

In 1775 hospital, 'miracle cure' was grim

More odds and ends:

■ The first public hospital in upper South Carolina was built in western York County by a Presbyterian minister, Dr. Joseph Alexander. In 1775, Alexander built a log cabin near his church (Bullocks Creek Presbyterian) as a result of a smallpox epidemic.

Louise Pettus



NEARBY HISTORY

Alexander, who was a school-teacher as well as a minister, inoculated his patients and kept them in the cabin until they recovered. All the patients survived, but the inoculation made them very

sick.

This was 21 years before Edward Jenner performed his method of inoculation, though Jenner had presented his theory of inoculation the same year that Alexander first practiced it. Jenner's method produced a purer vaccine that was more effective and was used until smallpox was vanquished in 1980.

■ In 1908, the first airplane to appear in York County landed in a field where Winthrop's Joynes Hall is now located. The Curtis-Wright bi-plane was constructed of bamboo.

■ Capt. J.W. Marshall, a livery stable and livestock company owner, acquired a Standard Oil

agency in Rock Hill in 1896. Kerosene, which was chiefly used in lamps and lanterns, was reddish-brown in color. Later, refineries were able to take out more of the impurities and kerosene became colorless. However, people believed that the colored kerosene was more powerful and resisted buying the clear product. Captain Marshall put artificial coloring in it to satisfy his customers.

Marshall also sold gasoline, which was shipped on the railroad from Baltimore in 110-gallon wooden drums. He sold four drums a year until about 1900. Sometime around 1917 he put up the first "drive-in" gas station in Rock Hill. About that time, because of World War I, gasoline sold for 36 cents a gallon, an all-time high until the gas crisis of 1973.

■ Hanging Rock is an interesting rock formation in lower Lancaster county below Heath Springs. In the 1850s the spot was noted as a "watering place," or resort. James M. Ingram was owner of the site and put up the "bathe houses" for the public.

An ad in the Lancaster Ledger, May 27, 1857, stated that the mineral springs would be open on July 1 and would be served by a stagecoach that came up from Camden (27 miles south) on Monday, Wednesday and Friday and came down from Lancaster (11 miles north) on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday.

Ingram announced that "Mr. Wm. Barton & Lady will spare no pains to render Visitors comfortable. . . . The fare will be satisfactory — the best that the market affords."

More importantly, "The properties of the water are Sulphur, Magnesia and Tincture of Iron, and have in many cases afforded great relief and effected permanent cures to the affected."

■ There was a hanging in Lancaster in early September 1857. Charley Boatwright had murdered Charles T. Evans and been found guilty. A few days before the hanging, Boatwright requested that he be baptized.

The Rev. Thomas Davis of the Episcopal Church heard Boatwright's confession and administered the sacraments.

Boatwright believed that "drink and bad company" had caused him to murder Evans. He wished Davis would walk with him to the gallows and asked him to warn those present about the effects of alcohol. The Lancaster Ledger reported that "A very large concourse of people were present."

In those days it was not unusual for almost everyone in traveling distance — men, women and children — to attend hangings.

Louise Pettus is a history professor retired from Winthrop University. Her column appears Saturdays.