

Hot Springs, In Madison County, Famed For Many Years As Watering Place

(By Staff Correspondent)
HOT SPRINGS, July 26.—Hot Springs, one of the principal towns of Madison County, famed for many years for the healthful water that bubbles up out of the ground here, has been enjoying a relatively tremendous growth in population in the last few months. According to unofficial but reliable information the increase in the inhabitants of this place in the past 12 months has been from 478 to 700.

The reasons assigned are various. One is that mountain labor has been attracted to Hot Springs on account of the mills located here. Another is that quite a few people are coming here to live because of the excellent climate and the health-giving waters. As a result of the growth in population realty values have increased.

Hot Springs is the center of a rich mountain area. Splendid opportunities are offered along agricultural and industrial lines. The surrounding region supplies much raw material, and the labor supply is of the highest type. Among the business concerns already established in this region are the following:

The Buquo Lime Company, was established at Hot Springs 5 years ago. The output now is 200 tons of ground limestone a day, and from 50 to 60 men are employed. J. C. Buquo is general manager and J. P. Morris is secretary-treasurer. The plant is located one-fourth of a mile West of Hot Springs. This concern is now making several improvements at the plant. The work, which is practically completed, will cost about \$30,000.

The Hot Springs Hosiery Mills, Inc., were established here in December, 1923. The officers of this newly organized company are as follows: J. C. Buquo, president; J. W. Morris, secretary-treasurer; and Ira Plemmons, manager; S. H. Hutton is superintendent. The plant is at present located over the city power plant. The capacity is 250 dozen men's socks per day. The present capitalization is fixed at \$25,000. Some 35 persons are employed.

The corporation is planning to build a new structure to house the mill. It is thought that this will be ready sometime next year. It will cost around \$10,000. With the completion of the new building the capacity of the plant will be doubled. The present plant, which covers one floor, is 140 feet by 60 feet.

The Madison Improved Brick Company was established in Hot Springs about the first of the year. The officers are: S. W. Brown, president; J. B. Harrison, vice president and manager. These men are enlarging the capacity of their plant now from 5,000 to 10,000 brick a day. New machinery is being installed, and several thousand dollars will be expended on the work. About 10 men are employed. The company makes a chemical brick, which is of a very durable kind. The present investment is about \$10,000.

A number of small lumber companies operate from Hot Springs. The largest plant is that of the Spring Creek Lumber Company, which represents an investment of

about \$10,000. Thomas Frisby and Lon Brooks are the owners.

The firm of W. H. Ira and Roy Plemmons is one of the largest general business concerns in Madison County. These men run a hotel, the hotel dining room, an undertaking establishment, a farm, general merchandise store, a machine shop, have an interest in the local hosiery mill, and do considerable business in real estate. The three men represent three generations of the family. W. H. Plemmons is grandfather, Ira Plemmons is father, and Roy Plemmons is the son.

The Plemmons Hotel is a brick structure, with 16 guest rooms. It was completed in November, 1923.

Lon Brooks and Son conduct a general mercantile business, with about \$8,000 invested in stock. Mr. Brooks is also interested in the Spring Creek Lumber Company.

The Larce House is owned by Misses Georgia and Sue Lance who have a system of cottages with about 35 rooms in all that operate for tourists and commercial travelers. The cottages are located on Lawson Street.

The Gentry Hotel is owned and operated by Mrs. Jane Gentry. It has about 10 guest rooms.

The McFee House, run by Mrs. P. T. McFee, has 10 rooms.

The Mountain Park Hotel which was a large factor in making this town famous, burned down about three years ago. It had about 400 rooms. The site of the old hotel offers a splendid opportunity for the establishment of a new and modern tourist hostelry. There have been many rumors of projected plans for a new and large tourist hotel, but nothing definite has as yet been announced. J. E. Rumbough, former owner of the property, sold it about two and a half years ago to Mrs. B. M. Safford of Hot Springs.

The famous hot springs are located on this property, which is a level strip of land bordering on the left bank of the French Broad River. The place is very attractive, with fine old shade trees adding to the beauty of the grounds.

The health giving waters are still being used by people who desire to improve their physical condition. A bath house, containing eight private baths, is maintained by the owner and an attendant is kept there. The individual pools are set in marble. The bath house was built about five years ago and is open to the public upon payment of a nominal fee. The bathing water comes from the famous mineral spring and is heated naturally.

Because of these springs this town has been known from the early part of the last century as a Southern watering place. An old resident of Hot Springs declares that persons have come to Hot Springs in rolling chairs, with swollen feet, or suffering from rheumatism and have gone away within a few weeks free from uric acid.

These springs were discovered long before the white man came to this country. The Cherokee Indians used the waters for medical purposes. Within the memory of citizens here the Indians used to visit Hot Springs about twice a year. The Indian Chief would

come down Spring Creek, trailed by hundreds of Indians, from the home of the tribe back in the mountain fastness. The sick of the tribe would be brought along, accompanied by the medicine men, and those in need of treatment would bathe in the beneficent waters that spring from the grounds within a few feet of the French Broad River.

The waters are said to be a great remedial agent in cases of dyspepsia, and a sufferer from insomnia and nervous disorders may expect to find relief, it is declared.

An analysis of the water has been made by a prominent university chemist and it shows as follows: chloride of sodium, 1.0827 grains; chloride of potassium, 0.6192 grains; sulphate of potassa, 1.6192 grains; sulphate of lime, 20.0416 grains; sulphate of magnesia 7.1001 bicarbonate of ammonia, traces; bicarbonate of lime, 9.0106 grains; bicarbonate of iron, 0.1012 grains; phosphate of soda, traces; alumina, 0.0385 grains; silica, 3.1434 grains. Total solids 42.8631 grains, contained in one U. S. gallon of 231 cubic inches.

This analysis shows the waters to be almost the same in mineral ingredients as the waters at Hot Springs, Va., and Hot Springs, Ark., and they differ little from those at Aix-Les Bains.

The altitude of Hot Springs is 1,363 feet and the town is located in the heart of the Big Smoky Range of mountains. The warm waters afforded by the springs, and the cool climate, both as a result of natural causes, are conditions that are hard to beat in the location of a watering place.

An interesting character of Hot Springs is Prince Albert Garner, colored care-taker of the Springs and bath house. Garner, who is 68 years old, looks no older than a man of 50. He has been employed here since 1883. He claims the distinction of having been the first man to advertise Asheville and the beauties of the mountain region. This was done when he was employed by the Western North Carolina Railroad, now part of the Southern Railway System, to stand on the observation platform of trains and point out to visitors the different points of interest along the route from Marion to Asheville. Garner also says that he was the first man to call Western North Carolina the "Switzerland of America." His work in advertising Asheville was done about the year 1836. New York newspapers at the time commented on Garner and his enthusiastic praise of the mountain section.

The Merchants Association of Hot Springs in publishing a booklet describing the attractiveness of Hot Springs as a resort town and telling of the opportunities offered here in an industrial way. The booklet is now on the press at Asheville. Officers of the Merchants Association are as follows:

O. P. Grubbs, president; Lon Brooks, vice president; A. B. McDonnell, Secretary; W. T. Davis, treasurer. The Association was organized one year ago.

The Hot Springs Power and Light Company, owned by Mrs. J. M. Lance and sons, Frank and H. B. Lance, furnishes the lights and power for Hot Springs. The company has been operating here for about 15 years, and anticipates building a big water storage to double the power. A dam is to be built one mile above the present location, which is one-half mile south of town. Work will begin soon and around \$25,000 will be

expended. The present investment represents about \$30,000.

The town of Hot Springs owns its own water works, which were installed about eight years ago at a cost of about \$40,000. The water comes by gravity from about three miles east of Hot Springs. The pressure is 117 pounds down town. There is enough water to supply a population of 10,000.

Hot Springs also has its own fire department. The equipment consists of a horse wagon and some other things. The volunteer firemen number 20.

The sewerage system of Hot Springs was installed about eight years ago at the cost of \$10,000. The telephone system is operated by the Spring Creek Telephone Company and the American Telephone and Telegraph Company.

J. D. Hensley is now acting Mayor of Hot Springs. He is serving in place of Roy Plemmons, who resigned a few weeks ago to devote more attention to private business. Mr. Plemmons was perhaps the youngest mayor in North Carolina, being only 25 years old. Besides the mayor there are three aldermen: D. B. Duckett, Julius Pike, and Sam Alman.

The Dixie Highway passes through Hot Springs from Asheville to Knoxville. This Highway is through one of the finest scenic sections on the American continent. Asheville is 42 miles distant on this highway from Hot Springs.

A new road is now being built from Greenville, Tenn., through Hot Springs and up Spring Creek to Waynesville. The work is being done by the state. The Tennessee end is under construction and it is hoped that it will be completed in a year. The distance from the Tennessee Pike in Greenville, Tenn., to Waynesville is about 40 miles. The road has sand and gravel, which contains natural cement, thus giving a splendid road composition.

Madison officials have done considerable work on the roads of the county and there are now about 200 miles of improved roads in Madison. The county is keeping the roads in very good shape, and quite a bit of work has been done in relocating and improving old roads.

Hot Springs anticipates the paving of the main thoroughfare of the town next year. The pavement, which will be of asphalt, will cost about \$25,000; and will be put down by the state.

To the disciple of Isaac Walton, the news that Spring Creek, that runs by Hot Springs, is alive with California trout will be welcome. This statement is made on the authority of a resident of Hot Springs.

In regard to schools Hot Springs has the following: One free standard school of grammar grade. There are about 175 pupils.

The Dorland-Bell Private School is run by the Northern Presbyterian Board. There are about 175 girl pupils, and 60 boys, with 12 teachers. School opens about September 1, and lasts for nine months. The equipment includes a dormitory and a number of cottages. The investment represents about \$100,000 in all. The school has been located here for about 25 years. A few improvements, aggregating some \$10,000, are now under way.

The Madison County school board has about \$30,000 in the bank to build a high school building here. It will be of brick and will contain about 10 classrooms.

Work is expected to start in the near future.

Hot Springs has several good churches, including the Baptist, Southern Methodist, the Presbyterian, Episcopalian, and Roman Catholic.

The town is supplied by eight passenger trains each day by the Southern Railway. This Company is now conducting the final survey work between Asheville and Morristown, Tenn., for the building of a double track line. From Hot Springs to Marshall the double track will run on the western bank of the river. When the track is removed from the eastern side of the river it will mean that a new state highway will be opened up. Prospects are that the new railroad will go through sometime next year. The distance from here to Marshall is 16 miles.

United States Government airmen were here recently and made an airplane survey of the French Broad River. Photos were taken with a view to studying the possibilities of water power development along the French Broad. There is a drop of 714 feet in the River between Asheville and the Tennessee line, a distance of 43 miles. Water power is badly needed on account of the fact that the power that is now coming into Western North Carolina is supplied by power companies running in a circle around the mountains to the East. The development of the French Broad River would mean a short power line linking Chattanooga, Knoxville, Morristown, Greenville, Hot Springs, Marshall, Asheville and Charlotte, and would be several miles shorter than the lines now supplying this territory. Thus the power would be supplied at a cheaper price.

The United States Government national forest reservation of about 40,000 acres is close to Hot Springs, is now being developed. It is located in Magison County, N. C., Greene County, and Unicoi County, Tenn. Miles of trails are now being built. The expenditure will be around \$15,000. Some 20 men are employed. The trails each to the tops of many high peaks and will afford the tourists many opportunities for pleasure and recreation. Many of the peaks reach a height of five and six thousand feet.

Towers are being erected for observation purposes to guard the forests against fire. These towers will also be used for scenic purposes. From the tower on Rich Mountain, within four miles of Hot Springs, can be seen at night when electric lights are glowing, the following towns: Asheville, Hendersonville, Waynesville, Cahton, Black Mountain, Greenville, Tenn., Johnson City, Tenn., Newport, Tenn., Knoxville, Tenn., and other places.

Madison County has a variety of mineral deposits. Thousands of tons of limestone suitable for commercial use and hydrated lime and mineral salts are found in the County. Other minerals found are: barytes, used as a pigment for paint; iron ore and manganese, in scattered deposits; talc, garnet, and many other minerals. Silver Mine Branch in this County got its name from the Indians. The legend is that silver used to be mined on this branch, but no traces of the mineral have been found. The branch is east of Hot Springs, not far distant.

Hot Springs has one bank. It is the Citizens Bank with a capitalization and resources of \$85,000. The officers are: E. R. Tweed,

president; and W. T. Davis, cashier.

A number of new residences are now going up in Hot Springs. Jacob Peiffer, President of the Miller Tire and Rubber Company, of Akron, Ohio, recently purchased a plateau on the east side of town and expects soon to build a Summer mansion, which will cost about \$50,000. The plateau consists of about 10 acres.

W. R. Ellerson has just completed a large and handsome residence on an adjoining plateau. The house is on a tract of land 10 by 12 acres in extent.

This coming Summer, Ira Plemmons expects to build a 50-room hotel which will cost about \$60,000. A company will be organized and the citizenship of the town will be asked to take stock in the co-operation. The hotel will be located at the corner of Spring and Bridge Street. It will be two stories high and made of brick. The building will be so constructed as to allow for such additions as the growth of the town may justify. The hotel will be for both commercial guests and tourists. Water and bath will be supplied in every room. Mr. Plemmons is one of the outstanding business men of Hot Springs. The business he is now engaged in with his father and son was started in 1895 on a capital of \$85. An indication of the growth of the business is the fact that this year taxes to the extent of \$1,000 were paid.

P. S. Harkins and C. D. Balch have begun shipping asphalt sand and concrete sand and gravel. Work started about ten days ago, and some 10 men are now employed. The plant is equipped to ship five cars a day, and the investment is about \$5,000. The material is secured about two miles north of Hot Springs, where there are some 2000,000 yards of material on 36 acres of land. The land was recently purchased.

A Surprise Party

A very pleasant surprise party was enjoyed at the home of Miss Irma Henderson on Saturday evening July 25. Refreshments were served and music and games were indulged in until a late hour. Among those present were:

Misses, Irene Linkous, Lula Chandler, Rachel Dockery, Bertie Fortner, Lillie Drummeller, Lucy Fortner, Martha Ramsey, Jessie Lee Chandler, Sallie Henderson, and Virginia McClure. Messers, Charley Martin, Tom Fortner, Bates Henderson, Walter Davis, Andrew Ailen, Ernest Ramsey, Elmer Davis, Otto McDevitt, and Albert Fortner.

Still Captured

A still was captured on Meadow Fork by Mr. W. C. Coward Deputy Sheriff, and Mr. Ed Ebbs. This gives great relief to the citizens of Meadow Fork.

It was about 150 yards from the public road on the Patton Cabin branch.

ERROR

Through error Mr. W. C. Metcalf's land was advertised. His tax had been paid.