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Early Days

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with the requirement of the Act of the Legislature establishing the county in 1841, should be located within four miles of Wilson's Springs. Later the name was changed to Cleveland Springs.

The picture appearing elsewhere in this issue of The Times is that of the second hotel, a brick building of 50 rooms erected in 1866. During the winter seasons from about 1870 until the early 80's this hotel was used as a boarding school for young ladies. I think young men were admitted to classes. The school was under the management of Dr. and Mrs. Brevard.

For a number of years Mrs. Sarah Wilson Poston and her three sons, namely, McBride, Pink and James, operated the hotel. About 1887 or 1888 she sold the property to J. B. Wilkerson. He operated it as a resort hotel until about 1896, when he sold his holdings to Lee & Miller. That is, William H. Miller and his sister-in-law, Miss Amanda Lee. They continued to draw excellent patronage for a number of years.

A great many of the hotel guests came from the low country of South Carolina and eastern North Carolina. They felt that the sulphur waters would heal the malaria they knew they had. This hotel was the social center of Cleveland County.

About 1902, Orie L. McFarland leased the hotel from Lee & Miller and operated it as a resort hotel for five years. On the night of Sept. 19, 1907, lightning struck an electrical transformer and the hotel was burned.

One white woman, and two Negro women servants were burned. Another Negro woman who was on the third floor slid down the posts, praying as she came, and reached the ground safely.

New Hotel In 1920

In 1920, a local stock company erected a modern brick hotel on the site where the other hotel had burned. Eight years later, in October 1928, this hotel burned.

O. M. Mull and Max Gardner took over the property, and since that time have sold all but 100 acres of the original 350 acres that was originally known as "The Cleveland Springs property." But this remaining 100 acres with its numerous springs and wooded hills offers a marvelous site for a school, a hotel, or a nursing home.

Ghosts In The Hotel

Almost any building that has housed a large number of different people over a period of more than 40 years has its ghosts. Mrs. Inez Babington, who spent much time at the hotel while her brother, O. L. McFarland, was proprietor, tells some shivery ghost tales about sounds she and others heard, and of things other people saw.

On several occasions at night, a woman's piercing screams were heard; and from the empty kitchen came sounds of trays of dishes being dropped. At least three young night clerks told of seeing a lovely girl descending the stair, accompanied by a large Collie dog. The girl wore a soft white dress and her long hair was hanging down her back. One young man, thinking her a guest, asked her what he could do for her. She and the dog turned and went back up the stairs. The young man told Mr. Wilkerson he could not stay there. Mr. Wilkerson assured him that he, too, had seen the girl and dog.

I never, never saw a ghost. I hope I never hear one. But this I'll tell you right now, I'd rather hear than see one!