

# The Historic Huntsville Quarterly

---

Volume 10  
Number 3 *Special Combined Issue*

Article 3

---

3-20-1984

## Celebrations and Toasts

Micky Maroney

Follow this and additional works at: <https://louis.uah.edu/historic-huntsville-quarterly>



Part of the [Historic Preservation and Conservation Commons](#), and the [History Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Maroney, Micky (1984) "Celebrations and Toasts," *The Historic Huntsville Quarterly*. Vol. 10: No. 3, Article 3.

Available at: <https://louis.uah.edu/historic-huntsville-quarterly/vol10/iss3/3>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by LOUIS. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Historic Huntsville Quarterly by an authorized editor of LOUIS.

# Celebrations and Toasts

by Micky Maroney

"The party dispersed in good order, at an early hour, and the day passed off with much hilarity, and without any disturbance or accident."

An article about an Independence Day celebration at the Huntsville Inn was concluded with the above statement in **The Alabama Republican** of July 8, 1819. Twenty toasts were drunk at the party celebrating the 44th anniversary of American Independence. "His Excellency Governor Bibb" and many distinguished members of the Alabama Constitutional Convention were among the guests.

Huntsville Inn, besides providing accommodations for travelers and visitors, was a favored location for social events and festivities in Huntsville's early years. In those days, it was the custom for gentlemen to hold many of their political and patriotic celebrations at local inns. These festivities included "plentiful dinners" which started in the late afternoon and lasted for several hours. After the meal, the "cloth

was removed," and a president and vice-president of the gathering were elected or appointed to preside over the toasting and speech-making. From six to twelve Set Toasts, or Sentiments, were drunk, followed by the Volunteer Toasts.

The Set Toasts usually began with a toast to the occasion being celebrated, followed by up to eleven more Sentiments being offered to subjects generally including: "Our Country, the President of the United States, the Constitution of the United States, the Congress of the United States, George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, the Heroes of the Revolution," etc.

Numbering up to twenty or more, the Volunteer Toasts were offered by the various guests, who toasted topics of national and local concern. An interesting Volunteer Sentiment, offered at the 1819 July 4th Celebration by the Honorable J. W. Walker, was to: "Florida, west of the Apalachicola -- May it speedily be incorporated with

the state of Alabama." Even now, from time to time, the state still grasps at that unattained goal! All the Toasts were accompanied by cheers, speeches, appropriate songs, and even the discharge of cannon at a dinner held in honor of President James Monroe.

On June 1, 1819, when President Monroe made his unannounced visit to Huntsville, he was en route from Augusta, Georgia to Nashville, Tennessee. The presidential group, traveling by horseback on a tour of the South, stopped in the Alabama Territory town of Huntsville "to examine the various fortifications in the area and to lay plans for strengthening them against foreign aggression."

**The Alabama Republican** on June 5, 1819 reported, "On Tuesday last the President of the United States with Mr. Gouveneur, his private Secretary, and Lieut. Monroe of the Army very unexpectedly arrived in Huntsville and put up at the Inn." The paper stated that the citizens appointed a committee "to wait upon his Excellency" and to invite him to a public dinner to be given in his honor the next day.

**The Republican** continued, "On Wednesday at 4 o'clock, the President and suite, together with more than one hundred of the most respected citizens of Madison County, sat down to a sumptuous entertainment prepared by Capt. Irby Jones.... After the cloth was removed, the following sentiments were drunk accompanied by the discharge of cannon, and appropriate songs." The sentiments, numbering twenty-four in all, were patriotic in

theme, although by Toasts Number 20 and 21, the gentlemen were drinking to "The friends of freedom in South America" and to "Our Fair Countrywomen." President Monroe offered a toast to the Territory of Alabama and her speedy admission into the Union.

The company rose from the table about sunset, everyone highly delighted with the entertainment and the pleasure of dining with the President. The article concluded by saying, "The President left on the ensuing day, 3rd inst., for Nashville, and was escorted by a number of respectable citizens several miles on his way, the whole company being on horseback."

More than tens years later, on Christmas Eve of 1829, another memorable dinner was given. The newspaper account, entitled "Jackson Supper," even though Jackson himself was not present, does not say where the festivities were held. But the purpose was to celebrate "the reception and perusal of the President's Message" which had been addressed to both Houses of Congress. The speech had been printed in the December 18, 1829 **Democrat**, including an editorial note that the Message had arrived with record speed in the last Tuscaloosa mail from Washington City in "3 days and 19 hours."

The President was Andrew Jackson, well-known and admired in Huntsville for many years. But nationally, President Jackson had many critics and detractors, whose vehement criticisms of the rough and unpolished frontiersman incensed his loyal friends in Huntsville. (John

Quincy Adams is on record as having once referred to Jackson as "a barbarian who could not write a sentence of grammar and could hardly spell his own name.") At the Christmas Eve supper, the Huntsvillians showed their disdain for people who ridiculed Jackson, as is illustrated in several of the many toasts traditionally offered after the meal.

In the January 1, 1830 issue of *The Democrat*, an article describing the supper states, "On the evening of the 24th ult. Major John K. Dunn, to evince the pleasure derived from the reception and perusal of the President's Message, prepared a Supper and invited the citizens generally to partake of the viands. The supper was well served up and very numerously attended. After the cloth was removed -- On motion, Thomas J. Sumner, Esq. was appointed President, and Col. Byrd Brandon, Vice President -- and the following set toasts were drank (sic) with much cheer and friendship: ..."

Printed verbatim by the newspaper were all thirty-one sentiments that were eventually drunk, all patriotic in content. Many of them demonstrated the intense local support for Jackson. Among the Set Toasts that were offered, the following sentiments showed the great support for the President:

"Andrew Jackson, President of the United States: Let him be judged by his acts -- and detraction will not destroy a faithful servant of the people. 3 chrs."

"The Present Administration:

\*\*\*"

"Our Country: Free and prosperous, though under the guidance of a MILITARY CHIEFTAIN. 3 chrs."

"The President's Message: The velocity with which it has been disseminated can be equaled only by its intrinsic merit."

Of the Volunteer Toasts proposed by the guests, some showed an occasional bit of local wit:

By Maj. N. B. Rose -- "The oil of Hickory, famous for taking the rust from the locks of old bureaus: May the oil be well tried before it is condemned, to be not good."

By Capt. John Phelan -- "Here's to the cat, that routed the rat, that eat (sic) the mault, that lay in the vault of the house that Uncle Sam built."

By Mr. Hamblin -- "The Hickory: May it flourish in the Republic and be the scourge of tyrants."

By Mr. S. Spencer -- "General Jackson: His enemies like our pigs -- well roasted."

By Col. B. Brandon -- "The President's Message: If he can neither READ, WRITE, nor SPELL -- he has a very happy talent for chosing (sic) an amanuensis."

The festivities were concluded by a lengthy speech on "Liberty and Patriotism" delivered by James Robinson, Esq.

FOOTNOTE: Amusingly, the

next article in the paper after the "Jackson Supper" with the thirty-one toasts, is an article on temperance, entitled "Drunkards," start-

ing with this line of verse: "Oh, that man would put an enemy into his mouth to steal away his brains... ."



## A NEW TAVERN,

At the Sign of the Planters Hotel

**T**HE Subscriber respectfully informs the public, that he has taken the large White House on Franklin-street, which is about 80 yards from the south-east corner of the public square, the main leading street from town to Ditto's Landing, which house was lately occupied by Mrs. J.S. Rawling as a tavern.

The proprietor has been at a very considerable expense in fitting out the house; it is now commodious, and ready to receive and accommodate travellers, and those that may favour him with a call, in a style and on such terms as, he flatters himself, will render complaints unnecessary.

His Stables are large and commodious, and well provided with all the requisites.

### RATES:

Breakfast,	-	-	-	37	1-2
Dinner,	-	-	-	50	
Supper,	-	-	-	37	1-2
Lodging per night,	-	-	-	12	1-2
Horse per night,	-	-	-	50	
Boarding, without lodging, per w.				\$3.50	
Boarding, including lodging, "				4.50	
Horse per week	-	-	-	3.00	

Travellers for two days will pay by the meal - should they remain longer than that time, for man and horse per day, 1.50

Without a horse per day - 1.25

No gentleman considered a monthly boarder except from the time he enters his name as such - the same rule to be observed as to keeping horses.

N. B. ROSE

Huntsville, 17th Nov.

A facsimile ad from **The Alabama Republican**, November 24, 1820. The first five rates listed are cents.