

Stanback, Thomas Melville ^[1]

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by William S. Powell, 1994

8 Sept. 1884–21 June 1982

See also: [Headache Powders](#) ^[2]; [Headache Powder](#) ^[3]

Thomas Melville Stanback, pharmacist, was born in Byhalia, Miss., the son of Charles and Della Ingram Stanback. His parents had moved from [Richmond County](#) ^[4], N.C., a few years before his birth and returned when he was two years old. He attended Trinity High School in Durham and was graduated in 1905 from the University College of Medicine in Richmond, Va., with a degree in pharmacy.

After working successively in drugstores at Mount Gilead, [Durham](#) ^[5], and Thomasville, he settled in 1911 at [Spence](#) ^[6], where he managed the Rowan Drug Company. He bought shares in the company and in time became owner. In 1910 he had developed a headache powder that he first sold from the Thomasville drugstore. Concluding that manufacturing the powder in quantity and marketing it was too difficult for one man, he formed a partnership with his brother, Fred J., in 1924. Thereafter Fred Stanback called on drugstores to sell the remedy and Thomas remained at home to attend to the manufacturing. This venture proved successful, and soon Stanback [Headache Powders](#) ^[2] were being widely sold. The business grew and in 1932 moved from Spence to larger quarters in nearby Salisbury. Additional products, including a lip balm and breath freshener, were manufactured, but headache powders, sold largely throughout the South, were the mainstays of the firm, which remained family owned and operated.

Stanback supported many local projects including a hospital and library, the [YMCA](#) ^[7], an art gallery, a community theater, and a symphony orchestra. He also provided loan funds for local and regional colleges.

In 1916 he married Ada May Middleton, of Warsaw, N.C., who had been teaching in Spence. They became the parents of two sons, Thomas Melville, Jr., and William Charles. A member of the [Methodist church](#) ^[8], he was buried in Rowan Memorial Park, Salisbury.

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Additional Resources:

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