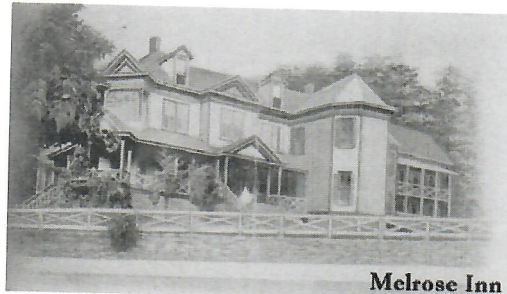


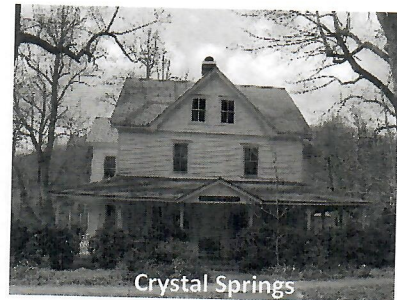
History of Crystal Springs in Saluda NC as told by Myra Ashley



Charles Estes, my great-great Grandfather, came up from Augusta, Ga. to escape the Georgia heat in the summer of 1899 at the age of 80. He vacationed at the Melrose Inn, a prominent hotel. His stay was so pleasant that he returned the following summer, and his interest was aroused to the extent that he decided to become a part of the growing community. In a short while he had purchased a great deal of property and real estate and had made plans for improving and developing this. However, Charles Estes never actually lived in Saluda, he just purchased property there to develop.



Melrose Inn



Crystal Springs

On his newly purchased land across Henderson Street from the Melrose Inn were some springs whose crystal-clear water fed the creek that flowed along Main Street, and ultimately formed the headwaters of the Pacolet River. Hence the name – Crystal Springs. Chemical analysis of the water showed it contains the same elements as the famous Poland Springs of Maine. On this site he built Crystal Springs Boarding House. A practical and innovative gentleman, he realized the clear, cool waters could be turned to his advantage to provide running water for both his boarding house and the Melrose Inn, the first buildings to have indoor running water in Saluda.

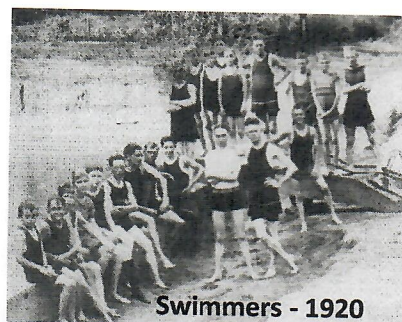
A ram was installed near the source of the springs, and the water welled up into the mechanism. Once it reached a certain pressure, it was released in a gush of water flowing through crude wooden lines to a tower at the Melrose inn, where it was then gravity-fed to the two hotels and several cottages and nearby homes.

Crystal Springs was operated by Mrs. H.P. Lane from 1901 to 1908. When Charles Estes died March 25, 1917 at the age of 98, all of his properties in Saluda were divided among his three daughters. Only one of the daughters stayed in Saluda - my great Grandmother Augusta Georgia Estes Coates. She bought the other two daughters' property from them, and both lived in and managed the Crystal Springs boarding house.

Behind Crystal Springs to the left of the drive way there are two rock columns that Augusta deeded to the city of Saluda. The city used this for a flushing system. The water was dammed up, and when full was released to flush out all the outhouses, since the creek ran under all the buildings of the town of Saluda. Around 1912, Saluda built a city water system and the deed went back to Crystal Springs. When water became generally available through the city-wide system that was fed by the reservoir at the top of Greenville Street, Augusta had a concrete dam built across the creek flowing from the spring a little farther up the hill to create a swimming pool. Many of the residents of Saluda learned to swim in "Ye Olde Swimming Hole".



Building the Pond - 1912



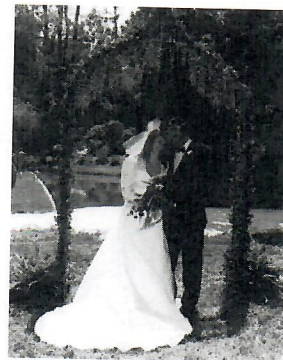
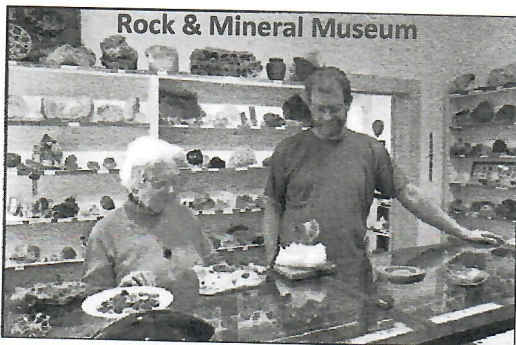
Swimmers - 1920

After Augusta's death on August 13, 1943 at the age of 81 her daughter, my great-aunt Mary Coates Haffenden, inherited Crystal Springs. Sometime after in the 1940's aunt Mary and her husband, Lieutenant Commander Charles Radcliffe Haffenden, changed Crystal Springs from a boarding house into four apartments. My mom and dad, Martha Coates Ashley and Allen Rhoads Ashley, lived in one of the apartments for a while when they first got married in 1951.



Allen & Martha Ashley

In 1965 Martha and Allen purchased Crystal Springs from my great-aunt Mary as a private residence and lived there with their 3 children - Eric, Becky and Myra. Allen and his father, William Crawford Ashley (aka "The Old Prospector") had been collecting rocks and minerals since the 1940's, which became the famous Polk County Rock and Mineral Museum in downtown Saluda. It closed in 1973, and the boxed collection was stored under Crystal Springs for 25 years – finally being restored to its former glory in three upstairs rooms of the home. Our family made many fond memories of gatherings, celebrations, reunions, and just day-to-day living at Crystal Springs and the pond – many of which would end in rocking chairs on the back porch gazing out over the beautifully landscaped property. I married my husband, Datis Cole, Jr., in a fairy-tale ceremony held at the pond, with the Azaleas in full bloom. Allen Ashley passed away on May 13, 2008 at the age of 80, and Martha Ashley lived in Crystal Springs until her death at age 93 on October 15, 2021.



Martha's three children - Eric Ashley, Becky Shropshire and Myra Ashley, have inherited the property. One of Martha's last requests was that nothing would ever be built above the pond. Her wish was to preserve Nature and the springs, and for future families to always be able to enjoy the pond. We hope the next owners will love and cherish the property as much as our family did.

