

THE FEELING OF REVERENCE: HEALING SPRINGS

Pipes Above Ground That Create A Fountain Of The Special Water That Flows Down And Is Believed To Have Healing Powers



There's almost a car there at every time of the day and night, some people having traveled over 100 miles to get there. And once they have collected their water, they leave. One hundred miles for water may seem crazy, but Healing Springs on God's Acre in Blackville, [South Carolina](#) is believed to have actual, authentic healing powers, backed up by folklore and first-hand accounts.

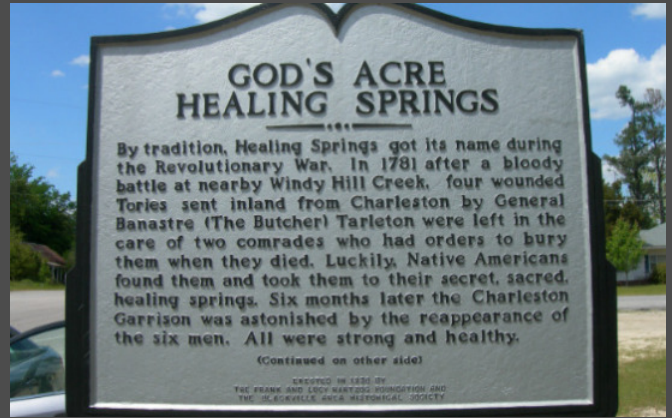
“You get a feeling of reverence that you just feel there,” said past president of the Blackville Historical Society Myrtle Quattlebaum. “Have you ever been to a place that has a different feeling about it? Healing Springs has that sort of feeling. Knowing that so many people have believed in its healing powers over the years, it just gives you an eery feeling.”

The Healing Springs aren't so much a hole in the ground, as many people may picture, but pipes above ground that create a fountain of the special water that flow down to a very shallow pool of water below. The springs have begun to dry up a bit in the past few years, making the fountain of water even more of a commodity for people who believe in its healing powers.

Surrounded by a peaceful forested area, dangling a foot in the steady stream of

water seems like an almost magical experience, giving people a sense of wonder and peacefulness that often can't be found elsewhere.

The lore of the Healing Springs began in the 1760s when Nathaniel Walker became the first white man to own the Healing Springs. When Walker settled just west of the Healing Springs he noticed Native Americans often going into the Healing Springs area.



According to a letter written by Quattlebaum's friend Stanley McDonald before his passing, "legend goes, he spotted an old Indian chief washing his face from water from a small hole in the ground. He learned the springs were considered sacred to the Indians and that the wounded and lame used its water." It's also legend that Walker traded for the Healing Springs, although Quattlebaum believes that, as a surveyor, Walker may have just purchased the land.

Around 1770, Walker formed his own church and became the first pastor. The church soon became known as the Healing Springs Baptist Church and it was believed by many that if you were Baptized by the Healing Springs "you'd never backslide," something that is still believed today.

The legend of the healing powers of the water continued during the Revolutionary War. The area of the Healing Springs was the location of a battle of great importance called the Battle Of Slaughter Field. The mortally wounded British troops had been left in the area to die in the aftermath of the battle, said McDonald's letter. The story – which is recorded – goes that the soldiers that were left to die later healed and returned.

So is the folklore true? Is the water at the Healing Springs that powerful? Said Quattlebaum: "I'm not going to say I do believe or I don't. But it's good, pure water. I developed lung cancer this past year. I had to have surgery. My son brings Healing Springs water to my house, which is a mile and a half from the house. We use it as drinking water. I'm not going to tell you it helped me to get better. But some people will tell you that."



Although quick to say she isn't sure about the Healing Springs' power, Quattlebaum – who has lived in the area for 84 years – has heard about the magic affects of the Healing Springs all her life. She said she recalled a man with a wound on his leg that just wouldn't heal (“a mule bit him, if you can imagine!”). He had been to the hospital and numerous doctors. Finally, he went to the Healing Springs several times a week, letting the water pour onto his leg. He gradually got well after bathing in the spring water.

“I can't tell you that the water is the reason,” said Quattlebaum. “But he believed it was.”

The powers of the Healing Springs may not be so farfetched. The water was analyzed throughout the years, including a study in the 1970s that revealed that the water contained numerous minerals, including magnesium, sodium, nitrium, silicon, titanium and zinc. An analysis done in Germany and England recorded that the water contained portions of sodium carbonate, sodium chloride and iron.

People from all over South Carolina and even the whole country cannot seem to get enough of the Healing Springs water. According to Quattlebaum there are even people visiting at midnight, collecting water. Many people bring trucks with them, filling entire truck-beds of milk jugs with the special water, using it for bathing and for tea.

“Many, many people still believe that the water is healing,” said Quattlebaum. “It's just a spot of interest. It's something a little bit different. You don't see it every day. They keep disappearing over time. Because of our carelessness and not taking care of the environment and what we have... I think there is value in a place like this.”



A graduate of East Connecticut State University in Journalism, Olivia has written for Stonebridge Press & Antiques Market place among others. She enjoys writing, running and video games.



[Barnwell State Park](#), a community favorite among the residents of Blackville, South Carolina. One of 16 state parks built by the Civilian Conservation Corps during the Great Depression, Barnwell is best known for its great fishing spots.