

INDIAN HOT SPRINGS AT EDEN

I treasure my memories of the hot springs. I went year after year with my parents to the Elk's picnic when it was held there and my last visit was on senior ditch day in 1966. In all these visits, I never entered the grand hotel that was lost to a fire in 2008 and I regret that deeply. It was simply not important to me at the time.

The "Jewel in the Desert," as it has often been called and consisting of the hot streaming springs, was known to the native Americans that used the healing relief from pain of the hot springs provided for many years before the white man arrived in the valley. It was in the late 1870s and early 1880s when it became commercial property and the streams were diverted into pools by Ben Gardner. The soldiers of Ft. Thomas often frequented the springs and relaxed around tents between the dips in the ponds.

It was not until the construction of the Gila Valley, Globe and the Northern Railway in 1895 and beyond that the venture became prosperous. People were transported from the train station in Pima by stage to the location.

In 1903, construction was completed on the beautiful hotel consisting of three stories. It replaced the tent cottages. The famous or infamous killer Jerry Barton, in declining health, was offered room and board to live there and sit on the porch telling of his many exploits in his halting and stuttering voice. Jerry was an attraction that many came to see and hear.

Jerry died the year before the largest swimming pool in Arizona was built at the Hot Springs in 1905. It was 255 feet by 70 feet. It was enlarged and cemented in 1916. It had 1.5 million gallons of daily flow into pools, tubs and mud baths at four different temperatures.

There was a gold fish pond where young couples could rent a boat and court under the moon. Many young men proposed there and many young women swooned by the dimly lit kerosene lamps.

It was in 1966 that the health department closed the pool, deciding that the water not being chlorinated was unsafe and could not be used for swimming. We wonder what about Roper Lake and other places providing swimming?

The property changed hands many times and was once owned by a group including Mick Jagger of the "Rolling Stones." It was a nudist colony populated by "hippies" in the 1970s and 1980. After that it became a retreat for the environmental group "Earth First" and a group called "Ruckus." During this time, in 2002, a murder-suicide occurred when a man providing colonic hydrotherapy irrigation, killed his partner and then committed suicide when he could not escape.

Over the years many of us have had wonderful experiences at the springs and without a doubt, most of us would like to see it prosper once again.

Pictures follow of the Hotel, the swimming pool and the gold fish pond as well as a Beauty Spring Wheel located at Indian Hot Springs.

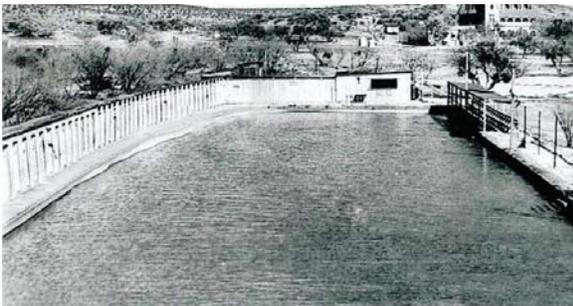
This article was written and submitted by Dan Haralson, along with the following photos.



Indian Hot Springs Hotel built in 1903



Beauty Spring Wheel at Hot Springs



Hot Springs 255 by 70 foot swimming pool



Hot Springs Gold Fish Pond