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Introduction

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Introduction

In the early 1930's, Virgil Carrington "Pat" Jones, a young writer, contributed a number of historical articles on Madison County which were published by The Huntsville Times. Mr. Jones spent countless hours researching his material and presented the public with factual and highly entertaining data on the colorful facets of Madison County, Alabama, history.

Of this history, Mr. Jones states: "...something should be done to acquaint Huntsville residents with the history of their area. It is rich and important, from the standpoint of the county, the state, and the nation. Not long after I went to The Times as a reporter in 1931, I began to read and hear of it and got an urge to put more of it in print. . . ."

"It kept me pretty busy. On week days, I put in a daily stint as city editor of the paper - 7 a. m. to 4 p. m. Then, after I got off from work, I would go out on my own and dig up the information from the courthouse files, the court records, surveyors' records and interviews. In my routine, I spent the week-ends and the first four days of each week gathering material. On Friday nights, after dinner at Mrs. T. W. Freeman's on Lincoln Street where I boarded my early years in Huntsville, I would begin writing. The article had to be ready the next morning in order to appear in the Sunday paper. More than once I have gone to sleep at the typewriter, but was always up in time to report for work next morning and always with the article finished. I sometimes devoted more than 90 hours a week to them and to writing news stories.

"I began by writing historical features, something I liked to do, and turned in one about every week-end. After a time, the managing editor, the late Reese Amis, suggested I write the series of stories on the old homes. When that was completed - I did 50 or more as I recall - I continued with the feature articles on any bits of history I could uncover. Some of the most amazing stories I ever heard were there."

Now, some thirty-odd years later, countless new faces

have appeared on the Huntsville-Madison County scene and they hunger for the information Mr. Jones contributed, information which would have been lost in time's march forward had someone not cared enough to preserve it then.

Dorothy Scott Johnson
Editor

