



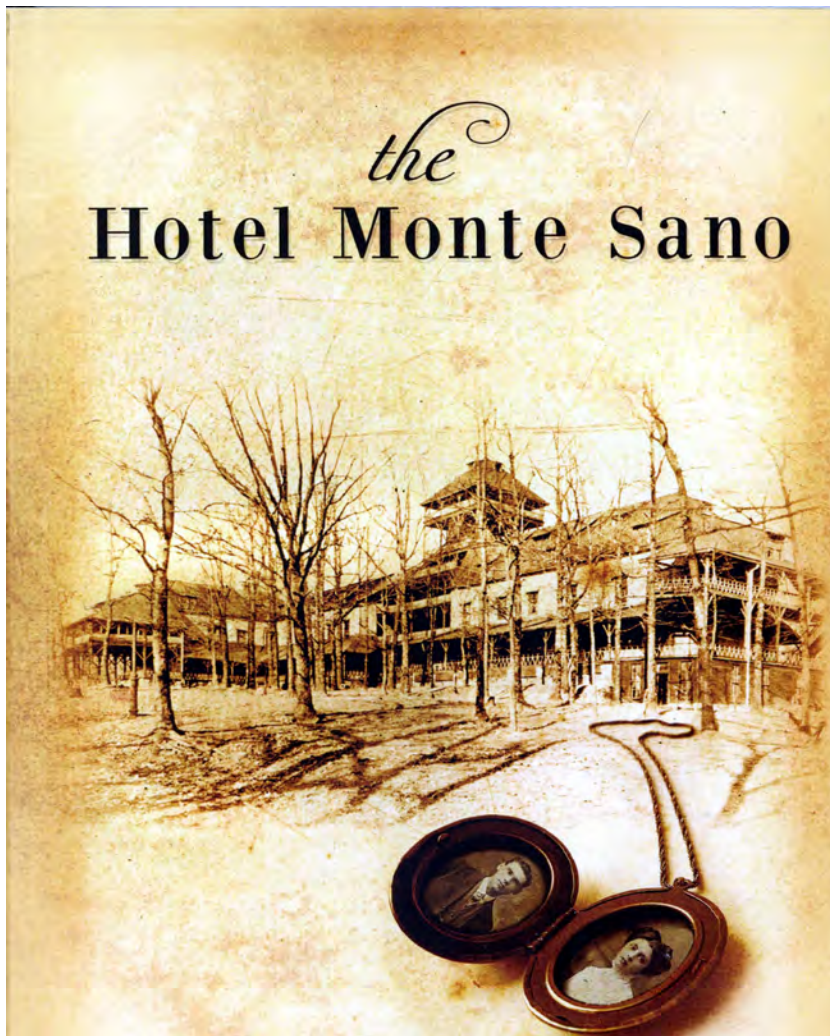
No. 264

February 2015



Old Huntsville

HISTORY AND STORIES OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY



the
Hotel Monte Sano

The country conductor pointed out all the local landmarks as the train chugged up the mountain, through thick woods and massive rocks, across high wooden bridges, with many beautiful views of the Tennessee River Valley below.

I wrote down the places we rode past: Calhoun Grove and Steel Grove in town, then a place named LaCrosse, and Fagan Spring where the train stopped to fill its boiler from a pretty little pool of clear water. Then O'Brien's Button Hole Bridge where the train travelled over this high, scary wooden trestle, Sylvan Glen, Buena Vista, Cold Spring and a little train station at the top of the mountain named Laura's View.

Finally, at long last, we stopped at the Wise and Company store, and, behind it, the towering Hotel Monte Sano.

Also in this issue: A Singular Suicide

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Domie Lewter
Mac Lewter

An Excerpt from The Hotel Monte Sano

by Charles Farley

(From the Diary of
Sophie Franklin
June 20, 1892)

At last, Mama, my six year-old brother Jeremy and I arrived in Huntsville, only to find out that we had to change to one final train before reaching the Hotel Monte Sano.

The conductor was a slight, friendly young man, with a syrupy southern accent, who told us all about the train. "This heel dummy-locomotive weighs two tons," he drawled, "and was built by the Baldwin Locomotive Company up north in Patterson, New Jersey. As y'all can see, we've encased it in a body that looks somethin' like a streetcar, and we've built some special noise-reducers to keep the steam and smoke from scarin' the horses and mules as we go through

town, down Jefferson Street and onto Clinton, and then up the side of the mountain."

"How far is it?" Jeremy interrupted.

"Seven and half miles," the conductor continued. "Only 'bout thirty minutes and we'll be on top of the world. Well, on the top of North Alabama, anyway."

"Why's it called the dummy?" Jeremy interrupted again.

"Cause it's so quiet. Y'all know, like a deaf and dumb person that can't talk. Like a little gal who come up here with her teacher when the hotel first opened up, back in eighty-eight. Her name was Helen Keller, from over in Ivy Green, and, even though she was blind and deaf and dumb, she wasn't dumb at all. In fact, she was smart as a whip. Why, with a little help from her teacher, she'd carry on a conversation just as good as you and me. I ain't kiddin' y'all."

"Now, let me tell y'all bout these heel coaches. All six of 'em was specially designed by a man named Arthur Wilson and built for the Monte Sano Railway Company by the St. Charles Car Company in St. Charles, Missouri. They's only forty-two feet long, as compared to a usual train coach of fifty to sixty feet."

"How come?" Jeremy had to know.

"Well," the conductor laughed, "I was about to tell y'all. But you're fixin' to find out fer your own selves, when we start makin' them short curves as

"Sometimes I wonder whether the world is being run by smart people who are putting us on, or by imbeciles who really mean it."

Mark Twain



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we head up the mountain. Now, that there coach at the end, that one there's got three separate compartments. One with ice in it to keep cold the meat, fruit and vegetables we're haulin' up from Halsey's to the hotel fer y'all to eat. Another fer yo' bags. And the third fer those that wanna take a smoke, like that man I just sent back there."

The country conductor pointed out all the local landmarks as the train chugged up the mountain, through thick woods and massive rocks, across high wooden bridges, with many beautiful views of the Tennessee River Valley below. I wrote down the places we rode past: Calhoun Grove and Steel Grove in town, then a place named LaCrosse, Fagan Spring where the train stopped to fill its boiler from a pretty little pool of clear water, O'Brien's Button Hole Bridge where the train travelled over this high, scary wooden trestle, Sylvan Glen, Buena Vista, Cold Spring, Withorn Spring, a little train station at the top of the mountain named Laura's View, and finally, at long last, stopping at the Wise and Company store,

and, behind it, the towering Hotel Monte Sano

I must say that it's much more impressive than I had expected, especially out here in the middle of nowhere. It has two stories and a large sloped attic and has been built right on a high bluff, facing southwest, overlooking the little town of Huntsville nestled in the wide valley below. There's a two-level covered porch that goes almost all the way around the hotel, and a boardwalk along the edge of the cliff, and a double-decked observation tower that looms above it all. Mama says that it was built in the Queen Anne architecture style, which I think means it looks like a big old comfortable country house, or, at least, that's what it looks like to me. It's made of wide wood planks, painted a light cream color, with a high, red, tin roof and even a steeple sticking up into the deep blue southern sky.

As soon as the train pulled in, a whole slew of men descended upon us, dressed in matching uniforms of maroon and gray. While they unloaded our bags, a tall, handsome bellman led

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us through a gateway of rock-lined flower beds and rows of finely-trimmed shrubbery, up the wide stairs to the hotel's porch and around to the front door on the bluff side of the building. The double doors were decorated with multiple panes of brightly colored glass, and Mr. Denison, the hotel's manager, met us there. He was a neat, well-dressed man in a pressed blue suit and a no-nonsense, business-like air about him. After he introduced himself, the manager immediately launched into a long speech, bragging effusively about the hotel's accommodations.

"Welcome to the Hotel Monte Sano," he began in a familiar northern accent, "the Saratoga of the South. You're the Franklins, I presume. We've been expecting you."

"Yes," Mama nodded. "This is Jeremy and this is Sophie."

I smiled and tried not to look as tired as I felt. Jeremy just leaned on me and moaned. Mama tried to look attentive and interested, but you could tell that she was just as worn out as Jeremy and I, maybe even more so.

But Mr. Denison, tall and thin and wound as tight as a tourniquet, didn't seem to notice at all and continued telling us more than we wanted to know about this grand hotel which he was obviously very proud of.

"Let me first assure you," he declared in his well-rehearsed patter, "that neither money nor pain has been spared in providing you with the most elegantly furnished, first-class accommodations, unequalled anywhere in the South, a true model of convenience and relaxation. It

"I'm going to retire and live off my savings. Not sure what I'll do that second month."

Billy Varnell, Madison

was designed by John Rea and built by L.S. Melbourn in 1887."

"Here in the lobby you will notice the rich oriental rugs that extend throughout the hotel, as well as the carved wooden paneling and stained glass windows. The rooms throughout the hotel are heated with steam, although I doubt you'll need it this time of year, and each is lit by gas chandeliers, fueled from three metal cylinders just south of the hotel. And, of course, each room is arranged so that it is naturally lit with a panoramic view of the valley below. There are no back or inside rooms at the Hotel Monte Sano."

Mr. Denison, in his tailored suit and tan spats, then led us through the hotel's lobby that had a big walnut desk behind which rested a callboard and a bank of two-hundred and thirty-three mailboxes and one handsome, smiling, middle-age man outfitted in the same maroon and gray uniform as the men

who met the train.

"The Franklins have arrived," the manager announced. "Mrs. Franklin, Miss Sophie, Master Jeremy, this is Mister Richard Schrimsher, our head bellman and resident expert on everything Monte Sano. He can direct you to the many natural sites and, if you wish to take the waters, to the springs throughout the grounds and tell you which will ease which ailments."

"At your service," the tall, smiling man answered, as he passed a key on a big brass ring to the manager who continued his spiel: "To your left is the Ladies Reception Room and next to it the Main Parlor and Ballroom, measuring forty feet by sixty feet, where you'll find an orchestra for your listening and dancing pleasure most every night. Note the plush bottom chairs and the golden oak Alamo and speaking tables throughout the hotel. And on your right is the stairway and, further down




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the main hall, our formal dining room."

"To quote my predecessor, Mr. S. E. Bates, 'the kitchen is the foundation of every good hotel.' Our current *chef de cuisine* is Bubba Conner, the former *sous chef* for the hotel's original chef, the noted Englishman Jessup Whitehead, who wrote a number of popular cookbooks before his passing in 1889. The chef serves nothing but the finest breads, meats and vegetables available, as well as Jersey milk and butter from General Moore's Monte Sano Dairy a few miles over on a neighboring mountain. His modern kitchen and fully-stocked storeroom are in a separate building just behind the dining room."

We then followed the manager out onto the porch where he showed us three steel-mesh cages sitting on a wooden table. He read the sign on the cages to us. "Beware of these poisonous snakes. Do not touch." "This one here is a timber rattlesnake," he said as he shook the cage and the snake coiled and rattled its tail much more loudly than you would have expected from such

a small creature.

"It's found mostly in the woods, under felled trees and brush, and this one next to it is a water moccasin, found near streams and springs, obviously. Stay away from both of them."

So, of course, Jeremy stepped closer to get a better look as Mama and I backed away. Mama grabbed him by the collar and jerked him away, as Jeremy howled.


But Mr. Denison was unfazed. "This empty cage here," he continued, "is for a copperhead, which blends in so well with our local sandstone cliffs that we haven't been able to catch one yet. My assistant Smokey Woods has been trying to trap one alive, but has been unsuccessful so far. Maybe you'd like to help him, Master Jeremy."

"Oh, yeah!" Jeremy screamed. "Can I, Mama?"

"I don't think so, dear," Mama answered, pulling him along. Mr. Denison then led us around to the northwest side of the hotel.

"There," he said, pointing to a long, two-story cottage across the lawn, "is Memphis Row. We built it originally as a dance

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hall and billiards room, but, because of our success in attracting guests, we've converted it into thirty-six adult guest rooms. Since many of our guests come from Memphis, we call it Memphis Row..."

The manager then led us back across the porch to the middle of the hotel, smiling along the way to the many guests who sat rocking in the porch chairs, reading, smoking, or just enjoying the view. He addressed most of them by name, as we strolled past them. Everything looked and smelled clean and fresh and natural, and I began to understand why they claimed that this place was so healthy.

When we arrived at the stairs to the double-decked, bell-roofed observatory, the manager stopped and pointed to the water tank beneath it, filled, he said, by eight thousand gallons of water pumped by a series of elaborate pumps from a big spring, called appropriately enough, but not very imaginatively, "Big Spring," in downtown Huntsville. And under the tank were the bathrooms — all with porcelain-lined tubs, he said — and separate water closets for men and women.

"Then in the south wing, we also have a barber shop, a saloon, a billiards room, and the

men's smoking lounge, as well as two ten-pin bowling alleys in a separate building just north-east of here. We also have a new lawn tennis court and croquet, of course, and a complete livery stable in the hotel's annex just southeast of the hotel, with our four-in-hand Tally Ho coaches, trained coach horses, carriages, buggies, two carts, riding horses and ponies — not to mention a well-trained staff of horsemen and guides. If you want to go riding or take a carriage ride, just let Mr. Schrimsher or me know and we'll be happy to arrange it for you. We have nearly twenty miles of well-marked trails for your hiking and riding pleasure."

Mr. Denison then led us up the stairs to the second floor. "We have you in Room Two-seventeen," he said, as we walked down a long hallway bordered on one side by lattice and solid doors to each room. He opened the lattice door to our room and put the key in the lock and opened the tall oak door.

"Note the Brussels carpet, and

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the marble-topped washstand and dresser. The beds for you, Mrs. Franklin, and you, Miss Sophie, are furnished with spring and horsehair mattresses, while Master Jeremy will, I'm sure, enjoy this comfortable cot we have set up for him near the window."

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Jeremy scowled, as he tested the firmness of the mattresses by bouncing up and down on them with his rear-end, until Mama caught him by the collar and told him to stop.

"Each room has a call bell, right here," the manager said, as he pointed to a red velvet cord next to the door, "if you need anything at all, just pull it."

Which, of course, Jeremy promptly did.

"And in the hall there is a fire hose, if, God forbid, that is needed," Mr. Denison said, ignoring Jeremy.

"This will do nicely," Mama smiled.

"And, finally, here is your door to the upper porch," he said, as he opened the door with a flourish. "Enjoy the view. You're seventeen hundred feet above sea level and about a thousand feet above Huntsville. Enjoy your stay."

Our bags arrived shortly, and, as Mama unpacked them,

Jeremy and I stood on the porch and gazed down at the valley below and the Tennessee River glistening in the sun like a slithering, silver snake in the far-off distance to the south.

And then on the narrow dirt road between the hotel and the bluff boardwalk, I looked down and saw the most amazing sight of this most amazing day: a fair-skinned boy, in tan canvas work trousers and white cotton shirt, about my age, with a curly mess of brown hair, leading a pretty palomino pony toward the front entrance of the hotel. He was as cocky as a prize fighter; I could tell just by the way he strutted.

And, when Jeremy yelled, "Hey, look at that horse," the boy looked up at us and stared and then ... smiled, his white teeth gleaming in the afternoon glimmer. And, even though he was much too cocky for my liking, I smiled back.

Sophie Franklin June 20, 1892



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Life's Unexpected Turns

by Malcolm Miller



Many years ago I recollect a very popular song that today would be classified as a country song. Even though I was a young man, this particular song, or at least some of the words, have stuck with me. Actually if I were to be quite honest with you readers many words and music of songs have stayed with me for years. I could sing and play on my guitar World War II songs for hours, religious songs for hours, songs I have written for hours, and country songs for hours. My mind is always filled with some type of music and lyrics are always roaming through my head.

Anyway, back to the song I first mentioned. The title of the song is "The Black Sheep." This song tells a very sad story of an old man that gave all of his wealth and earthly possessions to his children; that is to

all of his children except the one that was considered the "black sheep" of the family. Many families then and today both have one that is considered a black sheep or different from the rest.

As the story continues in the song, after the old man gave the other children all his wealth and earthly possessions they began to decide one by one that the old man was now in the way. They gathered together and called the people from the County Poorhouse to take the now penniless old man to spend the rest of his remaining days in the Poorhouse because they could no longer be



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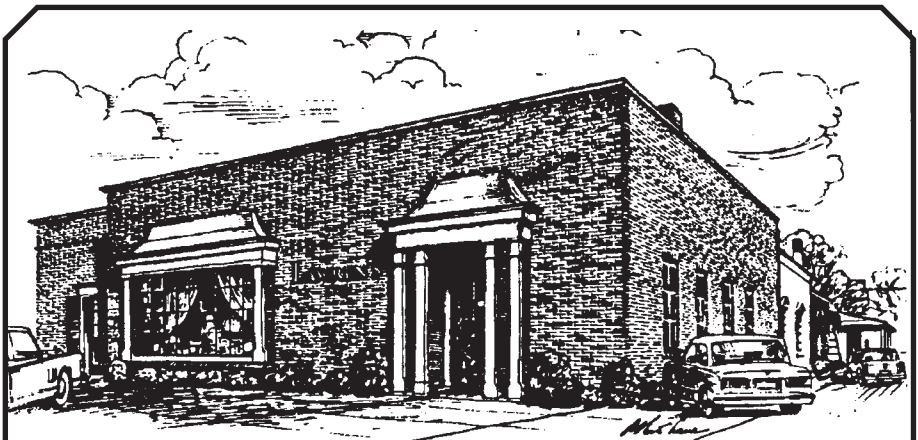
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Joey Thomas, Huntsville

bothered with him. Back in the days when I was a young man there were places called the poorhouses that took care of the destitute, this was before government assistance and welfare.

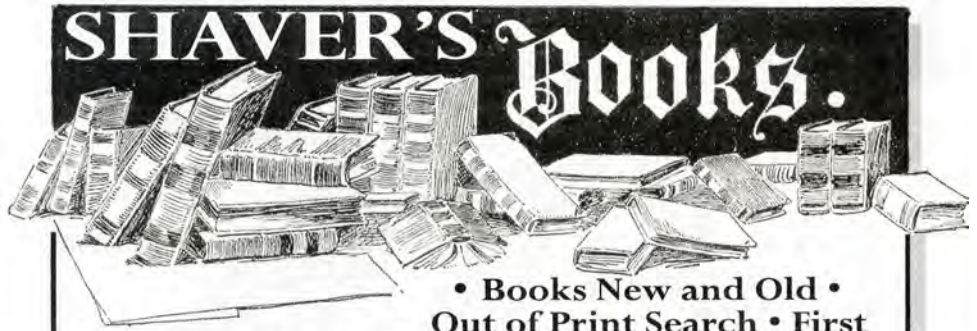
Now, at the last minute before these siblings could take the old man to the Poorhouse, the son that he had given nothing to because he was a black sheep came on the scene and took the old fellow home with him to care for him for the remainder of his life. Even though this young man had not lived up to his father's expectations, he was the only one willing and had enough love for his father to care for him now that he was destitute and old.

Nursing homes and Assisted Living Homes seem to be a way of life for the majority of people in our modern day society. Let me make one thing perfectly clear, I am certainly not knocking nursing homes; they, like the Poorhouse, are a necessity is our society.

I am now 87 years young and the time may come when I become a resident of one so thank God for these homes and the people who run them and work in them. Madison County once had a Poorhouse. It was finally closed in the late 1930s, and the families of its residents were forced to take care of their own elderly.

Because I have friends in some nursing homes, I visit them on occasion. True, the old Poorhouse has long been a thing of the past; however the practice of abandoning the elderly is just as prevalent today as it was in the past. Most are clean and neat and most employees have a genuine love and concern for the residents there. One attendant I talked to once told me, "If I didn't love the residents

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I couldn't stay here and see all the suffering and loneliness." My brother, Paul, lived in Tut Fann for a time before he passed and everyone there was lovely. The place was clean and they had many activities for the residents.

Naturally not all the patients in these homes have been abandoned by their families. Family members and friends visit daily bring cheer, clean laundry, gifts, flowers, goodies and their time that is precious to the resident. For various reasons family members cannot possibly care for their loved ones at home. Although many families still do care for them at home as long as they are able to. It does, however, mean certain sacrifices for all family members.

The sad fact of the matter still remains that a large majority of these nursing home residents have been abandoned by those they spent their productive lives providing for. Sometimes when I visit friends I don't mean to stay long on the visit and I then find myself there several hours talking to some of the sweetest, kindest people I have even known.

One old gentleman was very cheerful until he mentioned his darling wife. Each time he mentioned her he would break down and cry like a baby. He said, "Mister, if she were still alive, I would not be in this place." Another sweet little frail lady said of her children, some of which live close by, "I guess they are just too busy to come by today." Those "too busy" words do bother me at times.

Then, as her chin started to quiver, she said to me, "Mister, it gets awfully lonesome here."

As I walked down the hallway, an old lady confined to a wheelchair called to me and asked, "Is Hugh coming today?" I asked the nursing attendant who she was talking about. She said that it was the old lady's son, who had only been there once, to her knowledge, since he admitted her over a year ago. I quietly thought to myself "No, my dear lady, Hugh won't be here today, not tomorrow, maybe not ever."

Many of the people I see in these homes have been abandoned by their loved ones they still love dearly and are only waiting for the day when they will meet some of their loved ones in heaven. Sometimes death comes more from a broken heart of losing a life partner, other loved ones or being forgotten by one, than from a physical ailment. I have known those whose body gives out from heartbreak.

I do hope that if I become a resident of one of these places that I will be able to visit with the others there and help bring something different to their existence. I also hope that my loved ones find some time to drop by and bring cheer into my life and perhaps the lives of

some of the others.

At least we all know now with all the assisted living places and the great nursing homes nearby that we will not have to spend the remainder of our time in the "Poorhouse" of the 1930s.

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 - Rib Sandwich
 - Chicken Fingers
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- Hot Dogs
 - Slaw Dogs - Red Or White
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2 lb. Special - \$28⁰⁰
 2 lbs. of Pork, 3 pint sides, 16 buns, sauce

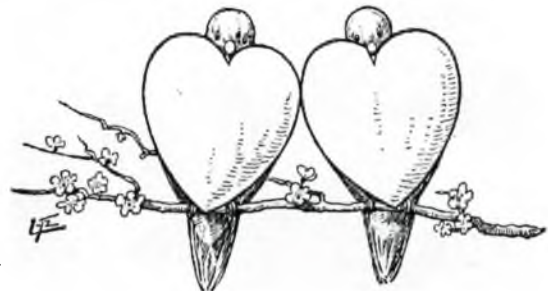
3 lb. Special - \$39⁹⁵
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About Charles Farley

Charles Farley lives with his wife, three teenagers, four cats and one dog a few blocks from the site of the Hotel Monte Sano in Huntsville, Alabama. He has worked as a teacher, librarian and salesman. He has written for *American Libraries*, *Library Hi-Tech*, *Library Journal* and *Living Blues*.

His first book was a biography of blues great Bobby "Blue" Bland, *Soul of the Man*, published by the University Press of Mississippi in 2011. His second book, entitled *Secrets of San Bias* and published by Pineapple Press in 2012, is his first novel. It is based on events surrounding an actual murder that occurred in the Spring of 1938 at the Cape San Bias Lighthouse near Port St. Joe, Florida. Its sequel, *Secrets of St. Vincent*, was published by Pineapple Press in 2013. The third and final book of the trilogy, *Secrets of St. Joe*, was published by Pineapple Press last year.

"My family loves to hike the trails on Monte Sano," Farley said, "and my kids kept asking me questions about the history and biology of the area that I couldn't answer. So I decided to find the answers to some of their questions and record them in a fast-paced love story mystery. I wanted them and other readers to know more about the mountain and Huntsville and what it was like to live here in 1892."

"It took me over a year to research and write *The Hotel Monte Sano*" Farley continued.

"While the plot and main characters are fictional, I wanted to make everything else as historically accurate as possible."

"Fortunately, I had a lot of help from local historians like Jane Barr of the Monte Sano Historical Association, B. Susanna Leberman of the Huntsville-Madison County Public Library, Stephanie Timberlake of Burritt on the Mountain, and Kent Wilbora and Brian Moore of the Monte Sano State Park, as well as many neighbors and friends who added tales and tidbits of lore that had been passed down through their families from early mountain settlers."

"It's been a fun and rewarding project, and I hope readers will enjoy it."

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From the Editor

For as long as I can remember I've heard stories about the beautiful Monte Sano Hotel that used to be perched on the north-west ridge of Monte Sano, overlooking the lights of Huntsville down in the valley. Older folks who remembered the hotel being torn down, walking through it before all was auctioned off, remembered the grandeur and felt sad that it was no more.

One story in particular that always intrigued me was about a singer, a lady who performed in a small singing group. She remembered one night in particular, it was one of the last parties held at the hotel. Her group was to perform after dinner.

She told me that behind the hotel there was sort of a large flat rock that was pretty close to the drop. She stood on the rock to perform her solo with a group of people standing nearby. As she edged towards the back of the large rock she lost her footing and began to fall backwards, down the steep slope. All of a sudden she felt someone grab

her around her waist, and pull her back up towards the rock. In true performer style she continued with her song, but never met the man who had saved her. She said she had wanted all of her life to be able to meet him, but never did.

Charles Farley lives up on Monte Sano and has written a book called "*The Hotel Monte Sano*" that everyone interested in Huntsville's rich history will treasure. His book is a story of a family who came to Huntsville from New York for health reasons, and while the people are fictional, the historic details at that time in Huntsville are completely accurate.

You'll learn about the rock formations on Monte Sano, the springs and caves, what it was like to be actually walking through the woods behind the hotel. You will experience walking the the lobby, going into your room, looking off the balcony overlooking Huntsville.

The story of the family coming here is very compelling and you will find it hard to put it down!

Cathey

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A Citizen of Madison County

by Marjorie Ann Reeves

"Big Momma" was the family name for our grandmother Viola Milliner Jordan born October 22, 1902, in New Hope, Alabama. The name came to be because her oldest grandchild copied his mother in calling Viola "Momma". Our father taught him to call Viola "Big Momma" to distinguish the child's grandmother from his mother. Being squat and wide, the name was descriptive and fit her well.

When Viola was young her mother, Sarah Vann Milliner, suffered from post-partum depression and committed suicide after giving birth to her fourth child. The children moved in with their grandmother, Rosie Carpenter Vann, in New Hope. She had been farmed out after she lost her parents so she saw no trouble sending her grandchildren to hard labor. Viola grew up knowing the world of hard knocks and hard work.

When Viola was fifteen, the children came back to their father's home in Woodville to help him. James Stokley Milliner owned a country store, did blacksmithing and was a gunsmith in Woodville. He was serving as a deputy sheriff when he was shot in the back while breaking up a saloon fight. He suffered from constant pain for the rest of his life and used a cane to get around. He would sit at a bench to work on a gun than give it to Viola to test it out. She became an expert marksman and could tell her father what was needed to be done to the gun to make it work correctly. Henry, her only brother, died from epilepsy after they moved back home.

In her nineteenth year, she met and married fifty-four year

old Alexander Napoleon Jordan against her father's wishes. She wore a white dress with a blue ribbon around her waist and a crown of flowers atop of her head. She was Alexander's third and last wife. Alexander

had four teenage children at home and his teenagers resented another teenager trying to be their mother. She had been taking care of others since she was young and tried to look after her stepchildren but they chose to make it difficult for her. Even after they were grown and had children of their own, they still refused to accept her friendship.

Alexander and Viola had six children together: four boys, with one dying after birth and one being handicapped and two girls eight years apart. Viola's sister had a son. When Aunt Willie moved

out of Viola's home to transfer with her husband to Mississippi, Jimmy asked her to stay because he did not like his new stepfather. Viola raised her nephew as one of her flock. Being the right size, Viola enjoyed playing Santa Claus

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at McDonald Chapel First Methodist Church for several years while her children were young. Big Momma was known for her sense of humor and ability to find comedy in many situations. She was often heard chuckling to herself.

Alexander died at seventy-four leaving Viola with a house full of children to support. Her father sold his businesses and moved in with Viola in order to help her keep her farm by putting all his money into it. Being dogged with pain, he would strike out at the children with his cane if they got too close to him. He had a radio which he would not allow any of the children to touch. Once he threatened to whip one of the younger children, but the oldest child took the beating for the child in trouble.

In 1942, after Viola's father died, the Federal Government came to Huntsville to buy up farms to increase the war efforts in Alabama. Viola would not sell so the Government condemned the property and took it for eminent domain to build the Redstone Arsenal. What little money she received from the sale, Viola bought five lots on 13th Street in Huntsville. She continued to have a cow and chickens, plus growing a large garden selling the produce. Big Momma had large flower gardens around her yard. When the autumn frost came she would call her family to come to cut the flowers before the frost killed the yard's beauty. She was known for her beautiful flowers in her neighborhood. It was hard work but she and the children did it all. To help with cost, she worked on the bomb making line at Redstone Arsenal until a bomb blew up and singed her hair. She wore her waist long hair up in a bun until the explosion. For the rest of her life she wore her hair short and permed. She transferred to driving a truck on the Arsenal. Viola was one of the first people in Huntsville to own a Model A Ford so children would line up along the road to watch her car go by.

She had a small cottage built on her property to rent out to the Northern men coming to Huntsville to work at the Arsenal. One of the Yankees taught her how to make beer. Most of her children were grown and gone except the youngest when she started bootlegging by buying liquor and selling it by the shot. It embarrassed her oldest daughter, Marjorie, to have to pay the fine to get her mother out of jail when she was arrested every so often for bootlegging in Madison County. Her house was always busy, and the youngest daughter Doris had to cook for the boarders,

go to school, and waitress at a nearby restaurant to save money to go to nursing school. Doris was the only child to graduate from high school because she was determined to attend nursing school in Birmingham. During the training in different illnesses, she was sent to Ohio. There she married and raised her family leaving Huntsville behind her.

Big Momma worked hard all her life and was known to be willing to lend a hand to the less fortunate. She died at the age of fifty-eight from heart problems, but the family believed she was just tired of the struggles of life.

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Heard On the Street

by **Cathey Carney**



Congratulations to our winner for the Photo of the Month for January. The winning call came from **Bill Loveday**, of Estill Fork, AL. Bill works for Valhalla Funeral Home and is from Madison County, but said he moved to Estill Fork to get away where "it's quiet."

Someone called with a question to see if our readers might know - was Huntsville, TX named for Huntsville, AL? I wasn't sure about that so will put that question out to you - call me and I'll add it to next month's column.

Dan Raby of Huntsville was only 77 years old when he passed away. He was a talented singer who sang with the choir at Whitesburg Baptist Church where he was a member for 10 years. He leaves his wife **Sandy**, son **James Briggs Raby**, daughter **Beth Akridge**, granddaughter **Hannah Akridge**, grandson **Dan Akridge**, sister **Carol Newberry** and other relatives and many loving friends.

I like to find unusual drinks that are also a little healthy (low sugar) and I made up one that is really good! You fill a glass with ice, then pour a cup of light Vanilla Soy Milk into the ice, then top with Diet Cherry 7Up til full. Stir with a straw. It really foams but the taste is amazing - sort of like a really good cream soda but without all the bad stuff!

The **Tinsel Trail** this year in Big Spring Park was just beautiful with over 200 decorated Christmas trees - but most amazing was the cleanup after. It seems that one day the trees were still up, early January, the next day everything was gone! I know the sponsors worked really hard to clean up the trees but then the **City of Huntsville** came in and it was all gone! Great job.

It's always good to see **Beth & Walter Thames** working out at the Downtown Y - the gym there is the best with modern equipment and a great staff.

So many people are sick with colds & flu - stock up on your vitamin C and chicken soup and green tea. I know I've visited both **Ruth's Nutrition and Pearly Gates** recently to find stuff to help if I get a cold. You've got to be prepared!

If you have ceiling fans in your home this is the time of year to change your fan's direction. In winter you change it to clockwise, in summer counter-clockwise. What happens when you switch it to clockwise the air is pulled up and around rather than straight down on top of you. Still gives you that great airflow but moves the heat down and around you while still

giving you that moving air.

Judy Smith has come up with a great combination of ingredients that not only gets rid of cat & dog hair on your carpet, but makes it smell great too. She mixes 2 cups water with 1/4 cup vinegar, a cap of fabric softener - shake it up in a plastic spray bottle and mist your rugs/carpet. Vacuum right after and there will be no dog or cat hair! Thanks to Judy for this idea.

Joe Connaughton is a 91 year-old Vet who not only fought for his country, but wrote a really interesting book that has just been published - "*Tales of the 319th*". His story "*A Christmas to Remember*" was the feature story in December Old Huntsville. His book has just been published so it is now available at **Harrison Brothers and Shaver's Books** in Railroad Station Antiques.

If you ever attended antique car auctions and get-togethers you probably knew **Terry Rogers** of Hazel Green. He loved restoring old cars and having friends visit with him to see his progress, sharing Cokes & Moonpies. Terry passed away at the age of 72 in January, and leaves wife **Ann**

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 sweet girl has been in the club/restaurant business here for many years.



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Sharp Rogers and their children; **Shandy, Wendell** and **Teresa** in addition to his two beloved grandchildren - **Ashlyn** and **Jessica**. We send our deepest condolences to family and friends.

It's amazing how good the people of the Huntsville area are to **animals needing their help**. Recently there was a dog/cat hoarder home in this area with many pets starving and needing help. The homeless animal shelters are limited in how many pets they can take in and put out a call for help. Huntsville/Madison Cty. residents stepped up and adopted every one of them. It just makes you feel good to be part of such a caring community.

It was interesting to hear that **Redstone Village Retirement Community** has some exciting news about a new facility for local residents. The Golden K Kiwanis hosted two ladies recently - **Candy Burnett** who is President of the Huntsville Hospital Foundation, and **Kelly Moreno**, Associate Director for Redstone Village. Candy updated the club on the building of a new on-site Hospice Care Facility that will be part of Huntsville Hospital, but located in the more serene location of Redstone Village off South Parkway. The new facility will have 15 rooms, each housing 2 family members. This will be the first of it's kind here in this area and is very much needed.

In another announcement, Kelly Moreno talked to the attendees about the addition to the **Grand-**

view Memory Facility at Redstone Village that will feature 18 new apartments, general store, courtyard, and even a 1955 Thunderbird in the facility! The addition is set to be completed by next year.

Hugh Michaels stopped by to see me recently with a really good story about Lancaster, AL where he grew up - you'll see it in the March issue - he's a truly sweet guy.

Our friend **Bobbie Peterson** of Madison had to undergo some surgery recently and her sweet husband **Karl** is taking such good care of her. We're thinking about you and wishing you a speedy recovery!

Betty Ann Savelle was very much involved in the arts here in Huntsville, as well as the Symphony Guild. She was in the Daughters of the American Revolution, Junior Welfare League and worked very hard to chair events at the Botanical Gardens. But most of all she was a beloved wife to **Bill Savelle**, and a funny, loving Mom to **William, Rick, Sally, Carol & Tim**. Betty passed away on Jan. 12th. She leaves grand and great-grand children and many friends who miss her every day.

Don't forget to mark your calendar for the annual **Dog Ball** this year, on Feb. 6 at the Von Braun Civic Center South Hall. Call 256-881-8081 for more information. It's an event you'll never forget! And usually all

the homeless dogs from the **Humane Society** get adopted before the night is out.

If you want to feel better - get out there and walk - 20 minutes a day at a brisk pace will do wonders for you! Come to the downtown neighborhoods - you'll enjoy it!

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Old Huntsville Favorites

White Chicken Chili

- 4 chicken breasts, cooked & cubed
- 2 cans Great Northern beans, drained
- 1 can chopped green chilies
- 2 cans Rotel tomatoes
- 1 med. onion chopped
- 1 t. minced garlic
- 1 t. thyme
- 1 c. sour cream
- Mozarella cheese

In a saucepan mix all ingredients except the cheese. Heat to boiling, reduce heat, simmer for 20 minutes. Add sour cream & mix. Add chicken broth to thin. Top with Mozzarella or cheese of your choice.

Fried Catfish

- 2 T. Olive oil
- 4 catfish filets, fresh

1 c. gluten free seasoned flour
 2 T. lemon-pepper blend
 Pour the olive oil into frying pan and pre-heat. Rinse catfish and partially dry with paper towels leaving damp. Mix the flour with the seasoning and coat each filet. Place in preheated frying pan. Cook over medium-high heat til filets are done and coating is browned. Serve with fresh onion slices.

Kerry's Chipped Beef Cheeseball

- 2 - 8oz. pkgs. cream cheese
- 1 bunch green onions, chopped greens & all
- 1 sm. jar chipped beef, cut in small pieces
- 1 t. garlic powder
- 1/2 t. cayenne powder
- 1 c. chopped pecans

Have cheese at room temperature and place in bowl with 1/4 cup water. Mix in the chopped green onions and chipped beef. Add seasonings. Mix well and form into a ball with buttered hands. Roll in chopped pecans to coat and serve with Town House Crackers.

Cheddar Baked Potato Slices

- 4 medium potatoes
 - 1 can cream of mushroom soup
 - 1 t. paprika
 - 1 t. onion powder
 - 1 t. garlic powder
 - 1 t. black pepper
 - 1 c. sharp Cheddar cheese, shredded
- Cut the potatoes into 1/4" slices. In a small bowl, combine the soup, onion powder, garlic powder, paprika and pepper.

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Arrange a layer of the potato slices in a greased 2-qt. baking dish in overlapping rows. Sprinkle with half cheese, spoon half the soup mixture over the cheese. Repeat for 2nd layer.

Cover with foil and bake at 400 degrees for about 45 minutes - uncover and bake for 10 additional minutes and the potatoes are tender.

Apple Crisp

1 qt. sliced apples (peeled and sweetened to taste with sugar and a little lemon juice.)

- 2/3 c. brown sugar
- 1/2 c. plain flour
- 1/2 c. oats
- 1 t. ground cinnamon
- 3/4 t. nutmeg (optional)
- 1/3 stick butter, melted

Pour sweetened apples into an 8" square pan. Mix other ingredients together and pour over apples. Bake for 35 minutes at 375 degrees.

Earl Frazier's Blackberry Cobbler

- 1 c. self-rising flour
- 1 c. sugar
- 1/2 c. milk
- 1 can blackberries, unsweetened
- 1-1/2 t. vanilla extract

1 stick butter cut in pieces
 Pour blackberries into a pot with about 1/2 cup sugar, heat over medium stove til boiling. Remove from heat and add 1/2 teaspoon vanilla.

If necessary to thicken a little, cook with a little more sugar, but don't make it too thick.

Mix flour, 1/2 c. sugar, milk and 1 teaspoon vanilla in bowl til smooth. Spray a 9 x 13 pan with Pam vegetable spray, then pour flour mixture into pan.

Smooth out to the edges. Pour blackberries over flour mixture, dot with pieces of butter.

Bake at 350 degrees for about 45 minutes. Can be used with many types of fruit, fresh as well as canned. Unsweetened cherries are good, also.

Beer Bread

- 3 c. plain flour
- 2 t. salt
- 12 oz. beer
- 3-3/4 t. baking powder
- 1 t. garlic powder

Grease a 9x5" loaf pan. Combine flour, salt, baking powder and beer in a large bowl. Stir together til well mixed.

Spread batter in prepared pan. Bake at 350 degrees for 45 minutes and browned, and a wooden pick comes out clean. Turn out onto a rack and cool before slicing.



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The Legend of "Aunt Jenny" Brooks of Lawrence County, Alabama

by Steve Gierhart

"If you prick us, do we not bleed? If you tickle us, do we not laugh? If you poison us, do we not die? And if you wrong us, shall we not revenge?" William Shakespeare, The Merchant of Venice.

Jenny Brooks would have liked Billy Shakespeare, unless, of course, he happened to cross her. However, to most residents of Lawrence County, her acts, rebraided into myth, are legendary and the woman herself is beloved. She is wrapped tightly in community pride because Jenny seems neither quirky or dangerous, but simply bold and justified in the heinous acts that are attributed to her and her brigand family.

This much is certain. Louisa Elisabeth Jane Bates, a half-Cherokee, was born in 1826 in Kentucky and by the tender age of 14 was married to a man 21 years her senior, Willis Brooks, a saddler and bootmaker, with whom she bore eight children. She was also a mid-wife, helping deliver hundreds of babies into the world. And by 1850 the Kentuckians had moved to Lawrence County, Alabama where they remained until their deaths.

Beyond that, every trace of fact is infected with embellishment or uncertainty, enabling the various events and acts that followed to grow larger and larger. Let us simply state that her myth must have much historical truth and enjoy what has risen afterwards as the thing of lore and the stuff to be told around campfires. But be sure of this - the Civil War brought much heartbreak

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to "Jenny" or "Aunt Jenny" as she was later called in awe and respect, but it also brought blackness and accountability to those that caused her heartbreak.

The War started in 1861. Willis and Jenny Brooks, ensconced in their mountain home in what is now the Bankhead Forest, did what their neighbors did, survive and stay away from the "rich man's war and the poor man's fight." More than a few Lawrence County men fought for the Union, not because they did not love their land, but because being poor and "just getting by" meant they were practical, and war was none of that. For the practical poor, they were not going to benefit from maintaining a plantation owner's way of life when that life would never be their way of life.

Nonetheless, as the War drained the South of men and resources, it is no surprise the War eventually knocked on the Brooks' front door with its hands out. Wave after wave of slaughter depleted the ranks of both sides, forcing the draft. Only the rich could avoid that. And to insure the poor gave their fathers, sons and their crops, the War levy to fill soldiers' bellies, the Confederacy created the "Home Guards."

Sometime in late 1863 or early 1864 the Lawrence County "Home Guard" came visiting at night to make their demand of the Brooks. When Willis disagreed,

they took him to a tree where he was tortured and strung up in front of his family. Their oldest son, John, tried to save his father, and for his troubles, both he and his father were riddled with bullets in front of Jenny and the horrified children.

The legend, not discounted by Jenny in later life, has her gathering her brood around the bloody corpses of father and son, placing a hand of each of the remaining kids into the blood of their kin and swearing an oath of vengeance against each of the eight men responsible for their deaths. Jenny's boys, her little avenging angels, grew to manhood where the feud played out over

40 years.

Even if the events afterward are inaccurate, the legend was worth retelling over and over. Most likely, at least some of the Home Guard were respected members of the community, probably wealthy and able to escape the draft themselves. So whether plantation owner, doctor, or simple farmer, the leader was the first to go. The myth may not have grown so large without this fact or embellishment, but it is said that the body of the man was decapitated and the head boiled in a large kettle, rendered of brains and soft tissue in Jenny's front yard. And for good measure the lower jaw was removed and from that moment on, even at Jenny's death bed, it was used as a wash basin!

That was not enough for the mythic proportions of "Aunt Jenny". Over the decades that followed, her sons and in-laws followed the other Guard mem-

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bers, awaiting the right time and slowly taking out each one, stalking them to gruesome deaths. Some of the men fled, but to no avail, meeting death even in Texas and Indian Territory. Not surprising as Jenny was a beautiful half-Cherokee herself. She certainly had ties to those Indians in far off Oklahoma.

Supposedly, Jenny recorded their deaths on her walking stick that she proudly showed to any visitor. That stick and the skull was a clear warning to any that dared confront her. Her influence was equal to this legend. It was said that any Republican seeking office in the county had to gain Jenny's blessing to be elected.

However, violence begets violence. And though Jenny got her revenge, the process took all of her sons, even some grandsons. The Brooks boys gained a reputation for lawlessness. Murder, not just for revenge, was a sometimes result. Hiding was often a feature of their life. Thievery was a common calling card. And of course, moonshine figured largely into their mountain life, as it did in countless other mountain families across the Appalachias in several states, a life that took the final son, Henry, in 1920 as he was shot by "revenooers."

In 1884 the *Moulton Advertiser* published a story accusing the Brooks of a multitude of sins, including "general cussedness." Regardless, up until the day she died at age 98 on March 29, 1924, Jenny Brooks Johnston (she remarried soon after losing

Willis to the Guard and raised Jacob Johnston's children as well as her own) confessed pride in her sons, all of whom met violent deaths themselves. Jenny said they died like men with their boots on.

It seems strange to see her gaining so much notoriety and support in a Confederate heartland; so much so that some of the legends spin her as a Confederate darling which she most assuredly was not.

Regardless, Jenny would probably be satisfied in her legend, would probably help

it grow if she could. In some ways she did just that. Of course, that starts with the nice touch of washing her hands in the skull wash basin at her death, but afterwards, many say that a green light often comes to her grave at night. Many a local teenager, even today, takes a visit in the darkness to her grave on a dare. And many fail the challenge, rushing away feeling the touch of a cold, avenging spirit on their backs.

Whether that spirit is evil remains to be seen, but certainly it is playful, smiling at the hackles rising on the arms of the children of Lawrence County!



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"I was so ugly, my mother had to feed me with a slingshot."

Rodney Dangerfield

News in 1897

- John Kenny was charged \$20 yesterday in court for beating his mule in front of the courthouse. He was arrested last month for beating his wife.

- 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, 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, and was taken into Mr. Thos. Jamar's house where he remained there for two days.

- Lem Johnson, of Knoxville, was arrested for picking pockets near the Post Office. Apparently he picked the wrong pocket as he is now in jail under the care of a physician.

- 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 years 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 eigh-

teen inches in length. The lad recovered and is better.

- Miss Myrtle Holloway, a resident of Knoxville, is visiting Huntsville with the goal of securing a husband. So far suitors have been far and few between.

- We hear that Mr. and Mrs. J. Walter Penney had an entertaining sociable at their cozy home on West Clinton Street, where a small number of their friends were entertained and treated to a repast of the substantial and good things of the season. Those present were Mr. and Mrs. Chas. Hundley, Dr. and Mrs. S. A. Sheffey, Mrs. A. E. Douglass, M. L. Clay, Dr. B. E. Scruggs and a representative of the Journal.

- Wanted - one hundred families to go to Texas and Louisiana to farm. Call on Thos. H. Haywood, Decatur, AL. Transportation will be paid.

- For Sale - I have in my possession a vacant lot 40x80 in front of M. M. McKinney's store, in that part of town known as "Georgia," which I wish to sell for cash. Contact H. C. Binford.

A Serious Accident

On June 10th as Mr. James Jones was returning home from the city with his wagon, out on the Pike someone dashed by him on a bicycle which caused fright to his mules and caused them to run away. Mrs. Jones was in the buggy just ahead, the mules ran into the buggy and

the tongue of the wagon struck Mrs. Jones in the side injuring her seriously. She was in the act of jumping out, or it would have killed her. We are pleased to state that at this time she is some better and will soon be out again.

There ought to be a law prohibiting persons riding their bicycles fast when passing or meeting vehicles with horses or mules attached.

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The Perils of Sitting on the Lap of a Bow-Legged Man

From 1889 Newspaper



There is a case coming up in a Georgia court that will be of great interest to thousands of people who have long desired a decision on some of the points that will be developed.


It seems that a middle-aged man, a gentleman of wealth and refinement, is to be sued by the father of a young woman for \$50,000 damages for injuries that his daughter received while in his society.

The couple had been keeping company for some years and the carriage of the man was often seen in front of the residence of the lady. Last December he ceased visiting her. Since that time she has been an invalid, and has been treated for a spinal difficulty. The father will go into the courts, against his daughter's wish, to have the matter of responsibility settled.


It seems that the man is bow-legged, so much that it is considered dangerous for anyone to sit on his lap, for fear they would fall through,

but in this case he forgot the danger and let the girl slip. The father claims that the reckless man, knowing how fearfully and how wonderfully he is made, should have adopted precautions. In his complaint he will swear that on several occasions he has warned the man that he should place a board across his lap, or someday his legs would let somebody through.

In his answer to the complaint the man will



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say that his legs are just as nature made them, and that anybody who sits in his lap takes their chances. He further adds that if the girl had used all the precaution that one in so dangerous a position should use, and thrown her arms around his neck, as others have done, there need have been no danger.

Also, while he sympathizes deeply with her and her family, owing to the alleged injury, he cannot consider himself responsible. Of course, there are two sides to every question and both sides will have sympathizers.

While we do not wish to take sides on this question, there are some things connected with it that it seems a duty of the pious press to agitate. The country is full of bow-legged men, going about

seeking whom they may hold in their laps, and the wonder is that more such accidents do not occur.

There should be some law to protect girls from bow-legged men. We throw safeguards around our trapeze performers by compelling their managers to place nets under them, and why should we not provide by law that the bow-legged man should string a hammock under his boomerang legs, to catch those who may lose their spring balance, turn a somersault and fall in the winter of their discontent. It would not be pleasant to the bow-legged man to be compelled to carry a hammock when he went to see his girl, but it would be safer for the girl.

We have known a careful young man, who was bow-legged, to lay a pressboard, or

a sewing machine leaf, across his lap before he would let his girl sit down; but for every one man who is careful, there are hundreds who never think of the other hearts who are liable to ache.

Inventors have studied in vain a device for protecting people from bow-legs, and doctors who straighten cross-eyes have tried to straighten bow-legs, but nothing seems to succeed. Hundreds of women and girls as they read this will shudder at the narrow escapes they have had from falling through bow-legs, and they will unite with us, in the hopes that the law will protect them.

Of course there are some who would never fall through, even though the legs are bowed twice a much as they are, but many are so careless they are never safe.

The Hotel Monte Sano Challenge

Three Saturday Afternoons

Three Interpretive Hikes

In celebration of the new novel by Charles Farley, *The Hotel Monte Sano*, The Ardent Writer Press, Burritt on the Mountain, the Land Trust of North Alabama, The Little Green Store, and Monte Sano State Park are conducting three free interpretive hikes on the mountain.

•**Hike 1**—The Hotel Loop—Meet at The Little Green Store, to Ella's Rock, to the Old Hotel Chimney, and back. Approximately 1 Hour—One Mile.

Saturday, February 21, 1:00—2:00PM.

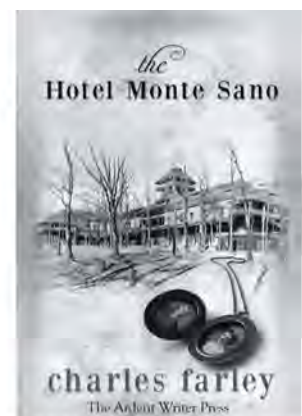
•**Hike 2**—The Fire Tower/South Plateau Loop—Meet at the Monte Sano State Park Office, to Lily Lake, to the O'Shaughnessy Home Site, to the Fearn Home Site, to the Fire Tower, and back. Approximately 2 Hours—Three Miles.

Saturday, March 7, 1:00—3:00PM.

•**Hike 3**—The Arrowhead/Natural Well Loop—Meet at Burritt on the Mountain Store, drive to the Trough Spring Parking Lot, to Abbey Rocks, to the Natural Well, and back. Approximately 3 Hours—Five Miles.

Saturday, March 14, 1:00—4:00PM.

Each hike will be led by the author, a park ranger, a local historian, and a biologist. Those completing all three hikes will receive a Hotel Monte Sano T-Shirt.



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Lum Dollar's Wood Yard

by Jerry Keel



I grew up on Beirne Avenue near the Goldsmith-Schiffman football field. There were some interesting families on our street. The corner house was occupied by the Dollars - Lum, his wife Grace and their three children: Billy (who went by Junior), Jo Joyce and an older sister named Lucille.

The Dollars ran a wood yard, a place where they sold firewood and kindling for starting fires in the fireplaces and heaters used by everyone back then. This was long before the advent of electric heat and central heating and cooling systems. The Dollars had a horse which was used to pull the wagon that delivered the wood and kindling which was all cut up by hand. Mr. Lum and Junior would spend hours cutting the wood before the deliveries began. Summer and winter, hot or cold, rain or shine, the men would work in the yard under a shelter which had only a roof, no walls.

The wood was first cut from logs into small lengths with a cross-cut saw then split by hand into small pieces for the fireplaces and heaters. The kindling was cut from the scraps left over from the firewood cutting. Pine was the preferred kindling material because it burned faster and hotter than oak and hickory, which were the preferred types for firewood because they burned slower and longer.

I remember standing for

“Congratulations on your wedding day! Too bad no one likes your husband.”

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what seemed like hours watching them cut the wood. They said very little to each other or anybody who happened by. Mr. Dollar was partially deaf and Junior was not the sharpest knife in the drawer.

Junior might have been slow but he sure knew how to cut wood. He would place a large block of wood on the chopping block then sink the axe into it with a mighty swing. He would then pick up the axe and the wood piece by the axe handle and lift it overhead, turning the handle so the axe would end up on the bottom. Then he would slam the block and axe down on the chopping block using the weight of the chunk along with his strength. The wood block would split into two pieces. He would repeat this until the log was reduced to a pile of firewood and kindling.

The small pieces or scraps used for kindling were held in the left hand and split with a smaller axe or hatchet. They looked like a Chinese or Japanese cook when they would rapidly cut the kindling pieces. If they didn't get their fingers out of the way of the hatchet they were subject to losing a finger. They were apparently good because they both had all the digits on both hands.

The Dollars weren't very big on hygiene. Rumor had it that Mr. Dollar would purchase a new pair of overalls and wear them until they completely wore out without ever washing them.

To be sure no one in our neighborhood liked bathing very much. All the houses had running water but only cold. Everyone had to heat water on the cook stove to use for bathing. The bathtub was a large round tub (a # 2 washtub) usually placed behind the stove in

the kitchen. The hot water was poured into the tub along with sufficient cold water to be used for bathing. The old #2 tub was another step in the progression to today's modern bathrooms with the fancy tubs and fixtures.

Back to the wood yard - the horse used to pull the delivery wagon was mean, a result of his having been terrorized by Junior. When he wasn't busy cutting wood he would pick at the horse and mistreat him. The horse was afraid of Junior but if anyone else ventured too close that person was subject to a nip from the horse resulting in another disciplinary session with Junior.

As progress slowly caught up with us the wood business gradually died out as more and more families went to coal and electricity to heat and cook with. Thanks to TVA, electricity became afford-

able for both appliances and heating.

The Dollars eventually sold their wood yard and left our neighborhood. They moved up around Gurley where they had a garden and sold vegetables as a means to get by.

Time passed and they were forgotten. It would be interesting to know what happened to all of them.

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As They Cooked

by Elizabeth Humes Chapman

From "Changing Huntsville, 1890-1899"
 Published 1972
 Excerpted Herein

Cooking was a fine art in Huntsville. No woman was ashamed to learn how to cook or to serve as cook at Church bazaars, fairs or picnics. Hospitality demanded that every woman be prepared to feed a guest who came at unexpected hours. Stoves were heated with wood, coal or oil. They were hard to regulate and uncertain for baking. Utensils were iron, tin or copper. There were iron pots for cooking vegetables, boiling water; iron skillets for frying; iron griddles for broiling meats; iron molds for muffins and cakes; and iron waffle rings. They were heavy and retained heat long after the fire was low which was their value in a wood stove. The things cooked in them tasted better, too.

Materials were bought in wholesale quantities and stored in a pantry. Every household of any pretention bought coffee and sugar by the hundred pound sack, flour by the barrel, sides of bacon and bushels of meal. Coffee was roasted in the pan and ground in a small hand-mill on the kitchen wall, or a smaller one which could be held in the grinder's lap. The grains were put into an open top, passed through grinders, and fell into a little drawer in the bottom. Experienced cooks knew exactly how much coffee to grind for a meal. Preserves were canned by the gross. A few women were successful in canning vegetables, but most families did without vegetables out of season. In winter, sweet and Irish potatoes, cow-field peas, dried okra, turnips and turnip salad, cabbage and butter beans were the ordinary menu.

Meals were heavier than they are now. For breakfast, oatmeal, muffins and biscuits, or battercakes or waffles, steak or chicken, eggs, milk, coffee and cream were a normal meal. In season, five vegetables, not counting rice or Irish potatoes, two meats and a dessert were the ordinary dinner which was usually

served between one and three o'clock. Supper was simple. Biscuits, jams, cold meat, grits, bread and milk, tea or coffee, supplied their needs. Children were fed about five o'clock and were put to bed by seven.

There was a smoke house on all of the old places. Hams were cured with saltpeter, pepper, salt, brown sugar and smoke from hickory chips. A few people cured beef, also. The fire had to be kept up three weeks. The hams and other pieces of meat were swung from the smoke house rafters. There were no windows in it nor was there a floor. The door was fitted as closely as possible so that as little air as possible could get in.

A good many families made their own wine or cider. They used hard presses, left the new wine in barrels with a siphon leading into water to take off the impurities. After it stopped fermenting, it was siphoned into bottles. They were corked and stored in cellars with the date on a label.

In the following recipes please note the "quick heat." This is important as your baked goods will collapse unless you use it. Our modern, quick oven is not quite as indicative.

RICH JUMBLES

Rub a pound of butter into a pound and a quarter of flour; beat four eggs with a pound and a quarter of sugar; when very light mix them with the butter and flour; mix in a glass of rosewater and a nutmeg; roll them in rings and bake slowly; sift powdered sugar over them after they are baked.

BEATEN BISCUITS

One pound flour, three ounces lard, one teaspoonful of salt, one teacupful of ice water. Cream the flour and lard. The salt is sifted with the flour. Beat on a biscuit block until the dough blisters with every stroke. Roll out. Cut with small cutter. Stick each biscuit four



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times in rows in the middle with fork. Bake forty-five minutes in a quick oven.

STUFFED HAM

Cut off all extra fat. Boil in a pot of water until it is tender. Remove, dry, and put in baker. Run in the oven until it is dry. Take out. Prepare meal or rolled cracker crumbs with some of the juice of the ham, two eggs beaten together, sweetened vinegar, salt and pepper.

Slice 1/8 inch strips out of the ham about four inches apart. Chop sweet pickles into the bread crumbs. Stuff strip with mixture. Cover the ham with it. Decorate with hard boiled eggs. Take the yolk out; slice into disks.

Use these as the center of a daisy. Make petals out of strips of the white. Cut pickles for stems of daisy. Run into oven until the dressing browns. Take out, set aside to cool. Serve on large platter when cold.

MOCK DUCK

Get a thin round steak. Roll it over like a cylinder. Stuff with bread crumbs mixed with two

eggs; one onion, chopped; salt, pepper to taste.

Bake in the oven until the steak is tender. Serve hot. Slice round.

SPONGE CAKE

Take twelve eggs the weight of them in sugar, and the weight of six of them in flour; beat the yolks with the sugar, and beat the whites alone; season with nutmeg or grated lemon peel; put altogether, adding flour last.

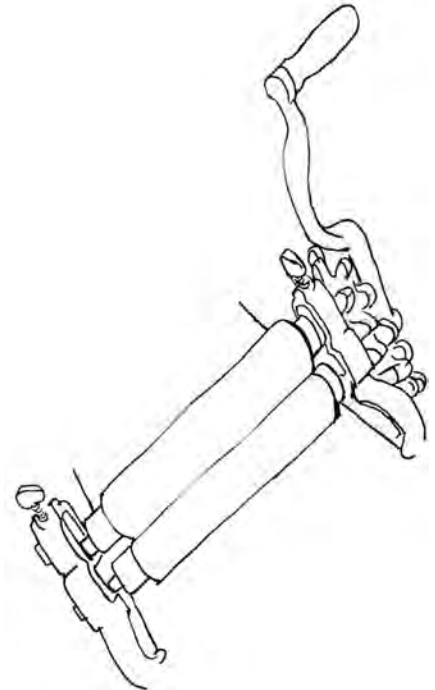
Stir it quickly after the flour is added as it will make it heavy to beat it much; you then grease several small pans and put it in; bake with a quick oven and they will be done in half an hour or less. They are pretty when iced.

LIGHT BREAD


Boil Irish potatoes. Mash them in their own water, cup for cup; add one cup of plain lukewarm water; one yeast cake dissolved in a cup of lukewarm water, one cup of sugar. Beat to smooth consistency and let rise in a warm place two hours at least.

Add one tablespoonful of

lard; one teaspoonful of salt, half the yeast mixture and enough flour to knead into a light dough. Form into rolls or into loaves. Let rise in a warm place until they are double their original size. Butter tops. Bake. The remaining half of the mixture may be kept in a cool place and used two days later.




A beaten biscuit machine






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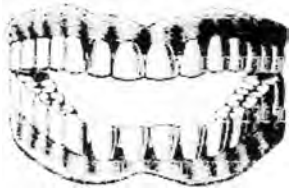
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from 1875 Newspaper

HE LOST HIS TEETH

A Huntsville man, M. S. Thompson, ten years ago got a set of false teeth mounted on a golden base. A short time afterwards he lost his teeth and he supposed they had been stolen by a bag boy in his employ. Thompson was in the habit of taking them from his mouth at night and placing them on a table in a glass of water. The boy strenuously denied the theft, but this did not in the least remove the suspicion. The boy was immediately fired. After a time all thought of the false teeth passed away, with Thompson having secured another set.

About three years ago Thompson caught a very severe cold and from that time forward he was troubled with incessant pain in his right breast, in the region of the lungs. This was attended with a severe cough and frequent hemorrhages of the lungs occurred. He thought he had consumption and for years had been under medical treatment, without relief.

During the early part of last fall he was seized with a violent fit of coughing and during its progress coughed up several pieces of a hard substance which appeared like bone on first examination. He experienced some relief at this time, and during the next day he coughed up more of the same species of material. Being very curious, he examined this closely and discovered pieces of metal attached to the bony matter, which, though worn and discolored, looked like teeth.

The truth suddenly dawned upon him. He had gone to sleep those many years ago with the false teeth in his mouth, and in the night he swallowed them; they had passed into his lungs and had lain there these many years.

In the course of a week he coughed up the gold plate in pieces, along with the rest of his teeth. He rapidly regained his health and strength and is now as hearty and robust as he ever was.

Contacting Thiokol Alumni

Between 1948 and 1996 over 7,000 people worked for Thiokol in Huntsville to develop and manufacture solid-propellant rocket motors for national defense and space exploration.

Since the plant's closure the Huntsville Division Alumni Association (HDA) has served to facilitate communication among these folks (newsletter, web-site, and email-list) and to sponsor regular gatherings in small groups and at major events.

Those former Thiokol employees, customers, suppliers, and their spouses who have been out of touch with old associates are urged to contact members of the group at <http://hdaa.info> or call 256-783-6003.

The next major event is a Spring Breakfast in March.

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The Rifle

by Austin Miller



Daddy ordered it from Sears and Roebuck in 1939 for five dollars. It was a single shot 22-caliber bolt action Remington model 510. By all accounts, Mama was not pleased with the purchase. This was about all the money they had. Their situation, however, was not as desperate as it may appear. They lived in the house with my grandparents and did not have to worry about rent or putting food on the table. You could see Mama's point of view but the rifle was not a frivolous purchase. The utility value of the gun was immeasurable. There were no shells for target shooting and Daddy almost exclusively used it for hunting. He used it to shoot fish, rabbits, squirrels, ducks and maybe an opossum on occasion. All of this ended up on the kitchen table. There is no doubt that the five dollar investment was soon returned many times over.

When I was growing up guns were such a part of our lives that nobody paid attention to a young boy shooting unattended at targets in the back yard or in the fields behind our house. From the beginning, I could hit where I aimed. It was no problem for me to hit soft drink bottle tops at thirty or forty feet or shoot sycamore balls out of the top of a tall tree without propping to steady my aim.

When I didn't have to work I roamed the fields behind our house at what is now 491 Ryland Pike. Sometimes I didn't have any cartridges but that didn't matter. I loved the feel of the rifle and having it in my hand. It was very relaxing to me especially after

a tough day at school. My favorite targets were bottles floating down the Flint River.

It was our only family firearm until the early 1960s. For a while after that it was set aside, out of sight and mind. After thousands of shots, lying in the bottom of wet boats, on damp or dusty ground and poor maintenance, it was no doubt worn out. At some point, my brother Berns re-discovered it and sent it to the Remington Company for repair. It was too far-gone and they didn't fix it or return the barrel, receiver or bolt. Instead they sent him a model 511 which is same gun except it is clip fed. The old gun was gone with the exception of the stock which was thrown in with a lot of other junk in the two room house in our front yard where my grandparents once lived. When we

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tore down their house in 2001, Berns saw it lying in a pile of trash, retrieved it and put it in his shed.

Sometime later he called me and said he had found an old piece of wood with an "A" carved in it, could I guess what it was? I couldn't and he said, "I won't tell you, you can come and see for yourself." When I got there, he showed me the old walnut stock cleaned down to the original wood and in mint condition. He had shined everything except where I had carved the "A" on the stock. He told me that when he found my initial he decided he was going to give it to me. He went on to say that I should be able to find a matching barrel, bolt and receiver but it might take a year or two.

The next day, he called Larry's gun store and they said they had one. We doubted that they did but went to check anyway. Sure enough, they had one. Berns checked it out and said it looked to be in good condition. I bought it and Berns oiled it, made some adjustments, cleaned the barrel and set it into the old stock. With all this done, it was in good working order and identical to the one Daddy bought in 1939. I could have bought a comparable new gun from Wal-Mart for less but a new one was not what I wanted. I like the feel of the old gun, its accuracy, weight, good

balance and simplicity. There is something satisfying about working the bolt, flipping out a spent shell and clicking a new one in the receiver.

Most of all I like it because it ties me back to days, when with a very active and boundless imagination, I took the old rifle with me to play in the fields around Ryland, shoot at difficult or interesting targets and explore the magic of Flint River.

These days we can't shoot a rifle in Ryland because there are so many houses and people but my son and I sometime take it to land we own in Margerum, Alabama where there are open fields, a creek, small streams and woods. We can shoot as freely as I did in my youth. It is always great fun.

I love doing with my son the thing I liked to do best in my early teens when my imagination ran free and wild. I would not trade the feel of that old single shot 22 for the most expensive gun in the world. I am proud to say that I never shot one bird or other living creature just for fun with that or any other rifle.

When a clock is hungry it goes back four seconds.

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"Just going to church doesn't make you a Christian any more than standing in a garage makes you a mechanic."

Alex Schwinn, Arab

EFFECTIVE TREATMENT FOR VARICOSE VEINS

Varicose veins are a very common problem, affecting an estimated 40% of women and 25% of men. New minimally invasive techniques in vein management, along with insurance companies recognizing the need for treatment of varicose veins and their complications, allow patients who have not previously considered treatment a simple and relatively pain-free option.

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.

Most patients feel an immediate relief of symptoms and can return to normal activity. There is no general anesthesia, hospitalization or scarring.

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Singular Suicide

by Doug Clark



John Henry Clark, Sr.

"Singular Suicide" was the heading of the article. It appeared in The Weekly Huntsville Advocate on Jan. 29, 1874 — nine days after my great-great grandfather, John Henry Clark Sr., committed suicide near Vienna, Alabama (now New Hope). Having a birth date of 1822, he is the first of my Clark ancestors that I know to be born in Alabama.

The events that led me to write this article were so unlikely that I believe I have an

obligation to defend my great-great grandfather. I will attempt to explain our path of discovering John Henry Clark's story and to refute some of the harsh comments in the article written 141 years ago.

About seven years ago I was researching my ancestors, the Clarks, along with a recently discovered third cousin, Leann Clark Richardson of Priceville, Alabama. At that time, we had no knowledge of John Henry Clark having committed suicide — these things were just not talked about. Leann told me she had asked her grandfather, Lacy Clark of Priceville, prior to his passing about his father and grandfather. He would always respond, "We don't want to talk about that." So, together, Leann and I made several trips to the Huntsville Library to see what we could find. We viewed family files and browsed through old newspapers for any hint of our ancestor. As we continued our research, both of us, whether

through fate or luck, stumbled on information about John Henry Clark that helped piece together his story. You can decide whether these events were by fate or simply accident.

The first event that led us to John Henry Clark happened in 2007. Leann made a trip to the Huntsville Library to look through old newspapers. She decided to look for something related to the death of John Henry Clark. Only having 1873 as an approximate date for his death, she decided to expand her search to include 1874.

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It was there, in the Jan. 29 issue of the Weekly Huntsville Advocate, that Leann came across an article titled "Singular Suicide." The article told of John Henry Clark's death, describing him as a "worthy planter of this county" and a "man of family and property." The article was correct in identifying him as such, for he had a wife and 10 children (seven daughters and three sons) and owned 380 acres of land just east of New Hope in the area known to locals as "the Bend of Paint Rock." This area is actually on Albert Mann Road, and descendants of John Henry Clark still live on some of the land.

The article then became somewhat harsh, stating the sole reason for the suicide was that Mr. Clark was illiterate and did not understand a business transaction. The article reads: "This incident is a good argument against illiteracy. Had Mr. Clark possessed a common education he would have been alive today." I can't imagine the hurt and shame the Clark family must have endured because of this tragic event and subsequently the release of the article. Below is the entire article as written in 1874:

Singular Suicide

"On the 20th inst, J.H. Clark, a worthy planter of this county committed suicide, near Vienna, by hanging himself with a bridal-rein. Mr. Clark was a man of family and property, and his sole reason for committing the rash act, was a supposed loss of money. Maj. Dickey, of Vienna, had in his hands \$630 belonging to Clark. This money was stolen from Dickey, and although he conveyed property to Clark more than enough to cover the loss, Clark could not but look upon it as a loss, he being very illiterate and not able to make a mathematical calculation, although a man of good common sense. Hence not

understanding the situation and being a great lover of money he took his own life in despair at his loss. This incident is a good argument against illiteracy. Had Mr. Clark possessed a common education he would have been alive to-day."

The second event began one day in 2007 when I was living in Athens, Alabama. While I was driving one day, my eye caught a sharp used Cadillac parked in a church lot with a for sale sign in the window. I wasn't in the market for a car, especially not a Cadillac, but something made me stop and call the owner. Within minutes an elderly man of stature arrived and convinced me to buy the car. His name was Mr. Dewey Craft, and he was a retired preacher and a really kind man. He explained that the car had belonged to his deceased wife and he no longer needed it.

While at the bank arranging my financing, Craft made conversation. "Clark, huh," he said. "My grandmother was a Clark."

Assuming his grandmother was from Athens, I responded. "Well, my family was from New Hope, Alabama area."

"That is where she is from," Craft immediately responded. "If we keep talking, we'll probably find we are related."

At that point, the loan officer was finishing up, and we left it at that. About three months later, I found the connection. I was indeed related to Dewey Craft. His grandmother was Mrs. Elizabeth Clark Dilworth, whose daughter was Craft's mother. Mrs. Elizabeth Clark Dilworth was a daughter of John Henry Clark, Sr. — the subject of this article.

I called Dewey, told him we were related and asked him if he had any family history information. He explained that his brother Joe Craft of Huntsville has some and gave me Joe's contact information. After exchanging phone calls and emails with Joe, he invited me to his house and relayed this story to me:

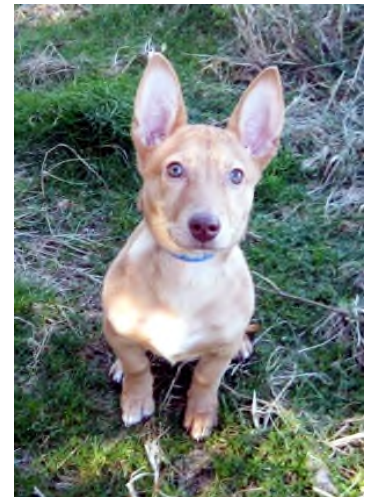
"John Henry Clark, Sr., just

"Roo"

Hello, the Ark named me Roo. One of the Ark volunteers said my ears looked like a kangaroo's. I was found as a stray puppy. The kind people who found me tried to find my family. They finally decided to bring me to the Ark. I was born September 2014.

The doggie doctor thinks I have Corgi in me. My legs are short but I sure can run and play. My coat is a pretty tan and my eyes are a gray/green. I'm told I'm very handsome.

I don't know how my family lost me or if they just didn't want me anymore. I could have been an unwanted Christmas gift. The Ark sees a lot of them. To be unwanted is really lonely. Do you want to give a sweet puppy a loving home? I think I could cheer you up! When you come to the Ark, ask to see Roo. That's me.



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before his death, asked one of his daughters, Elizabeth Clark (Dewey and Joe Craft's Grandmother), to wash his feet. Elizabeth was 11 years old at the time and did not realize that her father was about to commit suicide. J.H. Clark must have been at a point of desperation and at his ropes end, needing money to provide for his family, and, as the article states, Maj. Dickey could not repay John Henry for the cash Clark had loaned him."

"Therefore 11-year-old Elizabeth proceeded with washing her father's feet, and upon finishing the job, he reached in his pocket and gave her a half-dime coin. Who knows, it could possibly have been the last coin he had. After he gave her the coin, he got up, went out back to the barn and hung himself."

Turns out, Elizabeth was so affected by this event that she kept that coin and passed it on to her descendants. The coin is

now in the hands of Joe Craft. After showing me the coin, Joe further surprised me by showing me a photo of John Henry Clark – a photo neither my father nor I knew existed. Joe provided me with a copy of the photo and a photo of the old Clark home from the Bend of Paint Rock near New Hope. He also allowed me to take a photo of the coin. Had I not stopped that day to look at the Cadillac, I would not have known the story I just relayed and would not have a photo of my great-great grandfather. So, what do you think, was this fate or plain luck?

It is my belief that these two events were in the hands of fate. When I read the newspaper article about John Henry Clark's death, my impression was it was extremely harsh and jumped to conclusions, while overlooking the effects of depression and its consequences if not treated. As

we all know there are effective treatments for depression today, especially when compared to the 1870s. The two events happened to ultimately give me a chance to set the story straight and defend my great-great grandfather.

This article is dedicated to the memory of Dewey Craft and Joseph Craft who have both gone to be with the Lord in the past couple of years. They were great gentlemen and I am truly grateful to them and their families for all the assistance on my research.



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SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 28th @ 4:00 P.M. = EDDIE FROM PA will be BACK hauling for this date too!! We're still building on this sale, but it will involve multiple loads and a LARGE variety of Antiques, Furniture, Collectibles, Glassware, Advertising, Old Tools.... We'll also be selling other estate & consignment lots. Pictures, listings, and updates will be added to the web address below.

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Dogs

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- According to a recent survey, the most popular name for a dog is Max. Other popular names include Molly, Sam, Zach and Maggie.

- Dogs can vary in size from a 36 inch (150+ lb.) Great Dane to a 2 lb. Chihuahua.

- Puppies and kittens can be adopted as early as 8 weeks of age. Until then, they should stay with their moms and littermates.

- About a third of the dogs that are surrendered to animal shelters are purebred dogs.

- Contrary to popular belief, dogs do not sweat by salivating. They sweat through the pads of their feet.

- Dogs may not have as many taste buds as we do (they have about 1,700 on their tongues, while we humans have about 9,000), but that doesn't mean they're not discriminating eaters. They have over 200 million scent receptors in their noses (we have only 5 million) so it's important that their food smells good and tastes good.

- The term "dog days" has nothing to do with dogs. It dates back to Roman times, when it was believed that Sirius, the Dog Star, added its heat to that of the sun from July 8 to August 11, creating exceptionally high temperatures.

Cats

- A cat sees about 6 times better than a human at night.

- When a cat drinks, its tongue - which has tiny barbs on it - scoops the liquid up backwards.

- The ancient Egyptians were the first to domesticate the cat (in about 3000 BC), and used them to control pests.

- Healthy adult cats are in deep sleep 15 percent of their lives. They are in light sleep 50 percent of the time. That leaves just 35 percent awake time, or roughly 6-8 hours a day.

- Six-toed kittens are so common in Boston and surrounding areas of Massachusetts that experts consider it an established mutation.

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- Our domesticated pet rabbits are descendents of European rabbits and are a different species than the wild rabbits you see outside.

- Rabbits are crepuscular. This means that they are most active at dusk and dawn.

- Guinea pigs have four toes on each of their front feet and three toes on each of their back feet.

- Hamsters cannot swim and therefore do not need baths - they clean themselves without any difficulty.

- Pet rats are not like their wild cousins. Pet rats are actually very lovable, affectionate and one of the most intelligent rodent pets. They can be taught tricks and they can even learn to help keep their cages clean.

- Guinea pigs are born with their eyes open and all their teeth and fur.

- Many birds, including doves, parakeets and lovebirds, enjoy living in pairs for companionship.

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From the Desk of Tom Carney

The Short Career of the Great Davisini

One of the most popular forms of entertainment in Huntsville's early history were the traveling troupes of magicians, spiritualists and hypnotists who traveled from town to town performing one-night stands.

Edward Young, or the "Great Galvani – Master of the Hypnotic Trance" as he was more popularly known, was a frequent visitor to Huntsville in 1911, performing at the Elks Theater.

His show consisted of selecting volunteers from the audience and after placing them in a trance, having them perform various tricks. The highlight of the show always came when Galvani placed a small bowl filled with water on the floor and told the subject he was drowning. The resulting antics always brought down the house.

Sadly, the Great Galvani was also an experienced master of the whiskey bottle, consuming prodigious amounts of the fiery liquor at every opportune moment. Oftentimes the show would have to be delayed while a search party scoured the neighborhood bars for him.

Despite Galvani's shortcomings, he attracted a large group of admirers. One of them was Carlisle Davis, an employee at a nearby carriage shop. To Davis, Galvani represented everything he had always dreamed about. The allure of traveling, being

idolized by admiring fans and performing on stage was more of an attraction than anything Huntsville could offer the young man.

The biggest attraction for Davis however, was the awesome power Galvani seemed to hold over his subjects while they were hypnotized. Davis began spending every spare moment with Galvani. Before long he had committed the whole act to memory.

The Great Galvani was scheduled to appear at a local park as part of the 4th of July celebrations. According to a Huntsville newspaper of the day, over two thousand people thronged the park to see the mystic. Unfortunately, the great man had mysteriously succumbed to a quart of Ken-

tucky bourbon and could not be aroused.

The committee in charge of staging the event was frantic. There seemed to be no alternative except to call the show off.

Suddenly their gloom was interrupted by Carlisle Davis. "I can do the show!" He proclaimed. "I've been watching him and I know exactly what he does."

The offer was met by stunned silence and disbelief. Finally one of the men who had been standing in the back of the room stepped forward.

"The boy's right." He said.



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"I been seeing those two together every day for the past week."

Any other qualms the committee had were probably dispelled by the angry rumblings of two thousand people clamoring for the show to begin.

"Get your stuff," he was told. "You're on in five minutes."

And so it came to pass that Carlisle Davis, a local small town boy with dreams of stardom, was magically transferred into the "Great Davisini."

Davis was superb. He had copied Galvani's patter exactly. After a brief "lecture" he chose Ivan Benson from the audience to be his subject. Again, everything went perfect. Davis had Benson crow like a rooster, bark like a dog and even forget his own name.

The audience, though skeptical at first, begin to warm up to the budding star. Many of the crowd seemed to believe Davis had found a new career and would soon be headed toward riches and fame.

The grand climax of the show finally came. Davis carefully placed a small teacup of water in the middle of the stage. Now turning to the subject he announced in a loud voice that the teacup was the Atlantic Ocean and he was out in the middle of it about to drown.

Benson, the subject, immediately threw himself on top of the teacup and began thrashing about, as if he was swimming. The effect was everything one could have hoped for. The whole audience was on their feet laughing outrageously.

After about five minutes of swimming, the audience became silent, waiting for Davis to waken Benson.

The committee was waiting too. Finally one of the members

approached Davis on the stage and told him it was time to stop.

It was evident Davis was in trouble. He was sweating profusely and his eyes kept darting about as if searching for a hole to crawl into.

"I said that's enough!" This time the committee member's voice left no doubt that he was to be obeyed.

"I can't!" Davis cried in a trembling voice.

"What do you mean you can't? I want him wakened right now!"

"I can't!" Repeated Davis once again. "Galvani always whispered those instructions and I never got a chance to hear them!"

Realization dawned on the audience at about the same time. First there were a couple of cat calls and then a few hurled insults, followed closely by a barrage of rocks and bottles aimed at the Great Davisini.

Davis, deciding that escape was his only alternative, quickly took to his heels, leaving the hapless Benson lying on stage still swimming. With the angry crowd in close pursuit, Davis took refuge under the floor of a nearby house.

Fortunately for all concerned, Dr. Westmoreland, a noted Huntsville doctor, had observed what happened. After dragging Davis from his hiding place, the doctor marched him back to the park where he coaxed Davis how to waken Benson, who was still swimming.

It was the Great Davisini's one and only performance. The next week, Huntsville's city fathers passed an ordinance barring hypnosis from being used for entertainment.

AN ODD INCIDENT

FROM 1885 NEWSPAPER

FRANK MILLER OF HUNTSVILLE WAS AT THE POINT OF DEATH RECENTLY AFTER A LINGERING ILLNESS AND IT WAS REPORTED THAT HIS BROTHER JOHN OFFERED UP A PRAYER FOR HIM.

IN THE COURSE OF THE PRAYER JOHN MILLER SAID, "OH, LORD, I AM WILLING TO GIVE MY LIFE, IF IT BE REQUIRED, TO SAVE MY BELOVED BROTHER."

A MOMENT LATER HE FELL DEAD.

HIS BROTHER DIED THAT NIGHT, AND THE TWO WERE BURIED IN THE SAME GRAVE.

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- The many friends of Jack Hall are glad to see him out and on the streets again after several week's confinement to his bed and room caused by a jump from a buggy in which he sustained a badly sprained limb.

- The colored citizens living on Howe Street, off Meridian Road, were made painfully aware that some more than usual elemental trouble was in progress, when the water entered their homes and the furniture and belongings began to float around the rooms.

It was a terrible dilemma to be placed in, to face the blinding storm outside or remain indoors and perchance perish if the angry waters continued to rise.

The cause of the high wa-

ter was the narrow state of the bridge under Meridian Street, which could not accommodate the raging flood, but held it in check until a lake of backwater was formed, and this found its way back into the houses.



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THE DONKEY



One day a farmer's donkey fell down into a well. The animal cried piteously for hours as the farmer tried to figure out what to do. Finally, he decided the animal was old, and the well needed to be covered up anyway; it just wasn't worth it to retrieve the donkey. He invited all his neighbors to come over and help him. They all grabbed a shovel and began to shovel dirt into the well.

At first, the donkey realized what was happening and cried horribly. Then, to everyone's amazement he quieted down. A few shovel loads later, the farmer finally looked down the well. He was astonished at what he saw. With each shovel of dirt that hit his back, the donkey was doing something amazing. He would shake it off and take a step up.

As the farmer's neighbors continued to shovel dirt on top of the animal, he would shake it off and take a step up. Pretty soon, everyone was amazed as the donkey stepped up over the edge of the well and happily trotted off!

MORAL: *Life is going to shovel dirt on you, all kinds of dirt. We have to shake it off and take a step up. Each of our troubles is a stepping stone. It is sometimes hard to do, but we need to pick ourselves up and never ever give up....giving up is not one of our options.....Always keep going and take a step forward...*

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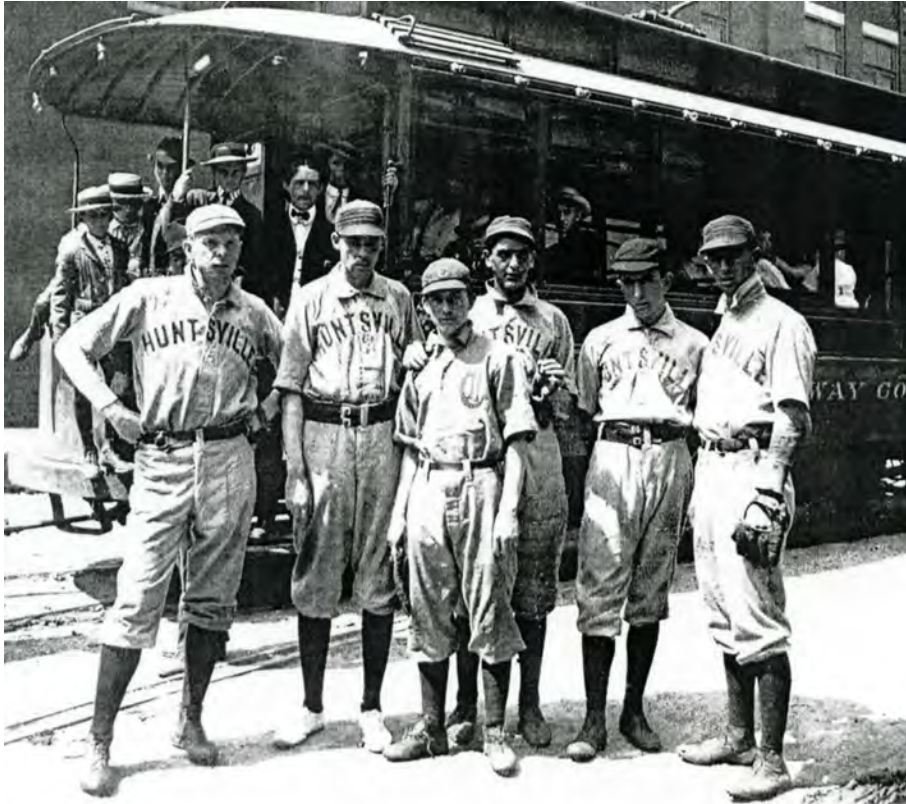
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The Huntsville Greys - The Popular Brand of Baseball of an Earlier Era

by Steve Gierhart

Charles Farley's novel, *The Hotel Monte Sano*, is not only entertaining but is painstakingly parsed with historical allusions to real people, events, and places. Interwoven with the story line of romance and mystery in the Huntsville of 1892 are descriptions of a magical July 4 and the festivities in the bustling city below the sumptuous hotel on a bluff overhead.

The characters of Farley's tome develop in this atmosphere of fun while revealing interesting facts about life in this past era. And part of the life of the city was baseball — 1890s style. Interspersed with reference to other semi-pro teams of early times, such as

the Cincinnati Shamrocks and the Memphis Chickasaws, are the real life Huntsville Greys. In Farley's story a lot of baseball of the time was the reality of semi-

pro teams, such as the Greys, playing other locally-bred teams that desired a David versus Goliath challenge — in this case a team put together by The Hotel Monte Sano's real life manager, Harvey Denison, that Farley calls the Katydids.

The Greys had quite a following in the early 1900s though doing an internet search does little to illuminate their popularity with Huntsville locals. They may not have actually played in 1892 (more likely that honor would go to the Milligan Sluggers, one of the earliest Huntsville teams), but in the first decade of the new century of Teddy Roosevelt they were all the rage in the Valley, sometimes playing before crowds of 5000 fans, 2500 being the average attendance. In 1908 they were the champions of their league and the state.

The Greys also had a saber-rattling rivalry with a team from Decatur, the good natured competition over-flowing into the newspapers as not only baseball



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pride, but city pride. The 1908 *Huntsville Mercury* had the following headline: "What, Again? Yes, Decatur Lost the Second Game." The write up ratcheted this up with this swaggering assertion - "Huntsville 100, Decatur 2. This could have been the score if the local (Huntsville) team had so desired, but the score card shows it 14 to 5, Decatur occupying the same position that she always holds in any contest with Huntsville, mercantile, athletic, or otherwise."

The club played its games at Casino Park, off Pratt Avenue, and had many a colorful player, such as "Bug" O'Reilly, a little man of stature but a giant on the mound, a holder of many one and two-hit games. Another was Fred "Dutch" Rothlisberger (as far as I can tell, no ancestor to Pittsburgh's great modern day quarterback), the Grey's catcher in 1908 who had a streaking arm for catching base stealers at second and was a mighty warrior at bat as well. The *Huntsville Mercury* said of Fred, "Dutch Rothlisberger can't help from playing good ball when he gets on the mound."

In 1908 the Greys may have played the first night game in the state, besting the Cherokee Indians indoor at the old Hippodrome in a hotly contested game that saw many a spectator and player come home with black eyes and various bruises. The Greys won 18-4 with the

Cherokees vowing revenge as the papers reported "The defeat stirred up the war spirit of the Indians, and they say they will yet take the scalp of the Greys." The lights used in this epic contest consisted of 50 arc lights of 1000 candle power each. For comparison today, one arc light in a pro football contest is normally around 137,000 candle power each.

Along with Bug O'Reilly and Dutch Rothlisberger, other members of that 1908 championship team were Walter Humphrey, Will Cooper, Albert Vaughn, Roy Mitchell, Ozro Price, Ivan Benson, Claude Phillips, David Bone, Frank Maples and Henry Hambrick.

(Information gleaned from Huntsville Sesquicentennial Newspaper of The Huntsville Times - September 11-17,1955 and the 1908 *Huntsville Mercury*)



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**OSCAR AND
MARIA LLERENA**

Taken from The Hotel Monte Sano Breeze, July 1890

Much has been said of the beauty of Monte Sano Mountain, and often not only in prose, but in poetry as well. Among these poets is Carolee Pleasants from Memphis, TN. who was also a frequent visitor to the Hotel Monte Sano. One of her works, "Monte Sano," was even published in the hotel's newspaper, *The Hotel Monte Sano Breeze* (July 26, 1890). It is too long to be published here, but below is one from another poet, as well as a well-known Huntsvillian from those Civil War times, Virginia Clay. Mrs. Clay married Clement Clay, son of the wealthy and influential Clement Comer Clay of Huntsville, a former Governor and member of Congress.

The Growing of Monte Sano

By Virginia C. Clay

The Sun had rolled back the blanket of mist
From the brow of the Mountain - then, softly it kissed
The stony old face, so rugged and seamed,
By the frosts of Old Time, till it fairly beamed
And smiled with delight at the warm demonstration
From the Fountain of Light-bless'd gift at Creation!
With delicate fingers it wove a bright crown
Of crimson and gold, that it gaily placed down,
With gaudy pomp, upon the old head;
And wild Flowers, entwined, a vermeil he spread;
The Birds a blithe Coronation Hymn sang;
And the Woods caught the strains the glad Echoes rang;
The Heavens o'erhead formed a canopy blue
Above the brown throne of the Mountain in view;
Then Twilight's soft hands, with purple quilt deep,
Hid the wrinkled-faced Monarch, who went fast asleep
In all the gay robes, that the Frost and Sun lent;
And Night reigned supreme o'er Love and Age blent!

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NEW HOPE'S MYSTERIOUS GRAVE

by Col. Martin T. Burke (USA Ret.)
written in 1991

One day last year my friend Jack Dilworth and I had been fishing in a lake near New Hope. As we were not doing any good, he asked that we visit a country cemetery to look up some of his kinfolks. I had helped him do a little genealogy on his very large family on several occasions. As we drove to the cemetery, Jack had me stop by a large field that he said had belonged to his family for many years.

Jack pointed out a small area that obviously had not been cultivated for many years. It looked like it might have been an old well site or perhaps a large tree had been there, but Jack had the real story. He said that his father instructed all the boys not to plow in that plot because it was the grave of a Union soldier. I asked Jack if he had ever questioned his Dad about the grave.

"Oh, no," he said. "I was brought up not to question what my Dad said, and I sure didn't want to get his dander up about a Union soldier. Actually, we boys heard rumors and stories handed down by our grandparents about the Civil War, and this story had been circulating for some time."

The story sounded a little far-fetched for me. I thought I knew a lot about the Civil War. I even knew about the Federal troops stationed here in Huntsville.

Anyway, I was a bit skeptical about Jack's story, and I got him to go the Historical Section of the library in Huntsville. We had been up there several times before when I helped him look up data about New Hope on his very large family tree. Jack couldn't see very well and I often read the information from the books we located. We were helped in this research by a nice lady who Jack recognized as a cousin of his.

In fact, she gave us the clue we needed to check this story out. She referred us to the large collection of Union and Confederate Official Records. Then, she reminded Jack that New Hope was named Vienna during the Civil War.

With that information, I looked up Vienna in the index and found several entries about the troops stationed at Huntsville and their patrolling activities. Attached hereto is the action report that surely must have been the

basis of the stories still being repeated about the Union soldier buried in the field in New Hope.

The so-called bushwhackers who shot up the Union patrol were led by Capt. Johnson, also know as Parson. There is a story about him that needs to be told. I was told that Parson Johnson led a congregation in nearby Tennessee that had protested the secession of the South and he refused to join up as a soldier. Then his flock was occupied by Union troops who proceeded to pillage and burn everything in sight.

This so angered the Parson that he started a very successful guerrilla action against all Union troops and installations in his areas of Tennessee and Alabama. This was a very dangerous thing to do because if captured by the Union troops, they were very likely to be executed on the spot.

I am not sure why the body of the scout John C. Martin was not retrieved by Lt. Col. Reed's men, but I suspect that the bushwhackers gave them such a trouncing that they didn't have time to retrieve him, and later action required that they move elsewhere. There is no further action reported about this unit in Vienna or New Hope.

So, this is the story about the unmarked grave of the Union soldier in the field in New Hope. It still remains a mystery to this day.

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The Natural Well

by William Varnedoe, Jr. and Charles Lundquist

(Reprinted from Tales of Huntsville Caves, Pages 31-36, with approval of Huntsville Grotto Executive Board, who own the copyright for "Tales of Huntsville Caves" from which this article was obtained).

This vertical pit cave found on Monte Sano was first mentioned and named in William's Huntsville Directory, City Guide and Business Mirror, 1859-60. On page 19 William notes, "a greater curiosity...a natural well..." This cave has kept the name "Natural Well" ever since, although one Civil War map shows it as simply, "Cavern."

In 1889, one Maj. Joseph R. Scrimshaw, a landscape architect for the Monte Sano Hotel, decided to make an attempt to explore the Natural Well. He used a bucket and employed a steel cable and winch system patterned after mining techniques of the day. However, on the day the equipment was finally completely installed and all was ready, he got cold feet! Just a glance down this chasm will make his reluctance under-

standable.

The Natural Well is deeper than any building in Huntsville is tall. Just imagine looking down the elevator shaft of a 20 story building!

Instead of the good

Major being a bold explorer, he passed this honor on to an intrepid African-American who volunteered to make the first descent. Therefore, credit for the first recorded entry of the Natural Well goes to Jackson Lines who actually entered twice before Major Scrimshaw, himself, dared try. The descent by this means was harrowing, as the bucket spun rapidly, making the occupant sick. The Major only went once, scratching his name on the cave wall. Having gotten down, he did not go on to explore the cave, but hastened to return up the shaft to the surface. No one else dared enter and the equipment was removed.

Since then, many people often visited and still visit the site. For example, Elizabeth Humes Chapman wrote in her diary in 1895 that on a visit to the Natural Well she was told that "several articles thrown in, came out at Big Spring" in downtown Huntsville. This may be the source of the well-known apocryphal story of ducks being thrown into the Well and later swimming out at the Big Spring.

It is odd how this story refuses to die despite clear refutation by detailed

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exploration, photographs and maps made since those early days. Many cavers, including one of the authors, have been down into the cave and can testify that any such idea is preposterous. The cave is dry and actually runs to the Southeast, away from downtown.

Yet we continue to hear this story crop up even today. This description was repeated, word for word, in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* of April 5, 1962. The authors were told a story by one of these CCC workers while the ex-CCC workers were having a reunion on Monte Sano. It was this man's job to operate the brake on the winch when lowering anyone into the cave.

Once when a Government Inspector visited the project, he wanted to see the progress being made down in the cave. As he was being lowered by this winch system, this CCC worker deliberately let go of the brake handle, allowing the Inspector to fall freely, as if the cable had broken!! He did eventually slow the descent and safely land the poor man. The worker thought this antic was a funny joke, but can you imagine how favorable the Inspector's report may have read?

Then World War II came along and put a stop to the project before the staircase could be built. The winch went to the scrap metal drive of the war and the shack was padlocked. Shortly thereafter, the shack burned and fell into the pit. Some say it caught fire from a woods fire, others say the fire was set by residents who feared their children would get hurt in the old, rotting building.

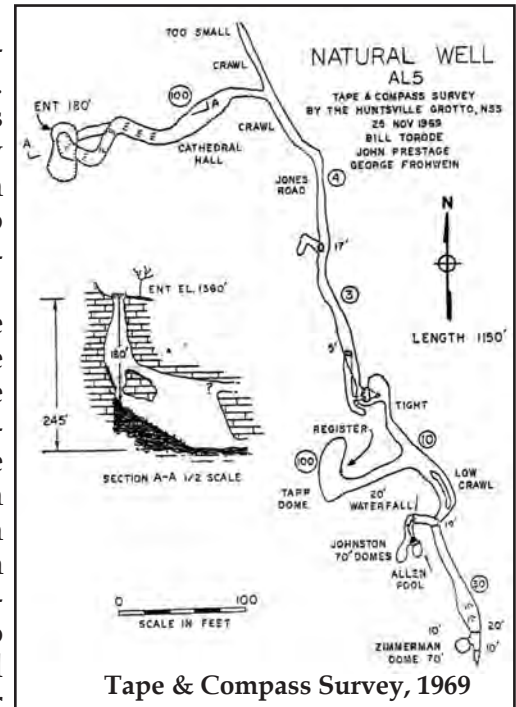
The Natural Well is still visited by hikers on one of the Monte Sano State Park trails. It is fenced because the pit is a whopping 197 feet deep,

straight down!

Cavers and Speleologists from all over the U.S. and even foreign countries visit the cave occasionally and descend the shaft with modern, safe techniques to explore the cave at the bottom.

The use and knowledge of safe equipment and the techniques used cannot be emphasized enough. On October 13, 1984, a twenty five year old lady, Teresa Lynn Carnes, fell to her death in the Natural Well. In addition there have been several rescues of would-be cavers who became injured or stranded through the use of improper equipment.

The complete, detailed story of the Natural Well, is published in Vol.18, No. 3 & 4 of the *Journal of Spelean History*.



Tape & Compass Survey, 1969



Civil War Map of the Natural Well (called "Cavern").

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TIPS FROM LIZ

* For those of you who suffer from leg cramps at night, do we have the remedy for you! Those who have tried this, swear it works. Just buy a bar of soap like Zest, Dial, Tone, etc. (with no added softeners in it, like Dove has) and take it to bed with you. Place it under the bottom sheet of your bed, close to your legs. That's it. There's no medical reason we know of, as to why it works, but it does. (Thanks to Diane Owens for this gem).

* We all need to drink more liquid. I just take a huge insulated glass filled with ice, then pour in a mixture of tea, unsweetened juice, cranberry juice, Crystal lite lemonade, etc. - whatever I have handy. Whenever I walk by the glass I take a huge sip. It stays cold all day and tastes great!

* A scratch on a watch crystal can be removed by gently rubbing it with a dab of toothpaste.

* When using several card tables for a party, bind the adjoining legs tightly together with heavy rubber bands.

* If you are camping out and your tent springs a leak, just put a glop of petroleum jelly over it and no more water!

* Ask your favorite ABC liquor store for their empty liquor

boxes - they are sturdy with cardboard inserts and are perfect for storing vases, Christmas ornaments or packing shoes.

* Soak your fingers for a minute or so in cold soapy water to remove rings from swollen fingers.

* Add a teaspoon of water when frying ground beef - it will help pull the grease away from the meat while cooking.

* Grab your hairspray when trying to get rid of flies, wasps, spiders, etc. It makes them stiff and they can't move.

* Chewing gum while peeling onions will

keep you from crying.

* Colgate toothpaste makes an excellent salve for burns.

* When your dog gets wet and has that "dog smell" just rub him down with a couple of sheets of Bounce - he'll smell great!


* Remove a splinter by applying Elmer's glue, let dry & pull.

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