

1) Surroundings of Baldone health treatment spring in 1795. This spring lies some miles from Riga – at Baldone manor in Kurzeme in a pleasant place. Nearby the Ķekava River is running. The healing qualities of it (the spring) have been found out just recently and now it is frequently attended. The spring is running invariably, in winter it simmers and never freezes. In summer it is very cold. Its water is clear and without colour, its smell is sulphuric and resembles rotten eggs. At Bārbele 5 1/2 miles from Baldone and 10 miles from Riga there is a similar spring. See. Dr. Ekhof's "Beschreibung des Baldonschen und Barbenschen Mineralwassers nebst einer Anweisung zum innerlichen und äußerlichen Gebrauch", issued in Jelgava, 1795, in the 1/8 leaf format, 64 pages. Explanations. The healing qualities of Baldone springs have been known for more than 500 years. Initially they were discovered by Latvian peasants. Cows also appreciated the water as they "drunk it as if they were crazy". In the 15th century the ruling elite of Livonia started paying attention to the healing qualities of the water. This is suggested by the 15th century coins found in the spring thrown there by the healed people. The consideration of establishing a resort in Baldone started in the 18th century by Kurzeme Duke E. J. Bīrons during the first period of his rule (1737 – 1740), however, his intentions were not implemented due to his fall in disfavour after the death of tsarina Anna Ivanovna. The fame of Baldone mineral water spread in the Duchy of Kurzeme and abroad. In 1780 the Governor General of Baltics was taking soldiers for treatment to Baldone. G. F. Stenders in his "Book of Supreme Wisdom" published in 1774 was praising Bārbele and Baldone healing springs and commented that it was a pity that no doctors lived at it, nor there was a place where the guests could be properly treated and received better catering for their own money. Scientific studies of the water started only after establishing Jelgava Peter's Academy by its well-known professor J. J. Ferbers in 1784 and the Duke's doctor J. H. Ekhofs. In 1795, right after of acceding Kurzeme to Russia the lessee of Baldone estate Heinrihs Gothards Korfs received a permission from tsarina Catherine II to create a bathing institution in Baldone and started constructing the building necessary for the resort and arranging a park. The Korfs family held the renting right of this property which belonged to the Crown, until World War I, although in this connection they had several court proceedings against the real estate administration institutions of the Crown. The rent of the Crown's estate passed to the Līvens family. In Baldone a resort was opened in 1797 when a doctor settled here. Wealthy persons from the Baltic cities and countryside - squires, merchants, civil servants to whom doctors had recommended salt therapy started coming to the resort. It is interesting to note that in 1799 a group of former Russian courtier assembled in Baldone who were banished from court by tsar Pavel I and were later involved in a plot against the tsar. At that time over a season there were more than 100 visitors to the sulphuric springs. Later their number grew even more. The popularity of Baldone decreased in the middle of the 19th century, especially in the second half of it when Ķemeri resort was rapidly developing and was linked to Riga with a railway (starting from year 1877). J. K. Broce. *Zīmējumi un apraksti. Latvijas mazās pilsētas un lauki*. Red. T. Zeids, R. Brambe, G. Straube. Zinātne, 2002. 81.-82.lpp.

2) It is reported that Baldone is the sunniest place in Latvia (may be that is the reason why an astronomical observatory has been created here?). Moreover, here the oldest resort in Baltics provides its services (according to several evidences – already since year 1795). In literature there are even news that already in 1477 and following years for treatment sessions Riga noblemen and the Master of Livonian Order had arranged a recreation place for himself. During Duke Jēkabs' rule when the demand for metal increased, the first workshops for processing and melting bog ore were created. This

place name has been preserved until now. In 1780 Riga garrison faced the “black death” – plague, the ill persons were sent to Baldone where a camp developed and many of them indeed recovered with the help of the magic sulphuric water. This case brought the fame of the spring so far that even Katrina II wanted to arrange a treatment place not worse than in “europas”, however, there was a ... lack of money. Only in 1795 baron Korfs, excited about the recovery of his ill brother who was suffering from rheumatism, had achieved the opening of a bathing institution. Already after four years Dr. Sīmanis published in a thick volume on the chemical contents and the significance of various components of Baldone sulphuric water at the time when even many famous foreign treatment springs did not have scientific description. The fame of Baldone and Mr.Korfs’ shop were flourishing and only in the railway line opened in 1877 from Riga to Ķemeri reoriented the target audience thus decreasing the significance of Baldone. Until World War II it was a quiet resort town with neat summer cottages and a bathing institution which was excellently arranged for its time. Currently the Ķekaviņa River has overgrown with aspen trees and littered with stumps and scraps, however, at that time various more or less richer entertainment boats ran along the river with Rīga gentle ladies under sunshades Bustle, noise and disorder in Baldone started during the last war: the armies changed each other, blowing the area up and trodding it. The years of building the new future came with greyness and rash. Although the resort had the honour of a district centre (with borders from Ķekava to Jaunjelgava, Zālite, Iecava, Stelpe and Skaistkalne), more or less considerate planning of new buildings was possible only during the very last years as up to that the sewage treatment issue had not been solved. Baldone experienced Hruscov and Breznev’s rule, the territory was divided, the district idea did not justify itself, Baldone remained alone and without anything – with a status of a town-village, grey as a walk-through yard because the “fathers” and “godfathers” in the government by promoting the unshattered friendship of people with the help of a resort of the Soviet Union significance shattered the natural development of Baldone for a long time: all funds were devoured by the sanatorium, while its unselective guests consumed everything that was eatable and non-eatable in the surroundings. Now it seems that a balance is developing. Although there is a huge amount of problems, Baldone is gradually starting to resemble itself, i.e., Europe and a town that is more appropriate to the Latvian mentality (previous year it was awarded the town status). The town council has become more active (which makes sense because the increase in its decision-making powers), the mindset of the most energetic inhabitants of the town have been ignited: one is about to open his own shop, another one – a filling station, maybe somebody becomes brave enough to arrange golf courts or, who knows, an air-balloon site... . However, first of all, something still different is necessary – the small details like cleanness and neatness, organized infrastructure and the willingness to achieve that. Nature has provided Baldone with everything: forests and lakes, rivers, meadows, clean air and healing mud, “the water of life” and maximum of the sun. Just a trifle remains up to inhabitants themselves.