

LETTER FROM BEERSHEBA.

BEERSHEBA SPRINGS, Aug. 9th, 1858.

DEAR BANNER: I promised you some historical reminiscences of this delightful Mountain retreat, now so signally attracting the attention of the people of the South. As most if not all your readers are aware, we are on the plateau of the Cumberland Mountain, in Grundy county, only five miles from Altamont, the county seat. Our altitude is said to be about seventeen hundred feet above the sea level, and about twelve to thirteen hundred above your city.

The tract of land upon which we are located originally contained 1150 acres, and was granted by the State in 1833 to Wm. Dugan, Esq., who now resides at the foot of the mountain. The Chalybeate Spring, whose water first attracted attention to the place, was discovered on the 1st day of August, 1833, by Mrs. Beersheba Porter Cain, an intelligent lady who still resides at Dan, about a mile West of here. Mrs. Cain was on a Mountain ride in company with the late Dr. Wm. P. Lawrence, of your city, his daughter Minerva, and a young gentleman of Nashville, Mr. Richard Hays. Though the contrary has been asserted, it is now generally conceded that this was the first knowledge to the civilized world of this spring and its peculiar properties, and it was from this discovery it received the name of **Beersheba**. The fact is strongly confirmed by the statement that when discovered there was but a slight dampness visible in the surrounding soil, and the party were obliged to develop the water by removing the leaves and dirt with their hands. The discoverer immediately employed Mr. Dugan to erect a cabin for her accommodation, which she located where the hotel now stands, and which she made her summer residence up to 1837. The year previous, 1836, the first public accommodations were offered at the Springs, by Stewart & Goodloe, who bought the tract from Mr. Dugan.— They subsequently sold out to Geo. S. Smartt, Esq., of McMinnville. The first stage, and from all accounts the first vehicle of any kind, that ascended the mountain, was in 1836, the opinion having always before prevailed that it was inaccessible except on foot or on horseback. Among the first visitors in 1836, was Moses G. Reeves, Esq., of Rutherford county, who, with his family, is now among our guests, and to whom I am indebted for these items of history. In those olden times the cabins were constructed of unhewn logs, the dining room was an open shed made of forks and boards, with a natural free-soil floor.

From 1836 to 1854 the Springs passed through various vicissitudes under many different proprietors. The natural attractions of the place always drew a crowd, and, during the last season, under Mr. Roberts, from whom the present proprietor purchased, there was a large and gay assembly. Col. JOHN ARMFIELD purchased the property in 1854 for a summer residence, but was subsequently induced to improve it for the accommodation of the public. It was believed that the location of the place, its contiguity to the Southern States, and its advantages of fine air and water, would combine to make it the great point of concentration for the Southern people during the summer months. The want of such a place has long been severely felt! Migration from the Southern States is not only a fashion but a necessity during the warm season. The habit of our people of spending their money in the Northern States is not so much a matter of choice; they are bound to go somewhere, and, if suitable resorts are not to be found in their own section, of course, they must seek them elsewhere. The present proprietor of **Beersheba** is a gentleman of independent fortune, and had no motives of pecuniary gain to prompt him to undertake an enterprise of the kind—requiring years of labor and large expenditures. He undertook it, however, from motives patriotic and benevolent. Having himself experienced the salutary effects of a summer on the mountain, he naturally felt anxious that his many friends in the South should have a taste of its revivifying atmosphere. Seeing that nature had done her part nobly towards the establishment of a watering place in the South, he determined that the balance should not be wanting.

The results of his liberal expenditures in the last four years constitute the main artificial attractions of the place.

But my letter is already too long, and I must reserve for the future some allusions to the various improvements which have sprung into existence on the mountain in the last four years.

In the meantime, I remain yours,