

There's Tiffany Under Those Soybeans



The dust turned up by the plow may be worth more to the farmer than the crops of this dry year. Because under soy bean and silage fields, as well as under houses and gardens, timber stands and kudzu, lie most of Cleveland County's 13 recorded sites where gemstones have been found.

Somewhere near Kings Mountain, the last of 13 diamonds reported found in the states was unearthed in 1893. Whether there are any more at home like that one has never been determined.

Beryl—the mineral family that produces emeralds and aquamarine—has been found or actively mined at five sites in the county; corundum—the family of rubies and sapphires—has been collected on at least three.

One corundum site marked on a state geological survey map, lies about two tenths of a mile north of U.S. 74 and about a mile west of the Mooresville business district. Another is now under soybeans in the triangle formed by SR1136 and Old Buffalo Church Road, where they

come together at Mt. Sinai Church Road.

The latter site is part of the Old Thompson farm, marked by a deserted old house and sheds. The Moss family currently owns it, and James A. Moss, who raises crops on the land, says he has never noticed anything sparkling unusual in the soil.

Not far away, on the old Allen farm, the rains of half a century have washed some soil back into the trench that once was the Plantation emerald mine. Tiffany's, of New York, once held the mineral rights to that plot, where beryl crystals first were identified in 1909. The Turner family owned the land back then; they also had another mine across Highway 18, off Davis Road.

The Allens came later. "My daddy never did dig down there," says Ruby Allen Hamrick, one of the Allen children, and now wife of James O. Hamrick of Boiling Springs. "He was a farmer. But he did find one piece, just picked it up. It was sort of bluish green."

She remembers her father talking to some people from up north about mining the land,

Mrs. Hamrick says, but the outcome of that conference is forgotten. According to state geological records, about 3,000 carats of emerald rough were gathered, mostly in small stones, from the Plantation mine, before it was left, sometimes in the Depression years, to begin to heal itself.

The mine, 1450 feet west of Emerald Mine Road and about a mile from Stice Dam, now belongs to Mrs. Hamrick's nephew, Joel Wesson, and his wife Gloria. Wesson says that every now and then someone will call and ask permission to walk around the place. He's run into others who did not ask, and he'd rather that were not so.

He's met some older fellows who used to work at the mine, when it was active, he says. One of the stories he's heard is about a freak crystal formation that turned up in the digging. "They got one about a couple of inches long, and about the size of a pencil, in the shape of a cross. It was finally sold to a church."

Like most other people, Wesson is hampered in his exploration of his unusual property by lack of knowledge of what to



The deserted Thompson farmhouse, above, marks the site of a farmer mine at Mt. Sinai.

look for, he says. Bright little rocks may be glass, or jewels, or bright little rocks. He has no intention at this time, he says, of opening the site commercially to hopeful diggers, as has been done in the mines around Spruce Pine, Hiddenite and Franklin. "If you do that, you have to stay with it all the time," he says.

Across Emerald Mine Road, "For Sale" signs mark the last couple of lots of a section of the Allen farm that was divided up for development. New people will be moving in, most of whom

probably won't be preoccupied with the dirt under their feet, except when it gets on the carpet. Only in the name of their street will the past be remembered.

For anyone interested in the locations of Cleveland County or other North Carolina mineral sites, the N.C. Department of Natural Resources and Development, Geological Survey Section, has maps and guidebooks at nominal prices. They're at P.O. Box 27687, Raleigh, N.C., 27611.

The Foothills View

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 2, 1983

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New Courses Open At Tech's Continuing Ed

The Continuing Education Department of Cleveland Technical College has scheduled the following courses:

Cross Stitch begins Sept. 6, from 6:30-9:30 p.m. at Floral & Hobby Shop, Casar. The class will meet each Tuesday evening until Nov. 8. The instructor will be Sondra Earl. Total hours 20. The registration fee is \$15.

Pottery Design & Production begins September 6, from 6:30-9:30 p.m. at Dawn's Busy Hands. The class will meet each Tuesday evening until Nov. 15. The instructor will be Annie Dixon. Total hours 33. The registration fee is \$10.

Pottery Design & Production begins September 7, from 6:30-9:30 at Dawn's Busy Hands. The class will meet each Wednesday evening until Nov. 16. The instructor will be Annie Dixon. Total hours 33. The registration fee is \$10.00.

Candlewicking begins September 7, from 6:30-9:30 p.m. at Floral & Hobby Shop, Casar. The class will meet each Wednesday until November 9. The instructor will be Sondra Earl. Total hours 20. The registration fee is \$15.00.

Pottery Design & Production begins September 8, from 7-10 p.m. at Campus Ceramic Lab. The class will meet each Thursday evening until November 17. The instructor will be Ada Blankenship. Total hours 33. The registration fee is \$10.00.

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Pottery Design & Production, begins September 8, from 9-12 a.m. at Campus Ceramic Shop. The class will meet each Thursday morning until November 17. The instructor will be Ada Blankenship. Total hours 33. The registration fee is \$10.00.

Quilting begins September 8, from 6:30-8:30 p.m. at Floral & Hobby Shop Casar. The class will meet each Thursday evening until November 10. The instructor will be Sondra Earl. Total hours 20. The registration fee is \$15.00.

Tole Painting II begins September 12, from 6:30-9:30 p.m. at Eagle's Nest. The class will meet each Monday evening until October 31. The instructor will be Alice Johnson. total hours 24. The registration fee is \$18.00. Registration is limited to 15 people.

Crochet, begins September 7, from 2-4 p.m. at Fallston Baptist Church. The class will meet each Wednesday afternoon until November 9. The instructor will be Elisabeth O'Dell. Total hours 20. The registration fee is \$15.00.

Crochet begins September 8, from 9-11 a.m. at Elisabeth Baptist Church. The clas will meet each Thursday morning until Nov. 10. The instructor will be Elisabeth O'Dell. Total hours 20. The registration fee is \$15.00.

Computer Awareness begins Sept. 6, from 6:30-9:30 p.m. at Shelby Senior High School. The class will meet each Tuesday evening until Nov. 8. The instructor will be Mike Sisk. Total hours 30. The registration fee is \$10.00.

The Patience And Hope Of A Summer Garden



Stunted by almost unbroken drought, her okra plants have produced valiantly, all the same, for Mrs. Essie Rollins of Mt. Sinai Church Road. Mrs. Rollins has gathered about half a bucket, here, from just part of her rows. Her corn fared not so well; it tasseled at about waist-high, and the beans she planted among it never showed their heads at all. But an early garden came and bore well and went, before the drought set in, so all is not lost. Otherwise, "I have never seen such a summer for trying to grow things," Mrs. Rollins says.

Church Looking To Fill Children's Choir Robes

Boiling Springs Baptist will begin its children's choir program Wednesday, Sept. 7, with games and refreshments planned for this special enrollment day.

The children's choir is part of the church music program that also includes chairs for kindergarten through sixth grade, choirs for college youth,

and handbell ensembles for adults, youth, and children.

Boiling Springs Baptist also sponsors a woodwind quintet, flute choir, adult choir, men's and ladies' chorus.

The church asks those interested in joining any of the music groups to call 434-6244.

Call To New School Year At G-W Convocation

Gardner Webb College marked the beginning of the new school year Thursday by welcoming back its students as well as recognizing a key member of the college's new financial development program.

George Blanton Jr. of Shelby was present during the college's fall convocation as G-W President Craven Williams announced Blanton's appointment as chairman of the program's endowment development committee.

As committee chairman, Blanton will coordinate the fund raising activities targeted at raising \$15.6 million for endowment. This represents the largest portion of the \$28.6 million financial development program "Getting Ready For Tomorrow."

"The importance of this program and the size of the objective will require the best effort of the best people available to us," Williams announced. "George Blanton Jr. is the right person for this college at this time. We are honored by and grateful for his services."

Blanton, who is chairman of the board and chief executive officer of the First National Bank in Shelby, has for several years served Gardner-Webb in a number of capacities.

He was twice elected chairman of the board of advisors and is currently a member of the college's board of trustees.

In 1981, Blanton along with his sisters, Caroline B. Thayer of Chestnut Hills, Mass., and Millicent B. Thompson of Charlotte, presented the college with their parents home on West Marion Street in Shelby. It has been renovated with funds donated by the Blanton family and now serves as the college president's home.

In addition to the positions he holds with First National Bank, Blanton is president of Eagle

Roller Mill, director of Dover and Ora Mill companies and is secretary and director of Shelby Radio Corporation. He also serves as vice president of both Seal Wire Company and Artee Industries.

While being actively involved with a number of business interests in Cleveland County, Blanton has also found time to donate his energies to many area civic organizations as well.

He has been an officer in the Shelby Junior Chamber of Commerce as well as director and vice president of the Shelby Chamber of Commerce. He is past president of the Cleveland County Historical Association, the Shelby Lions Club and has twice been president of the Cleveland County United Fund.

As Gardner-Webb prepares for the challenges of its new financial development program, guest speaker Dr. Merrimon Cuninggim reminded the college students during convocation that they too must prepare for the challenges.

Cuninggim told the students "Accept change - change is what college is all about."

A Rhodes scholar, Cuninggim has 19 years of experience working with college students and helping them adjust to the rigors of college life.

He has served as professor of religion at Pomona College in California; Denison University in Ohio; and Emory and Henry College in Virginia. Cuninggim has also served as director of religious activities at Duke University and for nine years was dean of the Perkins School of Theology at Southern Methodist University.

From 1976 until 1979, Cuninggim served as president of Salem Academy and College in Winston-Salem and currently is chairman of the Center for Elective Philanthropy.