Natural cure-alls were the rage in the late 1800's, and Adair County was no exception.

In 1881, George Shaw, along with his wife Ann, founded New Baden Springs Health Resort. On November 25, 1881, Thomas J. Dockery surveyed and platted the town of "New Baden" for the Shaws. Soon after, construction was begun on a hotel and springhouse near the center of the town. The town was to be located a few miles southwest of current day Midland off the end of what is now Highway DD. The building of the hotel and platting of the town were part of an attempt to build up business for the health resort. Lots of land, 54 feet by 108 feet, were sold at $50 per lot. The town was laid out into lots and blocks, with such street names as Grant, Spring, and Hotel. It is not known how the names New Baden and New Baden Springs came to be, but it is presumed that the Shaws were responsible. It is also presumed that it was named after the famous health spa in Baden, Germany. At any rate, the resort began to prosper and, although it was some 14 miles from Kirksville, many townspeople flocked to the springs by horse and buggy to "take the waters." The waters that bubbled up in the springhouse were supposed to have healing powers.

A number of articles appeared in the Kirksville Weekly Graphic beginning on May 19, 1882, attesting to the curative powers of the New Baden spring waters. These waters were said to have cured everything from kidney disease to tuberculosis. After the spring water surfaced, it was piped into outdoor tubs south of the springs. It was then heated for the people to bathe in. The springs put out a constant two gallons of water per minute even in the driest weather and slightly more during rainy seasons due to runoff. Several other smaller springs surfaced in the area, which suggests that there is a sizable underground river system in the area. An interesting sidelight is that during the 1930's the springs were tested for mineral content and were found to have about the same content as Hot Springs, Arkansas, a world renowned health resort. As the resort expanded, the town of New Baden was slowly beginning to grow, too. The hotel was a unique structure in itself. It was a three-story, wooden building built on a flat area at the base of the north side of the hill opposite the springs. The hotel was built into the hill so that a person could step from the third story onto the ground at the back of the hotel.

In February of 1882, George Shaw sold a lot to Edward L. Loso. Mr. Loso built and established a general store on the property, west of the hotel and just southeast of the springs. The store did a fair amount of business and in September,
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1882, a post office was established in a portion of the store. The post office was appropriately named *Resort* and operated until September 13, 1884. However, Mr. Loso was not the only postmaster. William Blakely was the second and last postmaster beginning in March of 1884. Another store at New Baden was run by R.O. Dimmett and later by T. Johnson. A saloon, which changed hands frequently, was also located in town. In February, 1883, it was owned by S. Hammond, rented by P.H. Bozarth, and operated by C. Jennings. A blacksmith's shop could also be found in New Baden after April, 1883.

New Baden was not without religion. A Methodist church was established in New Baden close to the time of the founding of the hotel. The church was a two-story, wooden structure and was located where the Loren Schillie residence is now. This church has been referred to in many documents as the "Methodist Episcopal Church of New Baden." The last trustees of the church were John Stone, D.D. Novinger, and J.B. Hammons.

In the late 1880's a temperance (alcohol prohibition) meeting was held at the hotel in New Baden. This meeting was said to have been quite a gala event, with some 1,500 to 2,000 people from across the area attending. The meeting could be viewed as the last big fling for New Baden, for shortly afterwards, around 1890, the hotel caught fire and was destroyed. After the hotel burned, the town, which had already begun to fade, died. The stores were closed and the saloon was only rarely opened, and then only to accommodate dances.

But this was not the end of New Baden Springs. The businesses were gone, true, but picnics and outings were still held around the springs. In 1901 Charles Schillie purchased most of the land around the spring. He converted the church into a home and lived in it until 1914 when a new home was built at the same location. Mr. Schillie also built the present brick structure that covers the springs. He constructed the springhouse so that one spring comes into the springhouse from the east and the other enters from the northwest. Each spring empties into a separate reservoir. The water in the northwest reservoir is used as the water supply of the Schillie residence. It is an interesting coincidence that Charles Schillie's parents both came from Baden, Germany.

An attempt was made to sell water from the springs by advertising on a Quincy, Illinois, radio station. Several hundred gallons of the spring water were sold, however, the mineral water failed to really catch on.

The hotel, the saloon, and businesses are all gone now from New Baden. Loren Schillie has a small farm there, the springhouse is still there, and the old Baden Springs cemetery is at the top of the hill. The springs are still flowing with their mineral water, of course, waiting for the day when an enterprising businessman will again sell the healing waters. Only time will tell.

*Photo at top left shows the outside view of the spring house. The photo at bottom left shows the interior of the springhouse, notice the water reservoir in the corner.*