

## History of the Faywood Hot Springs Resort

Near the corner of southwestern New Mexico -- midway between Silver City and Deming -- is Faywood Hot Springs, a natural geothermal high desert oasis. For centuries, this special place has lured many to its seductive, healing waters. Prehistoric peoples, Spanish explorers, weary westward travelers, soldiers, miners, health-seekers, a professional baseball team, and a multitude of everyday visitors from around the globe have found respite at the springs.

The hot water flows from an opening in the top of a distinct mound of material known as "tufa." The tufa dome was created over countless centuries from endless gallons of flowing mineral water deposited on the nearly flat desert floor. This unusual geologic phenomenon is a remnant of extremely violent episodes of volcanic activity occurring in this part of the world some 20 to 45 million years ago, in an era when the nearby City of Rocks State Park was formed.

Prehistoric peoples probably revered the hot springs as a sacred healing place. The presence of circular depressions or mortar holes in the tufa dome suggests early use of the springs by these nomadic hunter-gatherers. Pottery and other artifacts found in the vicinity attests that the villagers from the nearby Mimbres pueblos knew of these warm healing waters, as did the later Apaches. It was an ideal place to erase the winter chill before migrating to the mountains for the summer.

The first western visitors to the hot springs may have been the Celts. Numerous Ogam (Celtic writing) petroglyphs have been found in the area. The Spaniards began to arrive in the mid-1500s and were well entrenched by the end of that century. The area became part of Mexico in 1821, but their jurisdiction lasted only twenty-five years, peacefully yielding to occupation by the United States Army in 1846.

In 1851, Boundary Commissioner John Bartlett and his interpreter John Cremony visited the hot springs (then known as "Ojo Calliente") and wrote about it. Soon the hot springs became a well known stopping place for travelers on the westward migration trail to California.



### The Husdon Store

A number of individuals made early attempts to develop the commercial aspects of the hot springs during the wild and woolly days of the mid-1800s. The first in 1859, was a homestead claim on 160 acres around the hot springs by A. Kuhne and Billy Watts who completed a "House of Accommodations" and bath house in 1861. Two stage lines, Catlett's and Frazer's, dodged the Apache and ran past the hot

springs, between Mesilla (now Las Cruces) and Pinos Altos often making a layover long enough to accommodate the passengers with a luxurious mineral water bath.

At the close of the Civil War, the Mastin family acquired the property. As well as offering bathing facilities and accommodations for travelers, the Mastins also used the mineral water to raise vegetables and operated a successful dairy.

In 1876, Richard and Mary Hudson purchased the Hot Springs Ranch. It was their determination that would bring the hot springs into prominence as a health resort. Richard Hudson, an orphan from England, migrated with his adoptive family from New York to California following the irresistible lure of gold. Shortly after the outbreak of the Civil War, he came to the New Mexico Territory with the 5th California Infantry under General Carleton. Apparently they never encountered any confederates but spent much of their time clashing with the Apaches.

The war over, Hudson decided to remain in the New Mexico Territory and continue his search for gold. An ardent "Indian Fighter," Hudson was made a Colonel of the First Regiment of New Mexico by Governor Lionel A. Sheldon. When Grant County was created in 1868, Hudson was elected its first sheriff. His mining career was cut short when he was shot through both arms during a skirmish with Apaches near Pinos Altos later that year. In 1870 he was elected Judge of the Probate Court, the highest office in the county.

Hudson suffered from the gout. Although skeptical, he was convinced by friends to seek relief in the hot springs. His recovery was so remarkable that he made up his mind that these waters should be shared with others suffering from various ailments and that he should be the proprietor.

By 1884 the Hudsons had completed a large, square adobe structure about 200 yards north of the spring mound with a patio or placita in the center, protected from the desert wind. The kitchen, dining room and the living apartments for the family and help were located on the east side. On the north was the office and a small store equipped with articles for the convenience of the guests and local ranchers. There was also a large smoking room where all met to visit, exchange views and get the daily mail. Connected to the office was a large tastefully furnished parlor or living room. Extending from the parlor south and then west were the guest rooms. All rooms opened out into the placita, a lovely spot planted with shrubs and flowers.

The Hudsons also remodeled and enlarged the bathing facilities to the south of the hotel (remnants of this bath house are still visible today). The bath house had six rooms equipped with wooden bath tubs, made of heavy lumber, and as "smooth as any metal now used". A cot and chair were the only furnishings. Each room had a small window for lighting at the back. Mrs. Hudson did most of the caretaking at the hotel. One of her patients was Mrs. William Antrim, mother of Henry McCarthy "Billy the Kid".

The tenure of the Hudson Hotel as a resort spa was relatively brief, lasting less than ten years. Its termination occurred in the spring of 1892, the result of fire. The Hudsons had invested all they had in the resort and had allowed their insurance to expire, thus were financially unable to continue.

The rebuilding of the resort had to await the appearance of another enterprising individual, Andrew R. Graham, a successful banker and businessman from Chicago. In 1894, Graham bought the hot springs property and organized the Hudson Hot Springs Sanitarium Company. He began an extensive building

program. Initially, Graham had plans for a hotel of moderate proportions, but he was swept into a more extravagant dimension by the contagious enthusiasm of his old friend, the famous baseball entrepreneur, Albert Goodwill Spalding -- a tireless and vociferous champion of the hot springs as a health spa. Faith in the health-restoring qualities of hot springs was at its peak in America in the 1890's. The waters were used for both bathing and drinking purposes and were purported to facilitate many types of cures.

Graham's construction project, complete in 1896, evolved into a commodious structure of some 60 rooms and was aptly named Casa de Consuelo (House of Comfort). This establishment was the first in the New Mexico Territory with hot and cold running water in the rooms and was thought to be the finest hotel in the Territory. In the rear of the hotel, Graham constructed a large new bathhouse. The four dozen guest rooms were often filled those early years with prominent people from all parts of the world. In 1897 Hudson Hot Springs reported a permanent population of 35, Methodist and Presbyterian church services were held once a month, and a public school was open for three months of the year. Unfortunately, Andrew Graham had overextended himself in the building of the impressive but expensive hotel and the hot spring was destined to enter its next phase.

At the turn of the century, a hardware merchant and flour mill operator from Edgerton, Minnesota, Tom McDermott, had been developing a chronic pain in his belly which doctors told him was caused by ulcers. He traveled to Casa de Consuelo on the advice of a friend. After drinking and soaking in the water, his ulcers quickly disappeared. McDermott soon returned and bought the property along with two Minnesota friends, J.C. Fay and William Lockwood, (whose names were combined to form a new name, "Faywood").

Faywood Hot Springs enjoyed its most popular period early in the twentieth century. As war clouds gathered preceding what became known as World War I, Camp Cody sprang up with the 34th Infantry "Sandstorm Division" in nearby Deming. Many guests came to the hotel who were encamped there or who were friends and relatives of the military personnel.



For years the resort was an important social center. People would come from far and wide to dance all night at Faywood, eat breakfast at the crack of dawn in the placita, and many were reputed to ride home on their horses asleep in the saddle.

Fabulous Faywood began to lose its glitter to the dimming influence of age. T.C. McDermott and his wife continued to live in the hotel for many years as patronage dwindled. The McDermotts and their eldest son all died in 1948. McDermott's ulcers never returned and he reached the ripe old age of 96.

The resort was soon purchased by Herman Lindauer of Deming. For safety reasons, the remnants of the Casa Consuelo were pulled down in 1951 and the spring was capped with steel. Many people continued to come to Faywood in order to bathe in its warm waters, despite the lack of facilities. In 1966 Lindauer sold the property to Kennecott Copper Corporation who continued to allow free access to the public. The spring property was fenced and shut completely by Phelps Dodge in the early 1980s.



In 1993 the Faywood Hot Springs property was purchased by Wanda G. Fuselier and Elon M. Yurwit, who embarked on a rebuilding program to once again provide an enticing environment for those who succumb to the lure of the hot spring's seductive waters. In 2011, Faywood Hot Springs was purchased by the current owners, the Shirks.

