

Legend of the Quapaw Baths

HOT SPRINGS
NATIONAL PARK
ARKANSAS



This reprint of the original booklet is possible due to the generosity of Mrs. J. M. Callahan and the Bert Hanor Memorial Fund.

The commemorative occasion for its issuance is the return, in 1984, of the proud name Quapaw to the bathhouse. Replacing the bronze plaques and bronze letters along with other restoration measures brings beauty and vitality befitting the eminence of the Quapaw on Bathhouse Row.

The Legend of the Quapaw Baths is a fine example of one of the prestigious booklets produced when the bathhouses first opened. It is hoped that this reprint provides enjoyable insight into another era.

Roger Giddings
Superintendent
Hot Springs National Park

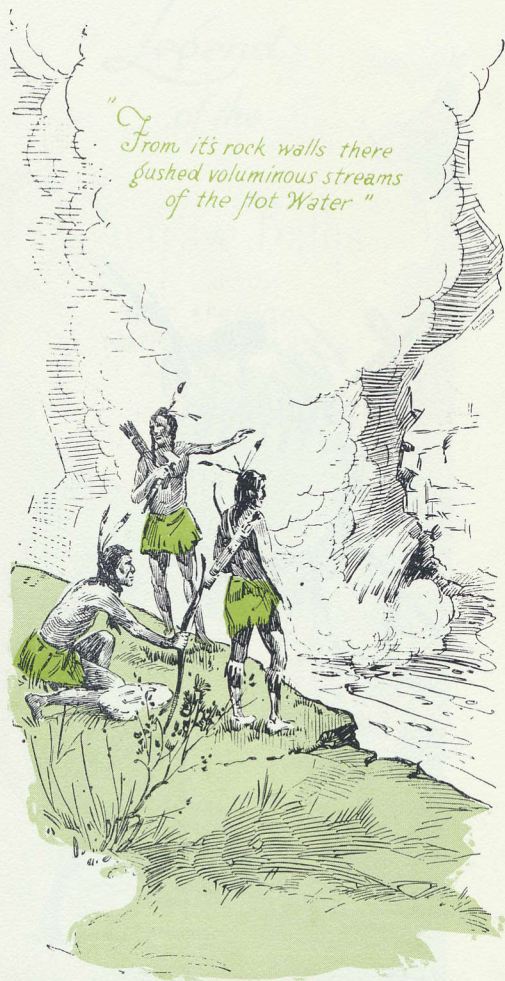
The Legend of the Quapaw Baths

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*"From its rock walls there
gushed voluminous streams
of the Hot Water"*



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"It was called 'Medicine Water'"

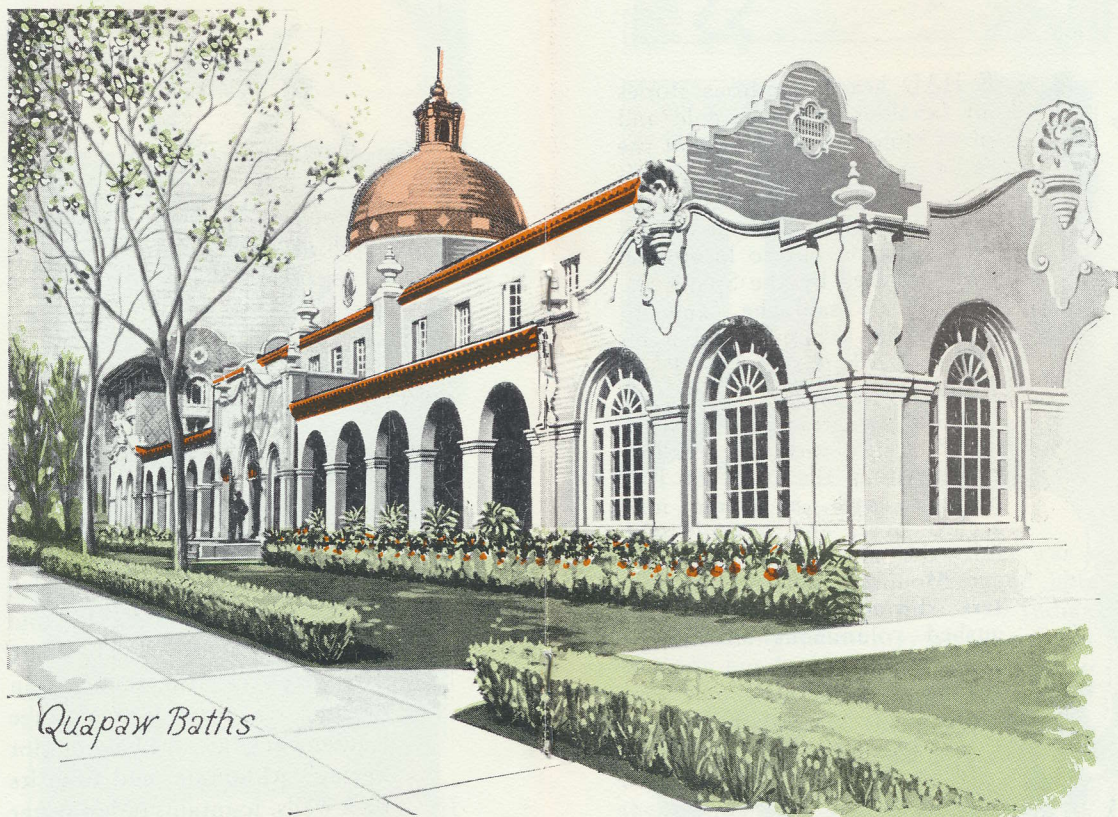


*Cave of the
QUAPAW BATHS
as it is to-day*



*Entrance
to the
Quapaw
Baths*

WHEN Nathan Dale, an aged wanderer, who said he was born in 1838 on the site now occupied by the QUAPAW BATHS, told the contractor that close to where they were excavating there was an opening to a subterranean passage leading back into the base of Hot Spring's Mountain, and from its rock walls, fountains of hot water gushed into pools upon the floor, he was not taken seriously. Dale had visited Hot Springs on many occasions and long before the ancient Magnesia and Horse-Shoe structures were razed to



Quapaw Baths

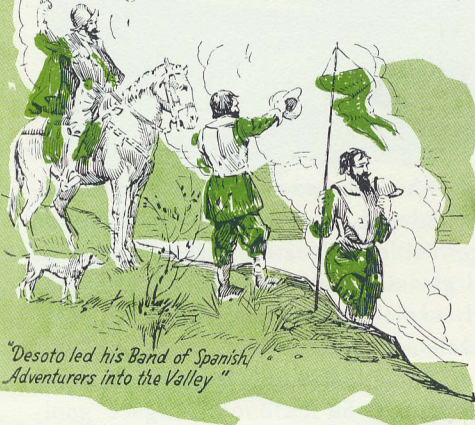
make way for the modern bathing palace, he had told his story to all who would listen. The tale was so rich in the legendary lore that characterizes the history of Hot Springs before DeSoto led his band of Spanish adventurers into the valley, and found what he believed to be the long sought "Fountain of Youth" that

those who gave an ear to the aged chronicler thought that he had built up an improbable fable around information he had gleaned from the stories told by the early explorers of this section.

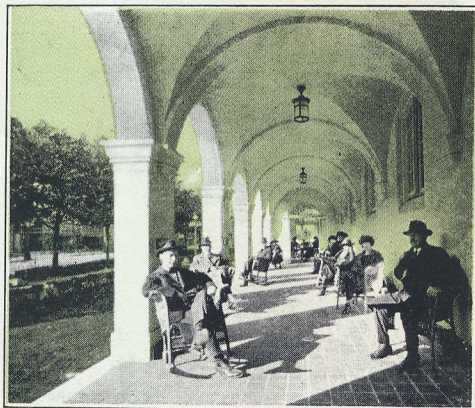
Dale said his father was a geologist from North Carolina who had located in Hot Springs in 1832.

HE HAD heard wondrous stories of fabulous riches in gold and silver mined by Spaniards of the earlier expeditions in this territory. Dale said his father had the characteristics of an adventurer and set out to locate the mines worked by the Spaniards. Thus, Dale said, he came to be born in a humble cabin on the spot where the QUAPAW BATHS now stand.

The subterranean passage which Dale's memory recalled, opened from the bank of Hot Spring's creek, a stream now arched over, and wound back into the mysterious depths of the Mountain of steaming waters. From its rock walls there gushed voluminous streams of



"Desoto led his Band of Spanish Adventurers into the Valley"



Corridor—Quapaw Baths

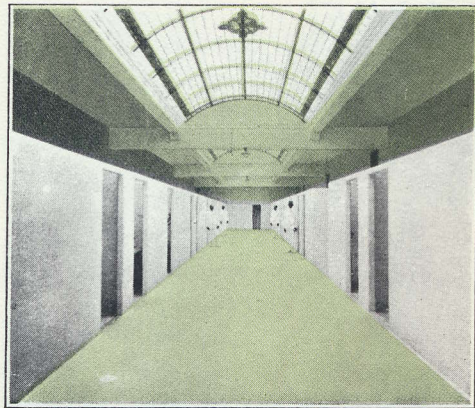
the hot water. In one place there was a hole of steaming mud. The mud hole was the Mecca for the sick of all Indian tribes roaming the country within a radius of many hundred miles. The infirm savages would lie in the mud for several hours each day, and the cure was infallible. It was called "Medicine Water" and was held sacred by all the tribes. There the members of all tribes gathered in peace. The simple children of nature realized that the "Great Spirit" had blessed them with a common healing place, and though the various tribes were hostile to each other, their members came and left the cavern unmolested.

THE fame of the wonderful waters reached far and wide. Dale recalled having seen Crow, Black-foot, and Sioux from afar, and the Comanches, Choctaws and Quapaws, who at that time were located in this territory, mingling at the health giving pools.

When the crews doing the excavating work struck hard rock, it became necessary to resort to blasting. Holes were drilled and heavy charges placed, but there was no upheaval of loosened rock. The explosive men were puzzled but proceeded to place more shots. The results were not any better. Finally, after the dust of one unusually large discharge had cleared away, the workmen found a black opening in the



"The Spaniards learn of the long sought 'Fountain of Youth'"



Men's Bath Hall—Quapaw Baths

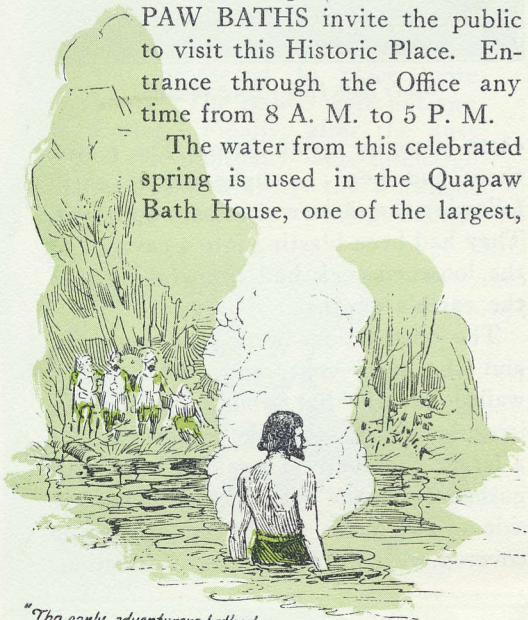
earth yawning up at them. The reason there had been no upheaval of earth following the shots was at once apparent. They had been blasting into a cavity and the loosened rock had been falling into the earth's depths.

The obstructions were soon removed, and the men ventured into the rock walled cavern that wound back in an irregular course. At the end there was a larger chamber. There the hot water gushed from the rock ribbed mountain side. The floor of the chamber was covered with a black spongy formation.

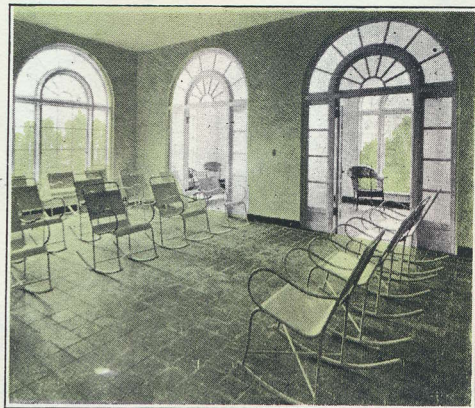
D ALE'S story was verified. It was necessary for much of the underground passage to be removed to obtain solid foundation for the building, but the builder of the QUAPAW BATHS carefully preserved the Tufa formation that surrounded the Cave, and has reproduced the original as near as possible.

The management of the QUAPAW BATHS invite the public to visit this Historic Place. Entrance through the Office any time from 8 A. M. to 5 P. M.

The water from this celebrated spring is used in the Quapaw Bath House, one of the largest,



*"The early adventurers bathed
in its 'Miraculous Waters'"*



Ladies Cooling Room—Quapaw Baths

most sanitary, and most beautiful bath houses in America, which is operated under strict Government supervision. The Quapaw Bath House is located in the center of Bath-house row on the Hot Springs National Park.

Since the completion of the QUAPAW BATHS thousands have bathed in these wonderful waters and have been cured.

Do not fail to visit the world's greatest health resort.



Quapaw Baths

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