried to be persuasive. "He's a good provider and he's a good God-fearing man. What else could you want?"

Susan burst out crying. "I don't love him. Can't you understand?"

The argument continued until finally her father put an end to it. "Love has nothing to do with it. Those books have put silly ideas in your head. You will do what is best for you!"

As hard as it may sound today, Susan had little choice. She could either agree to the marriage and make everyone happy or she could refuse and become an outcast among her own family and friends.

Susan Baxter and Edwin Sharp were married five days after her sixteenth birthday. Years later she would recall the ceremony. "While Brother Sharp was praying, a train passed by behind the church. Its whistle was blowing and I remember wondering where it was going. Suddenly I decided I wanted to just walk out of the church and go with it. I tried, I really tried but my legs would not move. I didn't have the courage."

The next week was busy as the newly married couple moved into their own home and church members stopped by with wedding gifts. Edwin's mother Lula purchased a new clock for the bride. Susan was thrilled with the present until she learned its purpose.

"Edwin is just like his father," Lula explained. "He likes his breakfast - one egg, one biscuit and two slices of bacon at exactly 6:15 every morning and dinner should be on the table at 6:00 sharp every evening. He needs a clean shirt

every Sunday, Tuesday and Friday and he likes the collar starched." This was followed by another fifteen minutes of detailed instructions of what Edwin expected from his wife.

Completely overwhelmed, Susan blurted out. "But what if I don't want to?"

A puzzled look appeared on Lula's face. "But why would you not want to?"

Lula Sharp was a huge woman, probably tipping the scales at two hundred and seventy five pounds and with a heart just as big. Although her hair was snow white, her upper lip boasted a black moustache. She later confided to Susan that she had once tried to shave it but her husband had forbidden it, saying she was vain.

Despite the difference in age, the two women became friends of a sort. Susan called her husband Mr. Sharp, just as the other wives called their husbands by their last names. One day while washing clothes Susan asked Lula what her husband called her. Try as she might, she could not ever recall Brother Sharp calling his wife by any name.

Lula looked startled by the question but was too honest not to reply. After thinking for a long moment she replied, "Woman."

"What does Edwin call you?" Lula asked.

Susan did not have to think about the answer. "Nothing," she replied as she angrily sorted through the dirty clothes. "He never calls me anything."

Lula, perhaps remembering when she was a child bride, wrapped Susan in her massive arms. "Honey, you just have to pray. We all have our places in this world."

Years passed and Susan tried to become the dutiful wife. Dinner was on the table every night at 6:00 and she starched the collars of her

husband's shirts. A daughter, Lizzie, was born.

And every night Susan would lie in bed with a stranger, cringing at the thought of him even touching her.

One day when her daughter was about four years old Susan was shopping and without thinking anything of it, purchased some paper cutout dolls. That afternoon when Edwin came home Lizzie was sitting on the floor cutting out the dolls and dressing them in various outfits. With hardly a second look he grabbed the dolls and threw them into the fireplace, saying, "She's got no business with such foolishness."

Suddenly a feeling of revulsion and hopelessness engulfed Susan. For a split second she saw her daughter's future. Her daughter would grow up to be just like her and it would be Susan's fault.

Grabbing Lizzie in her arms, Susan ran from the house. For hours she wandered the streets of Huntsville, her mind in a turmoil, trying to decide what to do. Finally, hours after dark, Susan returned home. Her husband was sitting on the front porch waiting for her.

Without any preamble Susan put into words what she had just dared to think about before. "I want a divorce."

"That's impossible," he replied with a blank look on his face. "Why would you even think something like that?"

Susan tried to explain. "I just don't love you and I have never loved you."

"It's amazing how fast the kids learn to drive a car, yet they're totally unable to understand the lawn mower, dishwasher or vacuum cleaner."

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JOIN US AND WE WILL SET ANOTHER PLACE AT THE TABLE

Golden K Kiwanis of Huntsville, Alabama

When Edwin reached for his Bible, Susan fled to her daughter's bedroom where she made a pallet on the floor. The next morning when she got up he had already left.

That afternoon Edwin was late getting home from work. When he did arrive he was accompanied by his father and mother as well as several other members of the church. Brother Sharp motioned everyone to be seated and announced, "We need to pray for Satan to leave our sister."

Susan lost it. "Get out of my house!" She screamed. "Get out of my life! Get out!"

During the next several weeks Susan moved out. She rented a room in a boarding house and found a job. The lady who ran the boarding house agreed to watch Lizzie while Susan worked. But, if she thought her troubles were over, she was mistaken. It was 1939 and divorces were almost unheard of.

She talked to an attorney about a divorce and was told it would be expensive and hard to get. Edwin was a good husband and it was doubtful the court would rule against him. "In fact," the attorney told her, "Edwin will probably get custody of your daughter if he tries."

Edwin must have been talking to the same lawyer. Several days later Susan returned to the boarding house to find that he had taken Lizzie. That afternoon she confronted Edwin and with tears in her eyes, begged him to let her have her daughter back.

His eyes were stone cold when he replied, "Come home, do the Lord's will and you can see her."

Edwin, his family and the congregation made it impossible for her to have any contact with her daughter, no matter how hard she tried. The only time she could see Lizzie was at church where she was surrounded by his family.

Days, weeks and months passed. Susan attended every church service hoping for a chance to hold her daughter's hand or to tell her how much she loved her. In a perverse sort of way many of the church members seemed to approve of the arrangement. There was no divorce and it was clear to everyone that Edwin was still in control of his wife.

Susan had given up all hope when one afternoon she stopped at a used clothing store hoping to find something that would fit her. She had sorted through most of the clothes and was about to leave when she noticed a dress at the bottom of a box. It was bright red, of a silky material with bows on each shoulder. It was the kind of dress you would have expected to see in a burlesque show. For the first time in months a smile played on her face.

The next Sunday, Susan timed her entrance into the church perfectly. Brother Sharp was in his element, condemning everyone who did not believe like him to eternal Hell, and the congregation was on their second round of Amen's. Looking straight ahead, Susan slowly made her way down the aisle and took her regular seat.

Gasps broke out as the members gawked at the red dress. Never had the Welcome All Church been defamed in such a way. The congregation shifted their attention to Edwin who was sitting in his customary place staring straight ahead, his face almost matching the

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color of Susan's dress.

After the service Edwin confronted her, telling her that she could not dress that way in church. Susan looked at him coldly and said, "I want Lizzie and I want a divorce."

It became almost a dramatic comedy. Each week Susan would show up wearing the red dress and Edwin would grow more flustered as the congregation whispered and pointed. At the end of one service a group of members actually approached him and demanded that he do something about his wife.

It was obvious that something had to be done, so Brother Sharp took matters into his own hands, announcing that the next week he was going to preach from the Letters of Paul. Everyone knew what he meant. A woman was to be submissive to her husband and obedient in church.

The next week began like a repeat of the previous weeks. Susan, dressed in her bright red silky dress, made her way to the woman's section where she took her seat. Edwin was in his seat staring straight ahead and trying to ignore the looks and whispers.

Brother Sharp started off in good form. Quoting scripture, he explained how the Lord had ordained that everything in his kingdom had a place

and a woman's place was to be subservient to her husband.

"At the end of time God will take his vengeance," he shouted, "and you had better be ready!"

Warming to his own words, he let his voice rise to a feverish pitch as he railed about women who adorned their bodies with fancy clothes, ribbons and bows. Suddenly, just as his voice reached a rousing crescendo, he stopped in mid-sentence while staring at the women's section.

Every face in the church turned to look as Lula Sharp, the preacher's wife, reached into her bag and pulled out a small red bow which she carefully fastened to the shoulder of her dress. Titters of laughter broke out among the congregation as they struggled to keep their composure.

The following week Edwin agreed to

the divorce, explaining that his father had had a revelation.

Nine years later my grandmother met her true love. They were married and lived happily ever after until her death in 1992.

She never talked about religion except to say that her God was one of love, not of vengeance.



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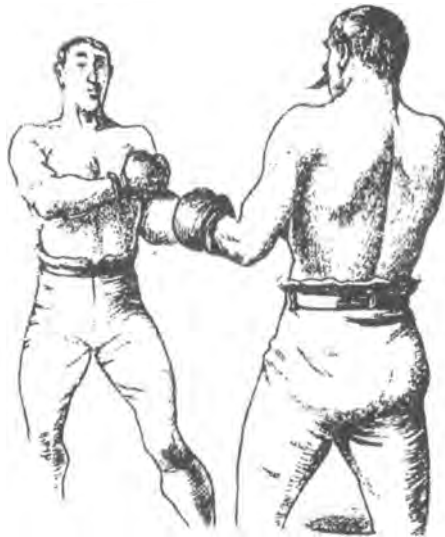
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The Battling Little Sergeant

by James Record



In the 1930s Huntsville boxing fans talked proudly of Sammy Baker, the toughest boxer to come out of the city in that era. Baker fought throughout the Deep South under the tutelage of Bushy Bolton and "Kid" Clant, two of Huntsville's early boxing promoters.

Clant died in the mid-thirties while hitting a punching bag.

Baker was born on February 20, 1902 in New Hope. At age 16 he went to work as a weaver in the Merrimack Mill. He enlisted in the Army

at age 18 and began boxing. Baker fought in the Army Olympics in Hawaii in 1924. He earned a seat on the U.S. Boxing Team and went all the way to the finals before losing a disputed decision to Al Mello. Mello went on to win a gold medal in the Paris Olympics.

Sammy Baker turned pro in 1924 while still a sergeant in the Army. On June 15, 1927 Baker knocked out Ace Hodgens in the seventh round at the Polo Grounds. He said it was his most memorable

fight and claimed that Welterweight champion Joe Dundee refused to give him a shot at the title after witnessing the fight.

In 1929, Baker fought Tommy Jordan two times in Huntsville. The first was at Big Spring Park before a crowd of over ten thousand.

On May 23, 1929 the rematch was held at the old Huntsville Fairgrounds before about twelve thousand fans.

It was the largest crowd to ever attend a sporting event in the Tennessee Valley at that time. This is significant since the population of Huntsville at that time was 11,554.

In 1931, "Young" Stribling came to Huntsville to fight Baker after losing to Max Schmeling.

Baker retired in 1937, never having had the chance to fight for the title.

He will never be the champ in the record book, but to a generation of Huntsvillians he will always be the "Battling Little Sergeant."

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Helpful Tips

- It's really cold and many of you are using your fireplaces. When you order and stack wood, make sure that you don't put it on the ground, because it will attract many bugs all year round. Build a frame of 2x4's and concrete blocks - the wood should be stacked at least twenty inches above the ground.

And, when you stack, stack with the bark facing up - it will repel water so you start with drier logs.

- Position a section of old inner tube on your garage wall so that when you open the car door it doesn't hit anything hard.

- Dark shoe polish can make an excellent finish for wooden frames - it adds color as well as a waterproof shine.

- Use an old waiter's trick - if you have a water spot on wood, put a pat of butter inside a cloth napkin and rub.

- An extra bread box will hold all

the tools you'll need to take care of any household repair.

- You'll want to clean your dishwasher occasionally by filling it up with warm water and adding about a gallon of distilled vinegar. Let it go through its cycle and you'll have a fresh-smelling washer.

- I still buy sheets one size smaller for the top sheet - in other words, for a queen size bed buy queen size fitted sheet, but full size top sheet. It still covers you but without so much excess and is cheaper.

- When I first slept in our new bed it was awful, because we bought a firm bed and it was uncomfortable. So I went out and got one of the "eggshell" foam mattress covers that just lays on top of the mattress underneath the fitted sheet, and it is so comfortable.

- This really cold weather has made many car doors stick the next day after a really cold night. Prepare for that in advance by spraying some of that silicon spray on your gaskets

(rubber sealing) on the inside of each door and you'll find it won't be able to freeze, as the silicon dispels the water.

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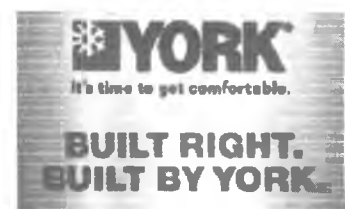
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Terrible Flu Epidemic Hits Madison County with Countless Number of Deaths - 1918

From an interview with Dr. Carl Grote, Sr. from a 1958 article in the Huntsville Times

People died "like flies" in Huntsville and Madison County that fall of 1918.

Caskets were set on porches to await the undertaker. Extra physicians, including six Army doctors, were called to the area.

Nine members of one family died. You could scarcely pass a cemetery in daylight hours without seeing a grave-side service being conducted for another dead one. Horse-drawn carts took many bodies to graveyards. No funerals were held in churches and even had there been, few people would have attended.

People stayed home.

Seven cotton mills of this area were shut down in their busiest season. Stores closed. Garbage collectors were called off Huntsville streets to dig graves.

Huntsville became almost a ghost town.

Entire families were incapacitated. Red Cross workers rode "soup kitchens" through communities feeding stricken people. Every train that chugged into Huntsville's station brought a box with a person returning home, dead.

People forgot the war that was tapering to an end across the ocean. A killer was in their own midst - a killer called "flu".

The death rate for Madison county in 1918 was 26.2 percent per thousand. "Most of those died in the fall, of flu." Dr. Carl Grote Sr., said this week.

Dr. Grote is one of the physicians who fought the epidemic here. He is one who survived. Four Madison County doctors did not. Three died in one day.

Dr. Grote came here in 1918 as Madison County's first health director. "I came especially to fight typhoid," he said "because there had been 130 cases of it in the county in 1917."

But the young doctor found more than typhoid during his first year here. Late in September, 1918, rumors were spreading about the terrible "Spanish Influenza" invading the United States.

"Many doctors thought it was being over-rated." Dr. Grote said. "A local newspaper editor scoffed at the idea of an epidemic hitting this country. But it did. Its first Alabama target

was Madison County," Dr. Grote said.

His first encounter with it came in Hazel Green. "Dr. W. B. England called me to visit his patient in Hazel Green," he said. "It was an Army man who had just returned from the shipyard of Philadelphia." His illness was diagnosed as influenza.

"Philadelphia had the highest death rate in the United States during the epidemic." Dr. Grote said, "and we felt this one brought the germ here."

The soldier's brother immediately took the disease. And the soldiers had peddled beef in the Lincoln village all day before succumbing to the sickness.

"In less than a week it spread like a sage fire, in the Lincoln village first." said Dr. Grote. "We thought we would quarantine the people, but it spread so rapidly we didn't have a chance. People died like flies."

"They would have a chill, then a fever... their lungs would seem to liquefy... then they would turn blue and die. Nothing did them any good. It was the saddest thing, we had no treatment. The old timers were still purging the patients. I think this may have done more harm than good."

Most doctors fell victim to the disease, although Dr. Grote did not. "In one day Dr. Thomas and Dr. Allen died." A New Market physician also became a victim of flu.

An SOS went out for medical help. Four civilian and six Army doctors came. Huntsville had only one small infirmary. The county was divided into districts with a doctor in charge of each one.

"They went from house to house treating people. There was someone sick in nearly every one."

Dr. Grote directed the operations and also made calls himself. "People were begging for doctors. In my forty years of practice, I've never seen anything to equal it. It was pitiful."

It took a month to get order out of the chaos. It lasted here the entire fall and into the following year. The veteran doctor recalled an "outstanding Red Cross nurse" who came to the area to join the local health department. "She went to the

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Lincoln village the first day and stayed there, nursing those people. She was a kind, gentle lady. She was dead within a week."

An Army doctor noted Dr. Grotes' dismay because nothing seemed to stop the flu's steady slaughter. "You've lost your nerve," the Army physician told him. "That was before the Red Cross nurse died," Dr. Grote said. "I asked him to treat her, since I could do no good. She died right in front of him."

The imported doctors, except those from an Army post in Chattanooga, didn't stay here long. They were needed at home because the epidemic had spread over the state.

It jumped from here to the Muscle Shoals district, where a mass of people were building a dam. In foreign military camps and base hospitals in this country many soldiers died at the hands of the flu.

"It was no respecter of persons, it killed rich and poor alike. Many prominent persons died with it," said Dr. Grote.

The Red Cross sent mobile "soup kitchens" through communities with food for many sick people. "They did an excellent job," Dr. Grote said. "Mrs. Bertha Pratt headed the Red Cross here. She was not afraid of anything. She never got sick."

"Flu masks" became popular as people tied cloth patches around their mouths while they waited on sick people. Neighbors wanted to help stricken families, yet were afraid. Many times food or coal would be placed on the door steps and the sick ones would have to come after it.

"People were afraid," Dr. Grote said. "They stayed close. This town looked like Sleepy Hollow. But a lot of people forgot themselves and fought it, many natives and many Red Cross workers, too."

Druggist Ben Lee Young became ill and closed his store. "Charlie Lane, who later became Sheriff, opened the drug store and operated it so people could get their prescriptions filled," he said.

Dr. Grote recalled one man who

took no chances of contracting the killing sickness. "They called me from New Hope that all their doctors were sick and said 'these people are dying, can't you come?'"

"I hired a taxi-cab and went. We found entire families sick, near death's door. I did what I could and we started back. It was dark and raining. It was in January. The taxi was lighted by acetylene gas. The light went out." Dr. Grote said. "Neither of us had a match. We blew the horn in front of a house. A man came to the door with a lamp and we asked for a match. He said 'You ain't been near that fluenzie is you?' I told the driver to say no or I wouldn't get near the house. He did. The man said 'Well, I ain't taking no chances anyhow. I'll put the box of matches on the porch and you can come get them.'"

The young Dr. Grote, unmarried at the time, lived in the old McGee Hotel where the Terry Hutchens building now stands.

"At 12 midnight I would have them discontinue my telephone," he said. "Preachers worked themselves to death, visiting and trying to do for people, beside all the funerals. I think only four doctors did not take the flu. Some of them probably would have taken it, but they went to bed as soon as they developed a cold. I never did get sick and I wasn't scared a time."

The doctor said he felt very helpless against the epidemic. One lady sent for him and when he got there her son had already turned

blue. Dr. Grote asked her why she had waited so late to call and she answered that she thought if the doctors knew anything to do for it there wouldn't be so many of them dying with it.

Dr. Grote said "I believe every woman who gave birth while she had the flu, died in delivery. We saved many babies, but the mothers always died.

"Should another epidemic of Spanish Influenza hit Madison County," Dr. Grote said, "I don't know what we would do. I'm not certain our present drugs would stop it. They have never been able to isolate the virus which we believe causes it. I understand they even dug up some Eskimos recently in an effort to isolate the virus, but they never did."

It has been a long time since the residents were turning blue and dying "faster than we could bury them" but the memory of it has followed one doctor through many years of his medical practice.

And the town once called a "ghost town" has now become "Space City".

Thank you to Butch Adcock for providing this article. He found it folded up in his late grandmother Jessie Troupe Adcock's belongings. She had kept it for years inside a metal box filled with her important papers. Jessie was 25 when the flu swept through Huntsville, and she was one of the survivors.

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The Kitchen is the Heart of your Home



From a 1901 Publication

The woman is the heart of the family, but the kitchen is the heart of the home. Since the kitchen is such an important room quite a number of things should be considered to make it convenient, usable and cheery.

The size for ordinary families should be about 10 feet by 12 feet, but this will vary with the needs of the family. A medium-sized kitchen is best because it is more easily kept, less steps being required to do the necessary work, thus saving the woman time which may be used for recreation.

Windows on two sides of the kitchen admit better light and give better ventilation. Nothing gets on a woman's nerves quite so much as working in a dark, poorly ventilated kitchen. For better ventilation a hood may be placed over the range with a pipe connected directly into the flue. This will carry out smoke and fumes.

Artificial lighting must be placed to suit the worker. Quite a bit of time is wasted when light is at the back of the worker. Less

light will be needed if walls and woodwork are of a light color.

Only the woman in her own kitchen can place things conveniently for herself. The sink should be under a window. With a cabinet for small supplies, a pantry of medium size for larger

utensils and supplies is necessary. A window in this pantry is very essential. All labels should face the front so that the woman of the home can easily find what she is looking for. A stool to sit upon while preparing food is a great help and saves tired feet and nerves. It is no longer considered lazy to sit down when preparing food or washing dishes.

A table in the center of the kitchen is one of the most convenient arrangements a kitchen can have. It saves time and steps.

The height of table, sink, stool and stove will depend on the individual. A person 5 feet 4 inches requires a 32-inch height for working surface, increasing 2 inches for every inch of the lady's height.

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Abnormal veins can appear as a bulging rope-like cord on the legs. Other symptoms of varicose veins include pain, aching, heaviness or tiredness, a burning or tingling sensation, swelling, pressure or throbbing, and spider veins. If you experience these symptoms and don't seek treatment varicose veins could lead to more serious complications, including phlebitis, blood clots, skin ulcers and bleeding.

Varicose veins occur when the valves in superficial leg veins malfunction. The superficial veins have one-way valves which allow the venous blood in the legs to return to the heart. When these valves become dysfunctional, typically caused by trauma, increasing age, pregnancy, and a family history of venous dysfunction, the valves may be unable to properly close. This allows blood that should be moving towards the heart to

flow backwards. This is called venous reflux and it allows the blood to collect in your lower veins causing them to enlarge and put the venous system under high pressure. Once a vein develops venous insufficiency it will always be abnormal and will only lead to the development of more abnormal veins and worsen.

In the past, venous insufficiency was typically treated with surgery using a procedure called vein stripping. This involved either multiple small incisions or a large incision leaving scars. Stripping can involve general anesthesia, treatment in a hospital, and multiple weeks of recovery. We now have minimally invasive treatments that are proven to be 98% effective in treating varicose veins.

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A new procedure called EVLT (Endo-venous Laser Treatment) is now available and covered by most insurance companies. EVLT is a non-surgical, more effective treatment for varicose veins. The treatment is performed in the doctor's office under local anesthesia. The doctor uses ultrasound to map out the vein. He then applies a local anesthetic; patients feel very little pain. After administering anesthesia, a thin laser fiber is inserted through a tiny entry point, usually near the knee. The laser is activated as the vein is destroyed. The body will absorb the vein over the next 3 to 6 months.

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Toll Gate Memories

by Catherine George
(Kimbrough)

I was born at the foot of the old Toll Gate Road that forks off to the right off Wells Avenue, the first house on the right past Gormalley's grocery store. It was a very small, one-room neighborhood grocery that operated several years.

My grandmother, Lucy Currier, lived on up Wells Avenue, so I spent much of my time there playing with friends Alice, Susie and Bobby Schrimsher, who later became one of my first boyfriends. I think they are all gone now except Susie, who still lives in Huntsville.

Hardly anyone had a car then so we usually walked. Often on Sundays, mom and daddy (John M. and Nettie George), my sister and I would hike up the Toll Gate Road to where there was a spring and we would build a fire and cook breakfast. I remember being young enough that daddy would carry me on his back with my feet in the hip pockets of his overalls.

We had a special connection with the toll gate since my great-grandfather, Archie McCay, operated the toll gate as well as kept the road passable with pick and shovel. Archie and his wife Kate had five children who lived to adulthood. Their oldest daughter married Mose Miller and bore him several sons, the youngest, Malcolm, being a frequent contributor to this magazine. Byron, a grandson, also contributes.

My grandmother, Lucy Catherine, was second eldest having only one daughter, my mother Nettie. More about them later.

My grandfather Alfred Higgins and grandmother Lucy McKay stayed married only two or three years due to his drinking and not working to support his young family. Like flies to honey, the young men came. One, an especially handsome young soldier, sent Lucy \$10 to pay for her divorce. Of course, since he was in the military, money was the least of his worries! Evidently while he was away at war (WWI) she met and married another man. His name was Lon Currier, a carpenter.

Lon was often working out of town, Birmingham for one place. Lucy, being newly married, followed him, sometimes taking little Nettie, my mother, along. Of course being tempo-

rary workers, they stayed in a hotel or rooming house. Mom said she remembered eating in the dining room, and all she wanted to eat was soda crackers with catsup! That was the first of these delicious foods she had ever tasted.

Since they were living probably in one room Mom, like so many kids today, was sent to live with her grandparents, Archie and Kate McKay. At the time they were living in and running the toll gate house. Their job was to collect money from anyone coming up the road, usually 5-10-15 cents according to their mode of transport: horse, wagon, stage, etc. The toll gate was nothing more than a long pole fastened to a post across the road with a large rock fastened to the end and a rope tied to the other end and fastened to the porch rail. When a wagon or horse came through



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Kate or one of the boys would collect the money, untie the rope and let the pole raise up like a see saw. When the wagon was through, the pole was pulled down and tied to the porch until next time.

One day they heard a wagon coming up the road and Mom wanted to be helpful, so she ran and untied the rope and was immediately jerked off the porch, up in the air, the rock on the other end being heavier than Mom. She was more scared than hurt, knowing she was in trouble with Kate. So she scooted up under the house on her hands and knees and stayed there until Archie came in from work.

He kept the rocky road passable, working with pick and shovel and strong back. He also cut their firewood down in the woods. One day a wagon came through, paid and continued on up the mountain. Mom hitched a ride on that pole that sticks out the back of the wagon and was having a lot of fun until she looked back and here comes Kate with her fingers pinched together with those dreaded wood ashes! That's how she punished them, putting ashes in their mouth. Mom dropped off the wagon and ran down through the woods to where "Papa K" was cutting wood. She was more afraid of Kate than any snakes she might have encountered along the way. She stayed with him until he finished for the day and went home with him because she knew he wouldn't let Kate punish her, as with the gate episode. I guess he was a little partial since she was the only girl, as his own two daughters married and had only sons.

Archie's youngest son Billy was still at home and a little older than Mom. They were playmates, so they got into some adventures together. One day while Kate was outside somewhere, the kids had to find something to do outside of Kate's watchful eye. So they looked around, and Billy "spying" Kate's can of snuff sitting on the mantle, challenged Mom to take a "dip." For people today that might not know what a dip is, (I think they now use the term chew) it's when you put a small amount of snuff in your lower lip or jaw. So Mom said, "I will if you will." Bill took the challenge.

He had a small pocket knife, so he used the blade to dip into the can for the snuff, Mom held her lip out and Bill dumped it in, taking one for himself. They did not know you are supposed to spit the juice out, so they swallowed it. Of course it didn't take long before they were deathly ill. Green around the gills, I think is a good description.

When Kate came in, it didn't take long to know something was wrong. She kept asking what's going on? "Nothing Mama," Bill would say, dreading those awful ashes. Kate knew they were guilty of something, and she looked around and spotted her snuff can with the tell-tale spillage on the mantle. "Bill McKay, you little devil! You've been into my snuff haven't you?" He said, "Yessum", sheepishly.

She said, "Well, I'm not going to whip you this time because you've been whipped enough." They may have preferred the ashes if they had known the effects the snuff had on them. Too bad tobacco doesn't affect people today like it did then. I don't think Bill ever used tobacco in later years, and I know mom didn't, so some good came of it.

Bill later married and moved to Birmingham where he and brother Joe were in the plumbing business and did OK. I lost touch with them all years ago, so don't know anything about any distant cousins. I have been away from Huntsville almost entirely since 1952 when I married a G.I.



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Old City Headlines

A Fortunate Romance Huntsville Democrat, 1896

Steve Ryan has been long regarded as a typical bachelor, viveur and man-about-town so when the notice of his upcoming nuptials were announced there was nothing short of a thunder clap to most of his friends. His reputation as an incorrigible practical joker had something to do with this prevalent skepticism, and the announcement was generally received with a vague smile and the certainty that there was "a catch about it somewhere."

The bride of the occasion, nee Miss Edith Askam, is a comely, though quite unfortunate brunette who has already at her young age outlived two husbands.

She is the daughter of Henry F. Askam, a well-known specialist who has been located for the last three or four years at No. 208 Washington.

Askam came to Huntsville from Cleveland and is reputed to have built up a large and lucrative practice. He makes a specialty of therapeutics. Some time ago, Dr. Askam purchased a pretty piece of property out on Washington Street near Love (propitious name) and it was there he made the acquaintance of Ryan.

A short introduction, a shorter romance, and Askam is once again a father-in-law. There were a number of handsome wedding presents sent in quietly by friends and not displayed, and this paper is informed on very good author-

ity that a check for \$25,000 was among the gifts.

Young Ryan is said to be well satisfied at the present state of affairs.

How to Cure Your Egg-sucking Dog Huntsville 1840 newspaper

Take from 4 to 6 grains of tartar emetic, according to the age and strength of your dog. Break the end of the egg, put in the tartar and mix it. If your dog is disposed to suck eggs, he will readily eat it. Confine him from cold water.

The next day repeat the dose, and continue to do so until he refuses the egg which will probably be on the third or fourth day. After this I have never known them to ever again be guilty of this offense. Instead of being the destroyer of our good wives' poultry, the same dog becomes their faithful protector.



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Tweetie's Pet Tips

"Sailors always had a cat on board their ships. What they needed was a good bird."

Tweetie



- Sailors used cats to predict the voyages they were about to embark upon. Loudly mew-ing cats meant that it would be a difficult voyage. A playful cat meant that it would be a voyage with good and gusty winds.

- Some people believe that cats are able to see the human aura, the energy field that sur-rounds each of us.

- If early American cats sat with their backs to the fire, the owners knew it foretold a cold snap.

- A cat sleeping with all four paws tucked under means bad weather is coming.

- Some people believe that cats may be able to see the spec-tre of death.

- If a cat washes behind its ears, it will rain (no doubt this superstition began in some very rainy country!).

- A cat sneezing once means there will be rain.

- If a cat sneezes three times, the family will catch a cold.

- A sneezing cat is a sign of future wealth.

- A cat sneezing is a good omen for everyone who hears it. *Italian superstition*

- Early Americans believed if a cat washes her face in front of several people, the first person she looks at will be the first to get married.

- If a cat is washing its face on the doorstep, the clergy will soon visit. *American folklore*

- When the pupil of a cat's eye broadens, there will be rain. *Welsh superstition*

- If you find a white hair on a black cat, you will have good luck.

- One Roman dream inter-pretation was that dreaming of being badly scratched by a cat foretold sickness and trouble.

- French peasants thought that black cats could find buried treasure, if they followed a spe-cific ritual: find an intersection where 5 roads connected, then turn the cat loose and follow him.

- A strange black cat on your porch brings prosperity.

- Scottish superstition says that tortoiseshell cats were be-lieved to be able to see into the future and could give the gift to a lucky child in the household.

- Sailors believed that if a cat licked its fur against the grain

it meant a hailstorm was com-ing; if it sneezed, rain was on the way; and if it was frisky, the wind would soon blow.

- A bride will have a happy married life if a black cat sneezes near her on her wedding day.

- Sacred cats kept in a sanc-tuary in ancient Egypt were carefully tended by priests who watched them day and night. The priests interpreted the cat's movements - twitch of a whis-ker, yawn, or stretch - into a pre-diction of an event that would happen in the future.

- The Pennsylvania Dutch place a cat in an empty cradle of a newlywed couple. The cat was supposed to grant their wish for children.

- In Scandinavia, the cat stood for fertility.

- It was a popular belief that cats could start storms through magic stored in their tails - so sailors always made sure that they were well-fed and content-ed.

- When you see a one-eyed cat, spit on your thumb, stamp it in the palm of your hand and make a wish. The wish will come true. *American superstition*

- A black cat crossing one's path by moonlight means death in an epidemic. *Irish superstition*

- The Hindu believed the cat was the symbol for a successful childbirth.

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From the Desk of Tom Carney

Free Born

by Tom Carney

The house was silent as James Fisher crouched on the floor, laboriously tracing the words on a note. If all went well he would be leaving Huntsville early in the morning with a pass in hand from his mistress, Mrs. Lane, stating that James, her slave, had permission to travel.

James flinched inwardly as he thought of the word "slave." Although he had been held in bondage for all of his life, he never thought of himself as a slave. He was a full-blooded Cherokee, determined to do what the courts had failed to do - set himself free.

Indian slaves were part of our country's horrible past that most historians have chosen to ignore. Almost from the very beginning of settlement in this country Indians were seized and sold into slavery. In North Carolina the practice was so widespread that some historians have estimated that fully half of the Cherokee population were captured and sold.

In the years preceding the Revolutionary War, the Indian slave trade was one of the colonies' most profitable commercial enterprises. Vast caravans of captured Indians were marched to Savannah and Charleston where they were sold and shipped to the West Indies, New York and New England. Years later, when most of the Northern states did away with slavery, many of these Indians were "sold south" to the very places where they had been captured.

Ironically, many of these Indian slaves were sold to firms engaged in the importation of Black slaves from Africa, where they would actually be used to help capture the Africans. In return, the Black slaves were often used to help capture the Indians in this country. It was a vicious cycle driven by high profits and the need for an inexhaustible supply of cheap labor.

Although the Indians provided cheap labor, they were never considered adequate for the hard work required on the Southern plantations. They were highly susceptible to the

white man's diseases and did not have the physique required for hard physical labor. As a result, the Indians were used primarily as domestic help while the Africans toiled in the fields.

By the beginning of the 1800s the practice of seizing and selling Indians into slavery had largely stopped, mostly due to financial reasons. An Indian would bring a price of about \$400.00 on the auction block while a strapping African in good health would often sell for \$2000.00.

Another major cause for the decline of Indian slavery was the fact that the courts never would decide exactly who could be sold as a slave. While there were strict laws governing the practice of African slavery, the issue of Indians fell somewhere in a gray area. Many states had laws stating that anyone held in servitude, as well as their children, was automatically a slave. Virginia had a law stating it was illegal to sell Indians unless they were slaves but declined to state what made someone a slave.

Most often the whole issue came down to what the supposed owner claimed, as once an Indian was deemed a slave he had no recourse in the courts.

In the early 1800s a young full-blooded Indian girl by the name of Maby Davis was living with a family near Knoxville, Tennessee. According to what she later related, her parents had experienced hardships and were no longer able to take care of her when a white family living nearby volunteered to raise her. She was treated as a loving member of the family, doing the same chores and enjoying the same liberties as the rest of the family.

After living with the family for several years,



tragedy struck when the parents died. A short while later the couple's son took Maby to Nashville, where she was sold as a slave. Although Maby protested violently, it was to no avail. Although technically she could have pursued her case in court, in reality it was impossible.

To press her case she would have to get a white person to sign a bond, then find a lawyer and pay his fee. All of these things were impossible, and illegal, without the permission of the slave's owner.

Maby's new master, Eli Young, owned a boarding house in Nashville where she was used as a servant. Young owned several other slaves, one

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of whom was Thomas Fisher, also a full-blooded Cherokee Indian. In 1816, Maby bore a son by Fisher, much to the owner's delight who now owned another slave. The father was evidently less than thrilled as he fled from bondage the same year. The following year, according to court papers, Maby bore a daughter by her master.

At about this time, Maby's owner agreed to let her take in laundry. Although he kept most of the money, she was able to hoard the few nickels and dimes that she received as tips. Her life was probably as content as possible for a slave. She had her two children, her master was not overly cruel and she was slowly but surely saving money.

Her life was shattered, however, when her owner announced his intentions of selling the family at a slave sale. He had suffered severe business losses and Maby and her children were practically his only remaining assets.

The daughter was sold to a plantation near Nashville and Judge George W. Lane of Huntsville purchased James, the son. Maby's owner, probably out of remorse, agreed to let her buy her freedom. Using the small amount of money she had been able to save as a down payment, Maby agreed to pay a certain amount each month with the loan secured by a mortgage on herself. If she missed a payment she would be repossessed.

Maby worked frantically over the next six years trying to earn every penny she could. Seven days a week she washed and ironed clothes, often into the wee hours of the morning with only a flickering lantern to keep her company.

Finally the day came when she was able to make the last payment on her freedom. Instead of rejoicing, however, she began to work even harder, putting in even longer hours and doing without necessities in order to save every penny.

In 1832 Maby hired an attorney by the name of Thomas Crump. Patiently she explained how she had been sold into slavery, had a son by another Cherokee and a daughter by her master. She told how the children were torn from her and sold at auction. All she wanted now,

she explained, was to have her children back.

Crump filed suit in court alleging that since Maby was born free she could not have been a slave. Therefore her offspring were entitled to their liberty, too. Papers were sent to Judge Lane in Huntsville who replied that he had purchased the son, James, in good faith and had no knowledge of the boy's Indian heritage. He asked that the suit be dismissed.

When the case came up in court it was immediately thrown out with the explanation that even if she had been born free, and there was no evidence that she was, the fact that she knowingly paid for her freedom acknowledged the fact that she recognized, and accepted, her status as a slave.

The attorney explained that for Maby to prove her children were free she would have to prove first that she was enslaved wrongfully. Once again Maby went back to work, again hoarding every penny to pay the attorney's fees.

Slowly her attorney began to collect statements from people who had known Maby when she was a child. The evidence supporting her claims appeared overwhelming but the attorney urged caution. Rather than file suit for both children, it was decided to sue for the release of the son first and use that judgment as a basis for acquiring the daughter's freedom.

Again, Judge Lane was served papers and again he replied, disclaiming all knowledge, and asking for the suit

to be dismissed. A short while later the court ruled that although Maby was born free, the fact that she had a child by a slave, even though he was an Indian, made the child a slave too.

Although the law stated that a child born to a White woman, or a Black woman, followed the status of its mother, it was vague about the status of an Indian woman bearing children by a slave. The court used the argument that since Maby was neither Black nor White, the laws did not apply to her case. In addition, the court argued a law that dated from pre-Revolutionary War times stating that any Indian held as a slave shall always be a slave, as shall their offspring.

Maby was devastated by the news, even though her attorney said he was sure they would win on appeal. In the meantime they would file suit for the daughter's freedom. The court's ruling, and the fact that the girl was fathered by a white man, seemed to ensure a favorable verdict.

Meanwhile, she went back to the wash board, working harder than ever to earn money for the legal fees. However tired she became, she took comfort in the fact that her daughter would soon be with her.

In Huntsville, Judge Lane was closely following the case. Besides the boy, James, he owned another Cherokee slave, and an unfavorable ruling could cause him to lose a considerable investment in "fancy slaves." These slaves, with light complexion, long black hair and trained for housework were a

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rage among wealthy Southerners at the time.

After acquiring James and training him as a servant, Mrs. Lane decided she also wanted a "fancy serving girl". She soon learned of a Cherokee girl in nearby Athens and began to badger her husband to buy her. Judge Lane was reluctant, however, arguing that the person did not possess a clear title and it could be costly if the girl was ever set free.

Regardless, Lane finally consented to buying the girl, but only after getting the seller to post a bond stating that if she was ever freed Lane would be reimbursed for the purchase price.

James was aware of his mother's fight to gain his freedom although it was difficult to learn many details. Maby was forbidden to enter the state of Alabama as a freed slave, unless a bond was posted in her behalf. Most of what he knew was overheard in the Lane household or gossip passed on by other slaves in Huntsville. After teaching himself to read and write he wrote several letters to his mother, but when Lane learned of it he was punished severely, along with being threatened with being sent to Louisiana where Lane owned an interest in another plantation.

In 1836 Maby's suit for her daughter's freedom finally went before a Nashville court. Her attorney argued passionately that as Maby was "free born" and the father of her child was also free born, and white, there was no justification for the daughter to be declared a slave.

The defense, however, had anticipated this line of argument. They offered rebuttal stating it was against the law for whites and Indians to have sexual relations and, strange as it may sound, since the alleged white father was never charged with a crime, therefore a crime could not have been committed. In support, an affidavit was offered to the court by Maby's ex-owner stating he had no idea who the father was.

Maby's attorney countered by arguing that the daughter's light complexion alone showed she was fathered by a white man.

The court ordered the daughter, only thirteen years old at the time, to be brought before the bench where she was ordered to disrobe. So-called experts, slave traders, doctors and probably anyone else interested, examined the young girl, feeling her muscles, peering into her

mouth, measuring her buttocks and even snipping samples of her hair to examine more closely.

In the end, the experts ruled that, although the girl was light complexioned, there was no overwhelming evidence that she had been fathered by a white man. Most likely, they concluded, her father was an anonymous slave which meant the daughter was a slave too and not entitled to the same privileges as a free born person.

The courts quoted a colonial Virginia law which stated that any Indian held as a slave shall be a slave forever, as shall be their offspring.

At about the same time, the courts heard Maby's appeal on her son's behalf. In short, the court ruled it was a moot issue as Tennessee could not impose its jurisdiction on a slave who resided, and was owned by someone living in another state. If Maby wanted to continue her fight she would have to do so in the Alabama district courts, most likely in the same district over which Judge Lane presided.

For the first time in her long struggle, Maby felt like giving up. Even though her attorney insisted they would win on appeal, Maby knew the

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process could take years and by then her children could be anywhere.

In Huntsville, it was several months later when James overheard the Judge and his wife discussing the outcome of the court case, that he learned of the final verdict. During all the many years that his mother had fought the case through courts, James lived with the idea that one day he would be a free man. Now that day seemed so far in the future as to be impossible.

Discarding all thoughts of the courts ever setting him free, James began to make preparations to flee. Numerous times in the past his mistress had given him passes, allowing him to run errands to outlying plantations. By studying them carefully he had learned to imitate her handwriting.

One day, while Judge Lane was out of town, his wife entered James' room and caught him practicing writing. In a sudden flash of anger she snatched the pencil and paper from James' hand and ordered another slave to go get her brother, Nicholas Davis. When he arrived, she asked that James' be given a flogging and told of catching him practicing reading and writing.

Davis ordered James brought before him, and without any explanation, began beating him with the edge of a heavy board. James grabbed the board from Davis and began hitting him back. Terrified that a slave would have the audacity to strike a white man, Davis ran from the room. Mrs. Lane then sent a servant to fetch her father, Captain Davis. In a short while the servant returned saying that Captain Davis was busy but would be there the next morning.

James knew he was in serious trouble. The elder Davis had often expressed a desire to give the Indian boy a beating and was noted for his brutal thrashings. It was said that he had killed a slave named Reuben, and a girl named Rachel, by excessive beatings. He had lately struck, with a heavy board, an old man who used to tend him when he was a baby.

As soon as James finished his chores that evening, he wrote a note and signed his mistresses name to it. Walking the few blocks to the stage office he asked if he might take a stage to Nashville the next morning. The clerk demanded his pass, whereas James showed it while explaining that his mistress was not used to writing passes for servants and she wanted him to look at

it and see that it was done right. The clerk obediently wrote the proper instructions on the back of the pass.

Returning to his room James read the instructions and wrote himself a new pass. Hours later he was on the stage bound for Nashville.

If James was hoping for a family reunion, it was not meant to be.

Ironically, after Maby Davis had spent years in court to prove herself a free born Cherokee Indian, that very fact was used against her when she was ordered West on the Trail of Tears.

Nothing was ever heard of the

daughter again. Probably she was sold to an owner in another state where she disappeared forever. James Fisher eventually made his way to Boston where he told his story to a newspaper editor. It was published in 1848.



Judge Charles Lane later earned the dubious honor of being one of the most famous traitors in Madison County during the Civil War. After first supporting the Confederacy, Lane changed sides and became a staunch Union man. He died a disgraced and broken man.

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A Noble Instance of Devotion

from 1887 newspaper

L. Page and son were cutting wood near Decatur and noticed for several days that a number of birds remained constantly upon a tree near them, some going and coming from time to time.

Upon cutting down the tree they discovered a limb with a hollow cavity, two feet in length and three or four inches in diameter, in which were two full grown birds of some goodly sized species.

There was a small aperture through which the birds were supplied with food from their mates. The limb was cut and the birds liberated. They were neither of them able to fly, having evidently never been out of their imprisonment.

How they came inside is the question. It is probably that the mother bird was small and though able to make her nest in the hollow of the tree and rear her young, could not extricate them. They did not gain strength enough to help themselves until the hollow had so closed that escape was impossible.

Those who examined the birds think they are about two years old. They have been fed from their birth by their bird fellows through the aperture in the limb of the tree. A nobler instance of devotion the human family never exhibited.

Mankind could greatly benefit from the lessons of these feathered friends.

Haunted French pancakes give me the crepes.

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The Old House

by Austin Miller

In late 1945, my parents moved into an old dilapidated shack at what is now 491 Ryland Pike. The house was in such bad shape that it was leaning noticeably to the north.

To keep it from leaning further and falling down, the back side was propped up by four long hickory poles. Despite many years of repair, it was never physically comfortable, had few amenities and was not what you would call a nice house. It had a full length front porch that was the center of our lives in warm weather. In winter, the social center moved from the porch to the living room as close as we could get to the heater.

From the warmth of the stove we spent many hours listening to the radio, visiting, talking and doing schoolwork. Sometime in the mid-fifties the radio was replaced with a television that got one channel out of Chattanooga. In real cold weather we had to eat our meals in the living room because it was too cold to eat in the kitchen. Our drinking water would sometimes freeze solid in the bucket.

On the rare occasion we took a bath in winter, it had to be in the living room close to the heater. After the fire in the heater died out at night there was no heat in the house. It was cold when we went to bed and even colder when we got up. One time it snowed and my brother Berns and I awoke to find our bed covered with snow that had filtered down through cracks in the roof and ceiling. We got electricity in about 1948 but improvements were slow

after that. It was 1959 before we got running water and 1965 before we got an indoor toilet. It never had air conditioning.

It is important to know that our house was not an exception to most Ryland homes in those days. Our closest neighbors were the Shepards and their house was about like ours.

The Elmer Sharp family lived in an old two-story house on Dug Hill Road next to the railroad track. The Sharp boys; Wayne, Phillip and Larry, had to sleep upstairs where there was no heat or electricity. Their sleeping area was an unfinished attic with no furniture except for three cots. The ceiling was a tin roof attached to exposed rafters. In winter, a window next to where they slept was boarded up by a piece of plywood. In summer it was

taken down to let in fresh air. The space was freezing in winter and stifling hot in summer but I never heard them complain nor do I ever remember any of them being sick.

There are only two or three old-time Ryland houses left. The Tornado of 1974 took the others away and changed the landscape and flavor of the community forever.

In the last twenty years or so, subdivisions have sprung up in and around Ryland. Most are smaller modest houses. The smallest and plainest of the new subdivision homes would have been considered luxurious by most Ryland people during the forties, fifties and sixties.

What makes a home are the people who live in the house, not the building. My mind is still full of memories of the

Each day is a gift.



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house.

In June of 1966, while on leave from the Army, I often sat on the front porch alone late at night pondering what fate awaited me in Vietnam. It's where I brought my future wife, before we married, to meet the family. When we drove up Mama, Daddy, Berns, my younger brother Gregory and Mark McMellon were sitting and lying on the front porch.

Several chickens were scratching around in the yard. After we got there a rooster ran out from under the floor chasing a hen. Four or five cows had gathered at the fence next to the house to eat watermelon rinds that had been thrown over the fence. Several rifles, shotguns and fishing poles were propped against the wall on the front porch.

I was afraid my fiance would think she had come to hillbilly heaven. But she, too, soon learned to love the old place - chickens and all.

Mark was a city boy who lived with his parents in Huntsville but spent a lot of time at our house. He talked not long ago about how he always enjoyed sitting around the heater in the living room or on the front porch listening to Mama and Daddy talk politics

and current events. He went on to say that his favorite place in the house was the old dark, drab rustic kitchen where he enjoyed some of the best meals he ever ate.

As uncomfortable and rustic as the old house was, it provided home and hearth for many families in the approximately 70 years that it stood. My father often said he wouldn't trade it for the finest house in Huntsville.

I called the old house home for almost thirty years or 120 seasons. It was where we had 30 great Christmases and an untold number of delicious meals with family and friends. These days the good times are exaggerated in my mind and the bad times don't seem so bad. That's the way it is with the times of our youth.

Sometimes I wish the old house was still standing but I know deep down that the era of its time passed long ago.

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Brotherly Love

by Charles Rice

Christian churches are supposed to be Houses of the Lord, places of sanctuary where one can go to escape the worries and woes of the everyday world. However, a Baptist church in Huntsville's Lincoln Mill Village became anything but that, one strange September night some half a century ago. In fact, the sleepy little church suddenly exploded into a raucous free-for-all in which the women matched the men in ferocity.

The bizarre incident apparently came about at least in part over the efforts of the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) to unionize the mill workers during those bleak Depression years of the 1930s. Union backers felt the CIO would stand up for their rights and improve their standard of living. Union foes feared the Northern owners would retaliate by closing the mills and moving elsewhere, something the Yankee capitalists had already done several times in the South. After all, the New England mills had only moved to Dixie to escape paying union wages in the first place and to most folks any job was better than none in those days of massive unemployment in America.

The labor dispute seems to have spilled over into the church, where Rev. C. V. Headrick enjoyed the backing of the union. The CIO's opponents had become dissatisfied with their minister, apparently feeling he was meddling in matters that didn't concern him. There were other complaints against the preacher as well, but the union dispute obviously was the major grievance. Headrick's adversaries al-

ready had tried several times to have him replaced. On the night of September 3, 1939, their impatience finally got the better of them.

Rev. Headrick was presiding at a conference in the divided mill village church. William Adcock, the local CIO leader, was on hand to give his support to the clergyman, which can only have angered the union opponents. Near the end of the meeting, a woman member of the congregation at last rose from her seat and forcefully shoved the preacher out of the pulpit. Other women quickly intervened and the Lincoln ladies went at it hammer and tongs -- kicking, punching, kneeling, slapping and pulling hair.

Not to be outdone by their spouses, the male members of the congregation promptly chose up sides and joined in the brawl. World War II was just breaking out in Europe, but a visitor at the Huntsville church might well have thought he was at the battlefield in Poland.

According to newspaper reports the next day, two men (Ingle Gant and Tom Bragg) were stabbed, while several others were taken to Huntsville Hospital emergency room with head injuries. A number of the ladies were somewhat bruised and battered, but none required serious medical attention. Only one person was arrested, Dillard Adcock, who had stabbed Tom Bragg before being struck over the head by Olen Graham. Labor leader William Adcock, Dillard's brother, had also been

hit over the head with a heavy object, probably a chair.

Tensions obviously remained high and Christian behavior was clearly the loser that day in Lincoln Village. In fact, it was later learned that another fight had taken place nearby several hours earlier on Meridian Street. A union organizer named Pearson had called a nonunion worker named Sharpe a "scab" and several other uncomplimentary names. Sharpe took offense and attacked Pearson. An unamused Judge Price issued arrest warrants for both men.

All things considered, the Lord just might have preferred to look elsewhere on that incredible September day. Brotherly love was certainly lacking in that part of our always surprising city.

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Dallas Mill Memories

by Nolan Myrick



I remember the morning Dallas Mills burned. I was on Highway 231 going south and when I crossed the state line from Tennessee to Alabama I could see the glow of the fire. We didn't know what it was, but you could tell it was big. My father and I were on our way to Hollywood, Alabama, where we worked at the Bellfonte Nuclear Plant. We were pipe fitters out of Local 377 in Huntsville.

I've thought about it since I read the article in Old Huntsville. The best days of my life were spent across from the mill. I never gave the mill much thought when I was young. It was like Monte Sano to me because it had always been there and I never went past it. It was sort of a boundary line for me. My grandfather, D.W. Myrick, often told me his brother Houston Myrick had been a bookkeeper at the mill. He was good with numbers and lived on Ward Avenue. He also fixed motorcycles and bicycles when I was young.

Our church, Fifth Street Baptist, was across from the mill. There was a VFW building between our church and the mill building. The church bought the building and we called it

the annex. It had a gym and a 2-lane bowling alley. I used to set pins for people. It was all done by hand, picking up the pins. You had to push a lever and it lowered the pins and set them up. Anybody could play there. You didn't have to go to our church. As I remember it, everyone was welcome.

I can't remember when they tore the annex down, maybe I had already moved to Tennessee. I believe maybe the mill built our first church, I'm not sure. It was a little stucco building by the big ditch facing 5th Street. Mrs. Eunice's cafe was across the street and Carroll Grocery. Later on Jimmy East had a heating and cooling business. The old R.C. Cola bottling plant was on the far corner. That little church was the beginning of my religious training.

When I sit here and look at the picture of the mill, I think of the neighborhood around the mill. If I were to stand on top of the mill and look out over East Huntsville, here's some of what I would see. On the corner across from the annex and big ditch you would see Bob and Maurine Alverson's house on the corner. He worked for Montgomery Ward before it moved to the Parkway when it was uptown. He was a deacon at our church and one of the best men I ever knew. Maurine was secretary at our church. On down the street was one of my favorite things. There was a lady who kept a jersey cow and milked it. She tied the cow out in front of where the fire hall was with a rope. I would ride my bicycle down there and talk to her. She was always glad to talk.

There's more I could say, but I wish everyone could have had fun like we did around the mill and East Huntsville. I'm glad Mr. Dallas decided to build it.

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Huntsville News in 1911

Mother of 13 dies from Paralysis

Mrs. Francis Limbaugh, 67 years old, died at 6 o'clock last evening in Patton Grove as a result of a stroke of paralysis suffered yesterday morning. She was the mother of seven sons and six daughters. The remains will be carried this morning to Monrovia, Al - her old home - for interment today.

Death caused by Rubber Snake

Frightened by a rubber snake in the hands of a companion, J. F. Holder, Sr., a young boy of Athens, dashed in front of a swiftly moving passenger train and was killed instantly. Jeff Tomlinson, 18 years old and young Holder were standing near the railroad tracks, when suddenly Tomlinson drew the imitation snake from his pocket and shoved it towards Holder, who in attempting to escape from the supposed reptile, dashed in front of the train and was literally ground to pieces. Tomlinson was arrested.

Man Arrested for Killing Dogs

Thos. Hooper, the surveyor, called at the Daily Times office to explain why he killed the two fine dogs about which the Sunday Morning Times had referenced. Mr. Hooper claims that the dogs had been killing his geese, which he valued at \$5 a piece and had also, he said, bitten a fine bull belonging to him. He was fined \$15 in the Mayor's court for shooting fire arms in the city limits and appealed his case to the Law and Equity Court, where he also has a case against him.

One of the dogs belonged to Miss Margaretta Wellman, the other to Frank E. Murphy, who

had the warrants sworn out for the arrest of Mr. Hooper.

Back from Visit

Mrs. William Dilworth is back from a trip to Paint Rock. She went to see her mother, Mrs. Kiel, who is very ill.

Love from a Common Bird Ardmore, Tn.

Mrs. Josie Leman relates a very unusual experience she has had recently with a bird - a common English sparrow.

Mrs. Leman has been troubled for several months with falling hair and had begun to fear that she was going to be completely bald. She is very fond of birds and regularly feeds several English sparrows near her front steps. She had taken special interest in one which had a deformed wing, showing that it had been badly crippled at one time perhaps by another animal.

This bird reciprocated the interest shown in it and would often sit for several minutes while Mrs. Leman would talk to it. Among many other things often told it about her falling hair, not for a moment thinking the bird could understand her.

Now, Mrs. Leman does not claim that the bird understood the trouble she was having with her hair, but she does state and can prove that this bird is daily bringing hair to her, such as it finds in its flights, and is leaving it on her porch. "It makes eight or ten trips a day" said Mrs. Leman, "and seems to be especially happy after bringing a real long hair, and I always let the bird see me take the hair, and I pretend that I am very much pleased, for I wouldn't hurt the little thing's feelings for anything on earth."

Miscellaneous

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Wanted - gentleman boarders at 326 Randolph Street.

For rent - 5 room cottage with all modern improvements on East Clinton Street - apply to Horace M. Layman.

For rent - the Alberta Taylor residence on McClung Street. The house is handsomely furnished and possession can be given at once. Apply to Mrs. E. E. Ezell.

Lost - handsome Maltese kitten strayed from premises on Second Avenue. Finder return to Capt. and Mrs. Peter Simmons for reward.

Wanted - ladies who want sales positions - call Miss Kate Acklin at 202 Eustis Street.

Money Found - someone left an envelope containing \$4 in paper in the office of the Ideal Laundry Co.. owner pay for ad and recover same.

Found - two fine Jersey milk cows who have taken up at my residence on Meridian Street. Owner can have same by paying for this ad and their keep.



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Three Months to Live

by Cathey Carney

Mary Smith Chambers was born in 1816, daughter of Doctor Henry Chambers. She quickly grew into a beautiful young lady, adored by her family and friends.

Her father was an early Alabama legislator who had been born in Virginia. Upon graduation from William and Mary College in 1808, he studied medicine for a time before finally settling in the new territory called Alabama.

After serving as a surgeon on the staff of General Andrew Jackson during the War of 1812, he made his home in Huntsville and was elected a member of the state Constitutional Convention here in 1819. He was elected U.S. Senator and stayed in office until his death in 1826, while he was en route by horseback back to Washington.

The whole town began to take an interest in the fatherless young lady, constantly speculating as to who would make a perfect match for her. The local gossips, after exhausting their limited list of possible candidates, quickly surmised that none were good enough for their Mary. But that was before the dashing and handsome William Bibb appeared on the scene. Everyone agreed that he and his brother, David Porter Bibb of Belle Mina were handsome, reckless, polished, and in short, everything a young lady could want in a husband. Their father

was Thomas Bibb, second Governor of Alabama and still one of the most prominent families in Alabama

Whether by accident, or on purpose, both of the young people were invited to a party arranged by mutual friends. It was here that the brothers met the two beautiful young ladies, Mary Chambers and her cousin, Mary Parrott Betts.

When the pair of brothers began courting the two cousins, the older people stood silently by, watching with approval. Relatives on both sides agreed that it was the perfect match. This courtship seemed the logical preliminary to unions that would connect these three prominent North Alabama names.

It was to no one's surprise, then, when the brothers asked for the hands of the two cousins in marriage in the fall of 1834. The two cousins accepted breathlessly. This was to be the biggest double wedding in the history of Alabama.

The occasion was to be the most elaborate the state had ever seen. Orders were sent to Paris for elegant wedding gowns to be handmade. Both trousseaus were to be prepared of the finest materials and were to be the best the designers could make. Food was ordered, plans were made and remade.

Party after party followed the two couples. The prominent of Madison and adjoining counties celebrated the upcoming event extensively. The date, however, was not yet set.

Christmas came and went with no word of the wedding day. January went by. No one knew what was causing the delay, but the couples seemed as much or even more in love. The real reason for the delay was the fact that the wedding dresses had not arrived. Tales circulated about the length of time goods took to arrive from France, the weeks of slow travel by boat to the mainland. The young ladies met every stagecoach as they rolled to a stop on the downtown square, only to be disappointed time after time again.

Finally, in early February, a large package arrived that definitely looked like wedding dresses. However, when it was opened the girls were heartbroken to discover that only one dress had been made - the seamstress had run out of material.

Days went by, then William Bibb and Mary Chambers declared their intention to marry at once, even though it meant there would be no double wedding. The other couple understood, and the family began making arrangements for the ceremony.

It was planned that the ceremony would take place at the Chambers' home. Excitement increased every day. There was a whirlwind of activity, with sewing, flower arranging, cleaning, cooking and sending out invitations. Friends notified them that they were coming from many other states. The couple was blissfully happy and the older folks envied them. Then the unthinkable happened.

Intuition is what tells a wife her husband has done something before he even thinks of doing it.

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Just a few nights before the wedding, Mary's old Negro mamma called her and her cousin to her side. "My children," she said, "you'd better take some medicine before this marriage comes off, because you don't want your faces all mussed when all them good lookin' gentlemen get here. I'm gonna fix you up some ahead of time, and then you'll be the prettiest things present."

The girls just laughed - they loved their old mamma and had been under her care since they were born. They trusted her and doted on her like she was their real mother.

The old woman came back in a few minutes with a small glass of clear liquid. "What is it, Mamma? Will it make us more beautiful?"

"My child, this is nothing but salts," she said. "It won't hurt you." The girls couldn't decide who would take it first. "You're the one getting married - so you should take it first. I'll be next!" Mary Betts urged, laughing.

Mary Chambers took the liquid in one gulp, making a face for her mamma's benefit. But as soon as she put the glass down, she knew something was terribly wrong.

"My throat hurts! What's wrong with me? Help me, Mary!"

While her cousin soothed her, the Negro mamma dashed into the other room, to return a moment later with her face covered in tears.

"Oh, what have I done to you?" She sobbed.

The "salts" had come from a bottle containing oxalic acid.

A doctor was immediately sent for and after examining Mary, rendered his opinion... The patient could only hope to live for a short time - three months at the most.

In a few minutes the Chambers' home was buried in a deep depression. William Bibb's fi-

ance could only live a short time.

Physicians without the use of modern equipment were powerless to help in a poisoning case. It was a matter of Mary slowly dying a painful death from an ulcerated stomach. William Bibb was out of his mind with grief when he was informed of the tragedy. For days he would not leave his sweetheart, holding her pale hand and kissing her forehead.

Then, one day for no reason, he said to his love, "Mary, you and I are going to be married immediately."

On February 26 an entirely different wedding than that which had been planned took place. Friends and relatives, trying to act cheerful, watched as Reverend John Allen, first Pastor of the First Presbyterian Church, united Mary Chambers and William Bibb in holy wedlock. The poignancy of the moment was such that words couldn't describe.

Mary Bibb lived three months to the day from her wedding day. It was said later that those

three months were the most precious in William Bibb's life. In her memory he built one of the finest monuments money could buy, and had it placed above her grave in Maple Hill Cemetery. It was the first mausoleum ever built in the cemetery.

Across the face of this marker were inscribed the three major dates in

Mary's life, and it reads as follows:

*Mary S. Bibb
Wife of Wm. D. Bibb
Daughter of
Doct. Henry Chambers
Born October, 1816
Married Feb. 24, 1835
Died May 26, 1835*

One error was made, however. The actual wedding date was two days later than shown. The license was issued February 24.

Many superstitions arose because of the unusual mausoleum. Some said that the tall mausoleum was placed there because the grave was that of a woman who died sitting up in a rocking chair, so that she had to be buried there. Some have even heard creaking in the vicinity of the grave at night.

So if you are ever walking through Maple Hill and happen upon the grave of Mary Bibb, try to remember her as she was, when she was young, in love and looking forward to a life of happiness with her sweet husband.

Oscar and Maria Llerena



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