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In Cleveland County's Early Days

By MAMIE JONES

Mining was one of the county's earliest industries. Cleveland has a large variety of minerals, some of which are of high quality and are considered rare.

Among the minerals which have been mined more or less profitably through the years are: limestone, gold, tin ore, copper, garnet, kaolin, silver, tourmaline corundum, plumbago (which is another name for graphite or lead), potter's clay, low grade manganese, fine and large quartz (chrysal), brick clay, iron ore, mica, monazite and spodumene. The mining and sale of the last five named have brought in a great deal of money to numerous individuals in this county in years gone by. So far as I know, no mining is going on in the county at this time.

VITAL WAR MATERIAL

Spodumene is the most recent discovery. This valuable product is found at what used to be called "the old tin mine" near Kings Mountain. Although this tin mine is one of the few in the USA, and has been operated off and on ever since 1880, the expense of operat-

ing was so great that tin could not be produced profitably.

Some years ago the owner, Lloyd Williams, formerly of Shelby, succeeded in interesting engineers in this property. They found — to their very great surprise — large deposits of spodumene (properly lithium aluminum silicate) a rare mineral. Later, the Solvay Process company leased the mine, erected very expensive machinery there, and during World War II the products of this mine were highly essential to the government. This vein of spodumene is about 25 miles long and approximately a mile and one-half wide. Mining operations there have been suspended for some time.

Mica has been mined in this section for a great many years. During World War II there were 30 mica mines in operation. When the Indians roamed over these red clay hills they used mica for mirrors.

AN EMERALD NECKLACE

A variety of semi-precious stones have been found at various places in the county. Dr. David Morrison

has in his possession amethyst which were found on the farm of Ed Morrison, near Lattimore. Dr. Morrison says that other semi-precious stones have been found in the vicinity of this farm, including rubies (not perfect), and probably hiddenites.

On what was formerly the Barrett Turner farm, near Stices Shoals about five miles south of Shelby, there is an emerald mine. A necklace of emeralds from this mine was given to Jessie Wilson, daughter of President Wilson, at the time of her marriage at the White House.

MINING MONAZITE

A profitable Cleveland county enterprise was killed dead some years ago when the tariff was taken off monazite, and it was permitted to come into this country, tax free, at a price much lower than it could be produced here. In South America, it was shoveled off the coasts of Brazil, put on shipboard for the USA, and was used (and I suppose still is) in the