

Healing Springs

by Gwen Thurmond

In the fall of 2000, I visited the springs known for hundreds of years for their healing powers. The surrounding vegetation was thick and the atmosphere serene. The serenity broken only by the steady flow of traffic, with people from as far away as New York filling large containers to carry back home.

*Do these
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The Indians believed in the healing powers of the springs. And through the years there are those who claim to have had experiences with or from the water's healing power. Historical records and legend date **Healing Springs** back to 1770 when Irish trader Nathaniel Walker spotted an old Indian chief washing his face with water spouting from a hole in the ground. Through intimidation, Walker learned from the



For hundreds of years, the clear, cool waters of Healing Springs have been thought to bring comfort and health.

Watercolor courtesy of Thoroughbred Country.

chief that the springs were considered sacred and that the Indians only bathed in the waters for healing when they were sick or hurt. Walker acquired the springs by bartering maize; a day later, the Indians left the area and never returned.

In 1781 during the American Revolu-

tion, British Lt. Col. Baluster Tarleton Brown, aka "The Butcher," sent a troop of 150 men under the command of William "Bloody Bill" Cunningham on a march from Charleston to Ninety Six to harass the Whigs. Another feared Tory, Col. Hezekiah Williams, joined them. During the march they happened upon Patriots camped near Healing Springs on Windy Hill Creek. A battle ensued killing all of the Patriots. Four mortally wounded British troops were left at Healing Springs to die. Two able-bodied men were left to care for them, with instructions to return to the British garrison in Charleston after the men were dead and buried. Six months later all of the men, including the wounded, rejoined the garrison in Charleston, an event that helped perpetuate the legend of the springs.

Do these artesian springs really have healing properties? While the truth may never be known, legend continues to draw

visitors from great distances in search of its medicinal properties. Today, if you ask the people in the small Blackville community, they can't say with certainty that the waters can heal, but they do say that they regard the place and the springs as special.

IF YOU GO ... Healing Springs – open daily, dawn to dusk. Directions: 3 miles north of Blackville off SC 3.