

The Historic Huntsville Quarterly

Volume 5 | Number 1

Article 6

9-1-1978

And Old Views

Historic Huntsville Foundation

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

Historic Huntsville Foundation (1978) "And Old Views," *The Historic Huntsville Quarterly*. Vol. 5: No. 1, Article 6.

Available at: <https://louis.uah.edu/historic-huntsville-quarterly/vol5/iss1/6>

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.

And Old Views



This extraordinary structure once stood on the east side of Jefferson street half way between North Side Square and Clinton street. It was demolished in 1928 to make way for "three modern one-story stores faced with terra cotta, and modern in every way."¹ These buildings were in turn demolished in 1974 to be replaced by a parking garage. Property just off the Square had filled a mixture of commercial and residential functions until the 1920's when the expansion of mercantile activity made residential uses uneconomical.

This lot seems to have remained vacant until Orville M. Hundley purchased it in 1871, but by 1884, it contained two attached brick structures. One

was a two-story house set back from the street while the other contained offices on the first floor and a residence on the second. Between 1884 and 1888, the two buildings were reworked into a single brick residence, probably with an office in the front.

In 1894 the ARGUS announced that "Mr. Orville M. Hundley will have his residence on Jefferson street entirely remodeled so that it will be practically a new house. The office in front will be done away with and most of the space now occupied by the office will be left for a portion of the front yard. There will be such a complete change that to all intents and purposes it will be a new resi-

dence throughout." ² About all that Hundley retained of the original structure were the side walls and part of the back wall while a totally new facade was created. Unfortunately no architect can be credited with the design which is an extravagant interpretation of the Queen Anne style in masonry. The keynote of the Queen Anne is variety - variety in shape, texture, color, and material, and the Hundley house had it all. The design was asymmetrical and composed of a multitude of forms including a two-story bay, a recessed porch, a central tower, and wall dormers flanked by brick turrets. The windows were rectangular, segmental, and arched, and at least one of them featured stained glass. The wall surface was textured by a variety of brickwork patterns, such as dentils, corbels, and panels. The brick was contrasted with the rock-faced stone of the lintels, foundation and porch. Patterned terra cotta panels added yet another accent to the wealth of decorative details. O. M. Hundley's initials were worked into the conical roof of the bay and his name appeared again on the carriage block. It is a wildly agitated design that seemed ready to explode upward in a mass of spiky verticals were it not for the sense of solidity provided by the heavy masonry construction.

Hundley remodeled his home when he was already 65 years old, and in 1903 he died, followed in 1905 by his wife. By 1908 the residence had been converted to offices and served for many years as the headquarters of the Huntsville Chamber of Commerce and of the Madison County Board of Health. In 1928, Hundley's daughter-in-law, Mrs. O. R. Hundley, had it

torn down to build modern stores.

O. M. Hundley was connected with other buildings in Huntsville. His wife donated the land for the Randolph Street Church of Christ and Hundley supervised the construction of it. In 1888 he was appointed Chief Superintendent for the construction of the new Federal building to be erected between Eustis and Randolph on Greene street. He also was the construction superintendent for the Huntsville Cotton Mill (1881, Jefferson), the Holding Block (1869, East Side Square) and the Opera House (1872, Jefferson), all of them demolished, as well as other unnamed substantial structures. His son, Oscar R. Hundley, also was responsible for several local buildings although there is no indication that he oversaw their construction as his father had done. He had built the imposing residence for himself at 401 Madison (National Register) as well as the houses at 108 Gates and 400 and 500 Franklin street which were rental properties. In 1896 he erected the two-story building at 128 South Side Square now occupied by American National Bank.

The two Hundleys, father and son, took a very active part in creating the physical fabric of late 19th century Huntsville; it is sad that the father's efforts can only be appreciated today through old photographs. *

1 THE WEEKLY TIMES, August 16, 1928, page 6.

2 ARGUS, March 29, 1894, page 8.