
PATCHWORK

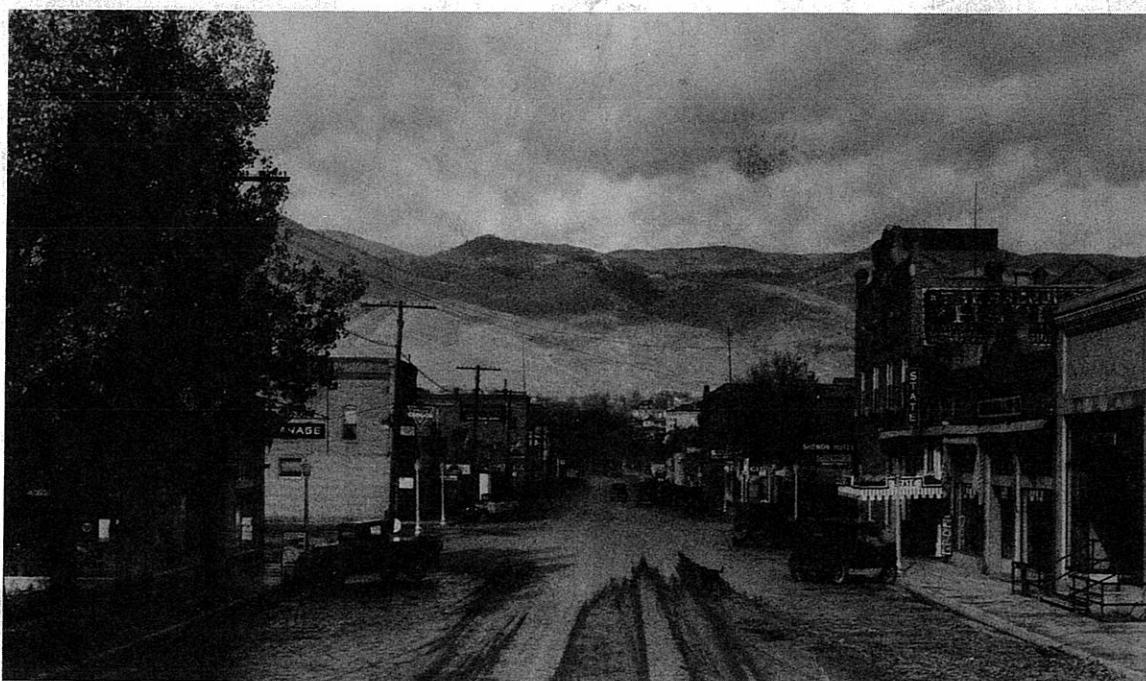
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Pieces Of Local History

MAY 1989



MAIN STREET, SALMON, Idaho. Date: pre-1910. (Forest Service photo).



MAIN STREET, SALMON, Idaho. Date: around 1930. (Lowell Brough photo).

OCT - 7 2008



SALMON HIGH SCHOOL Patchwork class, 1988-1989. Front row, from left: Justin Kohl, Nate Taylor, Melissa Jensen, Melissa Furness, Bill Heffner, Christina Stephenson, Angela Hobbs, Laura Groll. Back row: Jeremy Jenkins, Darci Erickson, Kellie Fraser, Suzette Stenersen, Susie Bennett, Kimberly Hatch, Tina Buster, Melanie Scoble, Tammy Bowen, Kimberly Hogan, Terry Magoon (Instructor). Missing: Michael Crosby (Instructor).

Patchwork: Pieces of Local History is produced by Salmon High School's Patchwork class. We worked hard to write well and in-depth and to support our articles with photographs and other visuals. Some of our information is probably inaccurate or less than complete, either because our sources gave it to us that way or because we made mistakes. We apologize for those problems. We'd appreciate any corrections or additional information our readers might have. This 1989 issue is the fourth yearly attempt to put on paper the stories of Lemhi County. We hope you'll enjoy them.

Patchwork: Pieces of Local History

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PATCHWORK
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Salmon Hot Springs

Salmon Hot Springs in early April 1899 consisted of land, some decrepit buildings, and the hot springs that lay its significant value.

The land amounted to just under 320 acres in two separate parcels that lay in one corner. The elevation ranged from about 4,500 feet, near the mouth of Hot Springs Road from the mouth to Pope Shenon Mine, to 5,400 feet, on the hill northeast of the buildings. The structure that housed the pools lay about 4,950 feet, surrounded by outlets of warm water.

Most of the acreage was hilly and of little worth as real estate. The few flat places didn't amount to much space. On the lower parcel were a couple flats, one holding an old, low-slung barn, the other used, presumably, for a hayfield.

On the upper parcel--the site of the hot springs itself--were a couple more flats. The buildings sat on the higher of the two; below was a slopy pasture with some wet places. The creek had eroded this pasture somewhat.

Clark Hereford Ranch was leasing the property as summer range for cattle.

Six or seven buildings were still standing: two abandoned log structures; one shed-roofed house; a fairly new garage/shop with an outhouse behind it; a cabin, lived in by a caretaker, made of two by fours stacked flat; and the building that used to be Salmon Hot Springs hotel and plunge.

A good sized swimming pool, supposedly twenty-eight by sixty-eight feet, held warm water (about eighty-six degrees fahrenheit). This pool, on the northwest side of the main building, was roofed but open on three sides. Not quite open: two layers of recently installed plastic enclosed it.

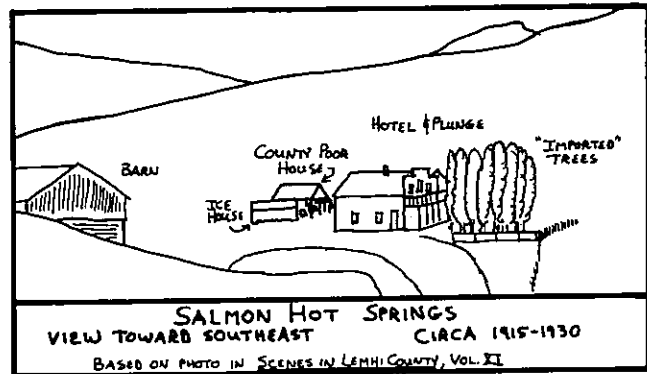
The pool was fed by water piped from the hot springs source, located very approximately a hundred yards northeast. The flow is substantial for a hot springs, but doesn't amount to much as a creek; on the Salmon quadrangle map (U.S. Geological Survey), Hot Springs Creek is represented by a line signifying an intermittent stream.

Not much was left, in early 1989, of what was once a showplace of Salmon. At its peak in the late 1930s, Salmon Hot Springs featured two pools: a large warm one for recreation and a small hot one for therapeutic soaking. It had a Spanish-style dining room, two dance halls (upstairs and down) and overnight accommodations for fifteen to thirty guests and staff. Two nearby structures housed the county poor, numbering as many as twenty to thirty men, elderly, destitute, without families. The hot

springs was, back then, a hotspot for the people of Salmon and Lemhi County.

But it's been kissed goodbye--the Salmon Hot Springs that had been a developed resort for almost as long as white men have lived in these mountains and valleys.

This is its obituary.



Legal claims on the hot springs are fairly well documented. Lemhi County Courthouse records show that Wentz and Finster filed a water right on "Warm Springs creek" on 28 September 1876. The water was "to be taken Out at The Source ... for Bathing and Irrigating purposes, and to be conveyed by ditch ... Said springs being about six (6) Miles South East from Salmon City [sic]" (Water Rights Book A, p. 157).

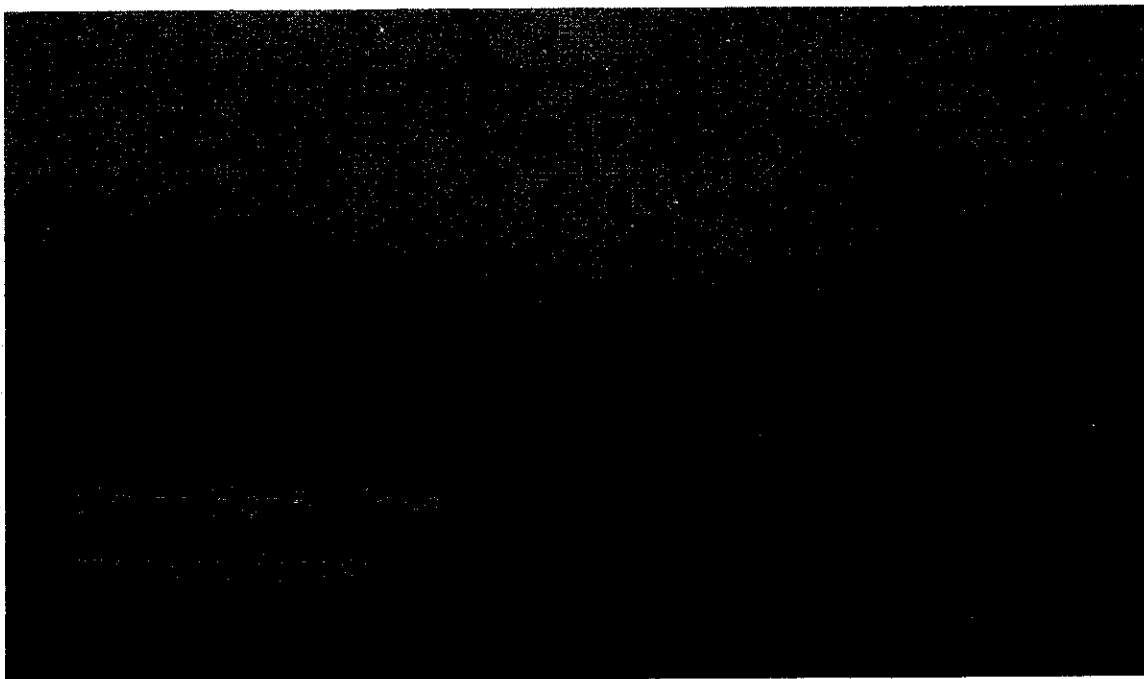
Salmon Hot Springs was called Andrews Hot Springs during the ownership of Thomas K. and Martha ("Aunt Matt") Andrews. By homestead right, Thomas was deeded 160.2 acres in "the South half of the North East quarter and the lots numbered one and two of section three in Township twenty North of Range twenty-two East" (Deed Record I, p. 151).

Aunt Matt said they lived there for fourteen and a half years--presumably until around 1899 or 1900--after which they sold it to A.J. Macnab (Martin, p. 18). Deed Record I, however, shows that Andrews sold the place to George L. Shoup (the former governor and then senator), Murdock M. McPherson, Alexander J. Macnab and William H. Shoup on 26 November 1896 for three thousand dollars (p. 152).

Those men in turn peddled it in 1899 to Henry H. Watson (Deed Record I, p. 153) who in 1901 sold it to Frederick Brough (Deed Record I, p. 154).

Frederick Brough was the father of Fred Brough, who owned the springs later.

Pearl Stroud was the daughter of Clarence Wayant, homesteader in 1915 of



COPY OF AN old postcard, date unknown; orchards, hayfield, and pasture are visible. (Lowell Brough Photo)

"would camp at the springs and bath [sic] and drink the waters as they traveled about the country" (Section 1, p. 6, 1961).

The springs, it went on to say, was also a "mule hospital." "Sore-backed pack mules were given a therapeutic benefit of the natural hot spring water along with liniment and other restorative treatment."

Another source on the subject is an article written by Eugene Conlee in his unpublished notebook collection entitled Scenes in Lemhi County, Volume XI (found in the Lemhi County Historical Museum). It too referred to the mules. He said, "In the eighteen seventies and eighties when the nearest railroad station was at Corinne, Utah all of the freight for the mines and the entire area had to be brought in by covered wagons or by pack strings of mules" (pages are unnumbered).

Conlee also mentioned Ez Orin, who lived at the springs in a log cabin and took care of the mules. Orin lived to be 102. Ironically, he died a resident of the county poor house at Salmon Hot Springs. Much of Conlee's information came from Pearl Stroud.

The Recorder-Herald article said that "Joseph Shirk located and made some improvements ... in 1885 and sold the squatter's rights to Tom Andrews who built a house and plunges." "Plunge," incidentally, meant pool, and was used in reference to Salmon Hot Springs throughout its history.

The Idaho Recorder on May 5, 1888 referred to the place as "Saratoga Springs" (presumably after the famous New York state spa). The springs was

said to be "about six miles south of this city." Chemically, the water had traces of "iron, soda, magnesia, and sulfur" (p.1).

The same story reported what may have been a rumor--or, at least, what hadn't been confirmed: "Joseph Shirk," it stated, "has bought out his partner, Thomas Andrews." It also claimed that Shirk and his wife would run it, offering "first class accommodations ... in the wonderful Springs ... [with its] curative powers."

A few weeks later the Recorder wrote that "A plunge bath sixteen feet square and five feet deep has just been finished" (30 May 1888, p. 3).

Also mentioned was the "new road," which was "a great improvement on the old one ... [with] no gates or bars to open and no ditches to cross." This is the road that went up around the cemetery, the one that served as the main road to the hot springs through at least the early 1930s.

In the spring of 1889, however, the Recorder published a bit of news saying that "Mr. and Mrs. Andrews are models of hospitality." It hyped the quality of the water by saying, "Dolph Davis ... [in] just four weeks ... is much improved by the treatment" of his rheumatism (28 March 1889).

Courthouse records establish Thomas Andrews as the first documented owner of the property.

The Andrews family received good publicity during their ownership of the hot springs.

An 1890 article in the Idaho Recorder said, "The new road to the Hot Springs via the cemetery bar is in good

condition, and this resort is open and ready for guests with Mrs. Thomas K. Andrews as hostess" (16 April, p. 3).

The "new road" ran along the east side of the valley, then through the foothills. The same article also boasted of "a new kind of pudding for dinner every Sunday".

The following week's paper included a bit about twenty-five guests having a "jolly party" and dinner. "This resort is becoming famous throughout the country for its healing waters as well as excellent cuisine" (Recorder, 23 April 1890, p. 5).

In August of the same year, a cloudburst was reported to have sent water through the kitchen and dining room, almost sweeping the house off its foundations (Recorder, 13 August 1890, p. 3).

The next year, similarly glowing descriptions showed up in the paper: the hot springs was "becoming more popular every year, and this season bids fair to surpass all previous ones." Andrews Hot Springs was "a first-class bathing resort" (Recorder, 8 July 1891, p. 3).

In 1892 mention was made of dancing at the hot springs "till sunup" (Recorder, 27 April, p. 3).

Walter Shoup, son of Governor Shoup, had an entry in his journal, dated 17 September 1892, saying, "I went horseback to-day across the hills to the Hot Springs and had a bath and dinner." He presumably rode over from the Shoup Ranch, near the mouth of Williams Creek.

During that same summer, a new newspaper started in Salmon. The Idaho Hydraulic Gold Miner was more promotional than factual in much of its coverage, especially about the prospects for mining and other business interests. This paper featured a front page article

headlined "Andrews Hot Springs," with a sub-head reading "A fine place for a bath, comfortable surroundings, the finest meals and good people to entertain you" (30 July 1892).

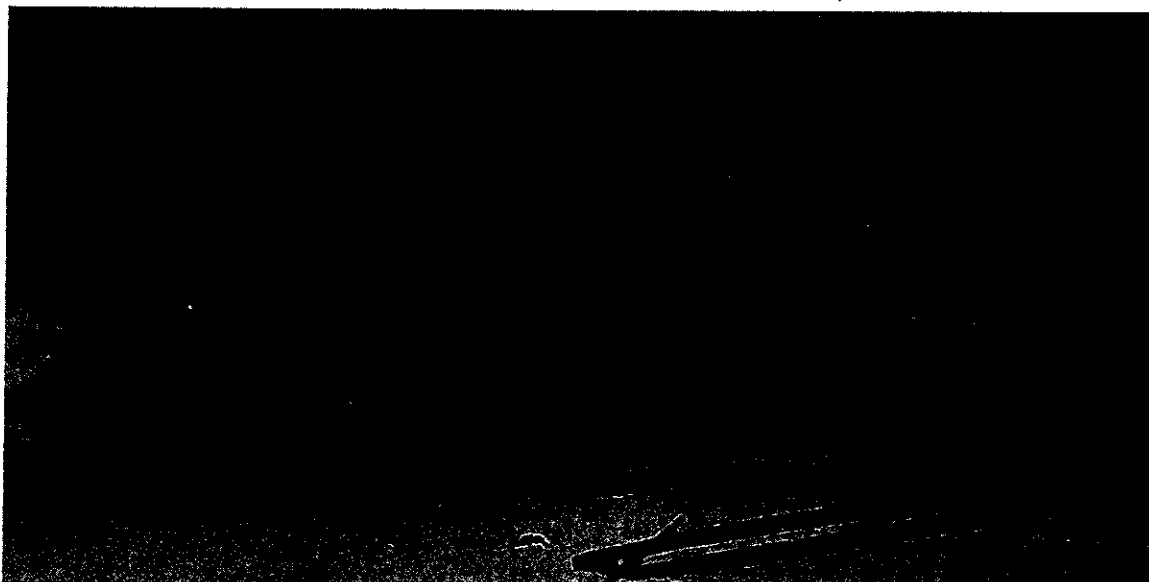
The springs was preparing for "big improvements." The article, calling it a "health resort," said that it had been "located about four years ago," meaning 1888. This conflicts with other information.

"The red light district was going then, and those women would come out."

The article proceeded: Andrews wanted to improve it, but the "material necessary is not available." He had, though, "recently built a new bath house ... for tubs exclusively, and where ladies can have the advantage of a private bath without going into the general plunge or swimming pool."

The Gold Miner description continued: "The building has six rooms with a good sized side room for a plunge, kept exclusively for private bathing." (This structure is probably the one which later housed the county poor.) Andrews had sent out several samples of the water for analysis but received no information about it.

The principal ingredients of the water (according to the article) included iron, soda, and potassium, with the first two stronger. It was, by implication, free of sulfur. (This contradicts information cited earlier, but in 1989 no smell of sulfur was evident.) The temperature at the spring itself was said to be 120 degrees, cooling to ninety-six to ninety-eight in the plunge. The water was "exceptionally



ICE ON SLEIGH at Salmon Hot Springs. Date is unknown but condition of barn roof is excellent and suggests the photo was taken soon after roof was put in. The original barn seems to have been expanded at a later time. (Lowell Brough Photo)

soft and pleasant to drink."

"The spring comes from a white sandstone strata between a granite and limestone formation.... On the opposite side of the gulch are fine cold springs ... conveniently situated," supplying the place with pure cool water.

The hotel was "at the foot of the mountains where there is always an exhilarating [sic] breeze." Lots of game meant good hunting.

It was generally agreed that the "curative qualities ... [were] valuable for rheumatism and all classes of chronic diseases."

The information in the previous several paragraphs came from that same article in the Hydraulic Gold Miner. Based on analysis of its writing, it was a publication whose primary purpose was to draw investors' money into the Salmon area. This kind of writing was no doubt common in mining areas during this period. Unlike The Idaho Recorder, however, the Gold Miner published mostly local "news" and put it on the front page.

"This resort is becoming famous throughout the country."

Conlee's Scenes in Lemhi County article said that Andrews sold the place to Watson in 1896, who then sold it to Frederick Brough in 1900.

That writer also said, "As soon as Mr. Brough bought it they had Snooks and Hughes contract to build a new building." This was almost certainly the original part of the main building still standing in 1989. It was known for a while as "Brough Hot Springs" (Instrument No. 17521).

The Recorder-Herald "Diamond Jubilee Issue" stated, "The place first received major improvements and was equipped as a health resort and hotel in 1902 when purchased by Fred Brough, sr. [sic]" (p. 6). As previously mentioned, however, courthouse records indicate Brough bought it in 1901.

Pearl Stroud, born in 1894, worked at the hot springs a couple different times during the approximate period from 1911 to 1915. The following information is based on two interviews with her this year.

Brough and his wife, Mary Alice Clowes Brough, had a rocky marriage and separated well before Pearl first worked there. Frederick left the place and took his older son Freddy (born about the same time as Pearl Stroud).

Pearl had heard about the couple's difficulties. "An old timer told me," she said, that when Mrs. Brough "'lived with old man Brough up there, ... she'd have a gun and she run him off and he'd walk to town. She'd dare him to turn

around.'

"And I said, 'Well, she wouldn't have ...,' and he said, 'Don't you bet on it. She would have shot him if he'd turned around.'"

Mrs. Brough stayed at the hot springs with younger son Burrell, who was probably born around 1897. At some time before Pearl went there, Mrs.

"'Don't you bet on it. She would have shot him if he'd turned around.'"

Brough remarried, this time to Vic Durand.

Pearl remembered the "county poor" who lived at the hot springs then. In the era before social security and other social welfare programs at the federal and state level, Lemhi County was responsible for its elderly, poor, and homeless--those without families to care for them. County poor were males, almost without exception, usually old miners, sheepherders, and so forth.

People with facilities for sheltering the county poor would submit a bid to the county commissioners, offering to take them in for so much per day or month: to house, feed, clothe, and do whatever else was necessary.

The number of county poor varied. Pearl remembered serving six in the dining room, but some were bedridden and ate in their rooms. County poor people didn't live in the hotel itself--they lived in a house to the east of the hotel. The county poor house was presumably the main structure from the Andrews era. It had a small plunge, wood lined, but wasn't used on a regular basis during Pearl's time.



THE BACK OF this photo reads: "Salmon Hot Springs. Fred J. Brough and horse that was sold to U.S. Calvary (sic) and Freddy saw the horse in France when the horse neighed to him." Ida Egge believed Fred himself wrote the note. (Lowell Brough Photo)



DAVID McNUTT SITTING on a stone boat at Salmon Hot Springs. Date unknown. (Lowell Brough Photo)

Most county poor would come to the hotel itself for meals and for bathing. Pearl spoke of Ez Orin, the original mule caretaker: "I remember old Ez.... He was awfully crippled up, and he walked with a cane. He'd take hold of my arm, and I'd help him to ... he always set at the head of the table."

Pearl also remembered Aunt Matt Andrews coming up once in a while on Sunday afternoons to socialize with Mrs. Durand and other ladies.

Another notable resident of the hot springs was David McNutt, a wealthy pioneer of Lemhi County. Shoup's History of Lemhi County indicated that McNutt and his partner Fred Phillips set up a store in Leesburg in the fall of 1866, the year of the discovery of gold there (p. 10).

McNutt reportedly made big bucks mining in the Moose Creek area and erected one of the original brick business buildings on Main Street in Salmon (most recently housing McPherson's clothing store). He had a ranch on Big Flat, and a ditch there is named McNutt Ditch.

Pearl Stroud had some memories of McNutt. He had one of the best rooms, a double with a balcony over the verandah and a beautiful southwest view with winter sun. "He paid for his [room and board, unlike the county poor].... He drank too much, and he was a great big fat man. He could kind of walk with a crutch, but he had a wheelchair."

"He would set out on the porch,... [and] do a lot of visiting with the old timers that would come up. But he never had much to do with the old county men.... He had a bathtub [in his room].... Vic would always give him baths. Somebody would cut his hair and see that he had clothes to change every week."

Vic Durand also helped the old county guys bathe, carrying some from wheelchairs to the plunge and putting them on the steps in the water. The old

guys would actually bathe in the plunge, using Ivory soap, the soapy water gradually running through the outflow.

Late in every week, before the weekend rush of business but after the county poor bathed, Vic would drain the plunge, scrub it clean with Lysol, and then rinse and refill it.

Pearl's first job there (when she was seventeen or eighteen, as best she could recall) was mostly maid work. She worked one summer and through the next winter, helping set table and cleaning up after meals, changing linen on beds, helping with the laundry, and doing other chores.

Laundry was a substantial job, done with a machine powered by hand. "Old John" (last name unknown) would push a handle back and forth, agitating the laundry. There were three separate tubs, one with soapy water, one with rinse water, and one with "blue" water. Sheets were run through a mangle (hand powered), then hung over the railings around the stairway. Other laundry included the clothing of the county poor.

She also emptied chamber pots, the contents ending up in an irrigation ditch, and eventually on a field as fertilizer. Indoor toilets were nonexistent. Guests normally used outhouses, one for men, another for women, three seaters that sat over a flume of running water. Excretory matter was "flushed" through the flume into the ditch and onto the field. Chamber pots were probably for night use and for the infirm, rather than for regular needs.

Another chore was to clean and fill the coal oil lamps, the only light source. In her spare time, Pearl would mend clothing of the county poor. For this, her first real job, Pearl earned twenty dollars a month plus room and board and bathing privileges.

Two or three years later Pearl worked at the hot springs again, this time as a cook, earning (she thought) forty dollars a month. This job lasted perhaps a year or longer. She recalled cooking for crews of sheepherders who brought their sheep to specially made concrete troughs on the property to dip them for insect control. The Conlee article had a photo of a flock of sheep in one of the pens at the springs.

She cooked for whatever guests were staying in the hotel, often including miners from Gilmore and Leadville (by Leadore) vacationing at the hot springs. Railroaders from the recently completed Gilmore and Pittsburgh line stayed there also. Vaudeville troupes sometimes rested up there.

Regular guests during this period paid two dollars per day for room, meals, and unlimited access to the plunge. The hot springs also did a big business for Sunday dinner. Guests who weren't staying overnight paid fifty cents for meals and fifty cents to

year.

Ida went to second grade in Salmon when she lived out below the springs, riding with Mr. Turnbull, who worked at a bank and drove in every day. He was leasing the hot springs.

During the early to mid-twenties, though, Burrell Brough and his wife Ruby (sister to Pearl Stroud and Ida Egge) owned and operated it. At some point, another Wayant girl--Grace--worked at the hot springs with her husband Lige Schofield.

Later, around 1926, and later again, in the early '30s, Ida worked there as a cook and general helper. This was before Fred (the son of Frederick) expanded and remodeled the facility. She remembered much about the experience.

Fred, a hard worker, ran the place then. Everyone around in the old days remembered Fred as a very heavy man, but he wasn't lazy. He helped with cooking and laundry, as well as managing the business, dealing with staff and guests, buying supplies, cleaning the plunge, and pitching in on many other chores.

"Fred was an exceptionally good cook," said Ida. "He taught me how to cook.... He said that he'd rather have somebody young like me up there than somebody" who already knew how to cook. She cooked on a wood stove, but not the same one as Pearl used.

For Sunday dinners, as many as seventy-five people would eat in the dining room at a long table holding as many as sixty at a time. The chairs were made of wrought wire in the style called ice cream chairs. Sunday dinner cost about seventy-five cents per person.

Ida worked long hours with very little time off. She rose early, typically around five or six a.m., but the old county guys pitched in to make her job a little easier.

"This old Robert George Yearian ... always packed a rabbit's foot in his pocket and the world was always going to come to an end. He would get up and put my mush water on ... and the coffee pot water.

Breakfast served at 7:30, consisted of hot cakes or biscuits, eggs (fried or boiled), and always mush (hot cereal). Ida baked lots of bread, ten to fifteen loaves every other day.

The mid-day meal, at one p.m., was dinner. Plentiful meat--big roasts, for example--was standard, cuts that Fred would normally buy daily, after the big meal, from Brown's meat market in town. Sunday dinners would often be chicken raised at the hot springs and plucked by Fred. As in Pearl's day, vegetables were generally bought in cans except during season. Desserts were cakes, and pies made with dried fruit shipped in board boxes.

Supper, a lighter meal, was put on the table starting around five. People ate at their leisure, pretty much helping themselves, and would be done

around seven or eight p.m.

For drinking water, two enamel buckets were filled from a covered barrel set into the ground close behind the hotel building. A pipe from the hot springs filled it. The barrel's top was just above ground level, and Ida would have to bend over, raise the barrel's lid, and then lift the full bucket out of the barrel. One bucket held water that was already cooled, while the other was in the process of cooling. Everyone drank from the same dipper, left hanging on the rim of the cooler bucket.

"This old Robert George Yearian...always packed a rabbit's foot in his pocket and the world was always going to come to an end."

Ice boxes provided refrigeration, the ice being hauled from town as necessary during the warm season. Every two or three days maybe, Fred (or his wife Lois Aldous Brough) would bring a hundred pound block from Wright's, who also had a flour mill.

Ice would melt, of course, so a pan had to be kept under the block to catch the water. The pan needed to be emptied regularly. If she forgot, Ida would have the job of mopping up the floor where water ran all over it.

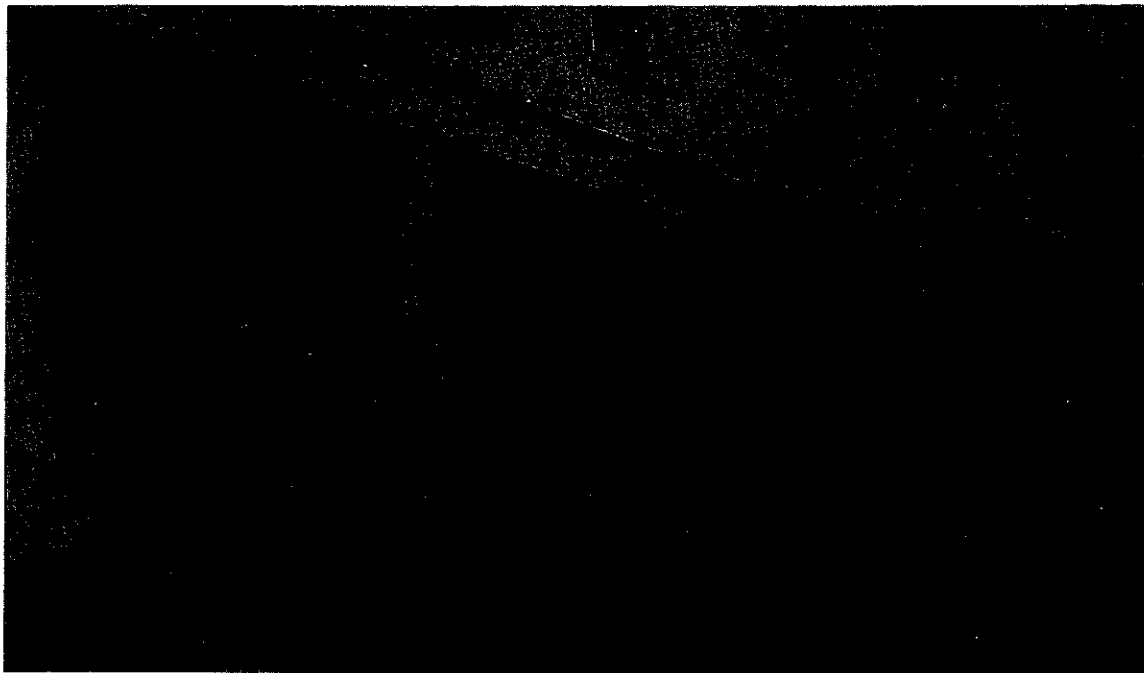
Ida also did laundry in the "office," but unlike Pearl, Ida had an electric-powered machine. They washed daily. Bedding was still run through the mangle and hung on the verandah. There was no bleach. Laundry could get a rusty tinge from the hot springs water, but the only way of bleaching was nature's way--hanging stuff in the sun.

Electricity saved work in other ways also. Whereas Pearl had to deal at first with coal oil lamps and then later gas lights, Ida remembered electric lights, single bulbs centered in the ceilings of rooms, with strings hanging to turn on and off. She also had a memory of cleaning and filling coal-oil lamps, probably as a backup for the electric system.

Electricity came from a small hydro plant installed sometime after World War I. Powered by the stream from the hot springs, it sat in the meadow down above the narrows. There were, though, very few electrical appliances.

Ida did have a little time away from her routine of twelve to fourteen hour days, seven-days a week. She could bathe or a swim daily. The county poor would often assist with chores. Her friend Margaret Morphey visited and helped her sometimes.

Fred usually gave her a part of a day off each week and she could go to town with his wife, Lois, just to get



VERANDAH, "SALMON HOT Springs, 1924," constructed about 1900-1901. (Lowell Brough Photo)

away from the place a while. Once supper was set, she'd have a little free time before cleaning up.

For her work, Ida remembered earning fifteen dollars a month before she graduated from high school in the class of 1930. She went to Portland afterwards for nurse's training. In 1933-34 she worked at the springs again, this time making forty-five dollars a month. She married Earl Witteborg in '34 and moved up Withington Creek. (In Patchwork '88 he was incorrectly named Lester.) For a year or two after that, until she had a child, they would occasionally ride horseback through the hills and soak in the hot springs plunge.

The hot springs hotel at this time was basically the same facility as when Pearl worked there, with only one plunge, the small one, about fifteen by thirty feet in size. This plunge, built around the turn of the century, had sides of cement that was backed by bricks. The cement was reddish from the iron in the water. The bricks looked like the soft local ones made at Pollard's brick yard.

At some point Fred's nephew Richard Brough (Burrell's son) painted murals on the walls of the plunge, colorful pictures of mermaids and other sea creatures. This was probably before Dick went to Southern California to work for Disney Studios. (Dick recently retired from a long career as an artist and a college teacher in Alabama. In 1988, he gave a water color painting of Salmon Hot Springs to the Senior Citizens Center at the Salmon Valley Center.)

In the dressing rooms off the

plunge were cots for people faint from the hot waters. The clientele was mixed, but the elderly were always a significant part. With water temperatures around or above one hundred degrees, prolonged soaking would naturally have an impact on frail bodies.

The dining room was large, and so was the dance hall on the second story (perhaps twenty by thirty-six feet). Ida and Pearl both remembered the pelt of a large dog that hung on the wall, its story a mystery. By the late twenties, the dance hall was not in good shape.

About fifteen rooms, generally small, mostly upstairs, were available for guests. Fred and Lois had a room downstairs where he could deal conveniently with late night visitors, since the hot springs was more or less open all hours. Ida had a room upstairs.

Ida thought that guests paid around a dollar to a dollar and a half per day, which was less than in Pearl's day. Ida explained that this decrease in cost was a reflection of the Depression.

Along the entire first floor front of the hotel (facing the southwest) ran a verandah with swings and other seats. About thirty to forty feet in front of the verandah was a row of trees, Lombardy poplars (?), planted about eight feet apart, giving the place a touch of elegance when seen by people approaching from below. (Some of these still stand today, although they also are near their end.)

Pearl called these poplars "imported," meaning brought in from outside. They were probably planted when "Snooks and Hughes" put up the new

building around the turn of the century. These trees, tall and slender, would have provided some shade from the hot sun of summer afternoons.

Beyond the trees, down the hill on the flat, were the garden, orchard, hayfields, and pasture. A cold spring sat south of them. Sometimes water would be hauled from the cold spring, but carrying it was quite a chore. The hot springs water, after cooling, was just fine.

Waste disposal was much like in Pearl's day: "All same Chinee!"

In addition to swimming or soaking and eating, customers entertained themselves. Some walked. Hunting was good, especially for birds, over toward Mulkey Creek, a mile or two southeast of the springs.

Reading was also popular. The library in the parlor consisted largely of books from earlier times. Ida said that "Old man Brough senior was a great friend of an old judge, Judge Giles, that came from Bayhorse with him. He had quite an extensive library" that ended up at the hot springs.

"Charlie Potter, from Leadore, (was the) locator of the Viola Mine...(and) traded it for a barrel of whiskey."

They also had music from a wind-up phonograph and a piano. Although radios were coming into the valley by then, the hot springs didn't have one yet. Dances were occasionally held.

Fred Brough, like his predecessors, augmented his income at the hot springs by caring for the county poor, a service that earned him about seventy-five cents per day per person for shelter, food, clothing, and a certain amount of additional care. Ida believed the number of old timers would vary from around fifteen to maybe twenty-five. In addition to the county poor house itself (the one probably built during the Andrews era), another building, one with a shed roof, held some county poor whose health wasn't as good as the others. (This was still standing in 1989.)

Besides Robert George Yearian, Ida remembered others, including Charlie Potter, from Gilmore, locator of the Viola Mine, who traded it for a barrel of whiskey. The old guys would keep her company and check out her beaus, when they weren't busy doing little chores or playing cards in the office or soaking in the plunge.

The old men didn't have a bad life there. "Every Christmas Fred would go down to the best bootlegger in town [behind McPherson's], and he'd get several gallons. He'd ... put this jug of whiskey on the table for the old boys, and they could get drunk for a day

or two if they wanted. That was their Christmas," said Ida.

"And of course everybody made home brew," she said, this being during Prohibition. "There was one old fellow up there [a county poor man], a big tall slim [guy with] a crooked stick that he used, and a black hat--a great big tall hat. He called this stick 'Old Salem.'

"All same Chinee!"

"The folks [Fred and Lois] left, I think to an American Legion deal in Portland or someplace,... and I kept thinking that maybe my sugar and things were going down. He [this old guy] made himself a little still. He stole the chicken feed and the sugar, and up above this cold spring, up a little gulch, he made some brew.... He came in one day with a little bottle in his hip pocket, and he ... wanted me to taste it.... It was hot. It was terrible.... That didn't last very long when Freddy got home. He fixed the still."

Transportation during the late twenties and early thirties had also progressed notably from the early teens. Cars were not unusual. Fred, for example, drove a Buick on his daily trips to town.

The hill through the canyon to the springs continued to be difficult at times, and was much steeper and more curvy than later, after it was worked on. Ida recalled that her brother-in-law, Roy Shoup, owned a Model T: "It had no top. It was what we called a bug. When it rained you got wet. I think it had a rumble seat."

"He always had trouble. He'd have to turn around and back up.... It was pretty steep when you got in the canyon there. In the winter time it was slick, even for those cars that could usually make it."

Fred Brough would "put this jug of whiskey on the table for the old boys (the county poor) and they could get drunk for a day or two if they wanted. That was their Christmas."

Lee Davis and other old car buffs pointed out that this tactic of backing up a hill was more likely to be because of the gravity fed fuel system than because of a lack of power. The gas tank was in front of the firewall but behind the engine. If the climb was too steep, the car would stall because gas couldn't get to the engine. Backing up the hill let gravity do its job in the time before fuel pumps.

The common route was still up

around the cemetery, past the Mylander potato fields and Chet Mathieson's place. Some people came out on the highway to the airport, then turned east toward Hot Springs Creek. Most of the hot springs business was during the summer, when roads were better, but the place was always open to the public.

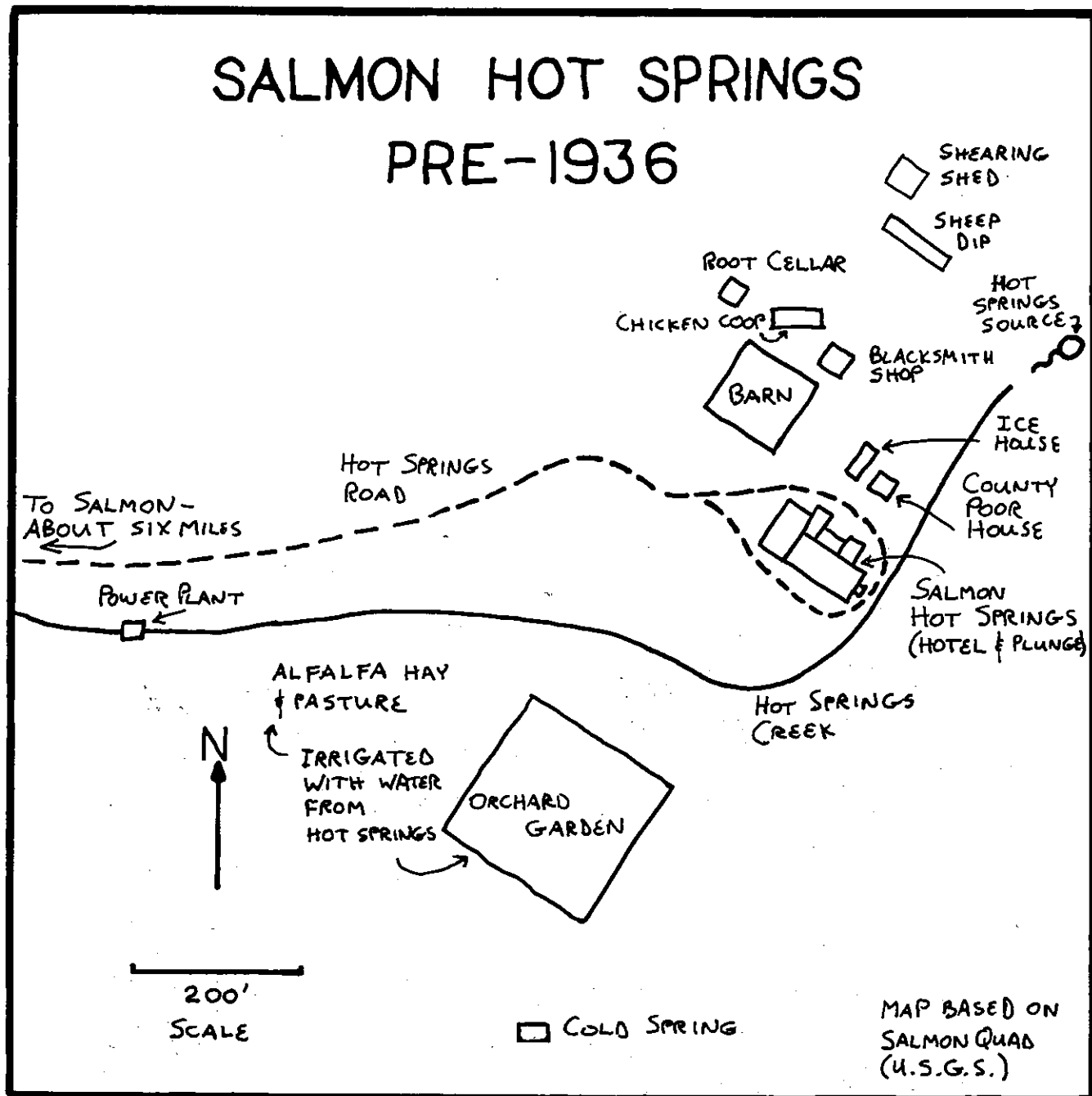
Ida, like her sister Pearl before her, left the hot springs to get on with life. Not long after Ida went away in 1934, Fred Brough took the financial plunge that eventually lost the hot springs to the bank.

Fred Brough had big plans for Salmon Hot Springs, and he was willing to go into debt to see his plans brought to

life. Ultimately, he had hoped to build the Salmon Hot Springs resort in the Salmon River valley at the mouth of Hot Springs Creek. He postponed that dream, and, according to Ida Egge, borrowed \$20,000 from the bank to expand and remodel the place (this during the Great Depression of the 1930s).

The Recorder-Herald in 1936 wrote several articles about Fred's project. One headline said, "Brough Building at Hot Springs: Fine New Plunge Soon Be Ready for Use" (10 June, p. 1). (All dates and page numbers in this section are from Recorder-Herald articles.)

That article discussed "elaborate plans to make this one of the



Buildings are located approximately; not all buildings may be present. The map itself represents an area of slightly more than one-quarter mile on each side. It sits approximately in the southwest quadrant of the original Andrews homestead. This map shows about fifty to sixty acres.

outstanding recreational centers of the county." The new plunge was to be twenty-eight feet wide and sixty-eight feet long, made of concrete, with shallow and deep ends. It was already under construction and would be roofed during the summer and enclosed before the next winter. (The enclosing, along with some other plans, never happened.)

People at this time seemed to hunger more for the recreational attractions of a bigger pool. They wanted room to swim and depth to dive. (This decade, remember, had Johnny Weismuller winning Olympic gold and Hollywood mega-bucks in movies of Tarzan, with at least one good diving and swimming scene per film.)

Salmon Hot Springs, the story said, would have an "abundance of water to keep the [new] plunge pure and fresh, and the water will be tempered before it runs into the pool." (For recreational swimming, cooler water was desired.) Fred also planned for tourist cabins, a dance floor, and a large dining room.

A month or so later, another article showed up headlined, "Work Continues at Hot Springs: Will Be Popular Resort of Central Idaho" (15 July, 1936, p. 1). It reported that fifteen carpenters, plasterers, and decorators were rebuilding and refinishing the large structure.

Burrell Brough, according to John Brown (a later owner of the springs) and Eugene Conlee, was a plasterer and did much of the work. The second floor dance hall was painted green and gold, the

first floor dance hall pink and gold. They stuccoed much of the outside of the building with cement on chicken wire stapled to boards covering the framing.

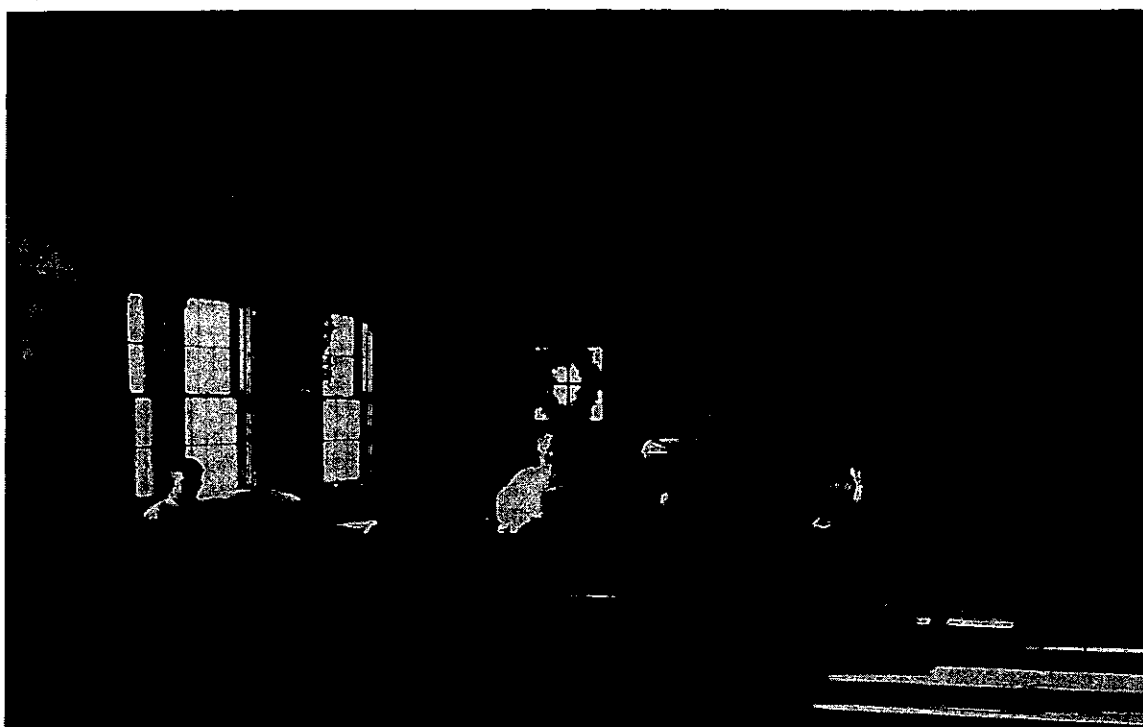
The 15 July story also said that the dance hall on the second floor neared completion and would have a thirty by forty foot hardwood floor. On the first floor would be a spacious room with another dance floor for dinner parties.

The "beautiful new pool ... [was] already popular." The old plunge was still in use, its water kept hot for soaking.

"Mr. Brough is spending a good many thousands of dollars," the article said. He enclosed the old verandah and created a series of archways to replace the original wall. He tore out walls and staircases and built new ones, adding some fireplaces as well. Fred probably at this time installed indoor plumbing and toilets.

The big opening for the new hot springs was later that summer, August 29, 1936: "Neither time nor expense has been spared to make the Salmon Hot Springs one of the finest resorts in the state.... The dining room, dance halls, and club room ... [are] nearly finished, are beautifully decorated and are being luxuriously furnished" (19 August 1936, p. 1). This club room was probably the site of gambling mentioned by John and Virginia Brown.

Parts of the back side (the northeast side) were also rebuilt. What had been Fred's bedroom became a small



MAIN ROOM (first floor dance hall) after the 1936 renovation. Fred Brough is in center. (Lowell Brough Photo)

dining room in the Spanish style, with one round window about two feet in diameter and two half-moon windows. The kitchen was moved, also.

The promotional buildup reached new heights in the same article: "There is no doubt that it will prove to be the most popular recreational center in the entire intermountain country."

For the grand opening, a "festive occasion" was promised: a dance with a six piece orchestra, a floor show, a midnight lunch--and swimming, of course. A truck would transport people from Salmon to the springs, but there would be, as well, plenty of parking for those who drove. All this for "no cover charge" (26 August 1936, p. 1).

Part of Fred's plans included improved access. The last half-mile or so of the road still twisted up through the narrow, steep canyon and caused transportation problems.

To get around this problem, Fred built a new road written about in The Recorder-Herald early that fall. This road ran from the "high bridge" to the hot springs, a distance of two miles. It would have a "uniform grade of five percent," and would be a "great improvement over the old one."

According to Ida Egge, the high bridge was on the old road just above where Fred's new road turned east. The bridge spanned Hot Springs Creek and was "high" because erosion had worn a deep wash under it.

John Brown said that the new road wasn't successful: the draw it crossed (just east of and above the high bridge) kept washing out.

"Later," the newspaper said, "Mr. Brough plans to construct a new road from the Lemhi Highway to tie into the two mile, five percent grade ... now being finished" (30 September 1936, p. 1). This road from the Lemhi valley was probably planned to follow the road from Four Mile School for a ways, and then turn southwest up a draw, connecting to

Roy Shoup would "have to turn around and back up" the hill in his Model T bug.

Fred's other new road--most likely at the saddle above the hot springs. Whether Fred ever did any work on it is unknown, but in 1989 a jeep road followed that route.

Fred advertised heavily during this 1936-38 period, with the emphasis on dancing and swimming rather than hotel rooms and dining. Ida Egge believed that the number of hotel rooms for overnight guests diminished as part of the 1936 renovation.

Competition for the dance crowd must have been fierce, since several dances at various places were advertised

every week. Dances at Salmon Hot Springs cost seventy-five cents on special nights, but were supposedly free on others.

In 1937, Brough advertised heavily in The Recorder-Herald, promoting dances with such groups as the Revelers Swing Band (12 May, p. 4), D's Varsity Band (26 May, p. 5), and the Revelers again, this time for a "Special Balloon Dance" (2 June, p. 4).

The Revelers show up several more times, including once for a "Fan Dance" (9 June, p. 4). An "Amateur Contest" was advertised in the 28 July 1937 issue (p. 4). The county fair was also party time at the hot springs, which offered a dance "Every Night During the Fair," with music by Dillon's Bachelor Club Orchestra (29 September, p. 6).

The 1938 season saw another big push by Fred, if quantity of advertising is any indication. The "Big Opening

"Fred, he was quite a card dealer."

Dance" of the year had music provided by "The Famous George Waring's Orchestra of Blackfoot" (20 April, p. 7). Soon after was an ad reading "Al Ahlborn Presents The Merry Co-Eds (All Girl Dance Band)" (27 April, p. 3). The same ad touts "Hollywood's Mari Lee Roller Skating Tap Queen," admission one dollar per couple, twenty-five cents for spectators.

Brian's Four Aces ("Old time and modern music") was advertised on 4 May (p. 3) and 11 May (p. 4), and on 18 May was an ad for a "Peanut Dance" with the Four Aces again.

The really big show for the summer, though, was Lemhi County's Fourth of July celebration, partly in the city and partly at Salmon Hot Springs. The "water carnival" would have prizes of cash and merchandise for winners of swimming races, fancy diving, and other events for children and adults (22 June 1938, p. 1).

This was, according to the article, "the first time a water carnival ... [would be] held in Lemhi County. There would be twenty-four events for different age groups. The public was invited to bring picnic lunches, and there would be a dance.

In addition to standard races for boys and girls of various ages would be free for all's, a "bald headed men's race," a "fat ladies race," "plunging" [diving], underwater races, and water fights (teams of two, one on the partner's shoulders). There would be a special prize for the "person making the most fun for spectators." A later article said that "moving pictures" would be taken and shown later at a theatre (29 June, p. 1).

Sidney Williams, still a resident of Salmon in 1989, won the twenty-five

yard race for boys twelve and under. With a smile Sidney recalled the race. He was twelve years old, eight to ten boys were in the race, and he won two or three dollars--big bucks back then.

Sidney and his friends went to the hot springs "every chance we got," but few kids had cars. They went with their families, usually, or jammed a crowd into someone's car. They also walked fairly often. Salmon Hot Springs was "real popular at that time."

Wynn Stokes pointed out that the big plunge had a diving board in the south corner. Near it, centered on the southwest end of the pool, was a diving platform about eight feet high with steps giving access. Some adventurous types would even climb up into the open rafters and dive.

Salmon Hot Springs must have been quite a place to go in Salmon. But as grand as the whole thing might have been, that mortgage was too much.

The place "never did pay off," said Ida. "He lost it to the bank."

Perhaps there couldn't have been enough business to make the payments, but one local person contended that Fred was putting profits from the hot springs into work at Pope Shenon Mine. (He owned a part interest in it. His family still does, according to Ida Egge.) Perhaps the mining was done in hopes of saving the hot springs.

Fred Brough, a man who dreamed, must have been heartbroken to see what became of the place after he left. The

bank got it in 1940 (or 1941) after the Brough family had pretty much owned it or lived on it for roughly four decades.

After that it sat empty for awhile, and then a succession of short-time leases had various people running it. Lyle Longhurst's family, among others, reportedly had it for a while.

But even before then, the elements were taking their toll.

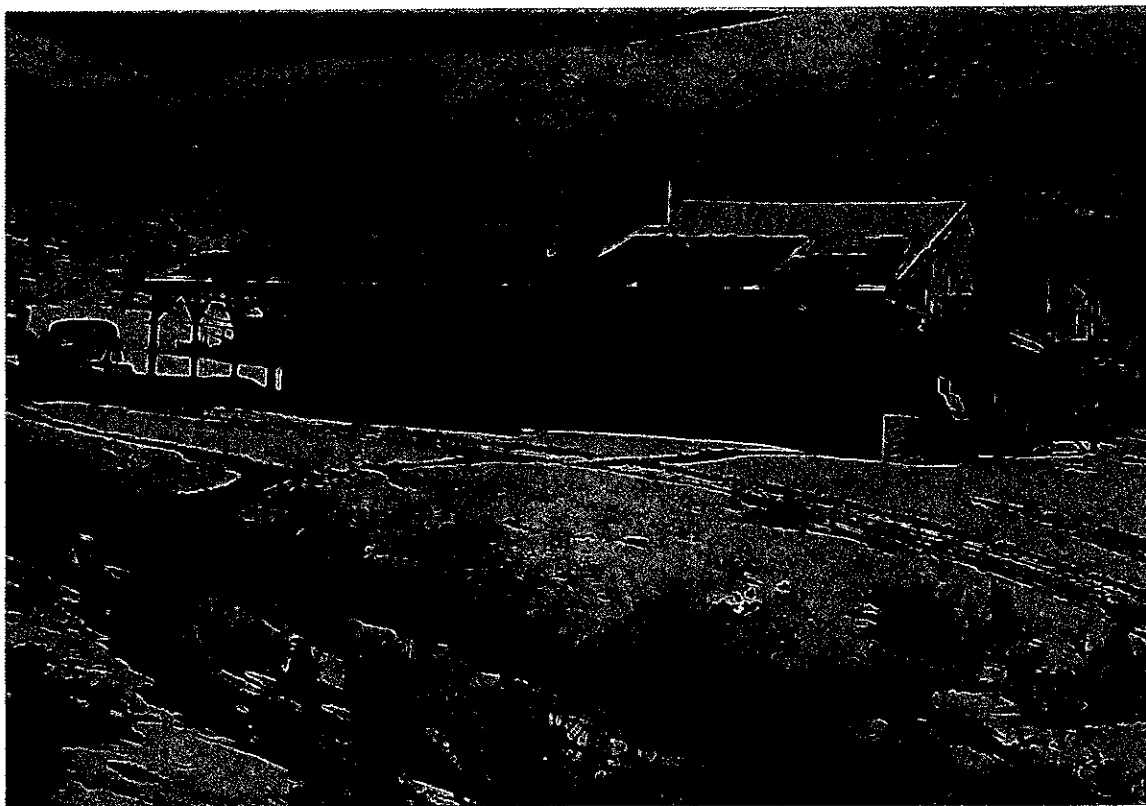
As a youngster, John Brown, like many other old-time Salmon people, loved the hot springs, especially the yearly openings. A 1938 graduate of Salmon High School, he fondly recalled the peak years of the late 1930s, when dancing was so popular at the hot springs that sometimes people would be dancing in both dance halls at once.

John said, "The orchestra set upstairs, then they had an opening [in the floor] in front of the orchestra so the noise could go down and they could dance to the music down there or they could dance upstairs."

And there was gambling, too: "Slot machines and twenty-one tables. Fred, he was quite a card dealer," John recalled.

In 1951 John was hired by his brother-in-law Paul McPherson to paint the main building, to build fence, and then to manage the place. Brown had a crew of six or seven Indians to replace the collapsed fencing.

About ten years before that the building had started to deteriorate. In the late 1930s, "they had a great big opening ... above the plunge," John



SALMON HOT SPRINGS; photo taken from northwest, date probably late 1930s; open structure is the new plunge. (Lowell Brough Photo)

said. "In the winter time, when old Fred Brough was there, he'd close it up to keep the steam out. But after the bank took it over, he never fooled with it. Burrell Brough, his brother, was a plasterer, so they [had] plastered all them walls up in there. When the steam came, the plaster just ... [collapsed]. It ruined the floor [also]. It was a good hardwood floor."

The floors, by the way, seem to have been maple. One piece recently examined was tongued and grooved on both sides and ends. Stamped on the bottom was the manufacturer's name, Yawkey/Bissell.

John and his wife Virginia managed the springs until 1959 when they bought the property from McPherson's widow, Myra (John's sister). They owned and operated it until selling to Bistlines in 1972. Actually they stayed until the following March.

"The plaster just" collapsed.

The Browns offered swimming in the large plunge and soaking in the small plunge; they had a snack bar, a juke box in the first-floor dance hall, and picnicking on the nicely kept grounds with the beautiful views. They lived in the big building during the warm months, but during winters stayed in the cabin they built a little east of the hotel. This cabin, constructed of two by fours stacked flat and nailed one on top of another, was heated by hot water piped under the floor. Virginia remembered their winter place as great for house plants.

At the hot springs, people partied: regular customers and church people and school groups and others. Both plunges still functioned. Virginia and her daughter re-painted the mermaids and other figures originally done by Richard Brough on the walls of the small, hot plunge.

Transportation difficulties continued. John improved significantly the bad part of the road, where it got steep and sinuous in the canyon after it crossed the creek.

"I bought a bulldozer," John said, "and I learned to drive it." He also used a bunch of dynamite to fragment and move rocks, gentling the grade and straightening the road. It needed it. People remembered cars regularly overheating up that road, and at times those heading for the hot springs had to park their cars and walk up the last part.

About the new road Fred built in '36, John said, "Sometimes you'd get through there [the washout at the bottom] and the rest of the road was pretty good."

By the fifties, traffic all came out on Highway 93 South to the airport turnoff, and then on up the canyon of Hot Springs Creek. At the turn from the highway were signs, at first one, and later two--one on each side of the road--reading "Swimming, Picnicking, Dancing. Closed Thursdays."

"There's a place up there," Virginia remembered, "called Gravity Hill. Just there where you go through the gate.... You go down there and you put your car in neutral, and it'll go back up the hill."

On Thursdays the plunges were cleaned, just as in Fred Brough's day. After draining them, John irrigated the hayfields on the flat below the building with water from the pools. Afterwards, he scrubbed the plunges, then refilled them.

Around 1971 a young girl drowned in the big plunge during a church party. Many other deaths had occurred at the hot springs over its long history (understandably so, given one of its functions as the county poor house), but this time was different.

John Brown had already sold off a few plots of land by the early '70s. In 1972, the Browns sold Salmon Hot Springs to Stephen Bistline, a judge from Boise.

Since then, vandalism and time and weather have pretty much finished what the steam started. During times when no caretakers have protected the property, people, mostly young, have used the big plunge. The small plunge, as of March of 1989, was completely desecrated, its brick-lined sides half dismantled for the sake of destruction or something less evil but equally damaging. The murals on the walls of the room housing the plunge were still visible in 1989, but were marred by adolescent scrawls of restroom graffiti.

Salmon Hot Springs, once called "one of the finest resorts in the state," died of mysterious causes. All that remained were memories better left focused on the way things were. But the

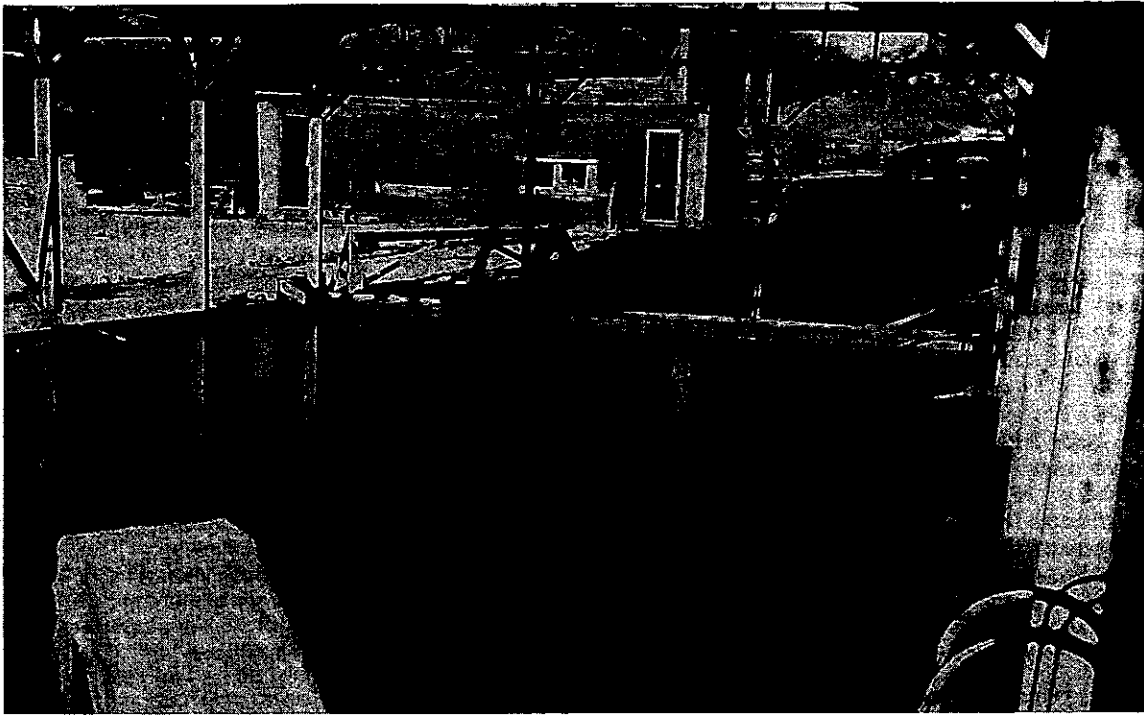
"Swimming, Picnicking, Dancing. Closed Thursdays."

water's still there, that little flow that led to so much.

The potential of the hot water, however, may have driven the selling price of the property past the profit point.

Not much remains of the hot springs resort that was once the pride of Salmon, but it's worth more than ever.

The asking price is \$650,000. That's slightly over \$2,000 per acre, most of it seriously hilly. The only justification for the price is the hot



THE LARGE PLUNGE with diving board, soon after construction. Sign on post at far end of pool reads "Use no soap." Car is probably a 1937 to '39 Chevy or Buick. Background buildings include a chicken house just past the front of the car, and a granary in the upper left. (Lowell Brough Photo)

springs--because it could generate income or because someone with no need for more income could afford it as a luxury.

It'd take a businessman to figure possibilities for producing income, for figuring what a viable Salmon Hot Springs resort could look like on a balance sheet, investment-wise. Could it attract enough business?

Most people enjoy soaking and swimming and many would pay a few bucks occasionally to do so, especially so close to home. Old folks and people with sore bodies benefit from hot baths. We don't have the county poor anymore, but we have retirees, local and imported. We also have many "hot springs types," mostly young adults who'll hike uphill if necessary to soak au naturel. They'd probably pay to plunge into a good hot pool.

Tourists passing through would use it some, and those coming to Salmon to hunt, fish, or float would constitute a market of some kind.

Some people would stay there, if a decent hotel existed, but there's no shortage of rooms in Salmon now. A nice restaurant would draw people--natives and transplants and tourists--but again, there's no shortage of places to dine locally.

A resort that offered various recreations, in addition to the hot springs, would have a definite appeal. Horseback riding, walking, mountain biking and motor biking would all be attractive. By really stretching the

imagination, one could picture access to the nearby tops of the north end of the Lemhis, and see trails for cross country skiing and snowmobiling as well as warm weather activities.

Hunters and fishermen could base themselves there, although it's not in the woods or the back country enough to have a prime draw that way.

An enterprising individual might rig up a greenhouse heated by the hot water and make some money (or at least spend some).

The current asking price is \$650,000.

One local resident suggested making the place a "fat farm" for ladies (men as well, surely).

But even if the hot springs could serve in all these ways, it's profitability is questionable. Look at the figures. (The following numbers, except for the selling price, are conjectural and should not be taken too seriously. They've been roughed out with the help of a local real estate agent, but any confusion or miscalculation is the responsibility of the writer.)

The current asking price is \$650,000. Assume an offer of \$500,000 was accepted, and roughly a third, about \$170,000 was paid down on it. The buyer would have to borrow about \$330,000 for twenty years at, say, ten percent interest. Without getting into

complexities of creative financing, the payments have been estimated at slightly more than \$3,200 per month on the property alone.

Beyond paying for the property, a new building would be necessary, big enough to house a hot pool and a swimming pool. Fred Brough's 1936 pool would not suffice. The building for a pool or pools is probably a minimum construction requirement; a restaurant, and rooms for guests, would be another matter entirely, cost-wise.

Say that \$200,000 could build a minimum facility. Loans on buildings tend to earn higher interest (say fifteen percent) than those on property. And banks don't want the payments strung out over as long a period; they'd allow perhaps fifteen years for the payback. Typically, at the end of five years a

"One of the finest resorts in the state."

balloon payment would be due, or the loan would be refinanced at a higher rate of interest.

This \$200,000 loan, therefore, would have payments of about \$2,800 per month, for the first five years--and could be more after that.

So, payments for the property and facility could easily amount to \$6,000 each month--payments, mind you, before dealing with expenses like insurance, wages, and maintenance.

A functional Salmon Hot Springs would be wonderful for Salmon and Lemhi County, but such a venture is a high-stakes game. Who would ante up?

John Brown recalled the Yellowstone earthquake of 1958: "It really affected the flow." Another spring actually surfaced, but the flow to the pool didn't seem to be affected. The Challis earthquake of the early 1980s also did not apparently change Salmon Hot Springs, but it did alter flows elsewhere.

What if someone invested big bucks to buy Salmon Hot Springs (doing so only because of the hot water), and that nice little stream of hot water diminished or cooled? Who'll take the chance? Is there any realistic hope of seeing Salmon Hot Springs in business again?

While people wait and see, this place, once beautiful, health-restoring, and pleasure-giving, crumbles more with every season's passing. It waits for the bulldozer.

By Terry Magoon

Lots of people helped to make this a good article. Several granted interviews, including Pearl Stroud, John and Virginia Brown, and Ida Egge. Ida also loaned me photos borrowed from

Lowell Brough, and she identified people and places in them. Many assisted me: Steve Gott at American Land Title Company, Terri Morton at the courthouse, Kathy Cramer at the Salmon Public Library, Rose Corum at the Lemhi County Historical Museum, Ken Stauffer and Ernie Schneider of the Salmon National Forest, and the staff at the Lemhi County Assessor's Office. Verdell Olson of the Clark Hereford Ranch permitted me to visit Salmon Hot Springs and to take students there for a field trip. Numerous others helped as well: Ramona Combs-Stauffer, Beryl DeBoard, Ralph Benedict, Joanne Tingle, Bruce Cole, Rose Corum, Bernadine Berry, Verl Armstrong, Ed Stepanek, Charles Kane, Sr., Jim McConnell, Wynn Stokes, Darwin Thompson, Lee Davis, Sidney Williams, and Ken Doering. Mike Crosby, my colleague and friend, referred me to several bits of information and provided editorial advice. Most importantly, I thank my wife Maria for walking to the springs with me, for talking with me about it, and for tolerating being alone during the many hours I've spent interviewing, researching, writing, and thinking about this article. My apologies to those I've neglected to mention here, and to those hundreds whom I didn't talk to who had stories about the hot springs.

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