

1950-09-01

1950, September 1

Mamie Jones

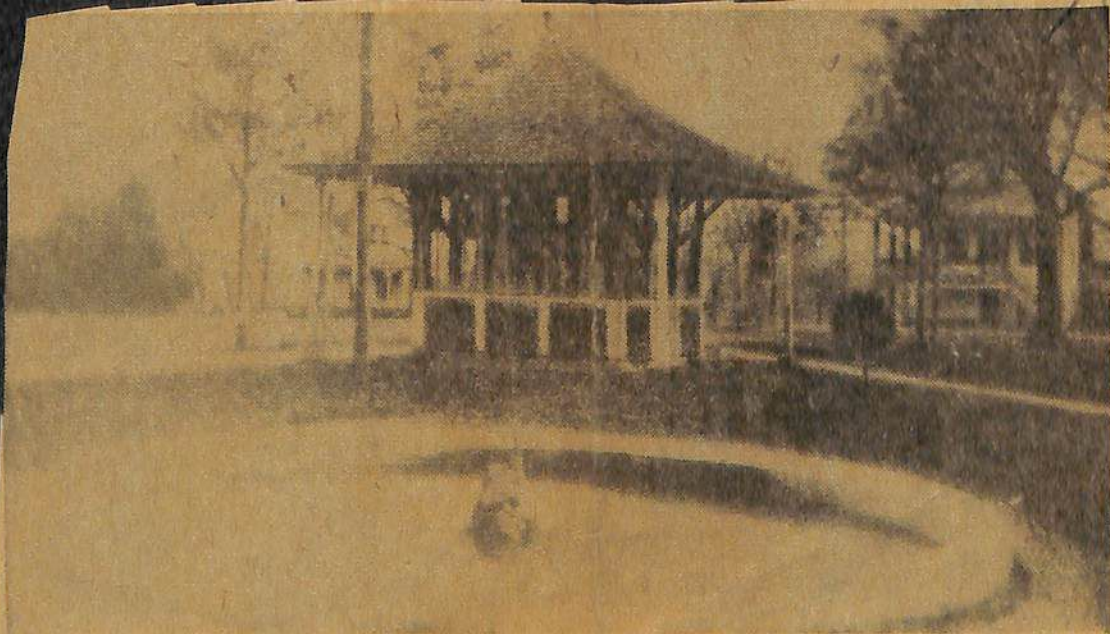
Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.gardner-webb.edu/fay-webb-gardner-cleveland-county-early-days-column>

---

#### Recommended Citation

Jones, M. (1950, September 1). 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](mailto:digitalcommons@gardner-webb.edu).



**LITHIA FOUNTAIN**—The house pictured above was located on the Northeast corner of the Court Square, and from this building the famous lithia water was dispensed from 1891 to 1921,

in the days when Shelby was known as "The City of Springs." It was torn away about twenty years ago.

LIFE

In Cleveland County's Early Days

Spt 21 - 1950

By MAMIE JONES

"In Shelby's beautiful Court Square, is located the lithia-water fountain, where pure mineral water is sold at two cents a glass. The water is brought from the famous lithia spring (formerly known as Herndon's spring) 2½ miles north of Shelby through pipes, and passes through ice-covered lead pipes in the fountain-house on the Square. It is served as cool and pure as it is refreshing.

"Mr. H. B. Quinn is the clever manager and proprietor. He sells large quantities of water the year round. Its medicinal values are well known. Many have been benefitted and a vast number cured entirely of various maladies by the use of this valuable mineral water.

"The water comes from a bold spring which is arranged so as to protect the water from all impurities." (Quoted from a booklet written by T. J. Gold, Esq., advertising Shelby in 1905.)

The picture shown at bottom left of this page was made sometime between 1910 and 1918. The small decorative fountain in the foreground is not to be confused with the lithia-water fountain within the building above pictured.

### HEALTH-GIVING WATER

The beneficent effect of this sulphur water on many of those who drink it has been so remarkable that about 1890 a group of prominent, civic-minded Shelby citizens felt that if the water were more readily available to those who might want to drink it, that its fame would spread, and that through this lithia water, and also through the already well known white sulphur waters of Cleveland Mineral Springs and Patterson's sulphur spring, and the lithia waters of McBrayer spring, Shelby might become really famous as a watering place.

The Shelby Land & Improvement Co., a corporation made up of some of the town's leading citizens, including Burrell Blanton, its first president, W. P. Love, its second president, T. D. Lattimore, its treasurer, J. Calvin Beam, H. D. Wilson, Albert Green, and others, decided it would be patriotic and profitable to finance a project bringing to Shelby this unusual lithia water with remarkable medicinal qualities, and to promote its sale through advertising.

Crawford Durham owned this spring and the land around it. He so greatly desired that the public should have ready access to this mineral water, that he agreed to give the spring to the Shelby Land & Improvement Co., if they would convey the water to Shelby and make it available to the public.

Under date October 2, 1890, Durham made a conditional agreement with the Shelby Land & Improvement Company, and executed to it a deed for one acre of land, containing the spring. (See Book 22, pages 481-482, Register's office of Cleveland county.) Later, he made deed to this same company for one-half acre of land on which the water-motor was located.

The deed and agreement stipulates that the Shelby Land & Improvement Co., shall convey the water from the spring to the town of Shelby and that "one place of its discharge shall be on the northeast corner of the Court Square, near two large forest oaks."

It appears all parties to the agreement hoped that when the project was completed, the town of Shelby would buy the property from the Shelby Land & Imp. Co., and supervise disposition of the



water on the Square. This was never done.

The deed and agreement provide:

"If the party of the second part (The Shelby Land & Improvement Co.) . . . or its successors . . . after the 2nd day of October, 1893, abandon the use of said spring and water, absolutely, then . . . the property herein conveyed shall revert to the party of the first part, his heirs or . . . assigns."

About 1891, or maybe it was in the early part of 1892, the S.L.& Imp. Company installed a slow-john pumping machine at the spring, and erected on the Court Square the above pictured building to house the machinery necessary to dispense the water, and laid 2½ miles of lead pipe between the spring and the fountainhouse. The laying of this pipe cost approximately \$3,000.

The lithia water was sold from this fountain-house. The first op-

erator was T. W. (Skinny) Hamrick. Later, Claude Webb took over the job. Both these hard working young men found selling water at a penny a glass from this fountain profitable.

A great many people from various sections of the country came here to drink the water. Some were cured of whatever they thought ailed them, and many others were greatly benefitted. J. Calvin Beam, as agent, shipped large demi-johns of it to a considerable number of regular customers every week.

### WATER NOT VALUED LOCALLY

Unfortunately, we do not appreciate the things that are easiest to get. When I was a little girl we lived near Stices' Shoals in the country. I had a severe kidney condition. Dr. Vick McBrayer told my father the lithia water would be good for me. Two or three

Sept 24 - 1958

(From Page 1, Second Section)

times each week Papa rode over eight miles of muddy, rutty roads to get this water for me. I got well. Later, we moved to Shelby. Then I did not drink the water. Other people also neglected to buy, and sales fell off.

In 1903, the Shelby Land & Improvement Co. sold whatever rights it had in the land to H. Beck Quinn and Dr. R. H. Morrison for \$700. Mr. Quinn dispensed the water after that time, occasionally being assisted by Beth and Sue Andrews, and others.

On the benches near this fountain, except in bitter cold weather, a group of cronies—the wits of the town—gathered every day to discuss the state of the world. These were: H. Beck Quinn, Charlie Hardin, T. Kandy Barnett, A. B. Suttle, Hatcher Webb, and R. B. M<sup>r</sup>ayer.

#### SPRING ABANDONED

H. B. Quinn died in 1922. About the same time, flood waters damaged the slow-john pumping machine beyond repair. Since there was no machinery to convey the water from the spring to the fountain house, it could not be sold on the Court Square, and the spring was abandoned.

Crawford Durham died in 1897. He willed all his property, of

whatever nature, as follows: "To my beloved daughter-in-law, Margaret F. Durham, and to my beloved daughter, Zulia J. Green, share and share alike." He made his son, Solon Durham, husband of the legatee Margaret E. Durham, one of the executors of his estate.

Zulia J. Durham above mentioned, was one of the belles of early Shelby. She must have been quite pretty. I recall her in her declining years, as she sat on the porch of her home which stood on the corner of North Washington and East Marion. She always reminded me of Queen Victoria. She was first married to W. S. Corbett, who died in 1868. By him she bore a son "Billy Corbett," who was her only heir. Later, she married Albert Green. Billy Corbett died some years ago in Texas. Several members of his family still live there. I do not know where the heirs of Solon and Margaret Durham live.

#### WHO OWNS THE

I am not certain as to the present ownership of the spring. When H. B. Quinn died, his estate, which included about 40 acres of land surrounding the spring, descended to his only heir, DeWitt Quinn. More than 15 years ago DeWitt Quinn disposed of this property to the First National Bank. About 1941, the Bank disposed of it to other parties.

However, under the terms of

the deed above quoted, it seems to me that the spring, and the acre of ground whereon it is located, and the half-acre of ground on which the water motor formerly stood, belong to Crawford Durham's heirs. It is possible there has been some transfer of this property right to the present owners, which I overlooked when I glanced casually over the records in the Register's office.

My purpose in mentioning all this is to suggest that since Crawford Durham wanted the town of Shelby to have this water and make it available to the populace, that some arrangement might be made with the present owners and the heirs of C. C. Durham whereby this healing water could again be piped to Shelby, and made available to the citizens of this community.

Crawford Durham lived in the house just behind and slightly to the left of the fountain-house in the above picture. He was the first clerk of the Superior Court of Cleveland County in 1841, and was one of the leaders in the town of Shelby from its beginning. He and his cousin, Captain Plato Durham, published a paper about 1871. This paper was a source of great annoyance to Lt. Albion Howe, who was here with his Yankee Army of Occupation to quell disturbances arising from K.K.K. activities.

The quaint house to the right

# ELBY DAILY STAR, SHELB

of the fountain house was the "Dr. Williams' House" which stood on the lot where Central Methodist church now stands.

There used to be another spring in the town that added to Shelby's fame as the "City of Springs," when people came from afar to board here and drink the health-giving waters. That spring was known as the iron spring, and was located on the Sisk-Forney property (owned then by their grandmother, Mrs. F. L. Hoke). The spring was at the foot of a hill about two hundred feet from the family residence on East Marion street. However, when some big oak trees nearby were cut down, the spring disappeared.

(Copyright by Mamie Jones)