

the GROUNDHOG

September - October
1989

A Publication of the Mentone Area Preservation Association

Shall We Gather At The River?



Little River is the only one of its kind in this hemisphere: It begins on the top of a mountain and ends after traveling over 50 miles to plunge to a creek in the valley below. From its birthplace at Head River near the Georgia line, to its descent into Yellow Creek, Little River follows a circuitous route that includes some of the most beautiful countryside in America. Local Historian Zora Strayhorn in her book *Mentone, Alabama: A History*, describes the river's run this way: "It meanders along the high plateau of the 83 mile-long narrow Lookout Mountain, plunging over a precipice 100 feet to form DeSoto Falls . . . The river flows through a rock-cliffed gorge and merges with the Coosa River, one of the three main river systems of the state."

It is not difficult to understand why the first inhabitants of this area were loath to give it up, why they had to be brutally rounded up and forced onto a death march to take this land from them. Weeping was not reserved for the infamous "Trail of Tears" that the United States government perpetrated under President Andrew Jackson; the tears began when Indian families were dragged from their homes and herded into the stockade at nearby Fort Payne, Ala. If exposure and cruelty did not kill these noble people, heartbreak must have.

Little River has been a focal point of the natural life of this area for millions of years, ever since the land rose from the sea and formed the mountain that cradles the waterway.

The river rushes or trickles, depending upon the season, but always nourishes the flora and fauna dwelling near its wide banks. It forms 15 falls, the deepest gorge east of the Mississippi, and two lake areas that came into being with the help of man.

Standing in mysterious solitude 150 feet above Little River is a series of caves cut into the face of a cliff. Ancient fires left smoky fingerprints on the surface of one of the caves, and arrowheads have been found there. There are many theories as to who carved the crude rooms and constructed a stone fort of sorts nearby. Some say a Welsh explorer named Madoc was the first to venture into the area. A controversial book, *Who Discovered America?* written in 1950 by Mrs. Zella Armstrong of Chattanooga, Tenn., states that Madoc was an Irish nobleman who built the fort and hammered out the caves for a settlement some 300 years before Columbus sailed to America. There is a theory that the local Indians built the structures in order to protect themselves from attack. Some give the explorer Hernando DeSoto credit for their

From Boardroom To Barnyard

Charla Hermann Takes A Side Road To Success

It wasn't long ago that you could find Charla Hermann in the corporate boardroom, wheeling and dealing with the CEO's and Presidents of major organizations. The last 10 years spent in Atlanta found Charla at the helm of many impressive marketing projects that included Cable News Network, Contel Cellular and several High Tech and retail operations. Her days as Communications Director placed her where most aggressive business women aspire, a decision maker in a "man's world." The list of accomplishments grew from Who's Who to leadership roles with the Business & Professional Women as well as named her one of the top five women executives in corporate America by age 30. From San Francisco to Atlanta to New York, Charla found herself moving in the circles of leaders of the communications industries.

One day the world changed as Charla found herself victim of a mass executive lay-off. What happened next has now been called the "Glass Ceiling" by some as the reality of being a high priced, upper management mom who did not want to leave the South sunk in. It did not take long for the creative survival brain cells to go to work and a marketing consulting business came to life. A 90-acre investment in Valley Head, Alabama that had once been her dream hide-away now became the challenge to base this new business. With the help of a hard working partner and her two teen-age daughters a plan came together to develop a new kind of business to meet today's demand for an alternative lifestyle.

The first year was dedicated to growth and development of a business plan that would put the land to use and keep it in its natural state. What sprouted from that plan was a series of small business ventures based around the organic farm and a self reliance seminar center. Now, 16 months later, she can honestly say that she sees a future in okra and relieving others of corporate stress.

It may seem an odd combination to market; vegetables, corporate burnout, and migraine headaches. But Charla thinks she's found a winning combination in her formula for a self-sustaining mountain retreat. At last she feels there is a positive way to evoke change in the lives of the people around her.

"Getting healthy and taking time to enjoy life is what it is all about," she says. "Everyone needs to eat nourishing food and when they actually see it grow, or help it grow, there is an added pleasure. We have designed a place for a person to go away alone in the woods or spend their vacation taking part in a variety of group projects. You should see the city kid who pulls his first carrot or the corporate executive who has not really cooked in years, now in the kitchen canning vegetables. We have craft and building programs as well as mandatory rest and think programs. It's amazing the change a person can go through when given time to think in the proper environment. We have had folks drop in for visits from all over the country. Some for the afternoon and others for an extended period of time, depending on what they need."

The 90-acre primitive retreat is in a daily growing pro-

cess. New business opportunities arise from new ideas that now support 10 full time staff members. Planned programs are sponsored at least once a month and the facilities are made available to businesses and organizations for programs based around team building, stress reduction, time management and creative visualization, to name a few. A network newsletter goes out to some 2,000 organizations, members and teachers. The barn houses as much computer equipment as vegetable seeds and tools to build the pending training center. The plans for the organic truck farm are every bit as aggressive as those that support the mail order business and the seminar services.

Charla can still be found jumping into a business dress and heels at 4:30 in the morning to maintain her marketing consultation business, Pathfinder Communications. Her travels now range from the corporate and organizational speaking circuit to the stockman's auction and the weekend farmer's market. Now she can tell you the average cost per sale of a cellular telephone as well as the going rate for okra and how many you have to sell to finance the tractor for next year's landscaping venture. It's a new way of doing business for Charla, but you just stop her long enough to see if she'd have it any other way. She loves to see the smiles on faces of relaxed folks leaving after a refreshing visit to the country. They always look healthier and ready to go back to the city with a new point of view.

(Reprinted From Pathfinder Communications Brochure)

MENTONE GROUNDHOG CLASSIC RUN



Randall Harris and Michelle Gilbreath

The Ones To Beat!

Groundhog Classic VII will be run from the Hitching Post to the turn-off to the Falls and back at 9:30 a.m. Saturday, Oct. 21. Trophies for first, second and third place winners in five age divisions for men and women and overall prizes will be awarded. Definitely the ones to beat are Michelle Gilbreath of Fort Payne, who has won the women's divisions for the past two years with her best time of 28:14 and the men's winner, Randall Harris of Huntsville, who has won for the past four years, with a best time of 23:06.

DeSoto Athletic of Fort Payne, owned and managed by Brant Craig, is responsible for this year's trophies and shirts, as well as the grand prizes. Food World in Fort Payne has given the fruit and fruit juices, paper bags, and cups. The local sponsors who generously support the race are especially thanked because their donations directly benefit everyone in town since MAPA uses profits from the race for its projects such as the sidewalk and the Town Hall Meeting Room:

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RUBY'S VARIETY
STATELINE COUNTRY STORE
TRIANGLE GROCERY
VALLEY HEAD DISCOUNT FOOD MART
WHITE ELEPHANT GALLERIES

Directors of the race will once again be Larry Hooks and Mark Pickle of Camp Skyline Ranch. They will be assisted by Frances Rosario and Harrel Jenkins. In charge of registration is Jean McGehee, assisted by Donna Bukley.

ALSO: VOLUNTEER FOR THE UGF

Helen Turner, Chairman for the Mentone Area United Giver's Fund Drive, needs helpers to collect funds for this worthwhile organization. Anyone interested should call 634-4185.

Big Sale At Old Cureton House



Gracie Oliver Sewell is having her fabulous semi-annual Antique and Junque Sale at her establishment in Rising Fawn during the month of October.

The Old Cureton House Antiques is crammed full of collectibles, antiques, novelty items, and many pieces that just cannot be categorized. Also, lots of other dealers and individuals will have some of their best stuff for sale on the spacious lawn of Old Cureton House.

Beginning the weekend of Oct. 5-7 and ending the weekend of the Mentone October Colorfest, Oct. 21-22, the sale promises to be one of the foremost antique and junque events of the year. Gracie lives in the Cureton House, so she is available to show her collection almost all the time.

Old Cureton House is old highway 11 just inside Rising Fawn. Just look for a white picket fence and an Amish buggy near a gigantic oak tree.

From The Editor

By Mickey Strickland

Whittle Communications of Knoxville, Tenn., recently proposed a deal to school systems. The organization would supply electronic equipment, satellite dishes, televisions, etc., to the schools and would produce a news program to be shown in the classroom. The equipment and program would be free, except for one small requirement: Whittle Communications would be allowed two minutes of commercial time during each news program. It seemed innocent enough.

Then all media hell broke loose. One would think Mr. Whittle had demanded the first born of every school age household. The furor raged; Digust was the predominant response and Mr. Whittle was boiled in the hot water of this tempest in a crockpot.

I see it in another perspective, and am reminded of a story I heard years ago: After finishing a rousing sermon on the dangers of hellfire and the glories of heaven and the necessity of giving until it hurt, a preacher called for a love offering from the congregation. Obviously moved by the sermon, the local bootlegger stepped forward with a wad of bills. As the preacher reached for the money, the bootlegger held onto it and asked, "Are you sure you want it, Preacher? You know where it came from." "Give it to the Lord, Brother," the minister replied quickly, "the devil's had it long enough."

These same children who were saved from two minutes of commercial Airtime geared to their market go home in the evenings and watch the hard sell for hours, not minutes, for everything from beer to safe sex. They hear bodily functions discussed that I hesitate to talk about to my doctor. I would like to go back to the days of the Victorian ladies who brought in a doll and pointed to where it hurt. The physician gave them herbs and maybe laudanum and they got better or died — there wasn't a lot of middle ground. It is too bad we cannot take models of our schools to the Legislative Budget Doctors and point to where it hurts and get a cure. The symptomatic result is the same, however, our schools have to get better or they are going to die. We have lost the middle ground.

Our children sit in front of the television watching commercials and getting nothing in return but programming that runs the gamut from the inane to the super violent. If, for once, someone proposes to give something in return that will benefit the child and the educational system, who are we to wrap ourselves in righteous indignation? I say soak it for all it is worth — take the equipment, use it, discuss the commercial programming with the class and turn it into a learning process that makes these children aware of the price we must pay for the things we want; the trade-off between big business and the average citizen that forms the basis for our economic structure today.

French novelist Andre Maurois wrote, "In literature, as in love, we are astonished at what is chosen by others." In this instance, the subject is education, and I am astonished and what was not chosen.

New Shop In Mentone



Barry Strickland at Mentone Shop

Barry and Carol Strickland own and operate a well-known wood crafting shop in Fort Payne, and now they have brought their expertise to Mentone. Woodmasters has a large selection of wood items, collectibles and just plain goodies at their place in Log Cabin Craft Village.

Barry talked of why he and Carol chose Mentone for a new shop: "We like the area a lot. There is a pretty, comfortable feeling here. Our things seem to belong here."

The Stricklands will handcraft any item from wood and their lovely pieces grace many homes in this area, and all over the country.

Woodmasters is open Saturdays, Sundays and holidays. The shop in Fort Payne is open six days.

The Groundhog

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(205) 634-4198 or 4185

THE GROUNDHOG STAFF

Editor Mickey Strickland
Associate Editor Helen Turner
Contributing Editors: Linda Brown, Eloise Brown, Nova Dean Kilgore, Bernise Crow, Vivian Nappier, Howard Cash Marsh, Seth Banks, Bill Pilson and John Baty.
Cindy Strickland Advertising Manager

Trevor Strickland Circulation Assistant

MAPA OFFICERS

Director Lynn Bathurst
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Valley View With Eloise Brown

Gladys Cobble, Ruth Pickett, Barbara Morrow and Priscilla Gregory attended the DeKalb County Extension Homemakers Camp at Ponderosa Bible Camp and enjoyed arts, crafts and seminars.

The U.M.W. of Valley Head Methodist Church met at the home of Velma Hammond with 12 present. Brownie Tuttle continued the Bible study, "Women in Alien Lands."

The Sunshine Club met at the home of Jean Jones Aug. 24. Those present were Bess Bauerle, Betty Brown, Addie Hall, Jewell Palmer, Tillie Schlicher, Sadie Cooper, Geraldine Hawkins, Ruth Pickett, Billie Harper, Mae Card, Gladys Stott and Eloise Brown. Billie Harper presented each one with bath salts that she had made and gave us the recipe.

Venna Livingston has returned from an interesting trip down Natchez Trace through Mississippi. She was accompanied by her daughter, Sue Mosely, and Sue's husband, Sam, and children. Sam and Carmen rode their bicycles most of the way down the Trace. Venna reports that it was so beautiful and the picnic areas so clean and well kept, which they enjoyed. They learned a lot of history from the markers along the way.

Lila Schlicher has returned home after treatment in B.M.C.-DeKalb.

C. E. Bell is convalescing after surgery at B.M.C.-DeKalb.

Adelaide Biddle attended the Appreciation Day service at the Alabaster Methodist Church honoring Jim Robertson, who was Valley Head and Mentone pastor several years ago. Several churches were represented, where he had been pastor. A poem was requested from me, which I sent for his Scrap Book.

Geneva Smith has returned home after having surgery at Memorial Hospital in Chattanooga.

Alba Brown was a guest at her son, Dixie's, surprise birthday party at his home in Henagar.

Opal Tatum has returned home after treatment at B.M.C.-DeKalb.

Pat Bauerle, who died recently, will be missed. She was faithful to her church and club.

Gail and Robert Hawkins of Brewton, Ala., were recent guests of his parents, Geraldine and Howard Hawkins.

Mary Louise, Ted and John Holleman toured 4,700 miles of the Southwest. Among the points of interest

(Continued On Page 8)

MOUNTAIN WATCH

By Mickey Strickland

Jean Hughes, noted Indiana poet, wrote: "To me the live earth has a beautiful heart that is filled with promise . . . it is security in an otherwise insecure world. Learning about nature is like learning another language. It is written on the fields and in the snow and in the treetops and along the roadsides. It is spoken by the birds and by the wind." At no other time of the year is that statement more true than in the Autumn.

As I walked down the dirt road to my house recently, my surroundings reflected the words of Jean Hughes and of how well these mountains and valleys give voice to the language written in so many places here.

The wind is high — blowing needles of rain into the trees as they turn their leafy backs to the persistent wetness. The surface of the pond shivers in the rain and the cattle huddle together in the lower field. Across the meadow and down the road, color begins. Fall reds and oranges now blend with the fading Summer's green. Elderberries are dried on the bush and patches of frosty horsemint line the ditch banks. Weeds and wildflowers abound in yellow, white, purple and gold.

This is my favorite time of the year, though it has a bittersweet melancholy that drifts like the wood smoke on the crisp morning air and in the cool, waiting softness of early evening. Dry flies sing the song of the harvest and of the time of reaping and laying-by. Night birds call across the void, as if to make contact with other living things; to reassure themselves that they are not alone in the face of the long, cold time of waiting that lies ahead.

There are pumpkins at the fruit stand on the highway that goes across the mountain to Georgia. Johnny Tate has big scarlett tomatoes and yellow and crimson slices of watermelon sitting on fence posts tempting passers-by. People are starting to rent the woodsplitters from Cloudland Trade Center, and lately William and Ruby have been selling more Kerosene.

The cold, rainy weather has made Mary Reilly's piping hot lasagna at the Stateline Country Store, the spicy barbecue at Cloudland Trade Center and the chili at the Log Cabin Deli the most popular dishes on the mountain.

Local folks are getting their vehicles serviced for winter at the Lake Exchange. The Mentone Hardware and Valley Head Hardware are selling supplies that tell of frozen water pipes to come, and of chill winds that might blow into crevices unsealed. We have our own kind of storm windows around here — sheets of clear plastic tacked to window frames.

The river at DeSoto Falls is full to the brim with water rushing headlong over the dam, across the rocks and into the basin with fierce gusto. The voice of the river is a roar now, and it is difficult to remember its faint whisper back in the Summertime.

Wild turkeys amble back and forth across their rangeland and squirrels dart to and fro with nuts in their mouths. I have noticed more skunks killed on the roads this year and less 'possums. I wonder if this is a trend.

Nature speaks many things to us, but the most important of them all is of promises made and promises kept — of the certainty that life will go on, that no matter how the world changes that there are those things upon which one can depend. Fall is the fulfillment of a vow made in Spring, and a harbinger of the promise of winter to come. Each season is fresh with the hope of what is to be, and with the memory of what has been.

Henry David Thoreau wrote in his journal, *Diary of a Country Year*, "I listen to the sharp, dry rustle of the withered oak leaves. This is the voice of the wood now."

Thoreau also wrote of the swift changing of the seasons: "It is futile to try and observe everything that is happening from day to day. It is happening too fast, and besides, it is happening with different actors on each stage — woods, fields, swamps, ponds and rivers. But just to fill your eyes with the new sights spurs you to grasp as much as possible from each changing day before it is gone."

As each season fades away, a new one is created from the seeds of the old and the memory of the passing is stored like the Mason jars of harvest on pantry shelves.

Thoreau: "There was a time when the beauty and the music were all within, and I sat and listened to my thoughts, and there was a song in them."

Alabama To Show Video

In conjunction with the 100th birthday celebration of Fort Payne, Ala., country music group, ALABAMA, will be showing a video of their performance at the 1989 June Jam. The video will be projected onto a 12 foot screen on Wednesday, Oct. 18, at the VFW Fairgrounds in Fort Payne at approximately 8 p.m.

According to June Jam Coordinator, Gaynelle Pitts, "So many of the volunteers working the Jam never get to actually SEE any of the performance. This is ALABAMA's way of saying "thank you" to all the volunteer workers and fans."

Free hot dogs and Cokes will be served from 5 p.m. until 8 p.m. to all those attending, compliments of two June Jam sponsors, Oscar Mayer and Johnston Coca-Cola. Colonial bread is furnishing buns for the event and the Fort Payne Band Booster Club has volunteered to handle food service. The Booster Club will be selling additional food items during the day.

Preceding the video will be the cutting of Fort Payne's record breaking 100,000 pound birthday cake with ALABAMA singing "Happy Birthday." The public is invited to share in the festivities and sample the hot dogs, Cokes and birthday cake.

COUNTRY JOURNAL

By Bernise Crow



Summer is over, and the days seem to have entered into a slower pace, which is nice. All our little campers have folded their belongings and gone their separate ways. They have entered into another school year, and will hopefully enjoy their summers with us again.

Many things are changing here, and we hope for the best. It is very exciting to see the Mentone Springs Hotel being given a face lift — to see the porch being restored is wonderful. That is the way I remember it when I was small. And I have never seen anything done with such lightning speed. Those men were experienced carpenters who knew what they were doing. The porch, which wraps around the turrets on each end, was constructed in two weeks! It was fascinating to watch it being done.

It is memory time now — I remember when the hotel was filled to capacity, and had people sleeping in the halls. The White Elephant was a hotel then, and it was filled also. The same thing could happen again. There is an ever increasing interest in mountains, and Lookout Mountain in particular. There is something akin to magic about the mountain air that breathes peace to mankind. Things move at a slower pace, and one discovers that it takes less of worldly goods to satisfy cravings for "things." The air is purer, and it could be that one can think clearer in such an environment.

Memories of this summer will bring smiles for years to come. We are making fond ones every day. This is the last year of the '80s decade. When I was 15 I thought I would be too old to see the year 2000, but now I look forward to it with relish!

Our visitors of the month at the Hitching Post were the grandchildren of Mr. and Mrs. W. A. Bruce. We had a marvelous time thinking of memories concerning the days when they spent their summers at Mentone with their grandparents. Mrs. Bruce (Hattie) told me that when Mr. Bruce brought her here, she thought she had come to a place of desolation — the "jumping-off" place, to quote her. She made him promise her that she could go back to Valdosta during school months to assure their five daughters received a good education. And that is what she did. She and the girls stayed here in the summer, and went back to Georgia in autumn.

Harriette and Sarah were here — daughters of Catherine (Mrs. Bruce called her Cattie). And we remember Harriette as "Cooter." I remember her walking with her grandmother to the Post Office, which was here in the Hitching Post. Cooter had lovely red hair. Also here with the girls was their cousin "Sonny," son of Jack Bruce. It was a most enjoyable afternoon. Harriette and Sarah renewed their dues to M.A.P.A., in order to keep the Groundhog coming to them.

With a great deal of anticipation we look forward to the coloring of the foliage in our area. There is not a prettier place in the world, when the colors are at their peak. This year should be spectacular because of so much rain. The Dogwood trees are very colorful right now, with bright red berries and leaves. A drive down the Lookout Mtn. Parkway is lovely. Take a good look at Charles Parker's place ("Railroad," we call him).

Those of us who attended Moon Lake School have been talking about having some sort of reunion for the alumni of the school. If anyone reading this article is interested, please contact me. We would probably stipulate years between 1930-1945.

We used to have concerts at the school to raise funds for the school. I remember the Swanee River Boys, coming from Atlanta, Ga., in the late 30s. They sang a song called "River of Memories." The words go something like this:

"Did you ever go sailing down the river of memories
To a little log cabin that's nestled beneath the sycamore tree

Where the sunshine is cherry and nothing in the world
is dreary

That's my cabin at the end of my river of memory."

Then during the 40's we sang, "Gonna Take a Sentimental Journey, Gonna Set My Heart at Ease, Gonna Take a Sentimental Journey, to Renew Old Memories. Then in the 60's it was "Tie a Yellow Ribbon Round the Old Oak Tree." All of us want to go back home again, and rekindle precious memories. Thomas Wolfe said, "You cannot go home again," but in memories we can.



Guy Hunt
Governor of Alabama

A Letter From The Governor

I would like to take this opportunity to make each of you aware of an organization that will foster and promote a spirit of goodwill in Alabama toward the people of Japan.

I am pleased to announce the creation of the Japan-America Society of Alabama.

Alabama ranks high among the southeastern states in total capital investment by Japanese firms. Because of these investments, many Alabama citizens hold jobs.

In addition, Alabama has become a temporary home for hundreds of Japanese businessmen, students and families.

We are trying hard to strengthen our relationship with Japan, and we are optimistic that the Japanese presence in Alabama will become even larger in the 1990s.

The total Japanese investment in Alabama is more than \$750 million, and Japanese firms employ about 5,700 citizens. This society will provide an opportunity for the people of Alabama and the Japanese citizens residing here to promote friendly personal and professional relationships with a better understanding of each other's people and customs.

Alabama has been one of the few states in the southeast that did not have a Japan-America Society. Therefore, in May, I appointed a steering committee comprised of a cross-section of business and professional people from various regions of Alabama to study possibilities and make recommendations about the creation of a Japan-America Society.

With the help of the Japan-American Societies of the United States, the steering committee created the private organization with membership open to any Alabamian interested in a better relationship and understanding of Japan.

The first activity of the Japan-America Society will be to co-host a public panel presentation about current issues in Japan and its relationship with the United States by three distinguished Japanese scholars and professionals. The event will be at 3 p.m. on Sept. 25 in the Mortar Board Room at the Ferguson Center on the University of Alabama campus at Tuscaloosa.

If you are interested in attending the event or obtaining additional information about the society, please contact the membership committee chairman Elmer Harris, President Alabama Power Company, P. O. Box 2641, Birmingham, AL 35291.

NARFE News

The DeKalb County Chapter of the National Association of Retired Federal Employees will meet at 10 a.m. on Wednesday, Oct. 18, at Best Western. Prior to the business meeting, Billy McDow, DeKalb County's capable Solid Waste Supervisor, will speak on the "whole nine yards" of trash, where we've been, where we are, and where we're heading. Of particular interest will be the new regulation on landfills, which may affect everybody's pocketbook.

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Exquisite New Home On Brow In MENTONE, ALABAMA



Front View

This unique property is located on DeSoto Parkway approximately five miles south of downtown Mentone (100 yards from Camp Comer).

"Southern Living" — You will think you have walked into the pages of "Southern Living" magazine when you enter this beautiful home. This custom cedar, brick and glass home has a spacious 20' x 28' great room with beamed Cathedral ceiling and wood floors features a magnificent floor to ceiling fireplace set in a wall of glass. The dream kitchen has a 4' by 8' island with Jenn-Air grill/cooktop. This home has three bedrooms and two baths. The master bedroom and bath are located in a separate wing for privacy. The luxurious bath has a double-sized ceramic tile shower and Kohler Whirlpool bath tub.

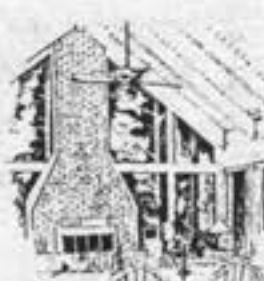
This unique property is located on DeSoto Parkway approximately five miles south of downtown Mentone. You must see at \$139,000.

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Rear View



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Valley Head — This is an extra sharp brick home with three bedrooms, two baths and separate two-car garage with workshop or hobby shop. Great location with city water and optional amounts of property. Nice yard.

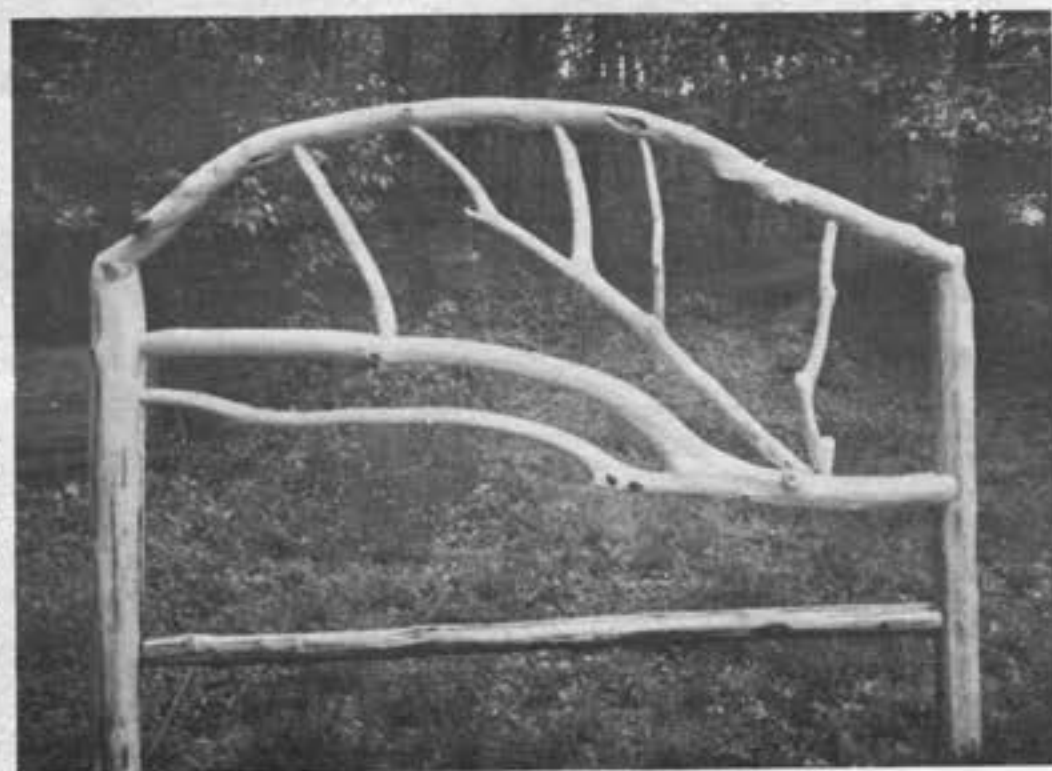
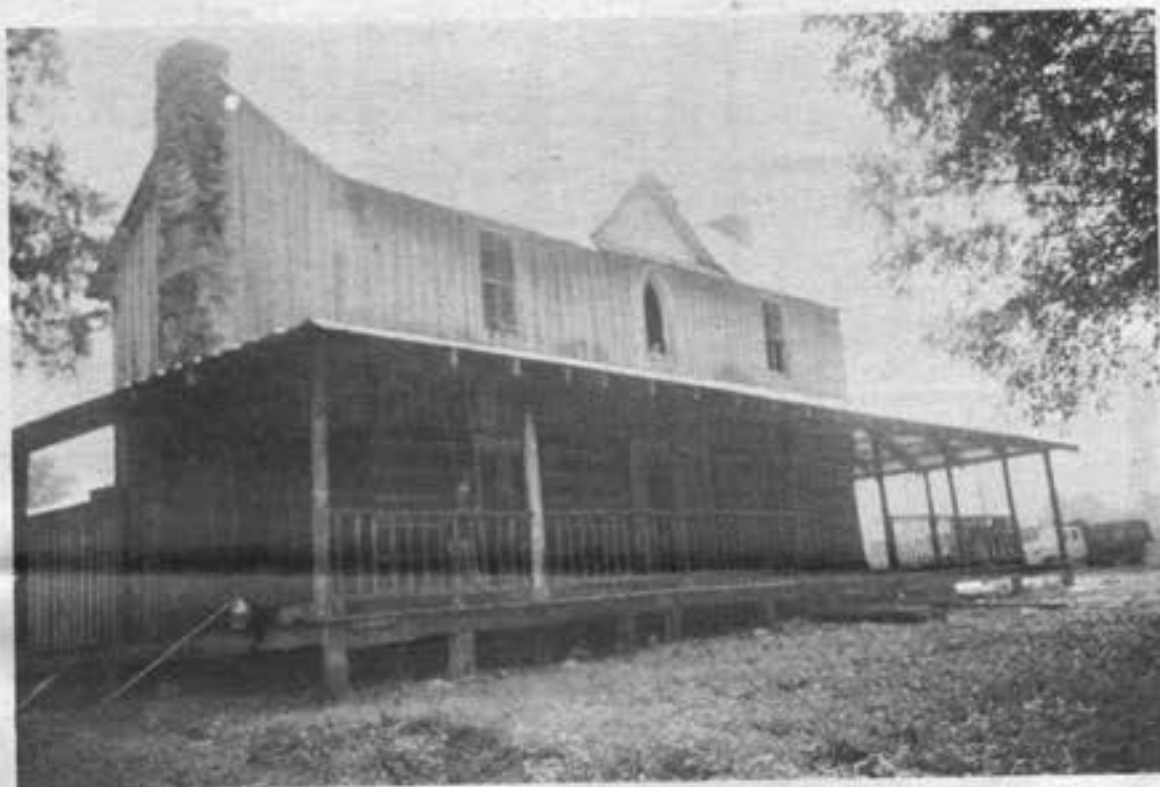
Mentone — This three bedroom brick home might be just what you're looking for with its living room — den — kitchen combination. Located just two miles from Mentone and only — \$37,500.00.

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In Memoriam



On Aug. 13, 1989 a tragic automobile accident claimed the life of Mentone resident, Mary Ann Corbett. Her husband, Steve, was critically injured.

She is survived by her husband, Steve; and children, Dava, age 16, and Zachary, age 12. Mary Ann was 34 at the time of the accident.

The Corbett's have lived in Mentone for four years. They moved here from Chattanooga, Tenn., after purchasing a home on Cutler Avenue.

Mary Ann's parents are David and Elizabeth Arwood of Chattanooga.

Steve Corbett has been released from Erlanger Medical Center in Chattanooga, and is back at home with the children.

VALLEY VIEW

(Continued From Page 2)

they visited were Boulder, Colo., Rocky Mountains State Park, Grand Canyon, Painted Desert, Petrified Forest, Truman home and library at Independence, Mo., and Clovis, N. M., where Ted was stationed in the Air Force during the war.

Myra and Richard Ellis joined the Bailey Smith Ministries, which combined with Southern Baptist Evangelist Christian Churches in Rio De Janeiro for a crusade. This included 250 Americans, including Kelly Cash, Miss America of 1987. There were five couples from Alabama.

DeKalb

County Beautiful

Billy McDow, DeKalb County's capable and innovative Solid Waste Supervisor who seems to work miracles with any project he undertakes, has been appointed Chairman of the reconstituted DeKalb County Beautiful Committee. The County now has an approved non-profit corporation to see that the things needed to be done are done under the legal aegis of the County.

The first public meeting will be held on Tuesday, Oct. 10, at 7 p.m., in the Sand Mountain Electric Co-op Building in Rainsville. Mark Herndon of Alabama Band, and the Honorary Chairman of the Alabama Beautiful Committee, is scheduled to be the main speaker. Everybody who has an interest in making and keeping our County and our communities clean and beautiful is urged to attend. Surely, beautiful Mentone should be well represented.

Mr. McDow visualizes an ambitious program and is looking for all of the help he can get. He hopes to have a committee of 300 people, from which 30 Board Members would be selected. If 300 sounds like a big bunch of people, consider that it is approximately 0.004 percent of DeKalb County's population. These people, obviously, are those who are vitally interested in the wellbeing of their communities, in the subject of landfills and solid waste disposal, more far-reaching than the "Adopt-A-Mile" programs. You may find the landfill discussion more astonishing than boring. Also to be considered will be construction of a recycling plant for glass: beer bottles, Coke bottles, jars of all kinds which end up in a junk pile using precious land space.

On the Rhododendron Garden Club's Adopt-A-Mile program, nine members (plus two great husbands) cleaned Highway 117 from the Post Office to the Mentone east town limits on Sept. 11. The next cleanup is scheduled for Monday, Oct. 9, beginning at the Post Office at 8 a.m. If it threatens to rain on our parade of orange jackets, then clean-up will be the following day.

The County now has an Adopt-A-Mile program for County roads, and signs are available to those who request them. The signs have been made; appropriate names to be added will take two to three weeks. The President of the County Commission, Sid Holcomb, is in charge of the County Road program, and requests for signs should be directed to him at 845-0404. The County Road Department will install the signs — so that all the individual or group needs to do is to keep the selected mile clean.

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River — Continued From Front Cover

construction, although it would have to have been the men he sent here, for he did not make the trip himself.

The caves are found just south of one of the most beautiful features of the river's domain — DeSoto Falls. In *Picketts' History of Alabama*, written in 1850, the river and its falls are described: "The river flows along the top of the mountain with very considerable banks, until it reaches a precipice of solid rock in the form of a half circle, over which it falls 70 feet perpendicularly, into a basin. After being received in the rock basin, the river flows off without much interruption, and, in winding about, forms a peninsula about two or three hundred yards below the falls. The banks of the river bordering on the peninsula are the same unbroken rock walls which form the falls, and are equally high and bold."

This unique configuration allowed for the construction of the first hydroelectric power plant in North Alabama above the falls. In 1925 A. A. Miller, a partner in the DeSoto Falls Development Company, headquartered in Baltimore, Maryland, built a dam to control the water of the river as it turned the huge turbines that furnished electric power for a radius of over 40 miles. Will Hall, local resident whose descendants live here still, told of the noise inside the plant being so loud that it damaged the hearing of all who worked there. His granddaughter, Eunice Hall Strickland, remembers visiting him at the plant and of climbing down steps to get to it.

One of the most striking features on the river's journey is Little River Canyon. It was originally named May's gulf for Union General Andrew May who tried to traverse the gorge with his troops on their way to join General Sherman as he began his march to the sea. The canyon proved to be too much, however, and they were taken prisoner. After the Civil War was over, General May returned to explore and map the canyon area.

On June 1, 1890, Colonel Woolsey Fennell brought a corp of engineers to the gorge as part of an effort to construct a railroad from Gadsden, Ala., to Menlo, Ga. It was to pass near the creek where Little River falls into the valley. Old timers in the area told Col. Fennell of the legends associated with the canyon — of how Indians from all over the Southeast came to the canyon Indians to buy lead that was mined deep in the gorge; of white men entering the gulf and never being seen or heard from again; of a lone Indian who would appear on a cliff near the lower end of the gulf each winter. It was said he would stand like a statue for hours and it was thought he was the last remnant of the tribe of Cherokees who were forced to leave on the Trail of Tears. Legend has it that a solitary Indian stood there like a haunting sentinel at intervals spanning more than 100 years.

In 1854, the town of Mentone was settled near the banks of Little River, and with good reason. The waters of the river were clear and clean and the land gently sloped to the banks in that area. The town was so quaint and rustic that visitors from all over the country made it a summer resort at the turn of the century. Big hotels were built to accommodate the many guests who came to escape city heat and noise long before electric fans and air conditioning were invented.

There was a rich vein of coal running through the mountain and it was not long before developers got wind of it. They overestimated its abundance, however, but not before they had built a huge dam to hold back the waters of the river. The resulting expanse of deep water was named Lake Lahausage. A compound for miners and their families was built near the lake. A "dinky line" railroad carried the coal to a chute which dumped it into the waiting railroad cars in the valley.

The mining operation ground to a halt in 1916 and the houses were sold to individuals who moved them all over the area. Mr. Herman Ledbetter has lived in one for decades and it still has the same sturdy simplicity it had over 80 years ago.

During a rainy season, the LaHousage dam was partially washed away by the furious river, but enough of it remains to keep the Lake full.

Developers and dreamers came and went, each with an idea to make Mentone a thriving resort, but not since the early days of the century has it attained the glory many thought it was destined to know. Now, it is once again becoming recognized as a place to spend peaceful moments. There are lovely inns, cabins, shops and two restaurants which have all kept the sweet flavor of the mountain without the bitter taste of over-development.

About a mile south of DeSoto Falls, as the crow flies, there is a place unique in Alabama — a ski resort. Cloudmont Ski and Golf Resort sits nestled among the hardwoods and pine of the mountain in perfect compatibility with its surroundings. Verdant golf greens, rustic chalets, an old covered bridge, walking trails, a beautiful primitive lodge known as Shady Grove, two ski slopes complete with rope tows and a snow making machine make Cloudmont the place to be in all seasons.

DeSoto State Park encompasses thousands of acres around sections of Little River. It is a nature lover's park

complete with interpretive trails, streams, camping areas, cabins and a resort with swimming pool, tennis courts, chalets, a motel and a charming restaurant offering mountain cuisine in a rugged yet elegant setting. Wildlife abounds in the Park, as do thousands of varieties of plant life, some precious and rare.

There are many structures at DeSoto State Park that were built in the 1930's by the Civilian Conservation Corps which was begun as a part of Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal. The young workers camped out for most of their working stay. They used native logs and stone for construction of cottages, a picnic area, shelters, buildings and gates.

Over 50 years ago, the mountain's primitive charm began to attract summer camps for children. These camps have provided economic stability to the communities and given local workers and businesses needed jobs and income. For many years, they were the only industry, besides tourism, and have always impacted positively on the area. Each Spring, hundreds of people swing into action, readying the many camps for the arrival of thousands of children. Most of the camps are located on or near the banks of Little River. The river plays an important part in the activities of the children, and it is one of the characteristics of the mountain that they love best. Canoeing, swimming, river vespers, fishing, and pageants offer a special dimension to the young visitors.

Two years ago, an organization known as **Friends of Little River** was formed to speak for the river — to give voice to the desire felt by all who know it and love it to keep the waters running as they have for millions of years. In other areas, man has proven he can destroy in a few years what nature took eons to build. The **Friends of Little River** want to make sure that does not happen here.

Little River has flowed like life's blood through the heart of this mountain for centuries. It has witnessed the lives of all the living things that have come for nourishment, both for body and for spirit. The river has had the tears of the Indian people mixed with its waters and felt the footsteps of the soldiers of a war that put brother against brother, father against son. The silent, deep pools have reflected the energies of the first settlers as they struggled to carve life and freedom from the wilderness. The rushing cascades still sing the joys and weep the sorrows of the mountain, and in that music is heard not only the history of a people, but the history of the earth as well.

A Special Thank You to Zora Strayhorn for Reprints From Her Mentone: A History, Talmadge Butler, for Use of DeSoto State Park's Archives and Tim Haney and Roberta Kirby for Assistance in Researching This Article.

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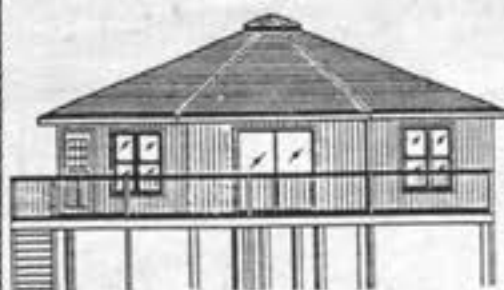
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Reunion Deemed A Success

Gov. Guy Hunt said Friday that the more than 2,000 Alabama Reunion events scheduled this year have "instilled a sense of pride in Alabamians that will live long beyond the Reunion year."

"More than 700 community committees and thousands of Alabamians made the Reunion a success," Gov. Hunt said. "Alabamians were excited about the hundreds of Reunion events across the state. The events instilled a sense of pride in our people that will live long after the Reunion Year ends. The excitement ignited by the Reunion has been greater than anyone's expectations."

Alabama Reunion Chairman David Rumbarger announced plans for the Alabama Business Reunion in October, which will be the final statewide Reunion event organized by the Reunion headquarters in Montgomery.

The Alabama Business Reunion scheduled for Oct. 13-15, will include top executives from Fortune 2500 companies from across the United States and England with Alabama ties who will be returning home to take a fresh look at Alabama. These businessmen and women, who may be in the position to influence capital investments and plant locations in Alabama, will experience an "Alabama Orientation" which includes several days of tours highlighting Alabama's improve business climate and way of life.

"The business leaders not only will become more familiar with Alabama's attractive business climate while visiting Alabama friends and relatives, but also they will be able to enjoy some of our state's many recreational facilities, fine shopping, sightseeing opportunities and the most exciting football atmosphere in the nation," Rumbarger said. "The event is being closely coordinated with the Alabama Development Office, the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs and the Bureau of Tourism and Travel as well as with various civic and community leaders across the state."

Effective Nov. 1, 1989, the coordination of local Reunion event will be transferred to the Bureau of Tourism and Travel. The Highway Department will continue its efforts to clean up the state through the Reunion sponsored "Adopt-A-Mile" program. The popular singing group, "Alabama Celebration!" which has performed at more than 65 Reunion events, will continue through the end of the year. Requests for the group will be handled through its booking agent, Book Ends Inc. Rumbarger said the Reunion office will close Nov. 1. A support staff will remain but will work out of the Bureau of Tourism and Travel and the Alabama Development Office for the remainder of the year.

Gov. Hunt said the enthusiasm created by the Reunion has helped prepare Alabama for continued economic growth.

"I am pleased with the continued success of the Reunion and I anticipate Alabama will reap benefits of the Reunion for years to come," Gov. Hunt said. "During the Reunion, I have felt people sharing a new sense of pride. Reunion volunteers can take great satisfaction in knowing they have helped shape a better Alabama in which to raise a family, gain an education and build a career. I am looking forward to the rest of the Reunion year."



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