

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Warm Springs Bath Houses 2019 Update
Name of Property
Bath County, VA
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

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Introduction

The following continuation sheets provide additional documentation for the Warm Springs Bath Houses (DHR No. 008-0007) located in Bath County, Virginia. The property was listed in the Virginia Landmarks Register (VLR) in 1968 and the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) in 1969. The additional information included in this update was not included in the initial nomination. Contributing buildings that were part of the original nomination include the Gentlemen's Bath House (1760s, mid-1820s), the Ladies' Bath House (mid-1870s), the Drinking Spring (1870s), and the Reception House (c. 1890). There are two noncontributing structures (footbridges built or rebuilt in recent decades) and one noncontributing building (c. 1940 frame shed). Much of the information herein was recently developed as part of a historic structure report for the bath house buildings.¹

The purpose of the nomination update is 1) to chronicle in more detail the significant architectural features of the bath houses and associated secondary resources and provide a complete inventory of contributing and non-contributing resources 2) to provide specific start and end dates for the period of significance; 3) to add additional areas of significance; 4) to provide justification for classifying the property as significant at the national and statewide levels; and 5) to provide current maps and photos showing the property's historic boundaries and locations of resources. Fortunately, none of the identified resources in the 1968/1969 nomination have been lost; therefore, the inventory included in this update will further describe those already identified resources and include all other contributing and non-contributing resources within the NRHP boundary.

The property's historic boundary *has not changed* as a result of this update; however, based on the original nomination, more precise mapping of the boundary as well as locations of contributing and non-contributing architectural resources are included in the updated materials.

All new information is organized by section headings as listed in the current NRHP nomination form with parenthetical reference to the original nomination headings where applicable.

Section 2. Location

Street & number: 11 Bath Street
 City or town: Warm Springs State: VA County: Bath
 Not For Publication: ☐ N/A Vicinity: ☒ X

Section 3 (Section 12). State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

¹ Gibson Worsham, The Warm Springs Bath Houses: A Historic Structure Report, prepared for the Omni Homestead by StudioAmmons and Glavé & Holmes Architecture, 2016.

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In my opinion, the property X meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

X national X statewide ___ local
Applicable National Register Criteria:

X A ___ B X C ___ D

Signature of certifying official/Title:

Date

Virginia Department of Historic Resources

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official:

Date

Title :

State or Federal agency/bureau
or Tribal Government

Section 4 (Section 12). National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- ___ entered in the National Register
___ determined eligible for the National Register
___ determined not eligible for the National Register
___ removed from the National Register
___ other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Section 5 (Section 3). Classification

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Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

Building(s) ☐

District ☒

Site ☐

Structure ☐

Object ☐

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing
0

Noncontributing
1

buildings

0

0

sites

0

2

structures

0

0

objects

0

3

Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 4

(The "previously listed" resource count includes the contributing within the listed property's historic boundary but not mentioned in the 1968/1969 nomination. Only the property's two bath houses were explicitly discussed in the original nomination.)

Section 6 (this section was not part of the original nomination). Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

HEALTH CARE: Baths

LANDSCAPE: Natural Feature: Spring

LANDSCAPE: Plaza

DOMESTIC: Hotel

COMMERCE/TRADE: Restaurant

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Section number Additional DocumentationPage 4**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

HEALTH CARE: BathsLANDSCAPE: Natural Feature: SpringLANDSCAPE: PlazaVACANT/WORK IN PROGRESS**Section 7. Description****Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

OTHER: Virginia FrameLATE VICTORIAN: Queen Anne**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)Principal exterior materials of the property: WOOD: Weatherboard, Shingles; STONE: Limestone**Narrative Description****Summary Paragraph**

The Warm Springs Bath Houses, as well as other resources associated with the therapeutic and social resort that surround the thermal springs, are located on the west side of the Warm Springs Valley about a mile north of the unincorporated community of Warm Springs in the mountainous landscape of Bath County, Virginia. The resources are oriented in and along the west side of a roughly five-acre parklike square that contains the outlets of the thermal springs, all of which flow into Warm Springs Run, which borders the property along its southeastern side. The original octagonal stone basin that held the water for bathing was probably built in the 1760s. It was not covered by a bath house until the mid-1820s, at which point it was covered by an octagonal frame building now known as the Gentlemen's Bath House. Also contributing to the property are the c. 1875 Ladies' Bath House, a frame building that covers the circular bath for women; the frame Drinking Spring Pavilion, a structure added c. 1875, and the c. 1890 frame building called the Reception House. The latter was designed as a waiting room for the Ladies' Bath, but was soon converted to serve as the home of the bath keeper, a function that continued for nearly a century. A small frame shed that dates to c. 1940 is located near the property's southwestern corner. Two noncontributing structures consist of a large newer footbridge across Warm Springs Run and a small newer footbridge across a spring outlet between the two bath houses. The Warm Springs Bath Houses was listed in the Virginia Landmarks Register in 1968 and in the National Register of Historic Places in 1969; however, the nomination discusses only the two frame bathhouses. The following narrative description provides an up-to-date inventory of all contributing and non-contributing resources associated with the property, updated and more detailed descriptions of the two bath houses, and new descriptions of the secondary contributing and non-contributing resources.

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Narrative Description

Inventory

The following resources are within the historic boundary of the Warm Springs Bath Houses. Contributing status is based on direct association with the property's areas and period of significance. Non-contributing resources postdate the period of significance. Each resource is keyed to the attached Sketch Map by number and name.

1. Gentlemen's Bath House, 1760s, mid-1820s, contributing building
2. Ladies' Bath House, mid-1870s, contributing building
3. Drinking Spring Pavilion, 1870s, contributing structure
4. Reception House, c. 1890, contributing building
5. Shed, c. 1940, non-contributing building
6. Large footbridge, c. 2000, non-contributing structure
7. Small footbridge, c. 2000, non-contributing structure

Setting and Landscape

Warm Springs is a small community and county seat in Bath County, which is located in the mountains of western Virginia close to the West Virginia border. Still quite rural in character, the area is best known for the thermal springs for which it is named. The Warm Springs and West Warm Springs Historic District (DHR no. 008-5025) was listed in the NRHP in 2018; the Warm Springs Bath Houses are within the district boundaries. The Homestead, a National Historic Landmark (NRHP 1984; NHL 1991; DHR no. 008-0025) is located in nearby Hot Springs and has been a popular resort since the 19th century. Tourism related to the county's thermal springs continues to be the lynchpin in the local economy.

The landscape of the Warm Springs Bath Houses responds to the form of the marshy area along the northwestern side of Warm Springs Run, from which the thermal springs arise, and the associated flood-prone bottomland. The Gentlemen's Bath House, Ladies' Bath House, Drinking Spring Pavilion, and Reception House occupy the low-lying marsh where the thermal water emerges from the ground. The springs traverse the property in a generally northeastern to southwestern direction, with the two bath houses straddling the springs and the pavilion located alongside their northwestern side. The grounds, originally shaded by a grove of trees, are today landscaped with hedges, gravel paths, and low plantings. The c. 2000 large foot bridge across Warm Springs Run provides pedestrian access to the grounds from a small parking area adjacent to the property's southeastern boundary and Sam Snead Highway (US 220). The c. 2000 small footbridge crosses the thermal spring between the two bath houses and next to the pavilion. The property is accessed from Bath Street, along the property's eastern edge via a drive that leads to a small parking lot alongside the bath houses. Bath Street was the historic entry drive to the resort hotel that once stood nearby. A c. 1940 shed stands close to the southwestern edge of the property, near the verge of the thermal springs, a walking path, and Warm Spring Run.

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In the following architectural descriptions, for ease of identification, cardinal directions are conventionalized— what is approximately northeast is described as north, and so forth.

Gentlemen's Bath House (contributing building, 1760s, mid-1820s)

The building known since the 1870s as the Gentlemen's Bath House has a long and complex history. It was originally known as the Warm Springs Bath or the Great Bath. During its first decades of use by European settlers, the 1760s stone-lined, octagonal bath was not covered with a building, but was masked from view by a fence or hedge. The frame bath house was added over the octagonal basin in the mid-to-late 1820s. It was enlarged over the next thirty to forty years until it took its current form. In recent decades, the Gentlemen's Bath House has suffered considerable physical deterioration due to many years of deferred maintenance.

Stone Bath Enclosure

The original Warm Springs or "Great" Bath is contained within an octagonal stone enclosure that measures 36'-6" wide from side to side. It was likely built by European settlers during the third quarter of the eighteenth century, on the cusp of the American Revolution. The 2'-thick coursed rubble limestone wall, parged on the interior with concrete, was set into sloping ground so as to maximize the depth of the pool. The rocky bottom of the bath slopes 12"-18" from the northwest to the southeast. Water is drained by an opening in the eastern side of the south wall. The opening is strengthened by stone buttresses on each side. Two early sets of stone steps give access to the pool at the center of the north and south walls. They are located partially under the wood deck that extends around the perimeter and cantilevers over the water.

The pool opening is filled by a wooden sluice gate that consists of timber jambs built into the stone walls and a gate that slides vertically in grooves to permit draining of the pool. The gate is made of three vertical boards held together by metal straps on the exterior. The central board extends upwards as a paddle-shaped handle. This is pierced with a vertical line of holes by which the gate can be pegged at different heights to a similar board behind it. It appears to have been raised with the assistance of a pulley (no longer in place) hung from an iron ring that is still mounted in the underside of the top plate angle brace directly overhead. Three smaller paddles are let into the interior face of the gate. Raising them controls the amount of water that is let out through holes in the gate to control the water level and to create the spout bath located in the outfall area.

Gentlemen's Bath House

The frame building enclosing the surface of the Great Bath was probably built in the mid-to-late 1820s. Since the Ladies' Bath House was built in the mid-1870s, the earlier building has been known as the Gentlemen's Bath House. Bathing facilities consisted at first of the main octagonal building and the north and south dressing room wings; the matching east and west wings were added in the mid-1830s. The building is mostly constructed of Eastern White Pine (*Pinus Strobus*). The polygonal hipped roof is

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covered with plain wood shingles. The roof culminates in a large central oculus approximately twelve feet across.

The central portion of the building has a mortise-and-tenon frame that is exposed on the interior. Each of the eight faces of the building is about sixteen feet wide. The structural framing is covered and strengthened by an exterior cladding of plain weatherboards with a 6 1/4" to 6 1/2" exposure, secured with cut nails. Most of the weatherboards, particularly those on the upper portion of the wall, appear to be original. The weatherboard face is topped by a minimal cornice element consisting of a five-inch-deep soffit with a plain outer edge. This is nailed to the underside of the projecting rafter ends and is trimmed below with a two-inch-tall beaded board nailed to the face of a 3 1/2" frieze board. The cornice is the same as those on the three surviving dressing room wings. The weatherboards on each face are separated by a beaded corner board with angled outer faces designed to receive the cladding on the flanking walls. The exterior of the building is painted with many layers of white paint.

On the interior, the structural framing consists of eight vertically framed sections forming an octagonal volume. Eight 5 1/2"-wide x 4 1/4"-deep corner posts are mortised into a 6" tall by 8" deep top plate. Studs fill the eight intervening sections of the perimeter wall. The top plate is made structurally continuous by half-lapped, pegged joints reinforced by eight short splice plates (4 1/2" tall by 7" deep) spanning between and mortised into the plates at each corner. Nothing remains of the original sill, which stood on the top of the stone enclosure and was aligned with its exterior face. The sill, which was cut each time a new dressing room door was added, was fully replaced in the mid-twentieth century with discontinuous sections of treated wood made up of three 2" x 10" boards.

The weatherboard cladding of the octagonal building continues behind the dressing room wings, but the weatherboards in each wing's gables are discontinuous. The roof structure of the wings terminates in boards let into the outer face of the studs, except at the west wing, where the roof battens can be seen projecting into the main room. The four remaining wall sections are made of six evenly spaced studs. The structural framing of all eight walls was braced by angled members extending to each side from midway up the corner posts down to the sill. The two outer pairs of studs are discontinuous, toenailed into each of the braces where they intersect. All surfaces of the exterior and interior of the building, except for the roof structure, are painted with many coats of whitewash and white paint.

The roof structure is original. The hip rafters extend to the corners of the frame of the octagonal oculus at the center of the roof. Parallel common rafters corresponding to the studs run between the hips. Each rafter is inscribed with a Roman numeral framing mark. Birdsmouths on the ends of each rafter are notched into the top of the top plate. The roofing shingles are carried on early, widely spaced battens that span between the rafters. It is not yet clear if the perimeter framing of the oculus itself is of an early date.

The roof of the building was not originally supported by a center post. The central support was first added in the mid-to-late nineteenth century and was replaced between 1955 and 1963 with the current structural system, in which a recycled telephone pole rises in the center to support an umbrella-like set

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of braces to each side of the oculus. Two modern 2" by 12" girts extend from the post to four equidistant corners of the building.

The building's original design, workmanship, and materials have been altered by repairs and minor updates over many years. Doors giving access to the spout bath, the cold plunge, and the dressing rooms on the northeast and southeast were cut through the sill and most of the angle braces. Extensive repairs in the mid-20th replaced all the sections of the sill. The building is currently in fair condition, with moisture damage to some structural members from a leaking roof and damp air from the spring.

North and South Wings

The north and south dressing rooms are the earliest of the wings, in place by 1831. All four gabled wings were nearly identical and measured about ten feet wide and fourteen feet long, including four-foot deep porches incorporated under the main roof at the outer end of each. A six-over-six sash window on the right-hand side lit each of the four dressing rooms. The north dressing room is the best preserved. The east and west dressing rooms, originally identical, were added by the mid-1830s. The east dressing room was replaced in the late 1840s with a larger wing containing the cold plunge.

Each of the three surviving wings is clad with plain weatherboards capped by a minimal cornice made of beaded trim like the main building. The wings have 3" by 1 3/8" corner trim with a beaded edge and beaded door and window frames. The roof at the porch is carried on extensions of the top plate of the side walls. The trim on each of these plates display notches for original corner posts, removed in the nineteenth century. A beaded board across the bottom of each porch gable ends in a decorative curved shape aligned with the lower end of the rafters.

On the interior of the north and south wings, the walls are sheathed with 6-inch horizontal tongue-and-groove boards separated by 3/16" beads. The ceilings are finished with random-width 6", 9", and 11"-wide tongue-and-groove boards nailed to the joists. The board-and-batten outer doors are original and are trimmed with a narrow beaded board that forms the door head and jambs. The north door was later divided into a Dutch door by a horizontal saw cut. The north wing has a modern concrete floor. Early peg rails to hold clothes are located on each side wall of each of the dressing rooms. The plain 1" x 7" trim on the doors to the central bath was installed in the mid-twentieth century.

The south wing was altered in the mid-19th century, by enclosing the porch, lowering the ceiling, and walling off a portion along the east side to form a corridor to give access to the added spout bath, a shed enclosure along the east side that was added in the late 1840s. The weatherboarded lean-to contains a wooden stair (rebuilt in recent years) giving access to the low-ceilinged lower area under the floor into the spout bath discharges. Beyond the stair is a toilet room at the south end of the lean-to, screened by a modern vertical board partition.

The south wing is raised off the ground on rough limestone piers on the north side and on a coursed rubble foundation wall on the east side, protecting the wing from the outflow of the pool. The enclosed

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porch is entered by a plain batten door and lit by a small, four-light, casement window that retains angled slots intended to hold (missing) louvers.

The West Wing

The west wing was built about a decade after the north and south wings, and was deliberately built to match the earlier appendages in form and detail. It was later altered to serve as the main entrance to the bath house. At that time, the exterior and interior door openings were widened and the main entry door was replaced with a molded four-panel door. The interior of the west wing has plain, random-width horizontal interior wall and ceiling sheathing measuring from 5" to 12". The butted floorboards are modern.

East Wing/Cold Plunge

The east wing of the octagonal bath was replaced entirely in the late 1840s to make room for a new wing containing the cold plunge, a small tank filled with water from a nearby cold spring. With the removal of the eastern two-thirds of the wing in the 1980s, the section that remains now contains two dressing rooms. When first built, the east wing was made three feet wider than the previous wing by aligning its north side with the adjacent corner of the octagonal building. The exterior of the remaining portion is clad with board-and-batten siding. A fixed casement on the north side lights the dressing room. An early six-over-six sash lights the south side. The interior featured exposed interior framing designed to carry vertical exterior board-and-batten sheathing. A small dressing room, built at the same time as the cold plunge, intervened between the cold plunge room and the main section, separated by a plain vertical board partition and lit by a six-light casement window in the north wall.

Southeast and Northeast Additions

The southeast addition was built as a lean-to against the southeast side of the bathhouse in the antebellum era. It does not align with the southeast face of the octagonal section, but is shifted to the northeast, where it overlaps the east wing, creating a complex floor plan and roof shape. The southeast addition is clad with vertical tongue and groove boards and supported on stone and concrete-block piers. The three dressing rooms on the interior are lit by three-light, transom-shaped windows and lined by vertical tongue-and-groove boards with narrow beaded joints. The random width tongue-and-groove floor appears to be original.

The lean-to across the northeast face of the octagonal central section was added, probably in the 1880s, to increase the number of dressing rooms. It has a shed roof and is clad with vertical board siding. It contains two dressing rooms, each lit by what were originally six-over-six sash windows with square exterior trim. The walls and ceiling on the interior are sheathed with plain tongue-and-groove boards placed vertically on the walls and separated by a vertical-board partition. The floor was replaced with a concrete slab during a repair in the 1980s.

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Ladies' Bath House (contributing building, mid-1870s)

Stone Bath Enclosure

The twenty-two-sided central portion of the Ladies' Bath House stands on a circular stone wall that encloses the spring and pool. The two-foot-thick stone wall is provided with a narrow vertical opening on the southeastern side which permits the water in the pool to be fully drained. The opening is filled with a wooden sluice gate similar to the one in the Gentlemen's Bath. The opening is reinforced by buttresses on the exterior to either side. On the lower, southeastern side, the stone wall is fully exposed on the exterior, while on the east and north it is mostly below grade. A stone wall to the west of the outflow keeps water out of the area under the dressing rooms. The water flows through a shallow channel until it joins Warm Spring Branch to the southeast.

The water from the octagonal spring flows along the eastern side of the Ladies' Bath, partly under the outer ring of dressing rooms on that side. Another, smaller channel that drains the adjacent Drinking Spring flows around the west side of the building between it and the Reception House of c. 1890. A brick tank containing the spout bath was inserted in one of the dressing rooms to the east of the outflow at some point.

Another bath was added in two dressing rooms on the north side of the main structure, from which the dividing partition was removed. Today this is identified as the Invalid's Bath and contains a primitive lift for invalids. An historic photograph from the 1950s demonstrates how the lift continued to be used well into the twentieth century.² Retention of an exterior door from the Invalid's Bath to the exterior when the dressing room doors were blocked indicates that the special bath could be used by disabled people of both sexes. A large rock on the platform under the chair probably helped the light-weight lift to submerge under the water. Another photograph, probably from the 1930s, shows a patient in a wheelchair leaving the Ladies' Pool.³ Comparison of the photograph of the lift with its appearance today confirms that it was rebuilt in the third quarter of the last century, approximating its original appearance. The pool itself is made of concrete, which may have replaced an older stone or brick pool.

Ladies' Bath House

The main section of the Ladies' Bath consists of a framework of timbers organized between a series of twenty-two posts, one at each angle, about six inches wide and four inches deep. The four-inch deep by six-inch wide posts rise from the sill, which is placed directly on the stone spring enclosure, to support the building's top plate. This central form is surrounded and braced by a continuous outer ring of dressing rooms about eight feet deep. The roof of the outer section is given a scooped appearance or "kick" by the use of curved rafters. The twenty-two facets of the outer ring were originally supported on stone piers at the angles, spanned by wood sills. Where the piers stand in the current of the outflow from the

² Invalids' Chair demonstrated by Horace Tonsler, 1950s. Collection, John T. Reddick.

³ Invalid wheeled from the Ladies' Bath, mid-twentieth century, Collection, John T. Reddick.

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octagonal bath, several of these piers have been replaced by wood pilings or dry-stacked concrete block supports. The supports along the north and west are not visible above grade and behind the deck that originally formed a perimeter around the entire building. In recent decades, the Ladies' Bath House has suffered considerable physical deterioration due to many years of deferred maintenance.

Exterior

The top plate carries a faceted roof in which common rafters rise to support a central frame surrounding an oculus. The oculus was originally crowned by a dwarf board-and-batten parapet that gave a finish to the top of the building. The exterior of the central section is clad with vertical boards, the joints of which are covered by battens where they are exposed to the weather. The top of the center section, as rebuilt in recent decades, consists of a frieze of vertically placed 2' x 12' boards. Eight-inch long sections of 2" x 12" rest on top of the posts. Modern 2" x 12" outriggers project from the exterior of the frieze to support the eaves, separated by short sections of 2" x 12" lumber. The original rafters ended at the wall plate and were provided with separate decorative sawn ends on the exterior. Today these survive on the lower roof only. The bottom edge of the outer wall retains old sections of a beveled water table that covers the sill. The water table and the bottom of the sheathing along the eastern and southeastern sides has been replaced with a tall horizontal board. The open area under the dressing rooms is infilled on the south by old vertical boards.

Each external facet of the outer ring was originally pierced by a two-panel door topped by a three-light transom. Most of the doorways were infilled with boards and battens in the mid-twentieth century, but the square, narrow outer frames remain and the transoms continue to light the interior. One of these doors survives on the interior on the south side. Two doors are different from the others in that they are located next to each other on each side of a corner post on the west side, where today they serve as the main entries to the bath. One door remains operable on the north, giving access to the Invalid's Bath.

The three exterior doors are now equipped with plain batten doors unlike the original two-panel doors. All that remains of the outer perimeter deck that gave access to the dressing rooms is a section of replaced flooring along the north and west side. At one point in the early-to-mid-twentieth century, this section was screened from the highway and the building to the north by a high wood fence. In the mid-twentieth century, the deck along the north side appears to have given access to the Ladies' Bath from the roadside parking area on the east side of Warm Springs Run.

Interior

The interior was extensively repaired and reinforced in the mid-twentieth century and the roof structure was completely replaced in recent years. It will be useful to begin by describing the original form and then proceed to the alterations. The main posts were originally connected at the top by twenty-two plates joined in some way into a continuous member. A series of horizontal girts, approximately 3" deep and 4" tall, spanned between and were mortised into each post. The lowest of these formed the heads of the twenty-two doors placed in the center of all but two of the wall facets. A second set of horizontal

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members about eighteen inches above the door heads corresponded to the ceiling joists of the outer ring of dressing rooms. A series of square elements visible in early photographs on top of this member were the ends of the joists that originally tied the plate of the outer ring of dressing rooms to the frame of the main section.⁴ The wide section of plain boards above is original and corresponds to the height of the roof of the outer ring. The horizontal structure at the top of the outer roof is provided by a pair of girts spaced about 12" apart. The last section of boards that extend to the top plate was stabilized on the interior by an intermediate girt.



Ingalls Family Annual Party, Ladies' Bath House, c. 1930 [Bath County Historical Society].

Alterations

The changes made to the building can be seen by comparing the historic photographs from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to the current building. The lower portions of the structural framing look fairly level in early twentieth-century postcards such as the one referenced above, but by the time of the photographs of an Ingalls family party c. 1930, the structure appears rotten and buckling.⁵ At some point between the two sets of images a set of braces was installed to link the midpoint of the angle posts to the ring of the oculus, strengthening the roof. There was as yet no central post or umbrella structure at the top. After the 1930s, the inner frame was extensively repaired. The lower half of each post was replaced and the posts reinforced by a new inner set of 3½" deep by 6" wide posts that were bolted through the existing posts. The horizontal girts and vertical board cladding

⁴ Warm Springs, Interior of Ladies' Bath, Postcard, c. 1910, Valentine Museum.

⁵ Ingalls family annual party at the Warm Springs in the Ladies' Pool, c. 1930, Bath County Historical Society.

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were also replaced around the entire building below the roof of the outer ring. The horizontal framing members and board cladding were retained above the overhead joists of the dressing rooms. A central post was added with an umbrella-like structure supporting the oculus.

When the frame of the main room was repaired and reinforced at mid-century, the inner dressing room doors were completely rebuilt. The form and trim appears similar to the original, but with subtle differences. The new members at the door heads and below were replaced with true 2" x 4" boards with the long side placed horizontally. The side posts and heads were trimmed with 1" x 4" lumber on both sides, provided with a bead-like bevel on the inside edge. The new horizontal members were toenailed to new 2" x 4" vertical members. The doors were not reused and no trace of hinges remains. The door heads were lowered, so that the space between the heads and the original framing member above is larger than it was in historic photos. Two of the bays on the southwest side were renovated, probably in the 1980s, by adding unpainted diagonal boards over the framing on the interior of the main room.

Drinking Spring Pavilion (1870s, contributing structure)

The Drinking Spring is located between the Ladies' Bath and the Gentlemen's Bath. It is adjacent to and feeds into a shallow spring pool with rock edging known as the Children's Pool. The water flows around the west side of the Ladies' Bath before it joins the outflow from the larger pool on its opposite side.

The eight-sided pavilion over the Drinking Spring is a low, pagoda-like structure with a tall, tapered roof with a large wooden finial at the top. The building stands on a circular stone base that appears to date from the temple-form pavilion that preceded it, dating from the mid-nineteenth century. The roof is supported on eight five-sided posts linked by a beam that is trimmed with ¾" boards on the interior and exterior. The outer board is shaped to give each opening a shallow Gothic form. The edge of the roof is trimmed with a decorative scalloped verge board. The upper section of the roof is covered with decorative scalloped wood shingles, while the lower slope is covered with plain square shingles.

The roof structure consists of a complex form made of mortis-and-tenoned members. A 2" by 6" joist diagonally spans the building from corner to corner. Joists extending to each side complete a cross shape. A diamond-shaped central structure receives the four joists from the four remaining corners. Additional joists are framed into the sides of the eight principal joists. Two-by-four rafters shaped to form the curved roof are birdsmouthed into the top of each of the joists. These carry the widely spaced sheathing boards. A central post extends though the apex of the roof and supports the upper ends of the rafters.

Lattice rails extend between the posts to enclose the interior seating area. A central opening giving access to the spring is covered with a plywood box. A set of benches fit into the octagonal form of the pavilion interior. Most of the woodwork, including the benches, dates from the late nineteenth century. The floor is covered with an added mid-twentieth-century brick pavement.

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The Reception House (c. 1890, contributing building,)

The Reception House, built in the late nineteenth century, was centered in front of the west side of the Ladies' Bath, for which it served as a waiting room. The 1875 brochure mentions a handsome reception room attached to the Ladies' Bath, but the current building was not built until c. 1890. The one-story, one-room building was given a fashionable Queen-Anne inspired exterior and a decorative interior.



Ladies' Bath House, Drinking Spring, and Reception House, c. 1911 [Collection of John T. Riddick].

Exterior

The exterior is sheathed with ornamental "novelty" siding above a wainscot consisting of panels filled with diagonal tongue-and-groove boards. Historic photographs indicate that the building originally incorporated a decorative paint scheme with at least three shades or colors.⁶ The standing-seam metal roof rises above a tall, bracketed cornice that extends around the ends to form a pediment. The pediment is filled with a decorative central circular pierced vent surrounded by panels of diagonally placed tongue-and-groove boards. The original portion of the building is supported on brick piers.

The building has a highly decorative spindle-work porch that originally wrapped around the west end and along the north side. The two-bay north end contained the main entry and a window to each side of a central internal brick stove flue. The sides were each pierced by two two-over-two sash windows with louvered blinds. The patrons were able to enter the bath by means of a central door in the east end.

⁶ Warm Springs, Springhouse and Ladies' Bath House, c. 1911. Collection, James T. Reddick.

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A shed addition across the rear (south) elevation, added in the early twentieth century, was followed by an adjoining shed addition at the west end at mid-century, by which time the building served as the year around residence of the bath-keepers. The west addition required the removal of the porch at the north end of the building and the extension of the porch along the north side of the new section. The builders made use of the existing trim, window, door, and siding from the original west end to help the north front of the addition blend in.

Interior

The interior of the original building consists of a single room. The high-ceilinged room is lined with diagonal tongue-and-groove boards arranged in decorative panels on the walls and ceiling, separated by wide applied boards with decorative reeding. The strips of wood are arranged in contrasting colors and species. There is no baseboard. The tongue-and-groove wood flooring extends through the entire building. The doors and windows are provided with reeded trim with bullseye corner blocks.

The first addition contains two rooms, each entered by glass-panel doors inserted in the former window locations on the south side of the building. The second addition along the west side is finished with square trim and celotex wall sheathing with the joints covered with wood strips. The southern room in the west addition contains a bathroom.

Shed (c. 1940, noncontributing building)

A very small shed dating from the second quarter of the 20th century is located in the southwestern corner of the property. It is built into the fence that surrounds it, near the spot where the outflow from the Warm Springs enters the Warm Springs Run. Its original function is not apparent, although it resembles a privy. The pyramidal roof is covered with asphalt shingles and the walls are covered with board-and-batten siding. A door opening is located on the south front.

Large Footbridge (noncontributing structure, c. 2000)

The large footbridge crosses Warm Springs Run to give access to the baths from the parking area along the north side of the stream. The bridge, which has been replaced many times over the years, consists of a pair of steel bar-joists that span the stream, covered by a treated wood plank floor, and railed by four heavy vertical posts on each side with a slender top rail and crossed diagonal members spanning between them. A bridge of similar appearance has occupied this site since the 1930s, when the majority of the guests no longer came from the hotel that once stood to the north of the bath houses.

Small Footbridge (c. 2000 noncontributing structure)

A small footbridge crosses the outflow from the Gentlemen's Bath. The bridge, which has been replaced in the past twenty years, consists of two steel I-beams that span the stream, a treated wood plank floor, and a simple painted wood railing with down braces at the posts. A bridge of similar appearance has

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occupied this site since the 1930s, when the majority of the guests no longer came from the hotel that once stood to the north of the bath houses.

Section 8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

☒

A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

☐

B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

☒

C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

☐

D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

HEALTH/MEDICINE

ARCHITECTURE

COMMERCE

ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION

SOCIAL HISTORY

Period of Significance

c. 1760-1925

Significant Dates

c. 1760

c. 1826

c. 1875

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph

The Warm Springs Bath Houses were given early recognition among Virginia landmarks when the property was listed in the Virginia Landmarks Register in 1968 and in the National Register of Historic Places in 1969. At that time, the property's areas of significance were Art (which included Architecture

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at the time) and Social History and its period of significance was broadly defined as “18th century” and “19th century.” The original listing did not specify the property’s level of significance. In addition to the property’s significance in the area of Social History, this nomination update for the Warm Springs Bath Houses adds under Criterion A the areas of Health/Medicine, Commerce, and Entertainment/Recreation. The property also remains significant under Criterion C in the area of Architecture for its architecturally significant collection of resources related to the medicinal and social use of thermal springs. The start date of the period of significance has been more carefully defined to begin c. 1760, when European settlers first built the octagonal stone pool, and has been extended to end in 1925, when the large 19th century hotel associated with the property was demolished. Since that time and during several campaigns of repair, very few changes have been made to any of the buildings.

This nomination update provides justification for classifying the property as **nationally significant** in the areas of Health/Medicine and Architecture due to its direct association with an ancient health care method of transcendent importance and the architectural design of the bath houses themselves. The Warm Springs Bath Houses also is significant at the **statewide level** in the areas of Commerce, Entertainment/ Recreation, and Social History due to its influence on the development of western Virginia’s early commercial and transportation networks and as a popular resort visited by people from many walks of life from the late 18th through early 20th century.

Narrative Statement of Significance

The Warm Spring Bath Houses and the immediate surrounding landscape were the subject of a historic structure report prepared for the property owner in 2016. Much of the material in this statement of significance is derived from that report.⁷ Also of note is that the property has good potential for intact archaeological deposits that, with professional investigation, could provide important information that documents 18th- and 19th-century medicinal and social practices at the spring. The following discussion provides the historical context for understanding the statewide significance of the Warm Springs Bath Houses in the areas of Commerce, Entertainment/Recreation, and Social History, as well as the property’s national significance in the areas of Health/Medicine and Architecture. An analysis of the Warm Springs Bath Houses compared against several National Historic Landmark and National Register-listed springs resorts concludes the discussion.

Thermal Springs and the American Development of the Bathing Tradition

American use of medicinal springs is firmly rooted in European medicinal practices dating back to Roman times. It probably began with the earliest discovery of sources of mineral water. The iron and sulphur spring at Lynn, Massachusetts, was noted for its curative properties as early as 1669, although it was not developed as a resort until 1811.⁸ Virginia’s Tidewater region very likely lost sight of the

⁷ Worsham 2016.

⁸ Alonzo Lewis and James R. Newhall, History of Lynn, Essex County, Massachusetts: 1629-1864. Lynn: George C Herbert, 1890, 257.

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English bathing tradition during the early colonial era because of a lack of free springs in lowland areas. The earliest commercial mineral water cures in the Mid-Atlantic states were in Pennsylvania, and it is to this source that the American springs tradition owes its development. As early as 1750, the springs in and around Philadelphia were in commercial use, including Yellow (now Chester) Springs, in Chester County, and Bath Springs, near Bristol, both known as early as 1720.⁹ The strong English influence in the Philadelphia area is clear from the selection of the names Bath, Bristol, and later, Harrogate, for springs resorts around that city, and from the English flavor of the resort life.

At about the same time (the mid-18th century), springs in the western part of Virginia began to become known and utilized by European colonists. All the evidence suggests that these early healing resorts were national in character, and as diverse as were the settlers in the western Virginia area, who came from Pennsylvania, Maryland, and the entire eastern seaboard as well as eastern Virginia, as confirmed by contemporary literature.¹⁰

The first of the great Virginia Springs was known as Warm Springs, Medicinal Springs, and (later) Berkeley Springs (now in West Virginia). It was located about 150 miles west of Philadelphia and 90 miles west of Baltimore. Sharing its name with the Warm Springs in Augusta County (now Bath) has confused historians ever since. As early as 1748, the Berkeley Spring was regarded by George Washington as "celebrated."¹¹ In 1769, Washington and a group of wealthy Tidewater Virginians spent as much as a month at Berkeley Springs, where about 600 people congregated at one time. Like the springs nearer Philadelphia, Berkeley Springs provided an impressive colonial imitation of the social and cultural life of the English spas in addition to a bath in the healing waters. Washington housed himself and his family in a tent and marquee rented in Winchester. In 1775, the bath at Berkeley Springs consisted of a hollow of about six by four feet screened by boughs, used alternately by men and women.¹² The late 18th century saw a change: five bath houses with dressing rooms were advertised in 1784.¹³

By 1792, one of the first professional commentators on the Virginia springs left the now-fading Berkeley Springs out of a list of Virginia's most important waters, which now consisted of the Sweet Springs, the Sweet Chalybeate Springs, the White Sulphur Springs, and the "Thermals"—the Warm and Hot springs in Bath County. The writer, Dr. John Rouelle, a French émigré, compared the medicinal waters favorably with the springs at Aix-la-Chapelle, Spa, and Plombières-les-Bains, indicating that some of the influence on the Virginia springs operators and designers came from Continental as well as

⁹ F. H. Shelton, "Springs and Spas of Old-Time Philadelphians," The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography 47 (1923): 196-237.

¹⁰ Dorothy Gilchrist, "The Virginia Springs: A Mirror of Antebellum Society," MA thesis, U of Virginia. 1943, 11.

¹¹ Gilchrist 1943, 5.

¹² Gilchrist 1943, 10.

¹³ Gilchrist 1943, 15.

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British sources.¹⁴

Jean Rouelle was a nephew of the great French chemists Guillaume-Francois and Hilaire-Marin Rouelle, who gave popular lectures in Paris attended by many of the most prominent thinkers of the French Enlightenment. He succeeded his uncle Hilaire-Marin as apothecary to the Duc d'Orleans and was engaged in 1788 by the short-lived Richmond Academy of Arts and Sciences as chief mineralogist and professor of natural history, chemistry, and botany. As professor, he was to make trips to collect materials for a cabinet of natural history and samples of "productions of every sort which Nature shall offer of a specially desirable kind in these vast countries" such as grains, trees, shrubs, animals, and shellfish. He undertook an extended trip to the various springs and published an influential tract on the mineral waters of Virginia in 1792. He returned to France in 1797 with an important collection of plants, minerals, and animals.¹⁵

Bathing at most resorts remained primitive for many years. In 1792, bathing at Virginia's Hot Springs, Sweet Chalybeate Springs, and Sweet Springs was conducted in unenclosed holes in the ground, while the cold-water White Sulphur Spring had a reportedly adequate bath house, of which little is known.¹⁶ Accommodations and support buildings at all the springs were built of logs, said by one visitor in 1805 to be "the universal fashion of this country."¹⁷ John Bell in 1832 regretted the lack of a suitable bathing accommodation of heated water at the White Sulphur.¹⁸

Virginia's Thermal Springs

An important group of thermally heated waters are found in a line along the western edge of the Virginia/West Virginia line. As many as 100 springs are recognized as being warmer than the average temperature of the air (around 48-54°F). These include the historic springs known as the Hot (104 degrees), the Warm (98 degrees), the Healing (86 degrees), the New River White Sulphur (85 degrees), the Red Sweet (78 degrees), and the Sweet (74 degrees). The water derives from rainfall that seeps down to areas of rock that are naturally warmed by residual heat from the earth's formation and from the decay of radioactive elements. According to a study of the springs, the gradient of heat relative to depth varies with location, but averages 1.5°F for every 100 feet of depth in western Virginia. The water, which takes about twenty years to complete its cycle, is thought to issue from what are described as "limestone formations. . . brought to the surface by anticlinal folding."¹⁹

¹⁴ John A. Rouelle, 1792. Complete Treatise on the Mineral Waters of Virginia. 1792, 64.

¹⁵ Julien Pierre, Mystère sur l'enseignement d'un Rouelle. Revue d'Histoire de la Pharmacie 66:236 (1978) 66.
¹⁶ Rouelle 1792, 29-55.

¹⁷ John Baylor, Letter to John Baylor [Jr.]. 5 Aug 1805, Acc. no. 2257. Box 1. Baylor Papers, Alderman Library, U of Virginia, Charlottesville, Virginia.

¹⁸ John Bell, On Baths and Mineral Waters (Philadelphia: Henry H. Porter, 1831) 429.

¹⁹ John K. Costain, Geological and Geophysical Study of the Origin of the Warm Springs in Bath County, Virginia. Department of Geological Sciences, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, 1 June 1975—30 Apr 1976.

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The geothermally heated waters of the Warm Springs Valley, recognized as the Warm, the Hot, the Healing, and the Falling springs, are collectively the hottest in the region. Bath County's Warm and Hot springs were recognized early as centers for healing. Explorer Dr. Thomas Walker had found six invalids at the Hot Springs in 1750.²⁰

Establishment of Warm Springs

There are three springs grouped near each other at the Warm Springs site.²¹ George Featherstonhaugh in 1834 observed that the ground in which the springs rose was very marshy and would make possible the addition of other bath buildings in addition to the Great Bath House already in place:

The marshy ground in which these baths are situated, contains in the three or four acres which it comprehends, a prodigious variety of springs, differing perhaps in nothing but their temperature, which varies a little. Myriads of bubbles are rising in every part of the brook, which will no doubt be enclosed at some future day to increase the number of baths.²²

Less optimistically, the site was described in 1804 as "a rude uncultivated spot; occupied chiefly by Weeds and Woods, rocks and rubbish, Hogs, and Dogs."²³

Meanwhile, Scottish commentator Alexander Dick described the site in 1806:

This is a very Singular looking place—It is Situated in a deep hollow Surrounded on all Sides by high Mountains—There is a tavern with a number of log huts & Cabins all round it for the accomodation [sic] of the Compy—There is also a Court House & Gaol. —The Spring is a most Copious one indeed. It forces itself up with great Violence by different issues which Cover a Considerable Span of ground & the run from which when Collected is Sufficient to turn a Grist Mill—The basin of the principal Spring is 50 feet in diameter & 5 or 6 feet deep in the Center—The Water is very clear & transparent, but has a bluish Cast & a pretty Strong Sulpherous [sic] Smell. The temperature when it issues from the earth is 96 degrees & in the Morning when the Air is Cool a Steam rises from it all along in the Valley as from boiling Water—It is a very great Curiosity indeed.²⁴

The territory in which the thermal springs are situated was slowly colonized and subdivided during the

²⁰ Gilcrest 1943, 6-7.

²¹ Costain 1975-76.

²² Featherstonhaugh, George. Excursion through the Slave States: Washington on the Potomac to the Frontier of Mexico; with of popular manners and geological notices. New York: Harper and Sons, 1844.

²³ William Cox to Rosanna Owens Cox, 29 Aug. 1804, Virginia Historical Society. Quoted in Charlene M. Boyer Lewis. Ladies and Gentlemen on Display: Planter Society at the Virginia Springs, 1790-1860. U of Virginia Press, 2001, 29.

²⁴ Sir Alexander Dick, Journal of Alexander Dick in America 1806-1809 [edited by] Helen Beall Lewis, Master's Thesis, University of Virginia, 1984.

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18th century. Warm Springs figured in the American Revolution as a mustering place for the Continental Army at the end of the roads accessible by wagon. The seven Augusta companies gathered there in early September 1774 to cut a trail through the woods to the general gathering point at Lewisburg in the lead-up to the Battle of Point Pleasant.²⁵

Bath County was created from parts of Augusta, Botetourt, and Greenbrier counties in 1790. Warm Springs became the county seat and served as the principal settlement in the valley for many years. Landowners in undeveloped areas sometimes tried to stimulate economic development by treating the springs as a shared public resource. Lord Fairfax had taken that route at Berkeley Springs and both the Warm and the Hot springs made use of the same model.

During the 18th and early 19th century, Virginia's government felt the need to support public works in the western part of the state, to encourage its growth and industry during a time when there was insufficient capital in the region. In addition to support of turnpike roads, in the late colonial era, the government even extended itself to capitalize buildings at mineral springs. One scholar has pointed out how interest in the potential of the mineral springs west of the Alleghenies led to repeated proposals for better roads.²⁶

A group of Fredericksburg businessmen advertised a lottery in 1768 for "raising the sum of nine hundred pounds, to make a road over the mountain to the warm and hot springs in Augusta county." In 1770, prominent citizens in Albemarle, Augusta, Botetourt, and Hanover counties petitioned the House of Burgesses, not only for a public road, but for buildings to shelter the patients who used the springs:

that the Warm Springs in the Counties of Augusta and Botetourt had been found to be very salutary to the Diseased and Infirm, who had drank of their Waters, but that it is very difficult for the Persons who most want that Relief to procure it, there being no good Roads to those places; and that great Advantages would be derived to the Country by opening and clearing such Roads thither, and proposing that a Sum of Money, sufficient for the Purpose, may be allowed by the Public, to open a safe and good Road from the Warm Springs to Jennings's Gap; that a Turnpike be established at the pass of the Warm Springs Mountains, with a reasonable Toll for keeping the Road in Repair, and that Trustees be appointed to receive Subscriptions, as well for keeping the Road in Repair, as for building Houses for the Reception and Security of the poor Sick who resort to the Springs, and to see the Public and private Money appropriated, for the Purposes aforesaid, faithfully applied.²⁷

The colonial government passed a resolution authorizing the new turnpike and houses for the sick. Although nothing is known about the proposed accommodations, the new road was finished the same year and vastly improved travel from Staunton. It shows up on the 1828 Public Works Map as the "old

²⁵ Oren Fredric Morton, Annals of Bath County, Staunton VA: McClure Co., 1918, 90.

²⁶ Christopher E. Hendricks. Backcountry Towns of Colonial Virginia. U of Tennessee Press, 2006.

²⁷ Henry Read McIlwaine. Journals of the House of Burgesses of Virginia, 1619-1658/59, Volume 12. Colonial Press, 1906, 167.

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road.” The tract containing the source at Berkeley Springs was dedicated to public use in perpetuity by legislation enacted during the American Revolution, at the first session of the Virginia General Assembly in 1776, which provided for the appointment of trustees. It remains the property of the state of West Virginia today.²⁸

The Lewis Family (1751-1815)

Sons and grandsons of Augusta County pioneer leader John Lewis were involved in the development of three of the earliest of the western Virginia Springs: the Hot, which was opened on land belonging to his sons Thomas and Andrew; the Sweet, which was owned by another son William Lewis, and, in 1751, the Warm. Thomas Lewis (1718-1790) patented the 140-acre Warm Springs tract in his and his young son’s name. That son, Capt. John Lewis (1749-1788), a veteran of the Revolutionary War, settled there and with his father developed the resort. By the start of the American Revolution, they had constructed the great octagonal bath, a small tavern, a store, and several log and brick cabins. By 1786, Thomas Lewis had laid out the lots for an adjacent town.

The early developers of the thermal springs, anxious to encourage settlement in this remote section of Virginia, supported unrestricted public use of the water. At Berkeley Springs, the proprietor had laid out a town and donated the public square containing the springs to the state in perpetuity. At the Hot Springs, brothers Thomas and Andrew Lewis and their partner Thomas Bullitt made an agreement in 1763 that access to the source would “be free to all” and that they would share in the expense of the building of the “bathhouses [that] shall be erected... and other necessary and convenient houses for the entertainment of the sick persons who should choose to visit.” They agreed that if they should decide, instead, to split their grant into two separate portions, as they did in 1766, the dividing line would go through the center of the spring and would continue to be free to access.²⁹

The organization of the town at Warm Springs was similar. There appears to have been an understanding in the 1780s that lots sold in the town came with free access to the spring. The bath was located on a reserved six-acre square lined on the north and west by town lots and probably intended by John Lewis to be a public square. The Lewis family retained all the lots to the north of the spring tract and sold lots that faced the spring from the west. The southernmost block of lots next to the springs tract was set aside by Margaret Lewis for the Bath County courthouse.

The Town of “Bathville”

In order to make the most of his land holdings in the valley and his investment in the mineral springs, John Lewis proposed a new town on his 140-acre holding in 1786. He laid out the lots for this town on 25 acres of land “round and adjacent to the great Warm Springs on the tract of land on which the said

²⁸ Virgil Anson Lewis. History and Government of West Virginia. American Book Company, 1904, 211.

²⁹ Indenture between Thomas Bullitt and Thomas and Andrew Lewis, 1766, Chamberlayne Papers, Virginia Historical Society.

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Lewis then resided.” It seems clear that Lewis intended that the springs would be a resource for anyone who bought a lot and chose to make an improvement within a prescribed period of time. This is confirmed by the plat of the proposed town, which shows the mineral spring on a six-acre tract adjacent to the town lots. In the nearby town of Hot Baths, each lot came with access to the Hot Spring.³⁰ Although the town at Warm Springs was never officially incorporated and the Lewis family continued to own the “Springs Tract,” the northeast quadrant of this “public land” became the site of the first Bath County Court House.

The town was situated on either side of Warm Springs Run. It consisted of three squares of four lots each to the east of the twelve-acre springs tract, and an adjoining nine-block-square grid to the north. The main street corresponded to today’s Church Road and most buildings were located on the high ground to the west of the road. The road turned at the tavern and followed the alley north of the bath toward Warm Springs Mountain. The tavern and its support buildings occupied the best lots along the main road. When Warm Springs was selected as the county seat of Bath County in 1792, the court first met in the home of Margaret Lewis and then made use of the northeast corner of the Springs Tract to form a public square.

Although the date of the subdivision is not known, John Lewis made lots available to purchasers well before his untimely death in 1788 ended his drive to have the town recognized by the Virginia General Assembly. The principal store at Warm Springs was operated by White, Kirk, and Co. as early as 1788, when the company loaned money to John Lewis.³¹ In 1792, a substantial number of local residents petitioned for the establishment of the town, which they proposed to name “Bathville.” They maintained that the town’s commerce was constricted by Margaret Lewis, who held the property for life, after which it was to pass to her son, Thomas Lynn Lewis.³²

A key tract in the controversy is made up of two lots, nos. 11 and 12. The lots were purchased by Valentine White, who assigned them to William Bowyer in 1788. William Bowyer, Anthony Mustoe, and William Chambers opened a tavern in a stone house on lot 12, directly opposite the bath, in 1803. The successors to the Lewises, who had never relinquished control of the spring, claimed to exercise a monopoly. Lawsuits, however, from 1794 until as late as 1833, sought to challenge their sole right to access. Probably because the town was never incorporated by the state in the 1790s, the Lewises and their successors were successful in maintaining that public access was not attached to lots that had been sold.³³ It may be this or another tavern near the spring that was still standing empty in 1838: “Also there is another large building standing near the Hotel apparently unoccupied and I am informed that a lawsuit is pending about a right to use the mineral waters is the cause in that being held by a different owner or

³⁰ Anthony Mustoe and William Chambers, ½-acre lot at the town of Hot Baths from Nathaniel Wilkinson et al, Bath County Deed Book 1, p. 494.

³¹ Chalkley’s Augusta County Records, 432.

³² Warren Skidmore and Donna Kaminsky. Lord Dunmore’s Little War of 1774. Heritage Books, 2002, 114.

³³ Bowyer, Mustoe, and Chambers vs Margaret Lewis, 1794, quoted in Bath County Chancery Court Case, Mayes vs Brockenbrough, 1833. Library of Virginia, Reel 22, 185.

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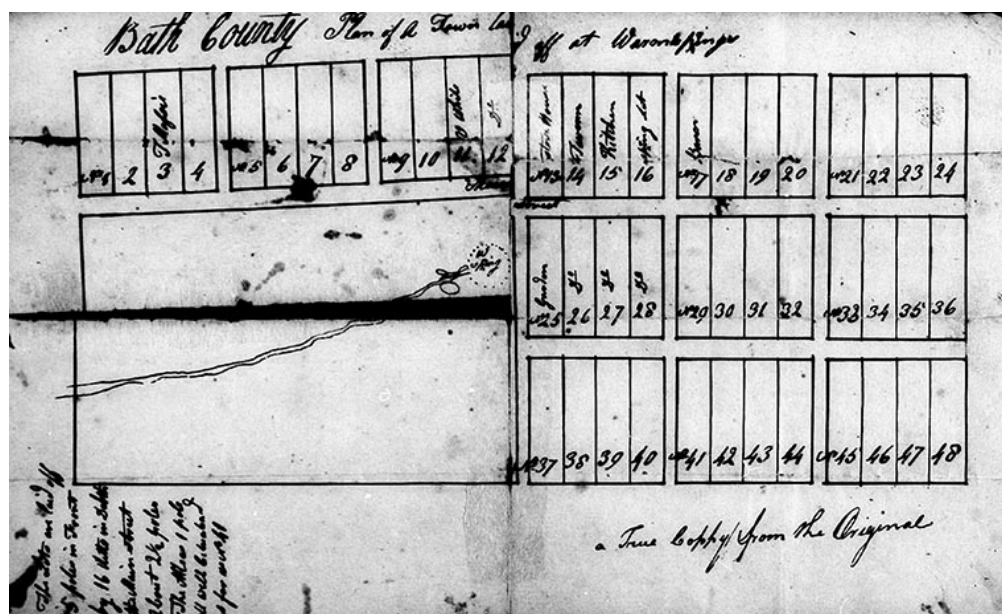
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Section number Additional DocumentationPage 24owners.”³⁴

Plat of a Town Laid Off at Warm Springs. Undated plat of 44 1/2-acre lots in the Town at Warm Springs arranged into blocks of four. Bath County Clerk's Office.

The problem of access was underscored in a 1792 petition to the state, submitted by local residents for legal recognition of the town, that explained that the springs property, being managed for minor children, could only be rented out, “and that at so extraordinary a rate, and under such restrictions as nearly forbid population altogether.”³⁵ Margaret Lewis opposed it, however, “because, by means of this spring, which is visited by many people, she has been able to sustain herself and her children since her husband’s death.”³⁶ This controversy suggests that the town’s establishment would have transformed the spring from a private site into a shared public amenity.

Indeed, the loss of the guiding hand and capital of John Lewis seems to have slowed the momentum of investment at the Warm Springs for the next few decades. The village that grew up around the spring, even though it was chosen to be the county seat, failed to fulfill its promise. In 1795, Thomas Lewis petitioned the state again to recognize the town.³⁷ Although in the following year the Virginia legislature authorized the county to lay out a town at the nearby Hot Springs, the petition for Bathville was never acted upon.³⁸

³⁴ E. Lee Shepherd, ed., “Trip to the Virginia Springs, an Extract from the Diary of Blair Bolling (1838), *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, 96:2 (April 1988) 211.

³⁵ Bath County Petition, 5 Oct. 1792. Virginia State Archives.

³⁶ Virginia General Assembly, Legislative Petitions, A 1535, 5 Oct. 1792, A 1536, 16 Oct. 1792, *Report of the Virginia State Library*, Division of Purchase and Printing, 1908, Volumes 5-7, 194-195.

³⁷ Virginia General Assembly, Legislative Petitions, A 1541, 25 Nov. 1795, 195.

³⁸ Joseph Thompson McAllister. *Historical Sketches of Virginia, Hot Springs, Warm Sulphur Springs and Bath*

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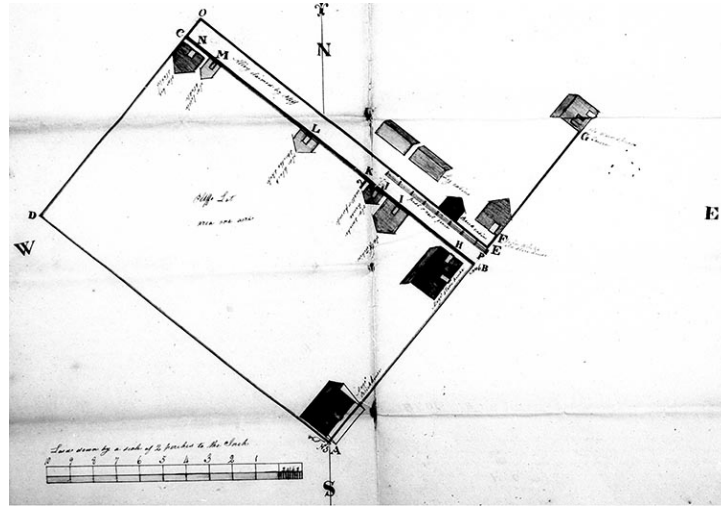
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Plat of the lot of George Mayse, in Bath County Chancery Court Case, Mayes vs Brockenbrough, 1833. Library of Virginia, Reel 22, 185. From center bottom to upper right, buildings are labelled Mayse's Brick House, Mayse's Stone House, Brick Cabin (set back from street), John White's Old Store House, and Old Warm Springs Tavern. The brick cabin appears to be the Gibson Cottage.

In spite of the lack of official recognition, the lots sold by the Lewis family gave an underlying form to later development. Margaret Lewis sold the spring and some of the lots to John Brockenbrough in 1815, but she retained other lots which she continued to sell from time to time as late as 1819, when she sold the "old store house lot" to merchants Richard Ludwell and Jacob Grouse, who operated the store next to the tavern.³⁹ In the following year, the store on their lot in Warm Springs was worth a substantial \$2,500.⁴⁰

A plat of George Mayse's lot at Warm Springs from an 1830s lawsuit shows how the land immediately northwest of the spring had appeared several decades earlier. His lot included "Mays' Brick House" and "Mays's Stone House" with an "Old Kitchen" and "Old Smokehouse" to the rear. His lots (nos. 11 and 12) are separated from the former Lewis lots (nos. 13-16), now Dr. John Brockenbrough's, by an alley or cross street. The Lewis lots (nos. 13-16) contain the former site of "John White's Old Store House," (probably the same as Ludwell and Grouse's lot mentioned above) as well as one brick cabin and two log cabins to the rear, and the former site of the "Old Warm Springs Tavern" on Lot 14. The tavern and cabins as drawn on the plat made up a modest assemblage of buildings.⁴¹

The lot and street layout gave a shape to the area around the springs that persists to this day.⁴² Church

County, Virginia. Salem, VA: Salem Printing and Publishing Co., 1908.

³⁹ Plat of the lot of George Mayse, in Bath County Chancery Court Case, Mayes vs Brockenbrough, 1833. Library of Virginia, Reel 22, 185.

⁴⁰ Bath County Land Books.

⁴¹ Plat, Mayse vs Brockenbrough, 1833.

⁴² Plat of a Town Laid Off at Warm Springs. Undated plat of 44 ½-acre lots in the Town at Warm Springs

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Avenue and Bath Street align with the plat. The relationship between the courthouse, on one side of the valley, and the tavern on the other gave the character of a public square to the marshy "tract" containing the spring that lay between them. William Burke acknowledged this now-hidden landscape structure when he wrote in 1846 that "the natural scenery is beautiful, but the place was laid out for a village, the public road passing by the court house and the hotel prevents a judicious or tasteful arrangement of the grounds about it. The square containing the Spring and Baths is, however, in the process of improvement," and in 1851 he added that "the grounds are broken in upon by the public road, which renders an ornamental and appropriate arrangement of them impractical."⁴³ Eventually, most of the town lots were absorbed by purchase into the Warm Springs resort property.

The Warm Springs Tavern

The "Old Warm Springs Tavern," was a conventional three-bay log or frame house, possibly of two stories in height.⁴⁴ Captain John Lewis was granted a license to keep an ordinary at Warm Springs in 1783 in company with innkeeper William Banks. He died unexpectedly, however, in 1788 and left the Warm Springs tract to his wife, Margaret Frogge Lewis. She raised their family at Warm Springs, managed the property, and was still living there well after 1815, when the Lewis family sold the lots containing the springs and tavern. The acreage associated with the Warm Springs increased from 140 in 1751 to 350 in 1791. By 1807 the tract had increased to 508 acres, which remained constant until 1815, when it was expanded to 580 acres. The Lewises leased the tavern and baths at Warm Springs during this period to innkeepers.

Margaret Lewis's son Thomas Lynn Lewis and his siblings granted a lease of the Warm Springs tract to Robert Turner of Richmond in 1804.⁴⁵ Robert Turner and George Turner also leased the Sweet Springs in 1807.⁴⁶ The Turners were the only innkeepers licensed by the county in 1806. The tavern at Warm Springs was open year-round because it also served guests when the Bath County Court was in session. This was true as late as 1867, when it was advertised that "unlike the other springs, the place is always open and prepared to receive visitors... as it is the seat of Bath County, where the monthly County and half-yearly Circuit courts are held."⁴⁷ In 1811, depositions in a legal case were taken at what was called the tavern of Robert Turner and Charles Lewis in Warm Springs.⁴⁸ On November 12 of the same year,

arranged into blocks of four. Bath County Clerk's Office.

⁴³ Burke, 1846 and 1851.

⁴⁴ Plat, Mayse vs Brockenbrough, 1833.

⁴⁵ Jean Bruns. *Abstracts of the Wills and Inventories of Bath County, Virginia 1791-1842*, Genealogical Publishing Co., 1995, 38-39.

⁴⁶ Barbara Ruth Kidd. *The History of Sweet Springs, Monroe County, WV*.
<http://lynnside.org/sweet%20springs%20story.html>

⁴⁷ Jedediah Hotchkiss, *Warm Springs and Attached Plantations with View and Maps*, Staunton VA: *Valley Virginian* Job Office, May 1867. Collection, Virginia Historical Society.

⁴⁸ William Tidd vs Robert Morris, Administrator of William Morris. Microfilm, Bath County Chancery Records, Index # 1830-003.

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depositions were taken in another lawsuit at “Turner’s Tavern, at the Warm Springs.”⁴⁹ Robert and George continued to receive tavern licenses each year until the property was purchased by the Warm Springs Company in 1815.⁵⁰

The Treatment Regimen

Treatments at the springs were often prescribed by doctors at home. The major springs, including the Warm, had resident doctors to advise the use of the water as well. Drinking the water at regular intervals during the day was prescribed at all of the springs, regardless of mineral content. Patients would carefully observe their internal reactions to the water in order to deduce if they were regaining their health. Bathing was thought good for the healing of the body of a variety of ailments, as the gases and minerals were absorbed through the pores and inhaled into the lungs.

The treatment was closely based on English bathing traditions centered on the celebrated healing waters of Bath, with deviations occasioned by specifically American conditions. Bathing in a large thermal pool served as the base of the English therapeutic regime. Besides the general immersion of the body in very hot water, thermal water could be applied by force to the skin, under the supposition that the benefits would be better received by the affected part without overheating the rest of the body. In the Elizabethan era, water was dashed from buckets at the bather. From the mid-seventeenth century on, hand pumps were installed on the edge of baths to permit the patients to be sprayed. In time these were replaced by hoses supplying jets of mineral water pumped by steam engines. At the same time, vapor baths, often consisting of enclosures elevated over the water, were employed to induce sweating.⁵¹

The managers of the local springs exploited romantic associations with Native American bathing traditions to promote their medical treatments. One travel writer attributed a popular tale to the Warm Springs bath keeper a legend of a male Indian whose strength was renewed by lying in the water. The management at the Hot Springs presented supposed archeological evidence as well. John Edwards Caldwell in 1808 “was shewn the remains of an Indian sweating house, and was informed it was supplied with a large fire and a number of stones, which, when made hot, were sprinkled with water, and the patient, after being drenched in vapour, leaped into a cold bath, but came out instantly, and was then enveloped in blankets until perspiration had its full effect.”⁵² Unfortunately very little is known about Native Americans’ actual use of the springs prior to European colonization.

Due to the large demand, bathers at the resorts visited the baths three or even four times a day in short intervals from early morning to late at night. Bathers were advised to stay warm after a time in the water. Where heated water was available, the bath was often followed by a sweat of some sort, either in

⁴⁹ Staunton Republican Farmer, 4:8. (25 October 1811) 1.

⁵⁰ Virginia Returns for Licenses for Ordinaries, Stores, and Peddlers, Bath County. Library of Virginia.

⁵¹ Roger Rolls. The Hospital of the Nation: The Story of Spa Medicine and the Mineral Hospital at Bath. Bath: Bird Publications, 1988.

⁵² John Edwards Caldwell. A Tour Through Part of Virginia in the Summer of 1808. New York: for the author, 1809. Ed. William M. E. Rachal. Richmond: Dietz Press, 1951.

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the bather's own room or in a room attached to the bath. At the Hot Springs, Caldwell described in 1808 how "the patient, on coming out of the two [hottest baths], is wrapped up in blankets, and lies stewing in the sweating room adjoining the bath, until the perspiration has freely spent itself from every pore of the body."

At the Warm Springs, many went to their own cabins to cool down. In the same document, Prolix advised visitors how to handle the Warm Springs bath: "Stay in the bath fifteen minutes, using very little exercise whilst in the water. As soon as you come out, hurry to your cabin, wrap yourself in a dry night-gown, go to bed, cover up warm, go to sleep, get into a fine perspiration, grow cool by degrees, wake up in half an hour, dress and go to dinner with what appetite you have."

Dr. John Brockenbrough and the Warm Springs Company (1815-1859)

The Warm Springs was purchased in 1815 from John Lewis's heirs by the Warm Springs Company, which was headed by Dr. John Brockenbrough (1772-1853) of Richmond. Brockenbrough, a prominent banker and civic leader in Richmond, had received a medical degree from the University of Edinburgh in 1792. He was joined by two investors to form what they called "the Warm Springs Company." Brockenbrough subsequently bought out his partners' interests and was sole owner. At some point he was joined by "Patton of Richmond" and George Taylor, "the legal luminary of Chesterfield County."⁵³

Warm Springs took its enduring form under Brockenbrough's period of active ownership. Although the Brockenbroughs maintained a summer residence at Warm Springs, the resort was managed under the terms of a lease to John Fry (1775-1844) during this time. Coinciding with Fry's death in 1844, the elderly Brockenbrough sold his large house (which later became the White House of the Confederacy) in Richmond and appears to have moved permanently to Warm Springs. He operated the resort himself for several years.⁵⁴ A new proprietor, George Mayse (b. c. 1790), was eventually installed, the same individual who had earlier sued Brockenbrough for access to the springs. Although Brockenbrough died in 1853, Mayse continued to operate the hotel and baths until he and some investors were able to purchase them outright in 1858 for a reported \$50,000.⁵⁵

The frivolity of life at the springs resorts was disapproved of by many evangelical visitors. Gen. John Hartwell Cocke, an influential proponent of temperance, wrote to Brockenbrough in 1844 about ways in which he could reduce the amount of alcohol consumed at the resort. Having witnessed an old friend, having drunk too much, "sink down into first the Chair he could reach on the piazza [and] fell to sleep... a spectacle of beastly drunkenness to every passerby," Cocke volunteered in 1844 to help supply the finances to build a church at the resort in order to help begin "a secession" from "the hair-brained dancers & airy aspirants for fashionable distinction." He hoped that Brockenbrough and he could convert the character of Warm Springs into a place "where sober minded and sedate people could

⁵³ "Echoes from the Springs, Warm Springs, VA.," 27 September 1878. Special Correspondence, Lynchburg News. Staunton Spectator (Staunton, VA) 15 October 1878.

⁵⁴ Burke 1840, 64.

⁵⁵ "Echoes from the Springs" 1878, 1.

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congregate without having their toes trodden upon & themselves elbowed into corners by the impudent and presumptuous fashionables of the day.” Cocke later lamented that Brockenbrough, “one of the most distinguished gentlemen of Va.,” has, instead, “contracted for a large & expensive Building for gambling purposes.” Christ Episcopal Church was not built at Warm Springs until 1852 and the Presbyterian Church in 1855.

Throughout the first quarter of the nineteenth century, the Warm Springs enjoyed a considerably larger visitation than the Hot, based on the rates paid for tavern licenses each year. John Fry at the Warm and Hezekiah Daggs, the innkeeper at the Hot Springs, paid from one-third more to twice as much each year to the county for the privilege of operating an ordinary as other ordinary-keepers. Both of the local thermal resort managers bent the law to make ends meet in the short season allotted to them. In 1817, Fry, the proprietor of the tavern at the Warm Springs, was fined for charging twice the amount set by the county court for whiskey, while Hezekiah Daggs was convicted of overcharging for meals.⁵⁶

As we have seen, the Lewises had built “a tavern with a number of log huts & Cabins all round it” to serve the guests well before 1806, according to one report.⁵⁷ Tradition says that a larger building constructed around 1811 replaced the original Warm Springs tavern, but it seems just as likely, instead, that John Brockenbrough would have added the new tavern at the Warm Springs after he purchased the property in 1815. This expensive two-story brick building was later incorporated into the central portion of the extended Warm Springs Hotel and survived until 1925.

A road map in the Virginia Board of Public Works field notes from 1833 indicates how the tavern/hotel evolved over time.⁵⁸ The long building was centered on the turnpike where it crossed Warm Springs Run. It is clearly the central part of the hotel shown in lithographs from the 1850s.

The row of buildings west of the hotel terminated to the west in a small brick two-room cottage later known as the Gibson Cottage, which survived the demolition of the hotel in 1925. The Gibson Cottage, apparently dating from the 1820s, served in the early days as the home of the resort’s resident physician.

⁵⁶ McAllister 1908.

⁵⁷ Sir Alexander Dick, 1984.

⁵⁸ Field Notes for the Huntersville and Warm Springs Turnpike, Virginia Board of Public Works, 1833, Library of Virginia.

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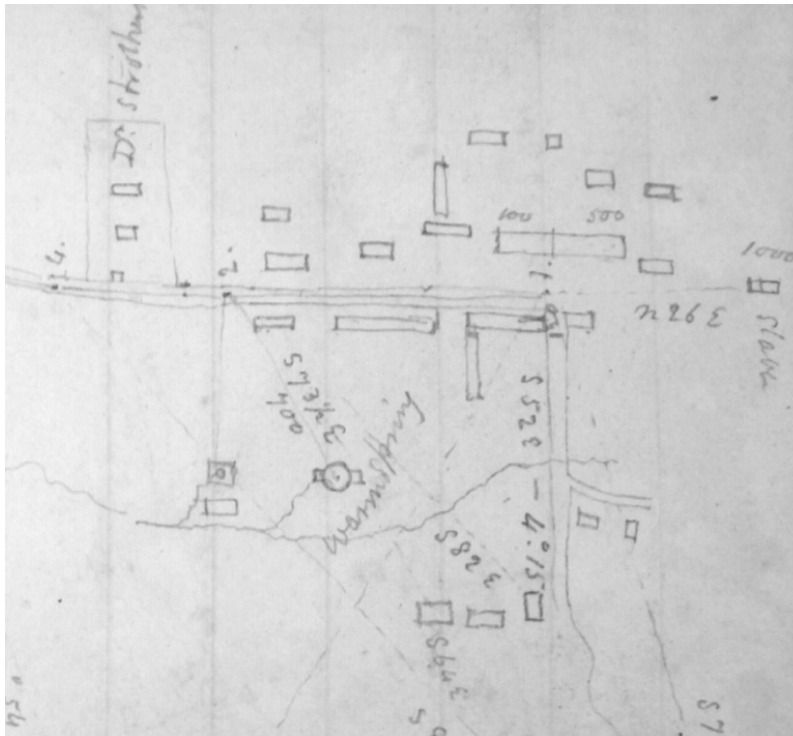
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Field Notes for the Huntersville and Warm Springs Turnpike, Virginia Board of Public Works, 1833, Library of Virginia. The two-part building at the angle in the road is the enlarged hotel. The Gibson Cottage is shown as Dr. Strother's dwelling.

The Warm Springs Hotel (pre-1833)

The evolution of the main hotel is complex. One part of the building was very likely the brick tavern mentioned previously. Dr. Brockenbrough and the Warm Springs Company slowly expanded that building. By 1833, it was an impressive hotel with a unified exterior, a grand colonnade, and a rooftop cupola. Whether or not the original tavern had a porch across the front, by the second quarter of the nineteenth century, a portico was the main building's most noticeable feature.

Based on the 1833 turnpike field notes above, the building consisted of two parts. Since the extension permitted it to stand on axis with the turnpike, it seems that the northern section may have been the addition. Thus, Brockenbrough appears to have more than doubled the length of his main building, the entire front of which was shaded by a tall narrow colonnade. This served a double purpose, to provide an outdoor room for gathering and walking and to unify the disparate parts of his building, to be seen in the irregularity of the chimney locations. The building had taken this form by the time it was painted by Eliza Burd in 1842.⁵⁹

⁵⁹ Painting of Warm Springs by Eliza Burd, 1842. Photo, Library of Virginia.

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Painting of Warm Springs by Eliza Burd, 1842. Photo, Library of Virginia.

According to William Burke in 1846, the Hotel was “150 feet in length, built of brick, with a piazza 15 feet wide; the lodging chambers are large and the fare good. The accommodations we should think sufficiently extensive for 100 persons.” Burke raised this number to 130 in his edition of 1851.⁶⁰ Most springs hostleries at this time, other than the monumental brick hotel at the Sweet Springs, were of frame construction and equipped with long porches and nearby rows of cabins. Except that the second Warm Springs Tavern or Hotel was of superior brick construction, it compared well with the accommodations at most springs, including the Hot Springs.⁶¹ Similarly, the use of brick for the Gibson Cottage, the Brick Row, and the Colonnade is a sign of the prosperity of the Warm Springs under the ownership of Dr. John Brockenbrough.

A map of the resort grounds as it appeared in 1900 helps in understanding the hotel’s evolution.⁶² It shows an asymmetrical plan for the center section. A music room, library, and parlor flank a passage to the left of the center. This grouping may well represent the domestic-scaled tavern that is typical at resorts during this period, possibly built by Brockenbrough soon after he acquired the resort. The large lobby, office, and adjoining writing room to the right probably make up the first addition, representing an expansion of the number of reception rooms.

⁶⁰ Burke 1851, 236.

⁶¹ Burke 1851, 237-38.

⁶² Bonner Sample Marquis, Hand-drawn map of Warm Springs Hotel, c. 1900. Bath County Historical Society

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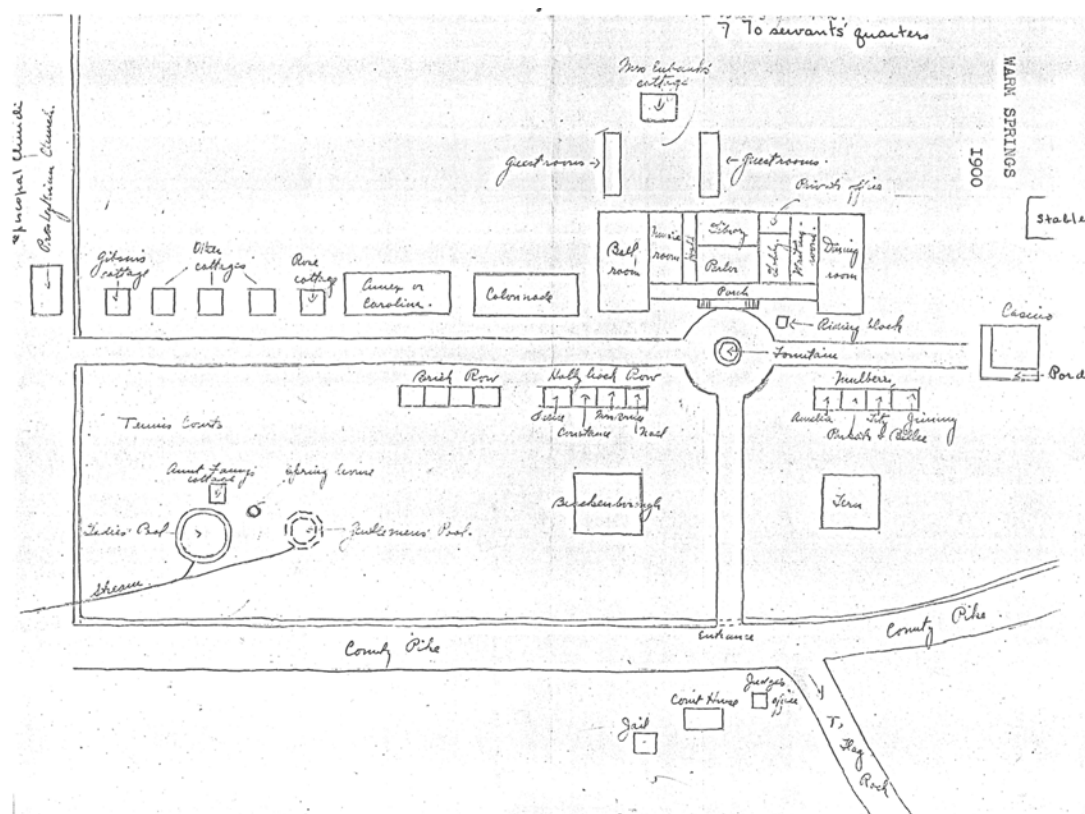
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Bonner Semple Marquis, Hand-drawn map of Warm Springs Hotel, c. 1900. Bath County Historical Society.

In 1835, a Bostonian named Otis thought highly of the resort's accommodations:

The entrance to this little village is delightful. As you wind around the descending path, you catch glimpses of the white colonnade running the entire length of the hotel, from which the residents, in their turn, watch the approaching carriage or cavalcade.

Arriving, you experience a most gentlemanly and cordial reception from the very polite host, who accommodates his guests to the extent of his house, in the first place, and afterwards fills up, in succession the several rows of wooden and brick cabins, that are built in different parts of his grounds, being files of small sleeping rooms about eight feet high, and as many wide. The table is of the very best description, far surpassing, I am forewarned, any thing that can be obtained farther on.⁶³

In 1838, English journalist George Featherstonhaugh noted a divergent opinion. Clearly the expanded hotel was not entirely successful on the interior, although the colonnaded portico served a useful purpose:

The house is an awkward, ill-finished, ill-furnished building, with all the pretension of a well-established hotel in an old settled country... There is a long dining-room with a

⁶³ Otis, Journal of a Trip to the Mountains, Caves and Springs of Virginia. Chapter II, Southern Literary Messenger 4:3 (March 1838).

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low ceiling, a small public parlour not capable of containing one-fourth of the company, and a few moderate-sized bed-rooms, in which families are accommodated indifferently enough. Wood cabins, out of the house, are provided for single people. . . . The portico is the greatest comfort about the place, being long and roomy, and affording a comfortable walk for invalids and ladies in the evening.⁶⁴

Building value is broken out from that of the land after 1820 in the county's land tax books. Increases in assessed value can be prospectively aligned with specific building campaigns to support the historic narrative. Previous to this, in 1816, John Brockenbrough, together with investors Thomas Tayloe and John Patterson, owned 580 acres at Warm Springs, including the courthouse building. In 1820, the 580-acre Warm Springs tract owned by Brockenbrough included improvements valued at \$9,000, representing a substantial investment in buildings, probably including the valuable bath, the first section of the brick tavern, and a number of cottage rows or "cabins." That value rose by \$200 in 1824 "on account of building." The increased value could correspond to the building of the plainly detailed octagonal Gentlemen's Bath House. The value stayed the same until 1832, when it rose by \$1,200 to a total of \$11,400, which probably represents the extension of the main hotel building and the addition of the colonnade across its front. In 1840, it rose again, this time to \$13,000, which may reflect \$1,600 invested in the brick annex known as the Colonnade and the bath improvements mentioned by Burke. It stayed the same until 1850.⁶⁵

Colonnade and Carolina Buildings

The land immediately to the west of the Warm Springs Hotel was retained by George Mayse, who had acquired two ½-acre lots already known as the Stone House Lot and the Brick House Lot.⁶⁶ He had received them from merchants Ludwell Richards and Jacob Grose, who had received them from Margaret Lewis in return for a mortgage they held. These buildings, which were probably used by the Lewises as part of the resort, were valued at \$1,000 and \$2,000 respectively until 1837, when the brick and stone houses appear to have been enlarged or replaced, after which point each lot contained buildings valued at \$3,000. They are shown on the plat of 1833. The values increased until they were collective valued at \$8,000 in 1850.⁶⁷ These buildings appear to be the same as the Colonnade and the Carolina Buildings shown on later maps. Mayse was shown as the owner of the land west of the hotel where these buildings stood of the hotel in 1867.⁶⁸ According to later owner Fay Ingalls, the Colonnade Building contained only sleeping rooms, although he assumed it had been altered.⁶⁹ This unusual, two-story, masonry cottage row, with gable-end parapet walls and a columned portico across the front, was probably built as an annex to the hotel c. 1840. Carolina may have begun as "the Brick House" referred

⁶⁴ Featherstonhaugh 1844.

⁶⁵ Bath County Land Books.

⁶⁶ Bath County Deed Books 6, p. 226 and 7, page 38.

⁶⁷ Bath County Land Books, 1820-1850.

⁶⁸ Hotchkiss 1867.

⁶⁹ Fay Ingalls. The Valley Road: The Story of Virginia Hot Springs. Cleveland and New York: The World Publishing Co., 1949, 29.

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to in the deed, court, and tax records, perhaps serving in the 1830s as the home of the George Mayse and his family.

It seems likely that the diarist Blair Bolling was referring to this building when he observed in 1838 that “also there is another large building standing near the Hotel apparently unoccupied and I am informed that a lawsuit is pending about a right to use the mineral waters is the cause ... that being held by a different owner or owners. There is a Store also contiguous thereto at present in the occupancy of Bernard Peyton Adjutant General who resides in Richmond.”⁷⁰

No building corresponding to the Colonnade appears on the turnpike maps of 1833. A two-story brick building to the south of the hotel and with a small pediment at the center was shown in a drawing by the pseudonymous artist Porte Crayon (who was David H. Strother) in 1855.⁷¹ This may have been the “elegant” home of the Brockenbroughs referred to by Dr. Burke, adapted for them after their relocation to Bath County in 1844.⁷² It may have begun as the tavern built by George Mayse but unoccupied during the time of his lawsuit for access to the water.⁷³ The building or another on its site was later identified as “Carolina” on a map dating to 1900.

The Hotel Enlarged (1851-1854)

John Brockenbrough died in 1853. As we will see, tax records show a dramatic injection of \$17,500 in capital beginning in 1851 and ending in 1854. This is chiefly associated with the further expansion of the main building employing more elegant architectural forms than had previously been used. These improvements were built at roughly the same date as the impressive frame hotel at the White Sulphur Springs and the smaller brick Healing Springs Hotel, but the Warm Springs Hotel had become one of the most impressive Virginia springs hotels of its day, on a par with the brick buildings at the Sweet and Bath Alum springs. It brought the capacity of the resort up to 300 guests.

The new hotel answered many of the objections of critics like Dr. Burke and George Featherstonhaugh. However, the heirs of John Brockenbrough at Warm Springs seem to have struggled with indebtedness. The hotel probably never repaid the cost of construction, and by 1859 the resort was in the hands of a new partnership headed by the former manager, George Mayse. Damage or neglect during the Civil War caused the Warm to lose 1/3 of its improvement value, and the resort limped into the postwar period under the new management of Col. John Eubank.

Fay Ingalls (1883-1957) recalled that the hotel as he knew it at the turn of the twentieth century was of three stories, “in the shape of an E with the center projection left off. Between the ells was a porch about fifteen feet above the ground level. The southern ell, at the porch level, was a good classical Virginia

⁷⁰ Blair Bolling. E. Lee Shepherd, ed., “Trip to the Virginia Springs, an Extract from the Diary of Blair Bolling (1838), *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, 96:2 (April 1988) 211.

⁷¹ David Hunter Strother. Illustration, Warm Springs, *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, vol. 10, no.57, Feb. 1855.

⁷² Burke 1851, 214.

⁷³ Bolling 1838.

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ballroom, with a balcony for musicians and ceiling two stories in height. The northern ell housed the kitchen and dining room.” Looking back, Ingalls found fault with the plumbing, but for its time it was probably one of the most elegant hotels on the springs circuit. “There was only one bath tub in the building and two large public toilets... The construction of the hotel, the Colonnade [which he said was thought to be the original hotel of c .1811], and some of the cottages of soft local brick laid in lime mortar was the reason for their final dissolution... The [hotel] building eventually became a hazard and was torn down completely in 1925.”⁷⁴

In 1851 the taxable value of improvements at the Warm Springs property began to rise sharply, beginning with an additional \$2,000, bringing the total to \$15,000. In 1852, \$5,000 more was added on account of new building to the land now held by the estate of John Brockenbrough. In 1853 and 1854, it rose by another \$6,000 and \$4,500 respectively on account of building for a new total of \$30,500. These three expenditures would appear to represent the injection of new capital after the death of owner John Brockenbrough in 1853, including construction of large brick cross wings at each end of the main resort building. The value was, however, reduced without explanation by \$500 in 1857.⁷⁵

The new hotel wings, combined, were probably as large as the central section. They transformed the resort, substituting a new ballroom with a high ceiling and a musicians’ gallery for the inadequate old one described by previous visitors with disdain. A generous new dining room and a kitchen occupied the first floor of the north wing and new heated bedrooms were found in the upper floor of both wings. Unfortunately, no visitors’ accounts from the 1850s have emerged to add detail to this picture.

A series of related historic images made during the 1850s and 1860s document the buildings at the Warm Springs. They are all bird’s eye views of the Warm Springs Valley from the south. The earliest is David Hunter Strother’s lithograph of Warm Springs published in February of 1855.⁷⁶ It was followed by the nearly identical lithograph in Edward Beyer’s Album of Virginia of 1858, drawn in the previous two years.⁷⁷ Jed. Hotchkiss appears to have updated the previous views in his Warm Springs and Attached Plantations with View and Maps of 1867.⁷⁸

These images show that, with a few exceptions, the buildings at the Warm Springs resort remained more or less unaltered after 1850. A total of four bath-related buildings in a central grove, including the Great Bath, the circular temple over the Drinking Spring, and two other smaller baths. Two long rows of cottage rooms (Brick Row and Hollyhock Row) were placed on the south side of the main road to the north of the springs. Another row (later called Mulberry) on the east side of the main entry was aligned with the other rows. Interestingly, the three sets of cottage rows are closely aligned with the placement of the squares on the original town plat of 1786.

⁷⁴ Ingalls 1949, 29.

⁷⁵ Bath County Land Books.

⁷⁶ Strother 1855.

⁷⁷ Edward Beyer, Album of Virginia; or, Illustration of the Old Dominion, Richmond VA: Edward Beyer [printed by Rau & Son of Dresden and W. Loeillot of Berlin], 1858.

⁷⁸ Hotchkiss 1867.

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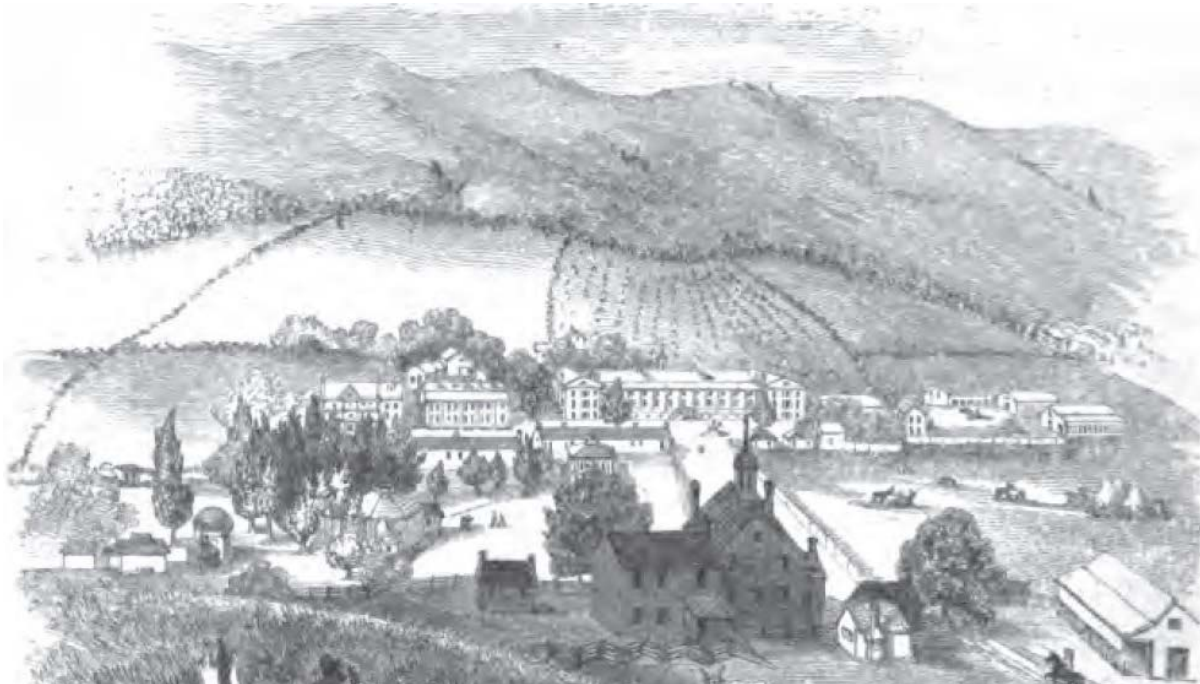
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David Hunter Strother. Illustration, Warm Springs, Harper's New Monthly Magazine, vol. 10, no.57, Feb. 1855.

Brockenbrough Cottage, with its surrounding porch, was located east of the Great Bath. The hotel and annexes on the north side of the road consisted of the H-shaped main hotel, the building known as the Colonnade to its west, and the Annex or Carolina building to its west. A house-shaped building later called "the Billiard" or "Casino" was axially located at the end of the extension of the main road beyond its turn to the south. The stables and support buildings were located to the east of the hotel.

The three cottage rows on the south side of the main road are examples of a type of building that was used at springs resorts across the region. These one-story buildings of log, frame, or brick consisted of interconnected one-room units known as "cabins." The Colonnade was a very substantial 2½ -story variation of the cottage row with a row of rooftop dormers. The building was two rooms deep. Each front room had a separate exterior door on the front, alternating with windows. The colonnade that ranged across the front, supported on colossal Tuscan or Doric columns without any entablature, appears to have been added.

D. G. Wise, Charles L. Francisco, and George Mayse (1859-1871)

The value of \$30,000 for buildings held steady until the end of the Civil War, at which time the improvements at the Hot Springs and Healing Springs were comparable in value, at \$30,000 and \$25,000 respectively. Warm Springs lost \$10,000 of its value at the end of the war, "deducted on account of injured buildings." The hotel had been used as a hospital during the war and may have suffered damage and neglect. The owners after 1859 were D. G. Wise, local merchant and court clerk

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Charles C. Francisco, and George Mayse, who had served as the innkeeper since the mid-1840s.

The Warm Springs Hotel served as a Confederate Hospital from as early as July of 1861 until as late as June of 1863. There were ten officers and 350 enlisted men there on 12 October 1861. According to one account, there were 48 deaths there between July and December of that year. While the Warm Springs Valley saw little action during the Civil War, the county seat was raided and almost burned by Union soldiers under General David Hunter, whose chief of staff was David H. Strother, the illustrator who, as "Porte Crayon," had previously visited and drawn the resort. He described the visit in his diary:

This place is the most elegantly improved watering place in Virginia. The soldiers were plundering generally or rather seeking plunder as there was little to be found here. Chairs, bed stands, mattresses, and crockery were all they found here except some spoiled sauces and some claret. The owner had run off and hid himself. Some Negro women gave us towels and water for a good wash, which we much needed. I found my way to the bath house but found the pool dirty with a green ooze and full of soldiers. In the ladies' pool, which was less crowded, I took a swim.⁷⁹

Eubank, Reynolds and Co. (1871-1874) and Eubank (1875-1889)

The postwar period was difficult at most of the Virginia springs. Warm Springs was put up for sale by its former owners.⁸⁰ It was acquired by an enterprising former Confederate officer who made some needed improvements. According to a contemporary account:

Mr. Mayse kept the Springs until 1871, when he disposed of them to Messrs. Eubank, Reynolds & Co., who conducted them jointly, with Col. John L. Eubank as managing proprietor, until 1874, when the property was sold at auction under a decree of the court, and was purchased by Col. Eubank for \$50,000 cash, or its equivalent. The Colonel has conducted and managed these Springs to the satisfaction and commendation of the public, as the crowd of visitors to the Warm annually will bear testimony to. He is widely known in your section of the country, and particularly in Lynchburg and Richmond as a legislator, merchant and Springs manager. He is ably aided in the management of the Warm by his right and left bowers, E. N. and H. Carter Eubank, his brother and son; while his sister, Mrs. M. J. Lee, of Lynchburg, performs the agreeable duty of superintending the domestic department of the hotel and matronizing the young ladies; and, in fact, keeping us all straight.⁸¹

During the Eubank ownership the hotel capitalized on the popularity of the baths by constructing a new 22-sided Ladies' Bath House. It was built by 1875, and followed by a small frame Reception House in about 1880. Col. Eubank was injured in a fall from a horse while inspecting his property on 13 June

⁷⁹ David Hunter Strother, A Visit to the Virginia Canaan and the Adventures of Porte Crayon and his Cousins. New York: Harper, 1857.

⁸⁰ "Commissioners' sale of the Warm Springs, a celebrated watering place in Bath county, Virginia." Broadside, 1871. George Mayse vs Francisco et al. Special Collections, University of Virginia Library.

⁸¹ "Echoes from the Springs" 1878, 1.

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1888. He was treated by the hotel's physician, but died on the 20th. His widow ran the hotel for that season and for many seasons thereafter.

The Warm Springs Valley Company, Southern Improvement Company, and the Virginia Hot Springs Company (1889-1993)

In 1889, the Warm Springs Valley Company was chartered to operate the Warm, Hot, and Healing Springs. The list of seven directors was headed by M. E. Ingalls (who acquired the property outright in 1911). Since that time, the Warm Springs has been operated under the same ownership as the Hot Springs. After the company's plans for a new bath house at Warm Springs in 1896 failed to materialize, Col. Eubank's widow, Mrs. John L. (Tallulah) Eubank, continued to operate the old-fashioned facilities at the Warm Springs for many years under a lease. She became almost as well-known for her benevolent oversight as Col. John Fry was in the antebellum period. She was followed by other operators for a few years before the hotel was demolished in 1925.

A plan of the resort as it appeared in 1900 shows how it was organized along each side of a maple tree-lined section of the old main road.⁸² The plan had changed much since the layout in the antebellum era. A front drive extended toward the hotel from an entry gate on the new "county pike" (today's US Route 220 that ran in front of the courthouse. This ended in a circular drive centered on a fountain placed directly in front of the hotel, Historic photographs from the period show a board fence defining the front edge of the property along the west side of Warm Springs Run.⁸³

A cottage pavilion called "Fern" had been added to match the Brockenbrough Cottage on the opposite side of the entry drive in front of two corresponding four-room cottage rows that faced the hotel from across the old main road. Another four-room brick cottage row was located farther to the left, across from the "Colonnade" and "Carolina" or "Annex" buildings aligned with the front of the hotel wings.

Four frame four-room cottages had been added to the west of the Colonnade since the Civil War. These terminated in the one-story brick and frame Gibson Cottage. Two more cottage rows, now vanished, formed a small forecourt on each side of Mrs. Eubanks' cottage at the rear of the hotel. A domestically scaled building with porches on two sides was called the Casino or Billiard House. A stable stood nearby to the east.

During the twentieth century, the special qualities of the Warm Springs Baths enjoyed an ongoing popularity with an established customer base. The Ingalls family, owners of the Hot Springs Company and custodians of the baths, made sure the baths were open and tried to keep their old-fashioned character. The bath buildings were maintained irregularly over the years by the hotel staff. Fay Ingalls observed of the Warm Springs buildings in 1949:

Probably every timber in both baths has been renewed in the course of over a century's

⁸² Marquis, 1900.

⁸³ Warm Springs, fence and bridge near the baths, early 20th c. Collection of John T. Reddick.

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exposure to the weather without and the steam from the pools within, but the structures have not been changed other than to put a new board in when one gave way.”⁸⁴

As Warm Springs faded and its accommodations seemed increasingly old-fashioned compared to the nearby Homestead, the resort gained a devoted following of culturally discriminating or unconventional guests who appreciated its Old South charm in spite of its lack of modern amenities. Guests included Jewish families, theatrical families, and others who might have found more socially prominent resorts less accessible and less culturally rewarding. Cottages on the grounds became associated with families who occupied them year after year, including the Alfred Brandeis, Alexander Bonner Semple, and George C. Norton families of Louisville and the prominent theatrical Skinner family of New York. The social antics of the guests were regularly written up in social columns in Southern cities, including Richmond, Washington, and Louisville.

Several hundred visitors from Hot Springs and Warm Springs attended a fancy dress ball last night at the Warm Springs Hotel. Miss Cornelia Skinner, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Otis Skinner dressed as a harem lady, led the grand march with Henry Lee Valentine costumed as a groom. Others who masked were Miss Louise Buckingham, French maid, Miss Elisabeth Valentine, Peter Pan, Mrs. Credo Harris of New York, Alice in Wonderland, Miss Francis Gray, Beau Brummel, Angus McDonald as a French nobleman, and Miss Fannie Watkins, four-leaf clover.⁸⁵

Louisvillian Adele Brandeis, niece of Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis, was part of the Louisville contingent. As she later recalled,

There are few places that have been held in deeper and more lasting affection by those who frequented it than “The Warm,” that is Warm Springs, Va., now alas, no more. It was never as large, of course, or as imposing as “The Hot,” but it had a tone, an atmosphere that its neighbor never approached, in fact, never disputed.⁸⁶

Adele Brandeis’ recollections were part of a review of a novel that was a thinly disguised depiction of the Warm Springs under the administration of Tallulah Eubank. Clouds over the Valley was published in Louisville in 1951 and written by Bonner Semple of Louisville, sister of prominent American geographer Ellen Churchill Semple.⁸⁷ The book gives a good description of the resort during these years. Another regular visitor from Louisville was the aspiring singer Maria McDonald Jolas, later, with her husband Eugene Jolas, of the experimental literary journal transition, published in Paris between 1927 and 1938. She remembered the Warm Springs of 1914 in contrast with the neighboring Hot Springs:

The “Warm,” on the other hand, was so different, so familiarly southern, that it could have almost been our own creation. The always starchily white-clad old lady who presided over its comforts and pleasures, Mrs. Tallulah Eubank – “Miss Tew” to the

⁸⁴ Ingalls 1949, 25.

⁸⁵ Washington Post 12 August 1916, 5.

⁸⁶ Adele Brandeis, Ex-Louisvillian Recalls Warm Springs, VA, Louisville Courier-Journal, 30 Sept. 1951, 56.

⁸⁷ Bonner Semple Marquis, Clouds over the Valley, New York NY: Exposition Press (1951).

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thirty or more black employees – was an antebellum figure whose eye, invisible like God's, saw all, even though she rarely left her private quarters on the hill behind the hotel, to which few were summoned except those responsible for her two hundred or so guests. Once, on some special errand, I was admitted into the presence, and had time to note with ill-concealed curiosity that the lines of matching medicine bottles, on open shelves beside her rocker, bore no names other than those of the indispositions they were supposed to relieve, headache, back-ache, stomach-ache, tooth-ache, etc.⁸⁸

A popular event at least once during the season, although frowned upon by the older generation, was a mixed party of young people in one of the baths, during which refreshments were floated on cork trays across the water. Although Mrs. Eaton was willing to countenance a good deal of unconventionality among the guests, there was an attempt on the part of the population of the summer colony to continue the old-fashioned manners and pleasures associated with the springs:

In the nineties there was a brave struggle to preserve a way of life which was passing fast. Cotillions, or Germans, as they were called, were still danced occasionally during the season, and it was flattering to the youth of Hot Springs when an invitation was proffered for one of these. From the earliest days the man who could "lead" a German was an outstanding figure, and when I danced my first, George Gibson, the last of these, held the throne. Gibson belonged to an earlier era. He was a brilliant and entertaining conversationalist whom we generally found sitting on the lawn, holding forth to a bevy of rather fragile females dressed in the frilly costumes the Southerners liked so much. He was usually busy with a piece of needlework, an occupation that so fascinated me it was hard to pay attention to his talk, which was really good. He never caught up with the mechanical age and his adventure with a gadget at the Casino bar for cutting the ends off cigars was typical. Endeavoring to how it operated, he pushed a finger into the hole where the cigar should go, losing the tip of his finger by so doing. That was bad enough, but a few weeks later, explaining how it happened and showing the scar resulting, he repeated the whole process. However, he was like a wizard at directing complicated figures on the dance floor.⁸⁹

Bath Attendants

The first bath attendants, known as "bath keepers," slept in the bath houses when they were not open. One bath keeper had slept during the bathing season in one of the dressing rooms for thirty or forty years before his death at the age of ninety c. 1830.⁹⁰ After the Civil War, the baths at Warm Springs were maintained and visitors attended by a long line of related African-American bath attendants. One family served for many years beginning in the period immediately after the Civil War. The best known were Frances Martin Sheppard and her husband William Henry Sheppard, who together cared for the

⁸⁸ Maria Jolas, Maria Jolas, Woman of Action: A Memoir and Other Writings. U of South Carolina P, 2004.

⁸⁹ Ingalls 1949.

⁹⁰ Warm Springs in Virginia, Southern Literary Messenger, May 1845, 280.

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baths for thirty years. She is said to have taught Bath County girls to swim by tying a sheet around their waist and tossing them into the pool. She had been in charge of the Ladies' Bath for about 30 years in 1900. She lived in "her own tidy little cottage" with her husband, was "a barber in comfortable circumstances." That cottage was the former Reception Building still adjacent to the Ladies' Bath House. Her son, who attended Hampton Institute, became a "well-known missionary to Africa," the Rev. William Henry Sheppard, Jr.⁹¹

Members of the prominent Tonsler family of Charlottesville were employed at the Warm Springs for over ninety years. Horace Tonsler (1892-1953) was the attendant at the Men's' Pool from 1919 until his death. His sister Pocahontas (1894-1984) was the attendant at the Ladies' Bath until the early 1940s. Their father, Horace Tonsler (1857-1938), had been the headwaiter at the hotel before the turn of the 20th century.⁹² Their mother, also Pocahontas (1867-1932), had been the ladies' bath attendant. Horace Tonsler, Jr's wife, Estelle, was the attendant at the Ladies' Pool from the 1940s until her death in 1983. She was also related by marriage to "Aunt Fanny" Sheppard on her father's side.

Like the Sheppards, the Tonslers lived in the Reception House next to the baths, which appears to have been expanded to serve as a year-round dwelling after the closing of the hotel. Estelle Tonsler's nephew, John T. Reddick, recalled visiting her there. He recollected that "the little suits that the women wore, the little kind of bloomers, she made those and that was an added charge. And that added charge was something she could take home that was separate from her salary at the pools. I think it kind of gave them a kind of position that allowed them some ways of making extra resources and having certain kinds of privileges that maybe not everyone had at the time."⁹³

Landscape

According to geologists, there are actually four springs that emerge at Warm Springs comprised of a group of three springs within about 30 meters of each other and a fourth about 250 meters to the southwest. Originally the area where the springs arose was a wetland. The area around the springs has been partially filled to create parking lots, but retains a marshy topography in the area between the springs and Warm Springs Run, the stream that runs through the valley. The run can become swollen during a storm, sending water across the site of the bath, scouring the landscape and sometimes depositing sediment in the baths themselves.

When Thomas Lewis laid out his property in lots in the 1780s, the thermal water sources were placed in a rectangular tract and eventually surrounded by a grove of trees. In addition to the original, octagonal pool, another large spring that issued from the ground within a hundred yards was later enclosed to make the Ladies' Bath. A smaller spring, partially enclosed, located between the two was used for drinking purposes at an early date. This configuration has

⁹¹ "The Mother of a Famous Missionary." Southern Workman. Hampton Institute Press, 1900.

⁹² Warm Springs Baths brochure from 1950s. Collection, John T. Reddick.

⁹³ John T. Reddick, Interview, 25 Sept. 2015.

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remained to the present day.

The proposed town of Bathville extended across the bottomland and organized the landscape into lots to the north and west of the approximately 6-acre "Warm Springs Tract" containing the water source. The road through the valley ran along the rising ground to the west of the spring tract. Four ½-acre lots were laid out in three blocks along the west side of the road. A set of nine lots were also laid out to the north of the spring. The lots along the west side of the road were developed by the Lewis family and by others who purchased lots from them. The flood-prone lots to the north of the spring were never sold or developed. Part of the Spring Tract to the east of Warm Springs Run was used for the site of the courthouse, today the location of the Warm Springs Inn.

The Warm Springs resort developed on each side of the main street, now known as Church Road, where it intersected with the Warm Springs Mountain Turnpike, which crossed Warm Springs Run along the north edge of the Springs Tract. The hotel and many of the cottages and support buildings associated with the resort have vanished, but one brick cottage and four frame cottages survive on the west side of Church Road along with several ornamental maple trees that were planted in relation to the hotel.

According to historic images from the mid-19th to early 20th centuries, access to the baths was by gravel paths coming across a lawn from the direction of the hotel to the northwest.⁹⁴ The baths were located on the eastern edge of a grove of mature trees. After the hotel was demolished in 1925, access to the bath was exclusively by automobile. Visitors' cars were accommodated along the side of the highway on the east side of Warm Springs Run, reached by a wooden footbridge over the creek. A characteristic sign in the shape of the Ladies' Bath that said "Pools" was located near the eastern end of the bridge.

A driveway, connected to the original entrance drive to the hotel, was established for the bath keepers to park their car in front of the Reception House, which became their year-round home. In the mid-20th century, the drive to the Reception House was expanded to form a small parking lot on the west side of the lot between the Ladies' and Gentlemen's baths, although the graveled parking area along the highway still remains in place. Runoff from the sloping ground to the west, as well as water from a small branch, was channeled into a ditch along the west side of the tract which drained under the rear wing of the Reception House to join the outflow from the Drinking Spring. During much of the twentieth century, wood plank fences separated the bath lot from the highway.

Architectural Design: The Great Bath

The 1760s Great Bath at Warm Springs was an exceptional facility among its contemporaries. One of the earliest and most famous of this remote group on the western frontier, it was originally known by one of several names — the Medical Springs, Augusta Springs, or the Warm Sulphur Springs to distinguish it from an earlier Warm Springs (now known as Berkeley Springs, in West Virginia). The

⁹⁴ Worsham 2016.

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thermal springs, which welled up in a marshy valley floor, are traditionally said to have been enclosed by the Lewises within the current octagonal stone walls in 1761. The earliest mention of the octagonal pool, however, is found in a January 1776 entry in Philip Vickers Fithian's journal: "the Place of bathing is enclosed with a strong Stone Wall I think thirty Feet diameter, in an octagonal Form; the Water is between three & four Feet deep, which makes a commodious Place for bathing. Its chief Uses are for Sores & Pains!"

According to Dr. John Rouelle in 1792, who was the earliest published commentator on Virginia's thermal springs, the Warm Springs pool was entirely open to the air, except for a low wall for privacy. He suggested in that year the need for dressing rooms with separate entrances as would be appropriate for rheumatic patients (similar to those that were instituted at the Hot Springs) as well as the provision of an adjoining cold bath):

. . . this famous spring [is] contained in a large basin built in Stone, of which the diameter may be twenty four feet, and of an octagonal Shape: the place is not covered, there is only a wall to keep the bathers out of sight. The situation of this bath is one of the most agreeable in these mountains, and it is more easy to find in its neighbourhood, necessary provisions for to be well accommodated. The air is very good there. It would require but little repair to render it one of the most agreeable spots for spending the whole summer; but improvements can not so soon take place. The bath might be divided, so as to have cool water when necessary, and each patient might have his room and a bath close by, which would particularly suit the convenience of rheumatic persons...⁹⁵

It was quite some time, however, before the resort's owners implemented the kinds of changes recommended by Rouelle.

European Precedents

The bath at Warm Springs assumed an octagonal form at about the same time the Hot Bath at the English spa was given that shape by John Wood the Younger, and some years after the form became available to American designers in Plate 47 of Morris' *Select Architecture*.⁹⁶ The Warm Springs Gentlemen's Bath House as completed bears a close resemblance to both the English examples, particularly in the separate entrances to private dressing rooms. Research suggests that the octagonal form, as assumed by the original pool, was inspired by European models and employed later at the Hot and White Sulphur springs.

⁹⁵ Rouelle 1792, 29-55.

⁹⁶ Robert Morris. Select Architecture: Regular Designs of Plans and Elevations Well Suited to Both Town and Country, 1757.

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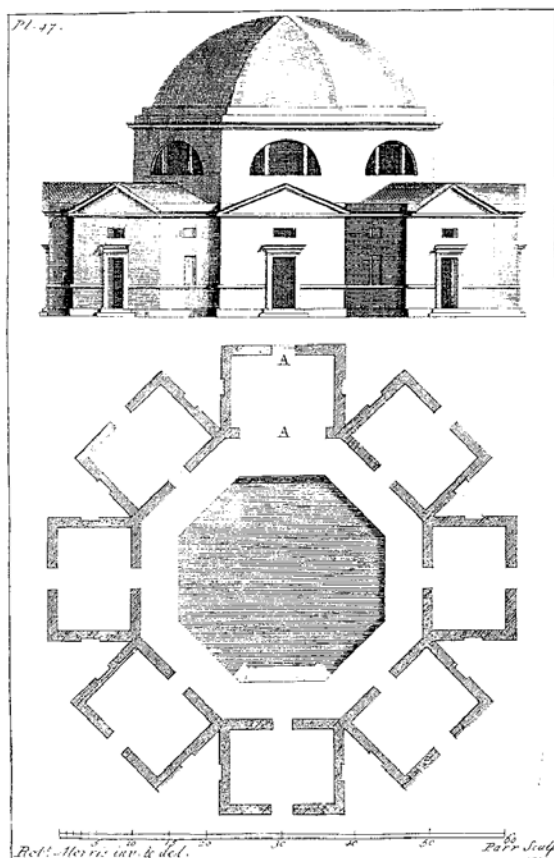


Plate 47, Design for a Cold Bath. Robert Morris. Select Architecture: Regular Designs of Plans and Elevations Well Suited to Both Town and Country, 1757.

The octagonal form was probably suggested to the British Palladians by thermal pools in Palladio's reconstructions and were conveyed to the American colonies by British publications of Palladio and the inventive work of Robert Morris in that tradition. The octagonal Hot Baths by Wood may have been an indirect inspiration for the individual heated dressing rooms through an intermediate source, a doctor, such as John Rouelle, who was familiar with them, or an as-yet unrecognized bath facility, perhaps in the Philadelphia area.

The Gentlemen's Bath House (1820s)

The construction date of the octagonal bath house, originally used alternately by both men and women, itself has long remained elusive. The constant addition of new features to highly specialized buildings at often under-capitalized resorts to satisfy changes in fashion, social order, and customer expectations resulted in a hard-to-pin-down cycle of building campaigns. John Howell Briggs wrote in his journal in 1804 that the Warm Springs bath was "most luxurious" but there was no mention of a building.⁹⁷

⁹⁷ John Howell Briggs, "Journal of a Trip to the Sweet Springs," First Resorts. Richmond: Virginia Historical

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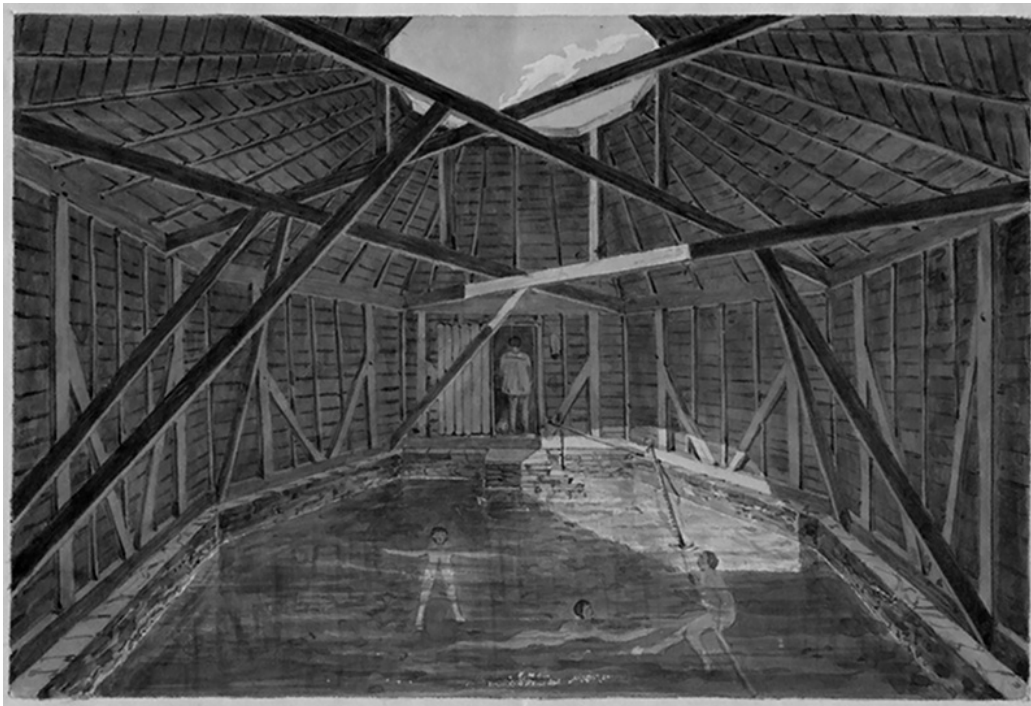
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Another description of the bath in 1808 as “perhaps, the largest and most elegant in the world” by another visitor is pure hyperbole, but he made no mention of a covering.⁹⁸ Eventually the octagonal bath was covered with an octagonal frame building open to the sky in the center, but there is no mention of it in accounts until 1831, when it was described by John Bell: “The basin has over it a wooden top, and is provided, on both sides, with small rooms, heated, when occasion requires it, by fires... It is here the bathers undress and dress, and here an attendant is always in waiting.”⁹⁹

In its earliest form the Gentlemen’s Bath House was adapted to the shape of the much older octagonal basin. The framing, which is especially spaced to align with the walls and doors of the wings only on the corresponding sides, seems to indicate that it possessed four identical dressing room wings from the start. In fact, both documentary and cartographic sources agree that there were only two wings in 1834.



J. H. B. Latrobe. Watercolor painting. Bath at Warm Springs, 1832. Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore MD.

One of the most useful images of the structure comprising the “great bath” house is an 1832 watercolor drawing by John H. B. Latrobe, son of the architect Benjamin Henry Latrobe.¹⁰⁰ Although the size and form of the building is somewhat distorted, it shows an octagonal building closely resembling the

Society, 1987.

⁹⁸ John Edwards Caldwell, A Tour Through Part of Virginia in the Summer of 1808, 1809. Ed. William M. E. Rachal. Richmond: Dietz Press, 1951, 32.

⁹⁹ Bell 1831, 429.

¹⁰⁰ J. H. B. Latrobe. Watercolor painting. Bath at Warm Springs [usually misidentified as the “Women’s Bathhouse”], 1832. Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore MD.

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existing bath house, with an elaborate braced roof support structure and identical stone stair. It indicates that the bath in 1832 could only be entered through dressing rooms to the north and south by means of the two extant corresponding stone stairs. When the deck was added later around the interior periphery to reach the added dressing rooms, the structure had to be changed to a central support similar to the present arrangement.

The building “having a large opening in the middle of the roof to admit light and air” was next mentioned in 1834, at which time there was “a small room to each side of the bath with a little fire, to undress and redress by.” There were “stone steps leading from these rooms to the bottom of the bath.”¹⁰¹ The Latrobe drawing of 1832 confirms that there was no interior deck for moving around the building as there is at present, but that the only access to the pool was directly from the dressing rooms.

By 1835 the bath house did not impress a visitor from New England:

A little below the house is the Bath; being a wooden shed, covering a basin five feet in depth, and nearly forty feet wide. The water is perfectly pellucid, and constantly throws off as it obtains the depth described. This water is about 98 degrees above Fahrenheit, and is not affected by the weather. The whole lot of ground in the center of which this pool rises, is filled with these little bubbling springs, and an area of many similar diameters could be easily formed, if desired, on the spot. At present, the bath is covered by a miserable hovel. . . . It was fortunate, too, that my leisure hour was the only one during the morning when I could have the large bath to myself. From four in the morning this bath was appropriated every alternate two hours to the two sexes. I was told that sometimes twenty women would be in it altogether, and fine fun no doubt they had, if one might judge from the laughter and noise that proceeded from the place at such times. The men, too, are not less gregarious, and thus convert the most delicate of luxuries into a state of things almost as bad, I should suppose, as that in the Penitentiary. Old sick men, young boys, husbands of charming wives, fathers of beautiful daughters, all in the same pickle together, mingling with the most extraordinary looking tobacco-chewing, expectorating, and villainous looking nondescripts. Where are the waters that could undefile a man after coming out of such a polluted liquid!¹⁰²

A map of 1828 may provide a graphic *terminus ante quem*, or date before which the bath building was constructed. The 1828 Map of the Warm Springs Mountain Turnpike, based on notes made the previous year, appears to show the circular shape of the bath house rather than just the unenclosed pool.¹⁰³

¹⁰¹ Prolix 1834: 20 and Blair Bolling, 1838.

¹⁰² Otis 1838.

¹⁰³ Wilson M. C. Fairfax. *Map of the Warm Springs Mt. Turnpike*. Virginia Department of Public Works, 1828, Library of Virginia.

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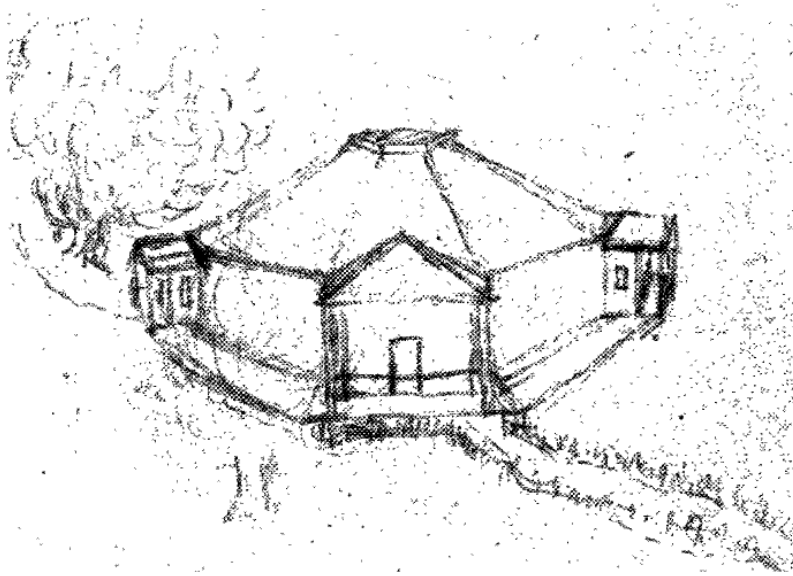
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Added Wings (1830s)

The Warm Springs Bath House was gradually augmented as time passed. As we have seen, the building appears to have incorporated two dressing rooms (at the north and south) from the start although the wall framing suggests that a total of four symmetrically placed wings were planned from the start. The 1833 Field Notes for the Huntersville and Warm Springs Turnpike included a detailed sketch map of the entire complex. It shows only two dressing rooms attached to the octagonal bath house, similar to the mention of dressing rooms to each side in 1831 by John Bell.¹⁰⁴ It seems possible that the heated dressing rooms at the octagonal bath and the four dressing rooms in the adjacent smaller bath were initially intended to provide private entrances to rooms for blanket sweats from the exterior and from there into the pool. In practice, they served for quick changes of clothes and rubdowns.



Sophie DuPont. Sketch, Warm Springs Bath, c. 1837. Hagley Museum and Library, Wilmington DE.

By 1837, two more dressing rooms had been added, as confirmed by a sketch made by Sophie DuPont. Looking from the south, her drawing shows a low crest around the oculus and three of the four changing rooms that were used by men and women in alternating time slots. Looking closely, it is possible to make out slender porch posts on each wing and a railing on the south wing where it overhangs the overflow. It also appears from her drawing that there was a deck around the exterior to permit bathers and the bath attendant to move easily between changing rooms.¹⁰⁵ Another visitor in 1838 described the full complement of wings.

There are four small dressing rooms around and attached to this bath, in which everything is provided that is necessary for adjusting the apparel, etc. A servant stands

¹⁰⁴ Huntersville and Warm Springs Turnpike. Field Notes, Virginia Board of Public Works, 1833, Library of Virginia.

¹⁰⁵ Sophie DuPont. Sketch, Warm Springs Bath, c. 1837. Hagley Museum and Library, Wilmington DE.

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ready the moment you ascend the steps from the water with a towel in his hand, with which he gives you a hasty and rather severe rubbing down, about this he is sometimes compelled to be in a hurry as he is much in demand. There are hours appointed to ladies during which a white handkerchief or flag is suspended on a pole at the Bath house and when that is not waving in the air, it is at all times accessible for gentlemen...¹⁰⁶

Spout Bath Addition (1840s)

According to Burke in 1851, at Warm Springs “there is now also a ‘Spout Bath,’” which was only being planned at the time of his 1846 edition. It seems likely that Dr. Brockenbrough added a new, more intense, spout bath to the great bath in the late 1840s, at the same time that he added the cold plunge.

It appears that he emulated the manager of the Red Sweet Springs in using the outfall of the bathing pool to project the full power of the water to envelop the body. This is confirmed by Burke’s description of the spout bath at the Red Sweet:

The water is conveyed by trunks to the reservoirs, and, by reducing the depth of the basin to four feet, it affords the finest spout imaginable. After swimming about for two or three minutes, it was my custom to place myself under this noble stream, and let it fall on the chest and shoulders. I never was tempted to remain longer than five minutes; I then got onto the platform, took in hand a towel and dried the head and neck, while a servant was engaged in rubbing the body with all his might. In two minutes, when the water is likely to suit, the skin becomes as red as crimson under this operation, and the person feels as if he could jump over the moon.

Adding the spout bath at the Warm Springs involved making the little shed on the east side of the south dressing room to contain a stair leading to the area of the outflow channel just beside the pool. According to an article in the Staunton Sentinel in 1871, “attached to the warm baths are douche or spout baths and cold water plunge or shower baths so any one here can pursue the Russian plan, although miles away from St. Petersburg and Moscow, and the so called ‘Russian baths’ of the city wash tubs.”

At some point in the later nineteenth century, a similar, but gentler, spout bath to the one in the octagonal bath was added in a brick tank located in a former dressing room in the circular Ladies’ Bath.

Cold Plunge (1840s)

The eastern dressing room wing was apparently removed in the late 1840s in order to add a larger wing holding a cold plunge that, in turn, was removed in the 1980s:

Dr. Brockenbrough is entitled to the entire credit of another addition to the bathing advantages of this establishment. Alongside the gentlemen’s bath, and as a wing to

¹⁰⁶ Bolling 1838.

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the building, he has erected a room containing a cold plunging bath, which is plentifully supplied with spring water from the neighboring hills. This enables the bather to use the Russian plan. After spending some 15 or 20 minutes in the warm pool, enjoying a luxury similar to that so eloquently described by Dr. Granville, the bather ascends a flight of steps and plunges into the cold reservoir, of a temperature ranging from 60 to 70 [degrees]. As may be supposed, the shock is great, but the reaction is prompt, energetic, and decided.¹⁰⁷

A similar cold plunge was added for the Ladies' Bath during the third quarter of the 19th century. In 1867, the sale handbill for the Warm Springs asserted that there were, "besides the warm baths, two cold plunges, alongside of the others, plentifully supplied with pure spring water from the neighboring mountain."¹⁰⁸

Additional Dressing Rooms (1840s-1880s)

Additional shed-roofed dressing rooms were made on two of the Gentlemen's Bath House's remaining sides. The southeast addition probably dates from the 1840s. Based on physical evidence, the northeast addition likely dates from the 1880s. An historic photo shows that there was an unroofed enclosure along the southwest side of the building by the second quarter of the twentieth century, apparently accessed by the single batten door that remains today.

Three of the four gabled dressing room wings survive intact today, with nearly identical exterior trim and small cantilevered stoops sheltering exterior doors on each gable end. The north and south dressing rooms are sheathed on the interior with beaded boards, while the west one, used as the main entry today, has plain interior sheathing. Evidence of a stovepipe hole and part of a stovepipe survive in the ceiling of the room within the north wing, confirming the reports of "heated dressing rooms."

The Jed Hotchkiss drawing and map of 1867 mentioned above, as well as the related Beyer and Porte Crayon versions of the same view, are useful for understanding the bath layout during the antebellum period under the administration of John Brockenbrough. The octagonal Great Bath House stands in a grove. Columns supporting the east dressing room and the parapet around the oculus are clearly visible in the Hotchkiss drawing, as is a diagonal exterior walkway around at least part of the bath, both of which were also visible in Sophie DuPont's sketch. Also shown is the square Ladies' Bath with an oculus, where now stands the current Ladies' Bath House, and the two other structures nearby, the Drinking Spring and the Children's Spring, with its own small oculus. The pyramidal-roofed cottage at the upper right is Brockenbrough Cottage, where Robert E. and Mary Custis Lee stayed regularly after the Civil War.

¹⁰⁷ Burke 1851.

¹⁰⁸ Hotchkiss 1867.

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The Drinking Spring (1820s, 1850s, 1870s)

The smallest of the three principal springs that emerge near each other at Warm Springs was probably harnessed at an early date to provide thermal water for drinking. The structure that covered the spring changed several times over time, but the provision of benches appears to have been a constant. This spring was described c. 1837 by Sophie DuPont: "There are several other springs of the same kind in the meadow—round one a platform is built with benches under shady trees, for those who drink the water, which notwithstanding its odour of half-spoiled eggs & its warmth, is not very nauseous to the taste."¹⁰⁹

The diarist Blair Bolling in 1838 noticed the poor condition of the bath house and the Drinking Spring: "the grounds and enclosures are very much neglected and the latter are in a state of dilapidation. The spring used for drinking is small 'tho bold it is covered by an old and decayed shelter supported by some six or eight posts framed into sills upon which the floor is layed."¹¹⁰

By the 1850s and 1860s, illustrations by Porte Crayon, Beyer, Ludwig, and Hotchkiss show the Drinking Spring was covered by a domed temple. The only detailed image of the domed temple is a sketch from c. 1859.¹¹¹ This temple was replaced c. 1890 by the present structure, an open octagonal pavilion with a low, scooped pyramidal roof. Historic photographs show that the building, called a pagoda in a mid-20th-century brochure, had its entrance in the northwest bay facing the hotel.¹¹² At some point in the mid-20th century, the entry was moved into the northern bay.

The Ladies' Bath (c. 1875)

On both the 1828 and 1833 turnpike drawings, and in the Porte Crayon and Beyer images from the mid-1850s, a second frame bath house is shown nearby, along the run, south of the main bath. This is likely the more modest bath adjacent to the large one mentioned by Bell in 1831 as close by the drinking and chalybeate springs: "Near to these is a warm bath similar in temperature and other properties to the first, but of small dimensions, and principally intended for the use of the more aged and infirm, and for children." It was favored by another visitor in 1835: "When I was not so fortunate as to find the public bath vacant, I used to secure a more modest bath adjacent to the large one, in a very nice, and not a very small private place, where you are privileged to be alone."¹¹³

Sophie DuPont later described and drew the interior of one of the four dressing rooms in this smaller bath house, which by that date (c. 1837) had been fitted up as a spout bath with a hose containing spring water under pressure:

Another bath house contains four small baths, into one of which a spout is arranged for the benefit of those who are recommended to take douches. I have tried this at Dr.

¹⁰⁹ DuPont, Spout Bath.

¹¹⁰ Bolling, 1838.

¹¹¹ E.A. Ludwig "The Spring," detail of drawing of the Warm Sulphur Springs, c. 1859, Bath County Historical Society.

¹¹² Photograph of the bath buildings from west, late 1870s (?), Bath County Historical Society.

¹¹³ Otis 1838.

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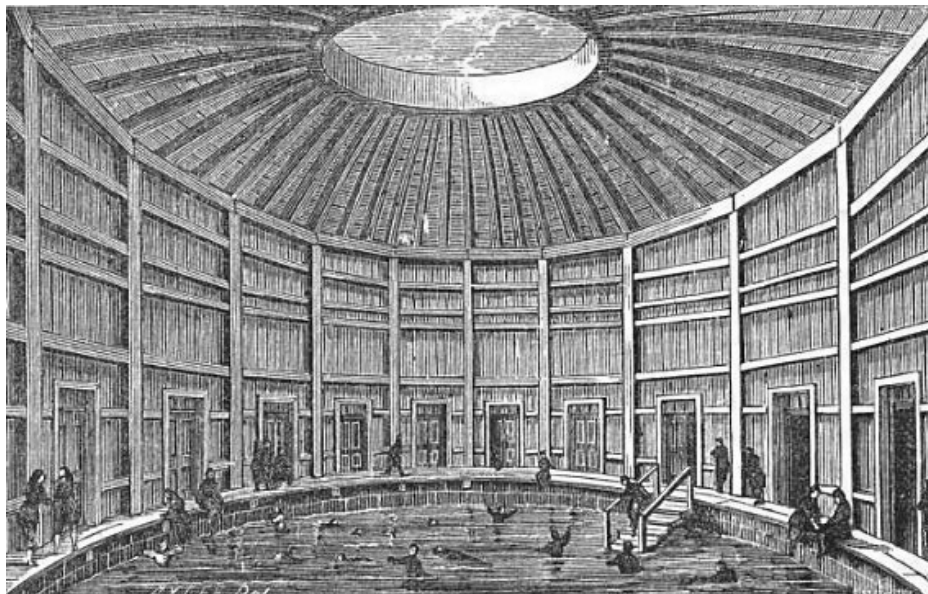
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Horner's request & think it of service to me, as well as the bathing.¹¹⁴

William Burke in 1846 mentioned that "besides the large octagonal bath, there has lately been erected a "Lady's Bath," neatly furnished and of equal depth," and in 1851 he added that in addition to the Ladies' Bath "there is now also a 'Spout Bath.'" The date often given for the construction of the current Ladies' Bath is 1836. However, Dr. Burke and other writers in the 1830s and after never mentioned its impressive scale in comparison with the octagonal bath, which still got most of the attention. No antebellum travel account mentions the current Ladies' Bath House, including the very detailed account by J. Milton Mackie in his travel book of 1864. He makes it clear that there was only one large bath house at the Warm Springs when he says that "one of these fountains used for bathing is protected by an amphitheater, having a circular opening in the roof, for light and ventilation."¹¹⁵ Another account in 1870 mentions only the forty-foot pool as "believed to be the largest warm bath in the world."¹¹⁶



Warm Springs, Bath County, Virginia: In New Hands and Greatly Improved. Open on the First Day of June.
Gary's Steam Printing Est., 1875.

The first references to the current, polygonal Ladies' Bath are found in promotional publications issued by post-Civil War proprietor John L. Eubank for the renamed "Warm Sulphur Springs." The Ladies' Bath was celebrated in brochures of 1875 and 1884. Both brochures used identical language to describe the facilities; "The Ladies Bath is a circular bath, fifty feet in diameter and one hundred and fifty in circumference. As a swimming pool it is very attractive and many ladies learn to swim... The cold baths

¹¹⁴ Sophie DuPont. Sketch, Spout Bath at the Warm Springs, c. 1837. Hagley Museum and Library, Wilmington DE.

¹¹⁵ J. Milton Mackie. *From Cape Cod to Dixie and the Tropics*. New York: G.P. Putnam, 1864, 46..

¹¹⁶ Edward Pollard. *The Virginia Tourist: Sketches of the Springs and the Mountains*, Philadelphia, J. B. Lippincott 1870.

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attached to these warm baths enable the bather to use the Russian plan.”¹¹⁷ The date of 1836 for the Ladies’ Bath House that has been referenced in many histories of Warm Springs corresponds with neither the documentary data nor the physical form of the building. The Ladies’ Bath was clearly constructed by the mid-1870s, when the Eubanks were attempting to rebuild the resort’s reputation as a thermal spa.



Interior of Ladies’ Bath before repairs, no date, from hotel brochure.

The original layout was rigorously geometrical. The central bath was surrounded by a ring of twenty-two small rooms, each with an exterior door. A detailed description of the Ladies’ Bath House in 1879 makes it clear that the bathing arrangement at that date was very similar to the present:

In regard to the baths, which are after all the attraction that draws together this multitude, it may be said, I think, that they are among the most luxurious in the world. A great round Pantheon-like wooden building with a low dome, having a classic round aperture at the summit, encloses the circular pool, 59 feet in diameter, which is the ladies’ bath...

Many remain in the bath for an hour, swimming, floating, loitering, dreaming in the enticing waters, much, I suppose, as the old Romans luxuriated in their vast thermal baths in the magnificent days of the Emperors. When any one desires to return from this soft aquatic existence to terrestrial life, the presiding genius of the place appears at the stairway of the pool, holding out a soft blanket, and the bather taking refuge in it, drops the wet bathing dress, is enfolded within its friendly expanse, and retires to one of the twenty-two dressing rooms which encircle the pool. Now, if there were a lounge in that little apartment, on which the weary invalid could dream away a happy

¹¹⁷ Warm Springs, Bath County, Virginia: In New Hands and Greatly Improved. Open on the First Day of June. Gary’s Steam Printing Est., 1875 and Warm Sulphur Springs, Bath County, Virginia. Richmond: Baughman Brothers, 1884.

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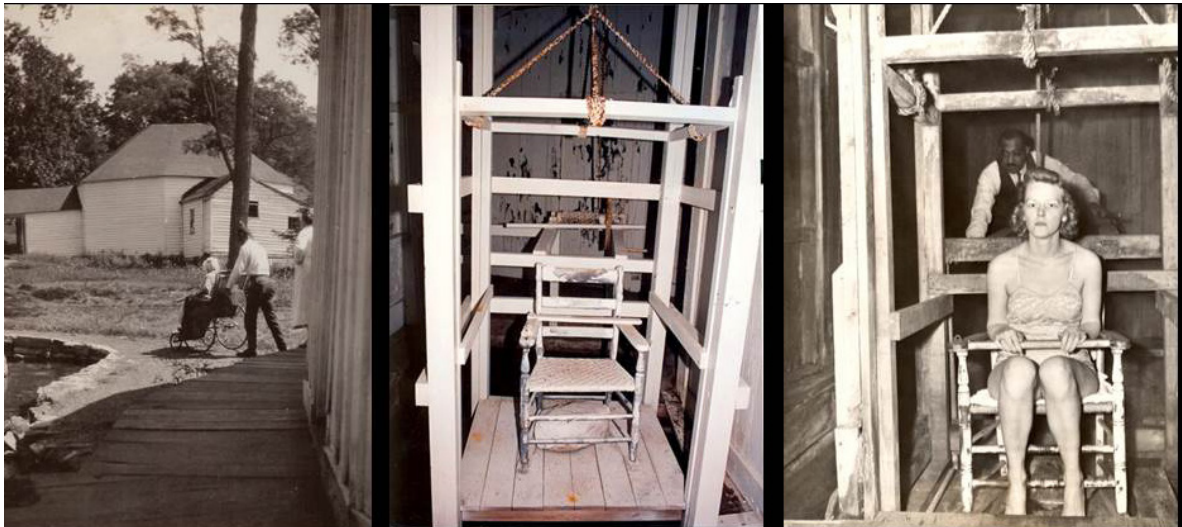
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hour, before the fatigue of dressing, nothing would remain for any to wish for, and it seems ungracious to make even this suggestion amid the real comfort and luxury of these baths. Those who like a private bath better than a social plunge can descend into a very comfortable inner pool, and any who want more vigorous contact with the healing waters may try the spout bath, near at hand.¹¹⁸

The spout bath and cold plunge within the Ladies' Bath House were advertised as being attached to the main building: "private baths of the same temperature as the main bath - douche or spout baths, and cold-water plunge or shower baths."¹¹⁹ It is clear that the number of dressing rooms was reduced in order to house the brick tank of the spout bath and an added concrete tank served by an invalids' lift. Much later, two other dressing rooms were converted into toilet rooms.

The current spout bath is housed in a brick tank located below floor level in the original dressing room to the south side of the spring outfall. Water is supplied by a pipe from the main bath. This tank probably served as both the private bath and the spout bath mentioned in the 1875 brochure. The adjacent room connects with it and probably served as a dressing room for it. The Cold Plunge no longer survives in the Ladies' Bath House and it is not clear where it was accommodated.



Above: Invalids' Chair in the 1950s. Horace Tonsler demonstrates the use of the original invalids' chair at right. Rebuilt invalids' chair at center. An invalid is wheeled from the bath in the mid-twentieth century on the left. Collection of John T. Reddick. The present lift at center is a non-working representation of the original one, replaced in the later twentieth century.

¹¹⁸ "In the Valley of Healing." By S. R. Friends' Intelligencer vol. 36. (Ninth mo. 9th, 1879) 489.

¹¹⁹ Warm Springs 1875 and Warm Sulphur Springs 1884.

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Chairs affixed to ropes and pulleys were used in the nineteenth century to lower invalids into the water. Mary Custis Lee, who was plagued by arthritis, visited Warm Springs only occasionally in the 1850s and early 1860s, but was a regular in later years. Similar chairs existed at both the Healing and Hot Springs. The Hot Springs advertised invalid chairs in 1885: "Suitable machinery has been provided, by means of which invalids, who cannot walk or stand without inconvenience, may be lowered into the bath, either in a recumbent or sitting posture."¹²⁰ The lift arrangement in the Warm Springs Ladies' Bath has been interpreted as "Mrs. Lee's chair" for many years; however, it is a late 20th-century reproduction of the earlier invalids' lift, not a working survival. The original was photographed in the 1950s, when it was likely still in regular use.¹²¹ In the photo, it appears that the small concrete tank in which it is placed was added or replaced an earlier masonry tank which occupied the former space of two original dressing rooms. Thermal water appears to enter the tank through the stone wall of the original spring enclosure.

In 1913, Tallulah Eubank, the manager of the Warm Spring, encouraged patrons to enjoy the large pool in the Ladies' Bath House for parties. One of these was written up in the New York Times. According to the headline, "Water Nymphs Dine from Floating Table at Unique Function" given by Mrs. Eubank in honor of the young Cornelia Otis Skinner, who was to become a popular American actress and novelist.¹²² In the following year, Cornelia Otis Skinner and her parents were at the Warm Springs for an extended visit. Mrs. Eubank gave a *thé dansant* (tea dance) for Cornelia Skinner, who made her debut there.¹²³ In the 1920s the owners of the Hot Springs Company, the Ingalls family, gave an annual party in the Ladies' Bath House. A set of photos from that event document the condition of the building at that time.¹²⁴

The Reception House (c. 1890)

The current Reception House was built as a frame one-room Queen Anne-style building with the entry door in the gable end. By 1900, the building was being used to house Fanny Sheppard, the Ladies' Bath attendant. It was enlarged over time to better house its tenants. The Reception House was labeled "Aunt Fanny's House" on the map of the resort as is appeared in about 1900. John T. Reddick noted in a presentation to the Warm Springs Historical Society in 2015 that it is interesting that the bath buildings were all oriented at one point towards the west and hotel complex.¹²⁵ The Reception House appears to have been intended to appear as an entrance pavilion for the Ladies' Bath, performing much the same role that the west wing plays for the Gentlemen's Bath.

¹²⁰ Virginia Hot Springs 1885.

¹²¹ Invalids' Chair demonstrated by Horace Tonsler, 1950s. Collection, John T. Reddick.

¹²² Hot Springs "Pool Party" A New Wrinkle In Entertainments: Water Nymphs Dine from Floating Table at Unique Function in Honor of Mrs. Otis Skinner. New York Times (17 August 1913).

¹²³ Richmond Times-Dispatch, 23 August 1914.

¹²⁴ Ingalls family annual party, c1930.

¹²⁵ John T. Reddick. Interview by Bonnie Ralston. The Historic Warm Springs Pools – An African American History: A Pride of Place and Race. Shenandoah Public Radio broadcast, 25 Sept. 2015.

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Other Development at the Warm Springs Resort

A series of cottages was erected at the resort during the 19th century. The oldest, known as the Gibson Cottage, is thought to have served as a dwelling for the resort's resident physician, based on a building having been shown in approximately the same location and labeled "Doctor" on the survey field notes for the Warm Springs Mountain Turnpike, made in 1828. Three buildings in the same location are labeled "Dr. Strother" on the Field Notes for the Huntersville and Warm Springs Turnpike.¹²⁶ Dr. Archer P. Strother, "a highly respected citizen who lived between Hot and Warm Springs,"¹²⁷ was the resort's resident physician.¹²⁸ It would appear likely that Strother lived in the Gibson Cottage before 1837, when he purchased the property known as Boxwood located midway between the Warm and Hot Springs.¹²⁹ He was also the uncle of General David H. Strother, who, using the pseudonym of "Porte Crayon," drew the first bird's eye view of the resort in 1855. In spite of this residential use, the building does resemble a typical multiple-room cottage at other Virginia springs.



Gibson Cottage, early twentieth c., Bath County Historical Society.

After the Civil War, three four-room rental cottages were built during the ownership of Col. Eubank. These were located between the Hotel Annex and the Gibson Cottage. The westernmost one of these has been missing for many years, but two survive. They are nearly identical and their interior floor plan could be adapted for families or for individuals by opening or closing the doors between adjoining rooms for flexibility in size and number of rooms. None of them had bathrooms or indoor toilets. When

¹²⁶ Virginia Board of Public Works, 1833, [LOV].

¹²⁷ Frederic Oren Morton, Annals of Bath County, Staunton VA: McClure Co, 1918, 50.

¹²⁸ Otis 1836, 516.

¹²⁹ The Highland County Recorder, 120:3, (Jan 1997) 17.

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The Homestead demolished the Warm Springs hotel and other buildings in 1925, these building were considered in adequate condition to be retained and adapted for rental purposes, possibly for employees at the nearby Homestead Dairy. Both of the cottages and the similar structure called Rose Cottage received lean-to wings across the rear that accommodated a pantry and bathroom to either side of a concrete-floored back porch.



Postcard, Main Avenue, Warm Springs VA, no date, Library of Virginia. Cottages One, Two, and Three are visible from left to right.

Another cottage, labeled as the “Rose Cottage” on the c. 1900 map appears to have been built c. 1890. It is distinguished by its narrow weatherboard siding and Victorian-era interior trim, both of which are original. Virginia novelist Ellen Glasgow rented “the old Rose Cottage” in Warm Springs during the summer of 1911 for her dying sister Cary “and stocked it with her sister’s favorite foods and European wines.”¹³⁰ Novelist Mary Johnston spent summers at “Rose Cottage,” where she wrote much of her novel, *Audrey*, published in 1902.¹³¹ Rose Cottage was adapted for year-round occupancy after 1925 by the addition to the rear of a porch flanked by a bathroom and pantry.

An unnamed cottage also survives from the period when the hotel was in operation. The post-Civil War, one-story frame, building began as a two-room cottage behind and uphill from the Warm Springs Hotel. The map from c. 1900 suggests that servant’s quarters were in that location. As it stands today, it was expanded and refinished as a four-room single-family home after the hotel was demolished in 1925.

Archeological Potential

The historic boundary for the Warm Springs Bath Houses includes the majority of the six-acre public

¹³⁰ Susan Goodman, *Ellen Glasgow: A Biography*, JHU Press, 2003, 120.

¹³¹ Richmond *Times*, 16 November 1902, 17.

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square originally set aside for the baths. This springs tract was retained by the owners of The Homestead even after the another tract, where the cottages are located and the hotel once stood, was sold off in 1993. The acreage within the historic boundary was evaluated for archaeological significance by the Virginia Department of Historic Resources in 2016. The brief report by State Archaeologist Michael Barber concluded:

With the buildings placed basically in the middle of an active streambed, the likelihood of intact prehistoric sites proved very low. This was reinforced by the area around the pool houses [being] marked by undulating terrain, the result of flooding with some areas prone to scouring and others to flood load deposition. In addition, areas of high visibility were examined particularly along the stream bank following Route 220. The soil deposition here was marked by fractured mudstone with some shale and limestone inclusions, typical of flood deposition. Areas around trees and walkways were also examined. Soils were wet and poorly drained.

Around the structures themselves were brick fragments from foundation repair with historic artifacts limited to 20th-century whiteware, a green insulator fragment, and rodent chewed *Sus scrofa* (pig) and *Bos Taurus* (cow) bone fragments. Most were butchered ribs and appeared relatively recent.

The Warm Springs Bath Houses have little to no potential for prehistoric occupation. Although the warm waters may have been a focus of prehistoric peoples, the higher and drier terraces above, like that of the Warm Springs Inn, would have been more likely occupation areas. Potential for data recovery may be associated with the buildings in the sense of early construction information and/or artifacts associated with spa recreation. Should seriously impacting construction be required for building repair, site monitoring is recommended by a professional archaeologist.¹³²

In addition to historic archeological resources associated with the thermal water, drier ground in the immediate vicinity around the bath houses may include foundations and other subsurface features associated with the 18th- and 19th-century log, brick and stone houses, stores, cottage rows, and hotel buildings that once stood along Church Road (which itself is a historic stagecoach route).

Comparative Analysis: National Significance of the Warm Springs Bath Houses

The Warm Springs Bath Houses, the associated historic buildings, and the adjacent landscape have national significance in the areas of Health/Medicine and Architecture as one of the earliest and best-preserved mineral springs facilities in the eastern United States. Very few medicinal bathing structures in the country combine a comparable level of integrity and ongoing use within a continuous bathing tradition across more than three centuries. The original octagonal stone bath dating from the 1760s and the two 19th-century bath houses are unique in their geometric form, plain detailing, and exposed

¹³² Michael Barber, Warm Springs Archeological Evaluation, Virginia Department of Historic Resources, 2016.

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framing.

As compared to the historic springs resorts in the United States that have been recognized as nationally significant, the Warm Springs Bath Houses shares a similar historic context, particularly with regard to the medicinal uses for which the springs are best known. In West Virginia, Berkeley Springs was listed in the National Register at the national level of significance in 1976. This property's historic similarity to Warm Springs already has been noted herein, including its relatively small size of just 5 acres. Europeans reached Berkeley Springs by about 1740 and were quickly taken with its curative properties. Hundreds of summer visitors regularly came to the springs by the 1760s. At this point, however, the histories of Berkeley Springs and Warm Springs begin to diverge, as a town was successfully chartered at Berkeley Springs while the effort failed at Warm Springs. More important, the Berkeley Springs were set aside in perpetuity for free public access, while the Warm Springs remained in private hands. Perhaps because speculators and businessmen were not arguing over access to the springs at Berkeley, commercial development there occurred rapidly, whereas Warm Springs struggled to attract investors through the late 18th century. During the 19th century, both resorts experienced periods of robust growth as well as stagnation, variously due to increasing competition from other resorts, lack of convenient transportation, consequences of the Civil War, and other factors. The process of "taking the waters" at Berkeley Springs and Warm Springs seems to have been very similar, and informed by the most current treatment theories of the day. The 1888 arrival of direct railroad service at Berkeley Springs prompted another period of expansion that ended abruptly when the main hotel building was destroyed by fire a decade later. Warm Springs lost its 19th century hotel as well, although not until 1925, and in this case due to demolition rather than disaster.¹³³

Today perhaps the most striking difference between Berkeley Springs and Warm Springs is their respective architectural assemblages. Warm Springs developed slowly, with as much as a 40-year interval between construction of the stone-lined octagonal bath during the 1760s and construction of the Gentlemen's Bath House by the mid-1820s. A separate Ladies Bath House is known to have existed by the mid-19th century, and it was replaced by the extant round, frame Ladies Bath House during the mid-1870s. Likewise, antebellum uses at Warm Springs included a supply of drinking water that was part of the treatment protocol, as well as a "children's pool." The small pool remains alongside the ornamental 1870s Drinking Spring Pavilion. The next, and last, architectural feature within the 6-acre core tract of Warm Springs was a small Reception House built during the 1890s.

All of the Warm Springs buildings are of frame construction. In the case of the bath houses, their aesthetic qualities are expressed through their symmetrical, polygonal designs, elaborately framed roofs with structural members exposed on the interior, and incorporation of natural light through strategically placed windows within dressing rooms, use of transoms, and oculus roofs open to the sky. Where ornamentation might typically be expressed, such as with trim at doors and windows and interior wall finishes, at the Warm Springs Bath Houses there is instead the simplicity of elements that merge form

¹³³ James E. Harding, "Berkeley Springs," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form (February 1976), section 8.

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and function. For example, the wood decks that encircle each stone-lined bath appear always to have been sturdy and utilitarian, based on drawings from as far back as the first quarter of the 19th century. The stone-lined baths themselves have been left virtually unchanged, including the means by which water flows into and out of the bathing pools. Rather than elaborate plumbing, the water's momentum and gravity-fed hoses were used to create spout baths for both bath houses, at least two cold-water plunge pools, and an invalid's pool. Repairs undertaken to the bath houses, drinking spring pavilion, and reception house generally have focused on reusing existing materials or replacing elements in kind and only to the extent strictly necessary. Even during the major repair campaigns during the mid-20th century and during the 1980s, few substantial alterations were made, such as removal of the cold plunge pools. But when rebuilding the dressing rooms in the Ladies' Bath House, similar dimensional sawn lumber was used and painted white, with the spaces otherwise left as rustic as they always had been. In a few places, a concrete floor was poured to replace a brick- or stone-paved flooring area. The deferred maintenance that has characterized more recent decades has resulted in makeshift repair, most notably use of rocks to fill spaces in the foundation where a building has shifted, or no repairs at all, as evidenced by the numerous holes in the roof of the Gentlemen's Bath House.

In contrast, Berkeley Springs features mostly brick buildings, including the 1780s Roman Baths, which has retained much of its original appearance, interior floor plan, and configuration of baths. Of similar vintage, a more modest brick bath house originally was built for ladies' use (and by the late 20th century had been converted to storage). The gentlemen's drinking spring is covered by a two-story brick building with a mostly open first story, supported by columns, and a second story enclosed with arched windows, brick pilasters, and brick arches. A 1920s brick administration building was a later addition to the springs complex and during the mid-20th century the existing bathing pools were replaced with a newer swimming pool-bath house complex surrounded by a chain-link fence.¹³⁴

Another striking difference between the two resorts is the level of engineering concerning the springs themselves. A large stone retaining wall at Berkeley Springs retains a hillside and from this, two springs spill from hollowed out rock bases, whereas all of those at Warm Springs continue to emerge from the marshy grounds. This differing approach owes partly to the local topography, with Warm Springs located in a valley and Berkeley Springs in a hilly area. Yet it also speaks to the fundamentally different character of the two properties. Whereas Berkeley Springs has more substantial brick buildings and a formal layout, Warm Springs has remained rustic, as if its owners always wanted to preserve a sense of the springs having just been discovered by outsiders.

Comparison of the Warm Springs Bath Houses against other springs resorts leads to similar conclusions, even with several that are relatively nearby in Virginia and West Virginia. Occupying just over 26 acres, The Homestead, also in Bath County, Virginia, was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1991. A hotel known as The Homestead has been located here since the 1760s, precisely the time that Warm Springs initially was being developed. By the late 19th century, the sprawling resort included a large frame main hotel with classically-derived ornamentation, a second hotel, an architect-designed bath

¹³⁴ Harding, "Berkeley Springs," section 8.

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house, a casino, 11 rental cottages, and 4 thermal springs with simple enclosures. A fire destroyed the main hotel in 1901. Just a year later, the first section of the extant hotel, a graceful brick Georgian Revival edifice, had been constructed. Major additions followed in 1903, 1914, the early 1920s, and 1929, the latter being excellent examples of Colonial Revival design on the exteriors and interiors. The scale and opulence of The Homestead, as well as the 20th century origins of its main hotels, are such that this property's similarity to the Warm Springs Bath Houses primarily is based on the fact that each has thermal springs that provided the basis for subsequent development.¹³⁵ Meanwhile, dating to 1778, The Greenbrier, also a National Historic Landmark, dwarfs Warm Springs and The Homestead, with a massive Georgian Revival hotel substantially rebuilt in 1930 (essentially replacing an older hotel) and considerable later development, including a casino, professional tennis facilities, and multiple golf courses on its several thousand acres. Located in Greenbrier County, West Virginia, the property's extensive grounds include a white sulphur spring, black sulphur spring, and white chalybeate spring.¹³⁶

Another West Virginia historic resort, Sweet Springs in Monroe County, was first exploited by European settlers during the mid-18th century. An entrepreneur, William Lewis, built the first hotel here in 1792. He also proposed a community with residential areas carefully segregated from commercial development, but the plan never reached fruition. The resort, however, prospered and, being within a day's carriage ride from other springs, was part of the pre-Civil War "Springs Region." Guests often would make a circuit to visit springs at several different resorts. By the mid-19th century, Sweet Springs grew to include a large, brick, Early Classical Revival main hotel, four two-story guest houses, a bath house, and other assorted facilities. Maps and photos that accompany the property's nomination show a rather formal layout, with the main hotel on one side of a circular drive, the bath house directly opposite, and a row of cottages in a graceful semi-circle to the side of the hotel. The 1850s two-story brick cottages are more simply designed than the main hotel, but feature classically-inspired symmetry, massing, and decorative elements. Sweet Springs, therefore, is perhaps more comparable to the Warm Springs Bath Houses with regard to the construction dates of its primary architectural resources. The architecture at Sweet Springs was certainly more substantial; however, its integrity was affected during the 20th century, starting in 1930 when the property went into receivership and then in 1941 when the State of West Virginia acquired and converted it for use as a nursing home facility named the Andrew S. Rowan Memorial Home. The bath house was converted to a chapel, while the main hotel's interior floor plan and finishes were renovated to create patient rooms, offices, and medical treatment areas. A wing was constructed on the building's rear elevation as well. Despite these alterations, the former resort was listed in the National Register in 1971. Twenty years later, the Rowan Home closed and in 1996 the property returned to private ownership; an early 21st century attempt to convert the property back to a resort proved unsuccessful.¹³⁷

¹³⁵ Carolyn Pitts, ed., "The Homestead," National Historic Landmark Nomination Form (December 1990), 12-18.

¹³⁶ C. E. Turley and James E. Harding, "The Greenbrier," National Historic Landmark Nomination Form (February 1974), sections 7 and 8.

¹³⁷ Michael W. Meador, "Sweet Springs," *The West Virginia Encyclopedia* (June 18, 2018), <https://www.wvencyclopedia.org/articles/656>; Clifford M. Lewis, "Old Sweet Springs" National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form (January 1970), sections 7 and 8.

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Yet another West Virginia springs is the Salt Sulphur Springs Historic District in Monroe County. This property is distinguished by its collection of limestone buildings, described in its National Register nomination as “one of the largest native stone Civil War groupings in West Virginia,” for which it is classified as being of statewide significance. In 1802 while Alexander Hutchinson was boring for salt, he discovered the Sweet Sulphur Spring. Three years later, the Salt Sulphur Spring was identified by Ervin Benson. At some point, a dwelling was built alongside the Sweet Sulphur Spring; the house and a group of modest cabins remained in use until the 1840s. Construction on the resort’s first stone building started in 1816. Business partners William Erskine and Isaac Carruthers acquired the property two years later, and opened the resort in 1821. In response to swelling numbers of guests, a larger hotel followed during the 1830s. A special feature at the resort was a bowling alley, constructed in the late 1820s. The resort temporarily ceased operations following the deaths of Erskine and Carruthers as well as during the Civil War. A group of investors pooled resources to refurbish and reopen the resort during the 1880s. Unlike some of the fashionable resorts in West Virginia, the Salt Sulphur Springs appears to have been more family-oriented and, starting in the 1880s, was advertised as the “Home-like Resort.” The Springs closed in 1914, but Four-H and other children’s camps continued to take place here until 1924. Six years later, attempts to revive the resort, now dubbed the Salt Sulphur and Iodine Springs, proved ill-fated and the last season the resort operated was in 1936. Thereafter the property was converted to residential use. Significant architectural resources on the property’s 34 acres at the time of its listing included the c. 1816-1820 Old Stone Hotel, two brick cottages, a c. 1836 church, an 1820 general store, a c. 1820 stone bath house, and a c. 1820 stone spring house. In addition to the Sweet Sulphur and Salt Sulphur Springs, the National Register nomination notes the Iodine Spring; the latter two had wooden pavilions marking their locations.¹³⁸

The architectural significance of the Salt Sulphur Springs property lies in the use of locally quarried limestone, as well as the compact range of construction dates and similarities in workmanship and design. The Warm Springs Bath Houses is quite different, as all four of its significant architectural resources are of frame construction and they were built across a span of about 70 years. Where the two springs are similar in their significance lies in their more rustic family appeal, as opposed to the glamour for which The Homestead and The Greenbrier are known. Although the Salt Sulphur Springs nomination is silent about the bathing practices here, by the 1820s the medicinal qualities of various thermal and mineral springs in western Virginia were well known and a fairly typical course of treatment for patients had been devised that included sweats in blankets or saunas, lengthy soaks in the springs followed by a cold plunge, and ample outdoor recreation. Salt Sulphur Springs is distinguished somewhat by the inclusion of summer camps for children for about a decade in the 1910s and 1920s, an activity that was not identified at the Warm Springs Bath Houses.¹³⁹ At 34 acres, Salt Sulphur Springs also is considerably larger in scale.

Certainly among the most picturesque and romantic of the National Register-listed historic springs is the

¹³⁸ Monroe County Historical Society, “Salt Sulphur Springs Historic District,” National Register Nomination Form (June 1985), sections 7 and 8.

¹³⁹ Monroe County Historical Society, “Salt Sulphur Springs Historic District.”

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Blue Sulphur Springs Pavilion in Greenbrier County, West Virginia. The property is listed at the statewide level of significance in the areas of Health/Medicine, Social History, Entertainment/Recreation, and Architecture and its early historic context is similar to Warm Springs. The property's geographic setting also is similar, as Blue Sulphur Springs is situated within a wide valley between Kitchen Creek and Sawmill Hollow. As a monumental example of Greek Revival architecture, the Blue Sulphur Springs Pavilion is described as being "unique in the landscape of rural West Virginia," a quality that it shares with the architecturally distinctive Warm Springs Bath Houses. The resort at Blue Sulphur Springs was founded in 1834, when the pavilion was constructed along with a complement of other buildings – a 200-room brick hotel, 20 rental cottages, a bath house, servants' quarters (in the antebellum era, servants likely were enslaved African Americans), and stables. But for the pavilion, the resort all but vanished after it closed in 1859 and was sold to a Baptist organization that planned to use it as a school.¹⁴⁰ Today, the pavilion stands alone in a wide field, only minimally altered since 1834, making it among the most physically intact springs-related resources discussed herein. Here again, the Warm Springs Bath Houses is similar, as its principal architectural resources have seen few changes and the springs themselves continue to flow unencumbered across the property's grounds.

Farther afield, a National Historic Landmark in Paoli, Indiana, the West Baden Springs Hotel, is another example of an elaborate springs resort. Occupying 80 acres, the property includes a 1901-1902 main hotel and several Greek Revival brick pavilions arranged around a formal garden. Some of the pavilions are atop springs, while others held recreational uses such as bowling and billiards. The first hotel on the property was built in 1855; it, like so many frame hotels of the era, was destroyed by fire in 1901. During its heyday, West Baden Springs Hotel drew guests interested in "taking the waters" as well as though seeking other recreational pursuits, including gambling, horse racing, and even major league baseball. Due to its later establishment, later hotel, and less emphasis on the springs, the West Baden Springs Hotel is not particularly comparable to the Warm Springs Bath Houses. Its significance appears to lie more in its architectural design, most notably the hotel's massive steel and glass dome that lights a two-story atrium.¹⁴¹

Pennsylvania, meanwhile, has the Bedford Springs Hotel Historic District, which was listed in the National Register at the national level of significance in 1984 and designated a National Historic Landmark in 1991. Covering 300 acres, the historic district dwarfs the Warm Springs Bath Houses, as does the opulence of its architectural resources. However, Bedford Springs was established in 1806, making it one of the few NHL-designated resorts springs in the eastern United States that are close in age to Warm Springs. The main hotel complex includes six buildings that date between c. 1806 and c. 1903, and represent a stunning array of nationally popular architectural styles, from Greek Revival, Italianate, and Eastlake/Queen Anne to Colonial Revival. A total of seven springs fall in or near the hotel across about a mile's distance. The most famous, Magnesia Spring, was covered with a springhouse and gazebo (each periodically replaced) from the mid-19th to late 20th century (after 1987,

¹⁴⁰ Amanda S. Cox, "Blue Sulphur Springs Pavilion," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form (July 1992), sections 7 and 8.

¹⁴¹ James H. Charleton, "West Baden Springs Hotel," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form (June 1985), sections 7 and 8.

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the spring was transported by pipe to a metal pump). After the twentieth century, the resort expanded to offer a broader array of recreational opportunities, including a golf course and swimming pool. Like The Greenbrier and The Homestead, the Bedford Springs Hotel Historic District was distinguished by its wealthy and powerful clientele, including prominent politicians (most notably President James Buchanan) and business owners.¹⁴² Due to its architectural significance, association with Buchanan, and its longtime use as a medicinal springs resort, Bedford Springs is nationally significant.

The Bedford Springs NHL nomination notes a small number of nationally prominent springs resorts, including The Greenbrier, The Homestead, Hot Springs (in Arkansas), and Saratoga Spa (in New York) had similar characteristics, such as a pristine natural setting, nearby mineral or thermal springs, attribution of medicinal properties to the springs, architecturally impressive buildings, and a dedicated clientele.¹⁴³ The Warm Springs Bath Houses certainly shares in these attributes, except that it is a more modestly scaled and architecturally rustic springs resort (with its main hotel lost to fire in 1925). These characteristics are at least somewhat owed to its early establishment as well as the socioeconomic status of its guests who, while a generally monied and fashionable group, were not part of the rarefied elite who patronized the larger resorts. Also worthy of note is that, perhaps more by accident as opposed to deliberate planning, the thermal springs at Warm Springs are the least engineered among all of the properties mentioned above. The opportunity to see the springs emerging from the marshy grounds, to bathe within stone-lined pools that have been but little altered for more than two centuries, and to be in distinctive architectural spaces that facilitate bathing in as natural a space as is possible while remaining sheltered are key defining characteristics of the Warm Springs Bath Houses. They appear to be replicated nowhere else among the Register-listed and NHL-designated properties identified to date.

As regards more modestly scaled springs resorts, Kentucky has a tradition of thermal springs-related tourism with as many as 55 “mineral water towns” that operated between 1890-1930; historic properties related to this theme may not be documented in the National Register to the extent found in neighboring states. The locally significant Sulphur Well Historic District in Metcalfe County includes 26 properties, at the heart of which are the Beula Villa Hotel and “The Grove,” where mineral water was discovered in 1845. Sulphur water flows from a concrete arch in a small park. The vast majority of architectural resources within the historic district date to the 20th century. Listed in the National Register under Criterion A in the area of Community Planning and Development, the Sulphur Well Historic District is noted as “the best example of [a] small health resort town that developed around a sulphur well in a rural landscape in western Kentucky. The nomination explains that common elements for the establishment of a “mineral water town” in rural Kentucky are the presence of mineral water wells or springs, hotels and/or boarding houses for visitors, development of a town plan in relation to a major transportation route, and construction of a residential neighborhood surrounding a commercial core.¹⁴⁴ As is discussed herein, such characteristics are common to many of the springs resorts identified in

¹⁴² Gerald M. Kuncio, “Bedford Springs Hotel Historic District,” National Historic Landmark Nomination Form (February 1991), section 7.

¹⁴³ Kuncko, “Bedford Springs Hotel Historic District,” section 8.

¹⁴⁴ Donna G. Logsdon, “Sulphur Well Historic District,” National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form (March 1998), section 8, p. 1-2.

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western Virginia, again highlighting the shared historic themes and contexts of springs and mineral water resorts in the eastern U.S. from the late 18th through the early 20th century, as well as the benefits of soaking in mineral waters and thermal springs and/or imbibing the water as part of a course of medicinal treatment.

Crucial differences exist between the Warm Springs Bath Houses and the Sulphur Well Historic District. The first is temporal, as Sulphur Well's mineral waters were not discovered until 1845 and all but one of the town's architectural resources postdates 1900. Further, the 1903 Beula Villa Hotel, the main tourist destination, has a different architectural character, consisting of a frame, two-story building with weatherboard siding, a one-story wraparound veranda, and minimal stylistic embellishment. Remarkably, the hotel did not burn, a fate that seems to have beset many historic hotel buildings at springs resorts. The hotel is almost contemporaneous with the Reception House at the Warm Springs Bath Houses, but the latter has a more effervescent Queen Anne style quite unlike the austere, rectilinear character of the former Beula Villa Hotel. Most crucially, however, is that the Sulphur Well Historic District appears not to have had bath houses, which have been the defining historic use for the Warm Springs property since the early 19th century.

In Hopkins County, Kentucky, the Dawson Springs community is another example of a mineral water town with a locally significant, National Register-listed historic district (originally listed in 1988, with a boundary increase in 1998). The two-block district includes 9 properties built between 1887 and 1922. Mineral water was not discovered here until 1881, placing this resort's historic context more than a century after the establishment of the first Warm Springs octagonal bath. Patients came by train from all over Kentucky and the Upper South to Dawson Springs, and with its hotels, boarding houses, and commercial buildings, it came to be considered Kentucky's "only example of a highly planned, fully developed, incorporated turn-of-the-century mineral water town that centered its physical growth around the railroad and mineral water wells."¹⁴⁵ The success of Dawson Springs is a striking contrast to the fitful creation of the Warm Springs community around its thermal springs, and likely owes as much to the readily available railroad access as it does to the savviness of entrepreneurs who could draw on over a century of experience in developing resort communities. When Warm Springs was founded, neither of these factors were present. Other historic springs resorts in Kentucky, such as Kirkwood Springs, Grayson Springs, and Diamond Springs, also trace their origins to the mid- or late 19th century. As a result, while the history of Kentucky's mineral water towns is certainly part of the larger historic context for resort springs in the eastern U.S., they do not appear to be directly comparable to the Warm Springs Bath Houses.

Maine is home to the Poland Spring Bottling Plant and Spring House, another example of a historic summer resort centered around a spring with reported medicinal properties. Tales of the springs' healthful benefits began to circulate as early as 1800 when a member of the Ricker family experienced a sudden recovery from an illness. The Rickers soon established a resort, and built their grand hotel,

¹⁴⁵ Logsdon, "Sulphur Well Historic District," section 8, p. 6; Philip Thomason, "Dawson Springs Historic District," National Register Nomination Form (July 1988), sections 7 and 8.

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Poland Spring House, was built in 1876 (and unfortunately burned in 1975). Constructed in 1907, the bottling house is a masonry building with Classical Revival design elements, while the associated spring house has rusticated walls that match the bottling plant's tower as well as a copper dome described as "Baroque in character."¹⁴⁶ Poland Spring continues to be sold today as bottled water.

The mineral water consumption emphasized at several of the Kentucky resort towns and at Poland Spring is a significant theme in the Health/Medicine context of thermal and mineral springs, but it is not directly relevant to the significance of the Warm Springs Bath Houses. As far as is known, a bottling water operation was never contemplated at the Warm Springs Bath Houses, although a Drinking Spring facility was in place by the mid-19th century (with the present pavilion erected during the 1870s). The bath houses and thermal springs, however, historically and today have always been the principal resource that drew tourists and patients to Bath County., where the stone-lined baths, unique frame bath houses, and the thermal springs themselves, bubbling from the marshy ground, are the key features.

Based on this comparative analysis, two conclusions are easily drawn. First, under Criterion A in the area of Health/Medicine, the use of thermal springs and mineral springs for medical treatments and recreational opportunities is a nationally significant pattern associated with evolving medical theories for treatment of patients with a variety of illnesses and injuries. Second, under Criterion C in the area of Architecture, the architectural resources built at springs resorts, particularly hotels and bath houses, have been found to be significant at the local, statewide, and national levels depending on their particular context, stylistic attributes, and integrity of location, setting, feeling, association, design, materials, and workmanship.

As one of the earliest documented thermal springs facilities in the eastern United State, the Warm Springs Bath Houses was a trailblazer in the establishment, successful operation, and endurance of springs resorts. Almost immediately upon their discovery by Europeans, the thermal springs were identified as a healthful resource and their use for an assortment of medical treatments (soaking, cold plunges, sweats, spout baths, and simply drinking the water) was based on the centuries-long tradition of hot springs bathing across Europe. The octagonal stone basin first built during the 1760s, and covered with the little-altered 1820s Gentlemen's Bath House, makes the Warm Springs Bath Houses an exceedingly rare architectural resource in this national context. Supplementation of the original bath house with additional features, including a ladies' bath house, drinking spring, and hotel, all by the mid-19th century, and with the extant 1870s Ladies Bath House and Drinking Spring Pavilion and the 1890s Reception House further buttress the property's significance. Examined both individually and as a collective whole, the resources of the Warm Springs Bath Houses illustrate the history of thermal springs resorts across three centuries. Therefore, the property is nationally significant under Criterion in the area of Health/Medicine and under Criterion C in the area of Architecture.

¹⁴⁶ Frank A. Beard and Roger G. Reed, "Poland Spring Bottling Plant and Spring House," National Register Nomination Form (January 1984), sections 7 and 8.

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Section 10. Geographical Data

Acree of Property 5.17 acres (approximate)

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 38.053740 Longitude: -79.780880

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

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The true and correct historic boundary is shown on the attached Sketch Map, which has a scale of 1"=188 feet. The boundary extends in a northeasterly direction for about 725 feet along the northwest side of Sam Snead Highway (US Route 22), then turns northwest for approximately 335 feet as it parallels the southwest side of Bath Street, then turns in a southwesterly direction to follow the southeast side of Church Street for about 735 feet, then turns to the southeast a distance of about 335 feet to return to the point of beginning.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The historic boundary includes the area that has been associated with the Warm Springs Bath Houses for much of its history and is based on the minimal geographic information included in the 1968/1969 nomination. The historic boundary has not changed as a result of this update, but is drawn to clarify that the listed property includes the two bath houses, the nearby drinking spring pavilion and reception house as well as the historic landscape, including natural springs, around the bath houses.

Section 11. Update Prepared Byname/title: Gibson Worsham/ Department of Historic Resources Stafforganization: Glavé & Holmes Architecture/ Department of Historic Resourcesstreet & number: 2100 East Main Street/ 2801 Kensington Avenuecity or town: Richmond state: VA zip code: 23221e-mail: gworsham@glaveandholmes.com/ lena.mcdonald@dhr.virginia.govtelephone: 804 898-5852date: September 2017/ February 2019**Photo Log**Name of Property: Warm Springs Bath Houses 2017 Boundary IncreaseCity or Vicinity: Warm SpringsCounty: Bath CountyState: VAPhotographer: Gibson WorshamDate Photographed: 2 February 2017

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

Photo 1 of 11: VA_Bath County_Warm Springs Bath Houses_0001View: Gentlemen's Bath House, west elevation, camera facing east.Photo 2 of 11: VA_Bath County_Warm Springs Bath Houses_0002View: Gentlemen's Bath House, south elevation, camera facing north.Photo 3 of 11: VA_Bath County_Warm Springs Bath Houses_0003View: Gentlemen's Bath House, interior, camera facing southwest.

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Photo 4 of 11: VA_Bath County_Warm Springs Bath Houses_0004

View: Ladies' Bath House, west elevation, camera facing northeast.

Photo 5 of 11: VA_Bath County_Warm Springs Bath Houses_0005

View: Ladies' Bath House, southeast elevation, camera facing northwest.

Photo 6 of 11: VA_Bath County_Warm Springs Bath Houses_0006

View: Ladies' Bath House, partial north elevation and primary entry, camera facing southwest.

Photo 7 of 11: VA_Bath County_Warm Springs Bath Houses_0007

View: Ladies' Bath House, interior, camera facing northwest.

Photo 8 of 11: VA_Bath County_Warm Springs Bath Houses_0008

View: Reception House, northeast elevation, camera facing southwest.

Photo 9 of 11: VA_Bath County_Warm Springs Bath Houses_0009

View: Reception House (at left), southwest elevation, Drinking Spring, and Ladies' Bath House (at right), camera facing northeast.

Photo 10 of 11: VA_Bath County_Warm Springs Bath Houses_0010

View: Drinking Spring Pavilion, west side, camera facing east.

Photo 11 of 11: VA_Bath County_Warm Springs Bath Houses_0011

View: Drinking Spring Pavilion, southeast side, camera facing northwest.



LOCATION MAP

Warm Springs Bath Houses

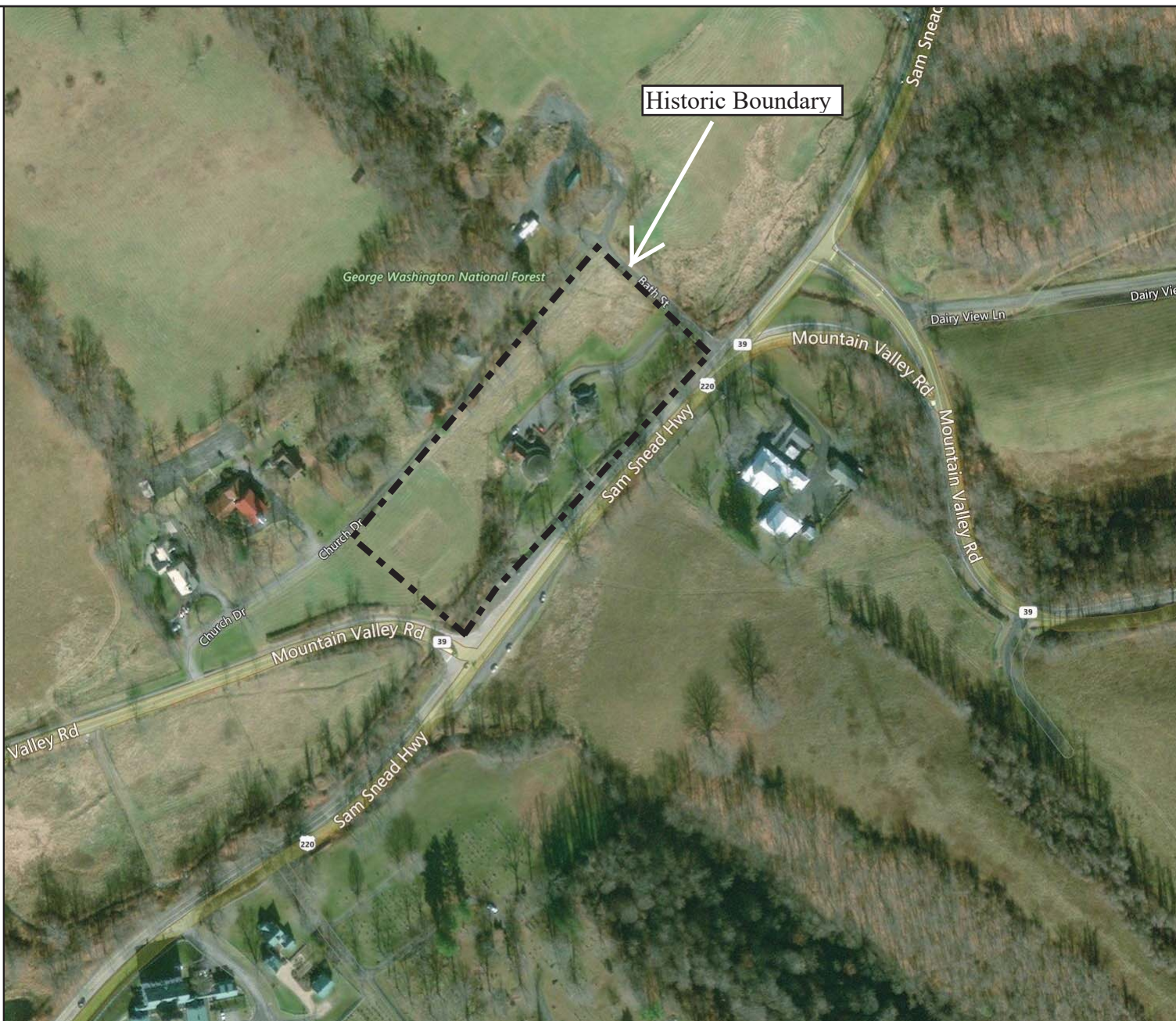
Bath County, VA

DHR No. 008-0007

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

1. Latitude: 38.053740

Longitude: -79.780880



Feet

0 100 200 300 400

1:4,514 / 1"=376 Feet

Title:

Date: 1/14/2019

DISCLAIMER: Records of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (DHR) have been gathered over many years from a variety of sources and the representation depicted is a cumulative view of field observations over time and may not reflect current ground conditions. The map is for general information purposes and is not intended for engineering, legal or other site-specific uses. Map may contain errors and is provided "as-is". More information is available in the DHR Archives located at DHR's Richmond office.

Notice if AE sites: Locations of archaeological sites may be sensitive the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), and the Archaeological Resources Protection Act (ARPA) and Code of Virginia §2.2-3705.7 (10). Release of precise locations may threaten archaeological sites and historic resources.



SKETCH MAP

Warm Springs Bath Houses

Bath County, VA

DHR No. 008-0007

LIST OF RESOURCES

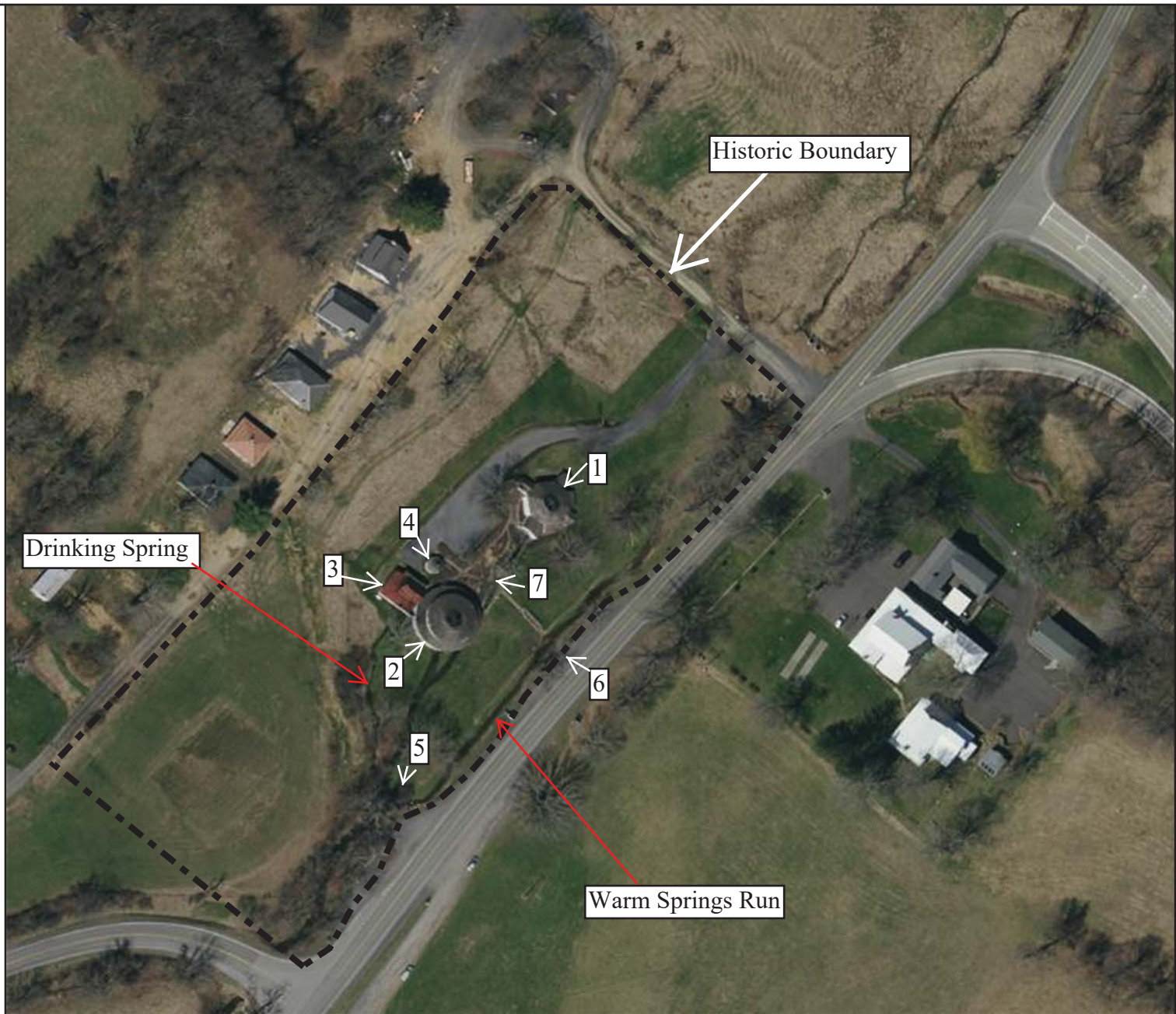
1. Gentlemen's Bath House, 1760s, mid-1820s, contributing building
2. Ladies Bath House, mid-1870s, contributing building
3. Drinking Spring Pavilion, 1870s, contributing structure
4. Reception House, c. 1890, contributing building
5. Shed, c. 1940, non-contributing building
6. Large footbridge, c. 2000, non-contributing structure
7. Small footbridge, c. 2000, non-contributing structure



Feet

0 50 100 150 200

1:2,257 / 1"=188 Feet



Title:

Date: 1/14/2019

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PHOTO KEY

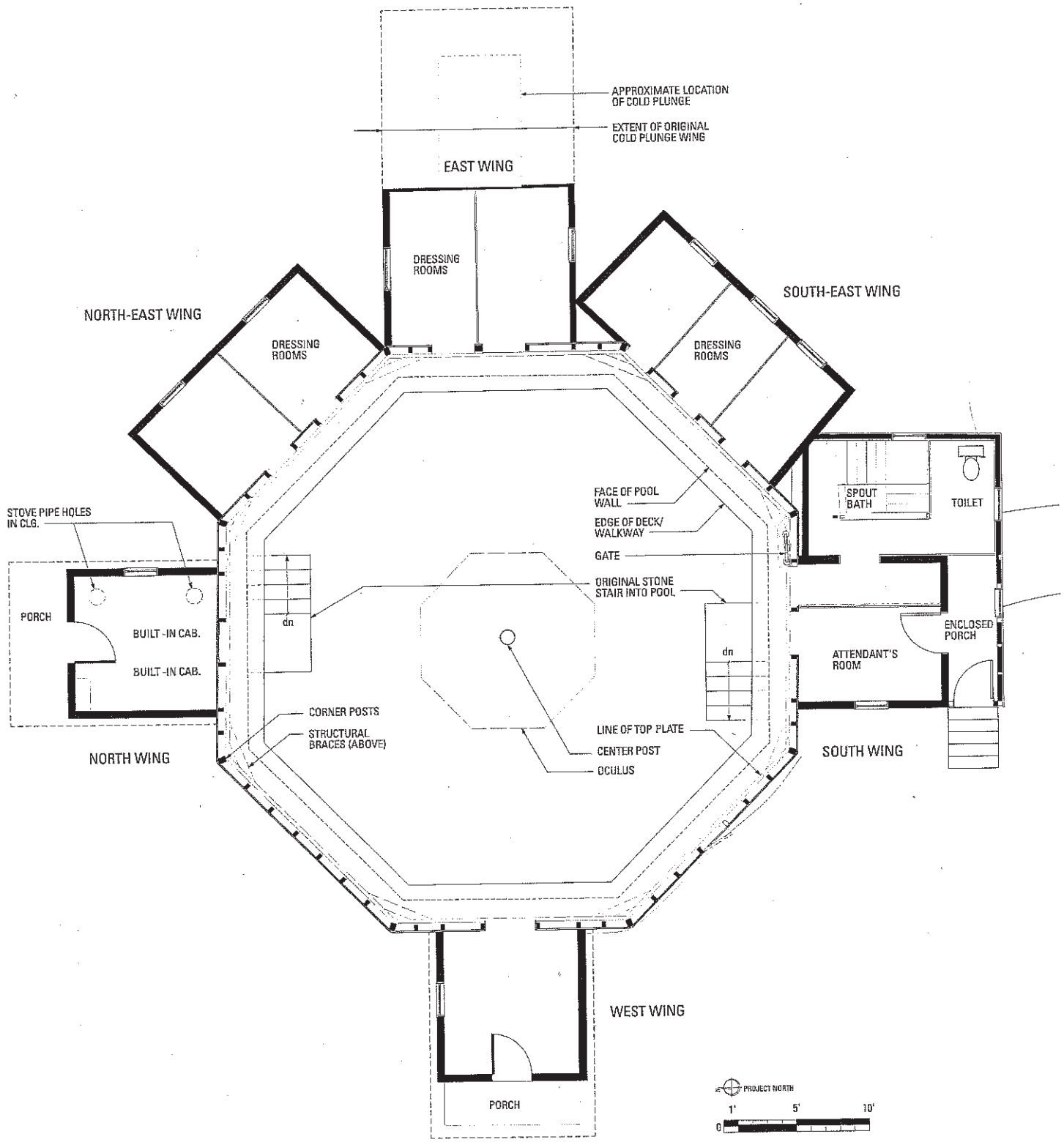
Warm Springs Bath Houses 2019 Update

Bath County, VA

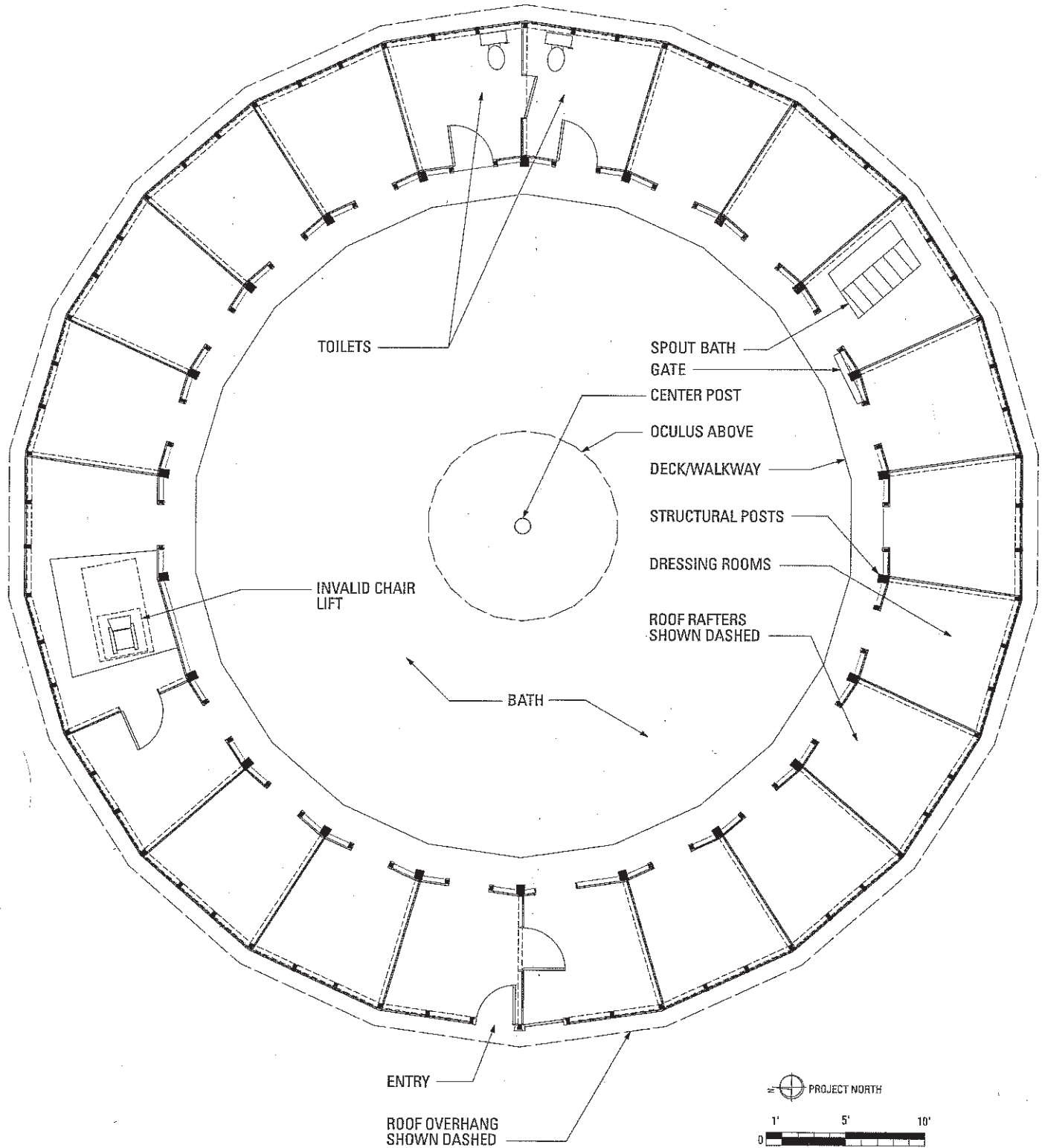
DHR No. 008-0007



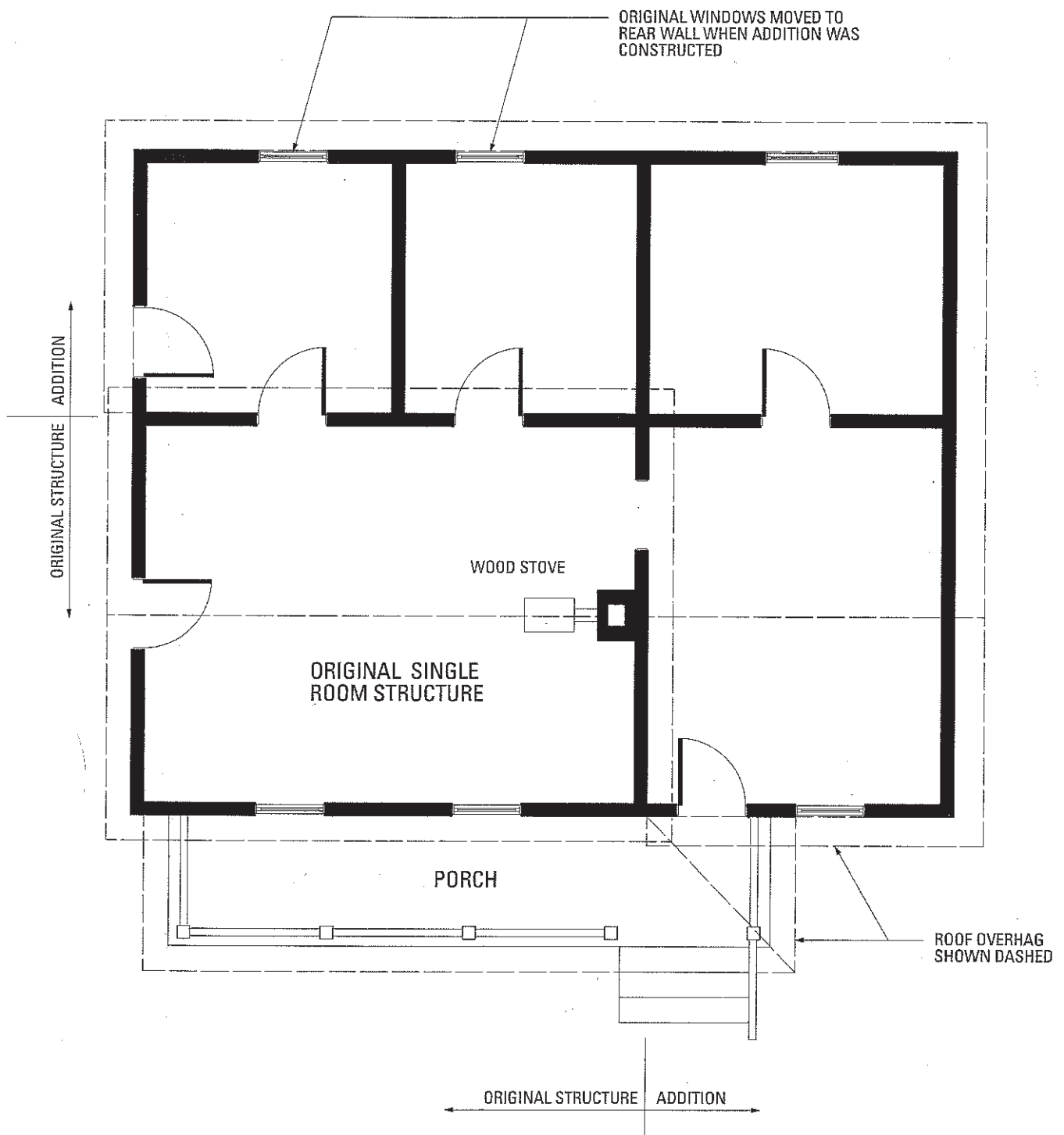
(Photos 3 and 7 are interior views)



GREAT BATH FLOOR PLAN



WOMEN'S BATH FLOOR PLAN



RECEPTION HOUSE FLOOR PLAN

