

1950-08-31

1950, August 31

Mamie Jones

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.gardner-webb.edu/fay-webb-gardner-cleveland-county-early-days-column>

Recommended Citation

Jones, M. (1950, August 31). Cleveland County Early Days, The Daily Star. Fay Webb Gardner Collection, Gardner-Webb University Archives, John R. Dover Memorial Library, Boiling Springs, NC.

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Series 1 - Personal Papers, Diaries, Scrapbooks at Digital Commons @ Gardner-Webb University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Cleveland County Early Days Column by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Gardner-Webb University. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@gardner-webb.edu.

In Cleveland County's Early Days

By MAMIE JONES

INTERESTING PEOPLE

Around the turn of the century Sam Harris, a telegraph operator by profession and a man of unusual abilities and varied capacities, became interested in psycho-

therapeutics and hypnotism (mesmerism).

Today, it is common knowledge that Duke University and Duke Hospital boast of having done pioneer work in both these lines in this section of the U.S.A. But Sam H. Harris was practising psychotherapeutics, hypnotism and magnet healing with a fair measure of success in not too complicated cases right here in Shelby and Charlotte, long before Duke University was even dreamed of.

According to a statement in a recent issue of Time magazine, it is an acknowledged fact that hypnotism has been used to make childbirth painless, alcoholics sober, and to heal a number of other maladies. Some doctors have hypnotized patients to set broken bones.

In the fall of 1901, a young Shelby girl, Clevie Weathers, fell and fractured her kneecap. Dr. Evans McBrayer told her he feared the kneecap was permanently injured, and that she would probably always limp and have to use a crutch or cane.

Clevie herself told me that she had tried very hard to walk. That she had wanted so very much to be bridesmaid in her sister Eula's wedding to Major Hopper. But she could not endure the pain of walking without the use of a crutch.

The French novel, Trilby, was being widely read at that time. This is the story of a beautiful street waif with a frog-like voice. She could not sing a note. Under the hypnotic influence of Svengali she became a famous singer.

A young woman with plenty of imagination had just read the book. She suggested to the Weathers family that since Mr. Harris could hypnotize he might, perhaps, be able to help Clevie.

Sam Harris was working as a telegrapher in Charlotte at that time. As an act of neighborly

kindness he came up to Shelby one Sunday afternoon to see what he could do for the girl.

He put her into a hypnotic sleep, then told her to walk toward him. Clevie obediently arose and walked toward him, although for several months she had been unable to walk without a crutch. When she reached the center of the room he awakened her. The girl was astonished to find herself standing unaided. She said "How did I get here." He replied. "You walked. Now walk back to your chair." She did. And thereafter walked without assistance and without pain.

Had it not been for this hypnotic healing, it is probable the young woman would have continued to limp and suffer the remainder of her life. Her parents, Mr. and Mrs. D. S. Weathers, published a signed statement in one of the Shelby papers in November, 1902, setting forth the facts of the apparently miraculous healing.

In this same paper there was a statement from D. K. F. Everett of Charlotte, N. C., as follows: "I called Mr. S. H. Harris to treat my son, Dixon A. Everett, who was wounded in the battle of Manila three years ago, and afterward contracted a terrible case of rheumatism. Several prominent physicians in Charlotte pronounced his case incurable, and were unable to relieve him. He could neither walk nor get on his feet without help. Mr. Harris cured him in three minutes and he has never had any return of the disease . . . (Signed) D. K. F. Everett."

Anyone who saw the demonstrations of hypnotism and telepathy by Franz Polgar, Hungarian mentalist, at the meeting of the Executives club in January this year, is doubtless convinced that one person's mind can influence another person's mind, thereby

LIFE

(From Page 1, Second Section)

making the incredible happen.

Sam Harris also did magnetic healing. In his advertisement in 1902, he says: "The human body not only contains great electric force . . . that force is readily communicated to another under simple conditions when such conditions are met. The patient who has once had a magnetic healer to place his hands upon him will feel the force as coming from a battery of a most soothing nature, and never again doubt the splendid healing qualities of it."

JOHN F. HARRIS

Sam Harris's father, John F. Harris, was a man of exceptional abilities for his opportunities. During the War Between the States, he served as a telegraph operator. It is possible he was the first telegraph operator in Shelby when, in 1875, this town became the terminal of what is now the Seaboard Air Line railway.

A tinner by trade, J. F. Harris had a small grocery and confectionary store on North LaFayette street, near the house that Richard Champion, (first clerk of the county court) built for himself and his wife, Helen Maria Burchett, about 1850. The location was where Paul Webb's drug store now stands.

In this store Mr. Harris held the first "demonstration" ever held here as a means of advertising an article offered for sale. This was a demonstration showing how to make clear drip coffee by using a special method and a tin pot Mr. Harris manufactured and was offering for sale.

In those days grocers handled green coffee beans in hundred-pound tow sacks. It was sold in small amounts and the cook put it into the oven and roasted the beans. Each time she made coffee she ground some of these roasted beans in a small handmill. Of course the handmill did not pulverize the coffee beans very well. The Harris method showed the women how to use this specially made pot and get good, clear, drip coffee.

BY REASON OF STRENGTH

Durbro Wilkins, who learned the tinner's trade under J. F. Harris, told me that he was a man of unusual strength and endurance. That on one occasion, when he (Harris) was about 72 years old he was working at Caroleen. After working part of Saturday, he walked the 14 miles to Shelby.

The next day he walked to a small place not far from Iron Station to visit his (Harris's) grandmother. It was the occasion of her 106th birthday. The old lady prepared all the dinner for the family assembled. She died at the age of 108.

In addition to the two old local newspapers mentioned in my story last week, I have found copies of three other old newspapers published in Shelby.

One is the Mountain Eagle, Volume II, number 43, dated Shelby, N. C., February 20, 1863, of which S. S. Ross was editor and proprietor. Most of the reading matter contained therein was Civil War news.

AN INDIGNANT JAILER

A bit of local news was contained in an advertisement signed by Martin Roberts, jailer.

Martin Roberts was indignant. Three prisoners, namely, Wm. Cody, Joseph Carpenter and Wm. Carpenter had picked the jail locks and escaped. In addition to taking French leave, the escapees took with them seven jail blankets and two jail locks. Jailer Roberts wanted them back, and advertised a reward of \$25.00 if these prisoners were returned to the jail before the 2nd Monday in March, 1863.

Another paper is Tar Heel Poultryman, dated Shelby, N. C., April, 1894 which was edited by Robt. L. Simmons.

"Bob" Simmons was an expert poultryman, and had a wide acquaintance among poultry raisers of several states as a judge of poultry. His paper had a wide circulation for a number of years.

One of the advertisers in this paper was J. J. Wirtz, a taxidermist; and also a dealer in books and curiosities.

RIP VAN WINKLE'S PAPER

Old Rip's Pop-Gun was a small paper with a definite purpose. In size it measured 13 inches by 18 inches. When folded this made four pages of three columns each. The paper I have bears date line Shelby, N. C., December 2, 1854. Rip Van Winkle was editor and Frank Harley his assistant. Old Rip's pop-gun was aimed at certain hypocritical practices engaged in by prominent citizens, but no names were mentioned.

David Crockett, junior, was one of the contributors. This evidently was a pseudonym, meaning a battler for the right.

(As we know, David Crockett who died defending the Alamo, was born in this section of North Carolina, in 1786. History books say he was born in Lincoln county. I have always felt reasonably sure he was born in the western section of Lincoln county, which later became a part of Cleveland county.)

The papers of 1854-55 had much to say about annexation of the Sandwich Islands. One paper said the "Hiwaian annexation treaty provides for the immediate admission of the islands into this Union as an independent and sovereign State. "They are to come into the Union as Texas did, and are to be represented in the next Congress by two Senators." Nearly a hundred years have gone by and they have not yet been admitted to full statehood.

(Copyright by Mamie Jones)