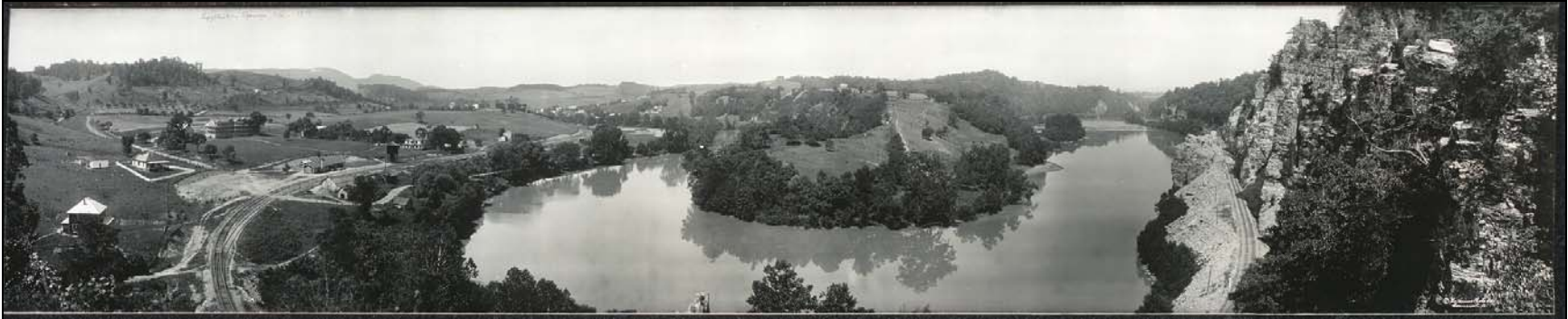


I. Introduction



(Figure 1.1) New River at Eggleston Springs, Virginia (Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, Panoramic photographs LC-USZ62-133183 DLC)

Water is a significant element for the landscape designer working in Appalachia. The landform as well as the region's history have been and continue to be shaped by this most vital element.

Water was at the center of one of the most expressive built landscapes to evolve within Appalachian Virginia, namely the spas or resorts or watering places known collectively as the Virginia Springs. Though seasonal, the communities that grew up around the springs left a permanent record of changing attitudes towards the natural world, especially in the minds of visitors. These mineral spring spas offered relief to antebellum visitors during the hottest months of the year. Among the attractions were several weeks of invigorating air, picturesque scenery and a regimen of bathing and drinking the healing waters themselves. Such discipline represented the state of the art medical treatment for a variety of maladies ranging from scrofula and dyspepsia to neuralgia and iron deficiency following childbirth to name a few.

Not merely medical facilities, the Virginia Springs also gained renown as summer gathering places devoted to sociability in the wilderness. Close proximity to varied and exotic scenery as well as to other springs made the Springs Tour a lively and cosmopolitan if not urban community for several months of the year.

Connected to the population centers of the east first by trails and roads for horses and carriages and then by railroads and later the automobile, these resorts were among the first places of recreation to develop in this country. By the early part of the 19th century they boasted an international clientele. As a result, the landscapes as well as the architecture to be found at the springs evolved as a combination of local building techniques and more cosmopolitan aesthetics.

Many springs sites have fallen into ruin and are little more than place names on maps of the region. They were once a part of a seasonal circuit or 'Springs Tour'. The landscapes remain legible, especially when compared with contemporary representations (such as written accounts, travelers 'sketches', landscape depictions and illustrated promotional materials). Also legible is a communication network connecting the springs to one another and to the outside world. Dozens of surviving places names attest to the existence of mineral springs throughout the Virginia-West Virginia border country. Originally identified as natural features in the landscape many springs saw the growth of seasonal retreats in response to the healing powers attributed to their waters.

What gave these places their healing powers? What scientific, social or spiritual agents were at work to produce a vast and well publicized fame for these places? Similarly what happened to lead to their almost complete drop into obscurity? How might an understanding of these historical places inform design in the Appalachian landscape of today?

This thesis has sought to first explore the landscape history of how this unique cultural landscape came to be and then to apply such findings to current design. It consists of a series of explorations into the nature of the Virginia Springs tour, especially at the height of their influence and popularity during the early years of the 19th century. Literature review, site visits and surveys as well as documentation following current landscape preservation techniques were conducted as a way of coming to an understanding of the elements that made up this regionally significant landscape.

This document contains two distinct but interrelated sections, reflecting the dual processes undertaken in researching and designing within historic context. One section is devoted to historical research and the other to a proposal for the re-development of an individual Virginia Spring located in Bath County. The landscape history, field surveys and to a lesser extent distillation chapters of the *Landscape Research* section have borrowed freely from techniques developed and employed by scholars focused on cultural landscape studies, including many focusing on preservation. The *Application* section consists of an overview of site selection, analysis and development as informed by the preceding research effort. A *Findings* section follows, containing final thoughts on the process undertaken.

Landscape Research

II. Methodology – a cultural landscape approach

III. Landscape History – Virginia Springs Tour revisited

IV. Regional Pattern – survey and documentation

V. Distillation – context for design

II. Methodology – a cultural landscape approach



(Fig. 2.1) Hamlet of Warm Springs, Bath County, Virginia

Two interrelated strains of cultural landscape studies were employed to explore the historic context represented by the Virginia Springs. These might be thought of as a 'preservationist' approach and a 'lyric' approach. The 'preservationist' approach has been articulated especially through the development of standards for surveying, documenting, analyzing and managing cultural landscapes and ultimately for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places (the National Register) as historic properties. It represents an extension of the historic preservation movement in this country beyond a traditional focus on buildings and structures. According to 'Preservation Brief 36, Protecting Cultural Landscapes, Planning, Treatment and Management of Historic Landscapes':

Cultural landscapes are defined as "a geographic area, including both cultural and natural resources and the wildlife or domestic animals therein, associated with a historic event, activity, or person or exhibiting other cultural or aesthetic values." There are four general types of cultural landscapes, not mutually exclusive: *historic sites, historic designed landscapes, historic vernacular landscapes, and ethnographic landscapes.* (Birnbaum, 1994)

In 1992, *The Secretary of Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* were revised so that they could be applied to all resource types included in the National Register of Historic Places buildings, structures, sites, objects, districts, and landscapes (Alanen and Melnick, 2000).

Cultural landscapes have been studied by focusing on land uses and activities, patterns of spatial organization, the response to the natural environment and as expressions of cultural traditions. Components of landscapes have been defined as circulation networks, boundary demarcations, vegetation related to land use, buildings, structures and objects, clusters, archeological sites and small-scale elements. A written statement tracing the evolution of a landscape is considered essential to developing historic context. This landscape history arranges elements in time (a chronology) just as design establishes them in place.

The 'preservationist' standards can be especially useful in structuring surveys, documentation, analysis and long-term management. Especially useful are definition of historic designed and vernacular landscapes and why they represent a kind of historic document in themselves. Consider the following definitions from 'Preservation Brief 36':

Historic landscapes include residential gardens and community parks, scenic highways, rural communities, institutional grounds, cemeteries, battlefields and zoological gardens. They are composed of a number of character-defining features which, individually or collectively contribute to

the landscape's physical appearance as they have evolved over time. In addition to vegetation and topography, cultural landscapes may include water features, such as ponds, streams, and fountains; circulation features, such as roads, paths, steps, and walls; buildings; and furnishings, including fences, benches, lights and sculptural objects.

Historic Designed Landscape--a landscape that was consciously designed or laid out by a landscape architect, master gardener, architect, or horticulturist according to design principles, or an amateur gardener working in a recognized style or tradition. The landscape may be associated with a significant person(s), trend, or event in landscape architecture; or illustrate an important development in the theory and practice of landscape architecture. Aesthetic values play a significant role in designed landscapes. Examples include parks, campuses, and estates.

Historic Vernacular Landscape--a landscape that evolved through use by the people whose activities or occupancy shaped that landscape. Through social or cultural attitudes of an individual, family or a community, the landscape reflects the physical, biological, and cultural character of those everyday lives. Function plays a significant role in vernacular landscapes. They can be a single property such as a farm or a collection of properties such as a district of historic farms along a river valley. Examples include rural villages, industrial complexes, and agricultural landscapes.

(Birnbaum, 1994)

The 'lyric' approach can be traced to the lectures, publications and scholarly works of John Brinkerhoff "J.B." Jackson and the numerous if widely distributed designers and writers that he influenced. This approach is both experiential and descriptive, often with only oblique references to how such essays might affect changes in the design and management of a landscape. The essays produced by its practitioners often approach the landscape through queries as to how certain features evolved into the form they did. The landscape's function or 'how it works' are often emphasized, with terms like 'Ordinary' (Groth and Bressi, 1997), 'vernacular' (Jackson, 1994), 'Common' (Stilgoe, 1982), and 'Everyday' (Wilson and Groth, 2003) used to introduce the explanation of evolved landscape form through understanding of its historic function.

In a typical essay, J. B. Jackson mentions the Virginia Springs in an essay on four landscape elements he believes make up the classic Virginian landscape in the United States. Along with the Classical Academy, the Courthouse, and the Country Store, the Mineral Springs represent a survival of much older ways of knowing the natural world (the survival or persistence of classical science, especially rooted in the senses).

*One final landscape feature deserves much more study than it has so far received: the watering place or spa or mineral springs. These also got their start in colonial Virginia and seem to have spread at an early date into Tennessee and North Carolina and Arkansas, and even as far west as New Mexico. What is noteworthy about these places is not that they are so popular with Southerners, but that they are not popular with **all** Americans.*

It is strange how the rest of America has totally neglected this form of therapy – which Europe of course takes very seriously. I am tempted to ascribe its survival in the South to that classical, sensory approach to environment that was much a part of the seventeenth century and which Virginia kept alive. It is, I suspect the most valuable but at the same time the least recognized of southern landscape attitudes. (Jackson, 1982)

Jackson speculates that the discovery of such places by European settlers was linked to the extension of a pastoral, herding lifestyle extending westward from the Chesapeake region.

It was quite possible that this search for water – and for deposits of salt for the cattle – led to the discovery of the mineral springs which abound in northern Virginia. In any case, in the first decades of the eighteenth century many of the springs became popular with the more prosperous planters, and the custom was established of spending two or three weeks at a spring, partly for sociability and relaxation but primarily for health. The belief in the therapeutic value of mineral waters, taken either internally or externally, is an essential part of the classical doctrine of nature: the restoration of the balance among the four humors or by means of absorbing one of the elements. (Jackson, 1982)

Jackson also mentions the medical value attributed to the Virginia Springs and finds irony in their apparent fall from grace, at least in this country.

It is strange to see how completely the contemporary discussion of medicine ignores these springs. Whereas the *Encyclopedia Britannica* of 1910 devotes several thousand words to what it calls “balneotherapeutics” (from the Latin *balneum*, meaning bath), contemporary *Encyclopedia*, largely American, does not even mention them – a good indication of how we have forgotten the old theories of medicine and nature. (Jackson, 1982)

Historical research, as defined by a ‘preservationist’ perspective, provides an especially useful means of organizing a broader regional pattern into discrete units or epochs (periods of significance) that recognize and attempt to explain perceptible changes in the landscape over time. Such a landscape history can precede and even complement the traditional ‘layer’ technique of analysis most frequently used by landscape architects at the site scale as preparation for design. The compilation of such a landscape history also allows for the assessment of a design or proposed development by viewing it within its historic context.

While the landscape history compiled is intended to be an essay on a generic type in the style of J.B. Jackson and the ‘lyricists’, it also owes much to the ‘preservationist’s’ methods of recording, analyzing and documenting historic designed and vernacular landscapes. The comparison of historic conditions (as documented through written records of visits to the Virginia Springs, contemporary graphic depictions and historic photographs to name a few typical sources) with current conditions is at the heart of the process by which historic properties are assessed for their significance and integrity (and therefore their potential for National Register listing).

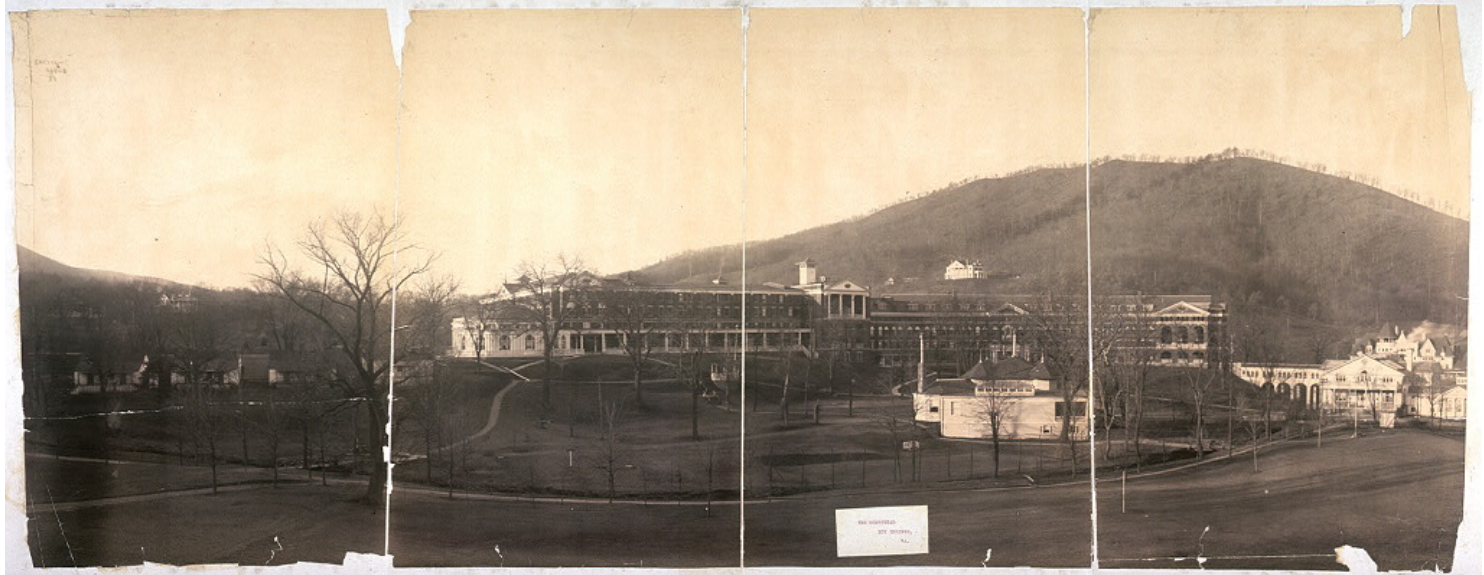
The brief history compiled in this document focuses on the evolution of the landscape at the Virginia Springs. Such a history is the key to understanding the source of the built form that has occurred at the Virginia Springs over the course of their development, decline, revival and current rediscovery. The landscape history is also the key to the next phase of development at the Virginia Springs as it provides historic context. Also of importance is the discussion of essential elements that have structured and defined how the Virginia Springs have functioned.

While the field and archival surveys exploring the evolution of the Virginia Springs landscape certainly provide for rich documentation of this unique and potentially significant cultural landscape, the intention of this effort has not been to merely identify and protect historic properties, but rather to apply insights gained by historical enquiry to current conditions. In other words, the landscape history ought to inform design efforts focused on the redevelopment of a specific site.

The methodology employed in this thesis is of necessity an amalgam of techniques borrowing from both 'preservationist' and 'lyric' approaches to the landscape. Most important has been the need to develop a program for the redevelopment of a single, typical site, rooted in an understanding of the cultural landscape studied, the Virginia Springs. To gain an understanding of how the Virginia Springs functioned, a series of archival sources have been consulted, with the result being a historic overview of the evolution of this regionally specific landscape type. Rather than applying the findings of this survey and documentation to the preservation or 'treatment' of the Virginia Springs generally or even to a single site, the landscape history has been melded with more traditional site inventory and analysis to inform the proposed redevelopment of one typical Virginia Spring. In this way, it is hoped; historic context can be understood and respected without necessarily playing a proscriptive role.

The Virginia Springs have been approached as a regional pattern in the landscape with a unique history and as a collection of individual places, each with their own characteristic response to site. Rather than documenting and surveying individual properties for assessment of significance (and perhaps National Register listing) this thesis has sought to cultivate a historic context to inform the next phase in the ongoing life cycle of this landscape. The idea has been to write a history of a generic landscape type, the Virginia Springs, based on an overview of available documentation and compared with existing conditions throughout the region. Throughout the intent has been to try to come to an understanding of these places functioned as an explanation of the unique form they have taken. If other designers, preservationists, or wilderness enthusiasts are drawn to the Virginia Springs as living, functioning places that can guide how we build in this historic context, then this effort has been a success.

III. Landscape History - the *Virginia Springs Tour* revisited



(Fig. 3.1) *The Homestead*, Hot Springs, Virginia (ca. 1903), Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, Panoramic Photos, PAN US GEOG - Virginia no. 18)

The Virginia Springs have been the subject of scholarly enquiry and speculation from the 18th century onward. Tales of healing waters flowing freely from the foothills of the Alleghenies preceded European settlement of Appalachian Virginia. Powers attributed to the Springs by Native Americans were passed to explorers, hunters, trappers, soldiers and surveyors associated with the advance of the frontier from the east. By the early 19th century the Virginia Springs occupied a central place in Virginia, both geographically and, at least during the summer months, socially.

Compiling a history of a regionally specific landscape like the Virginia Springs meant consulting a variety of types of sources. Of particular value in coming to an understanding of the evolution of the Virginia Springs as landscapes are the following source materials, falling into roughly six categories: landscape histories that generalize about the region and focus especially on the architectural remnants, 'Picturesque' travel accounts, especially those dating from the early 19th century, medical writing discussing the chemical and healing properties of the waters, graphic depictions of individual mineral spring spa sites, documentation related to preservation efforts, especially during the 20th century and more recent hydrological and geological surveys.

WRITERS ADDRESSING THE HISTORY OF THE VIRGINIA SPRINGS

A few select authors proved especially helpful in providing a basic understanding of the history of the Virginia Springs and why they developed as they did. Stan Cohen (1997), Henry Lawrence (1983), J.B. Jackson (1997), Percival Reniers (1982), Faye Ingalls (1949), Marshall Fishwick (1978) and Charlene Boyer Lewis (2001) have all written on the cultural significance, growth and decline of this historic landscape type and community that inhabited it. Unpublished master's theses by Lena Martindale (1994) and Dorothy Gilchrist (1943) were also especially helpful in placing the Virginia Springs within a regional historic context.

PICTURESQUE LANDSCAPE TRADITION

A second set of sources often cited by the above mentioned authors is a collection of travel writing dating especially from the antebellum period of travelers to the Virginia Springs. These accounts often make mention of a Springs Tour as well as offering detailed descriptions of the 'the roads leading thereto and the doings thereat' (Prolix, 1837). Central to many of these accounts was a 'Picturesque' tradition of experiencing landscape. Landscape Historian Ethan Carr discusses the 'Picturesque' as it developed in the United States during the early nineteenth century thus:

This cultural tradition of “seeing nature with the painter’s eye” determined attitudes towards the appreciation and the preservation of natural beauty on both sides of the Atlantic. In his 1927, ‘The Picturesque’, (Christopher) Hassey points out that in Great Britain between 1730 and 1830 “ the relation of all the arts to one another through the pictorial appreciation of nature was so close that poetry, painting, gardening, architecture, and the art of travel may be said to have been fused into the single ‘art of landscape’”. He goes on to observe that once tourists had learned to “connect scenery and painting in their minds, the picturesque became the nineteenth century’s mode of vision”. Aspects of picturesque culture – above all picturesque travel- exhibited a broad and intense appeal among Americans. The American farmer may not have been a builder of landscape parks in the manner of the English gentry, but by the 1820’s residents of growing American cities had become avid tourists seeking out picturesque scenery. (Carr, 1998)

Probably most striking are the illustrations of the Virginia Springs by the German landscapist Edward Beyer, published in 1858 as part his *Album of Virginia*. It featured a series of lithographs depicting the Virginia Springs as classically inspired compositions. Beyer featured color prints of fourteen spring resorts (Alum, Blue Sulphur, Burner’s, Faquier, Hot, Old Sweet, Red Sulphur, Red Sweet, Roanoke Red, Salt Sulphur, Stribling, White Montgomery, White Sulphur and Yellow Sulphur). They are individually and collectively, an idealized vision of antebellum Virginia and its relationship to the still abundant wilderness of the Appalachians.

Another important artist depicting the landscapes of as well as the social life at the Virginia Springs was Porte Crayon (pen name for David Hunter Strother). He wrote about the cultural life of the antebellum springs and the people who visited them, especially in retrospect in an attempt to revive their following the Civil War. He specialized in literary sketches, often illustrating his own pieces with engravings. Included in his works are a number of landscape depictions of individual sites. Classically trained as an artist, he was a popular contributor to magazines such as *Harper’s Monthly* throughout the 19th century. The son of a hotel owner at Berkeley Springs, his depictions is probably the most complete representation of the views towards the natural world represented by these seasonal communities.

The Virginia Springs figured prominently in the writing of several 19th century travel accounts. Among them were those penned by James Ewell Heath (1835), Mark Pencil (1839) and Peregrine Prolix (1837). Often these accounts were written in the ‘Picturesque’ style, describing social scene as well as landscapes. Heath’s description of arrival at ‘The White’ from the 1830s is typical.

There is something in the first view of the White Sulphur, very prepossessing and almost enchanting. After rolling along among the mountains and dense forests, the wild and uncultivated scenery is at once exchanged for the neatness and elegance of refined society, and the bustle and parade of the fashionable world. Almost every state in the Union, and some of the nations of Europe may find their representatives at the White Sulphur, during the months of July and August. (Heath, 1835)

We know of no scene more romantic and picturesque than that presented to a spectator from one of the cottages on the hill, after the lamps have been lighted for the night. The floods of light, streaming among the trees, and from every window; the throngs of the gay and fashionable, crowding the walks for the evening’s promenade, and the thrilling melody of the rich music from a fine German band, throws quite a fairy-like influence around this pleasant retreat among the mountains (Heath, 1835).

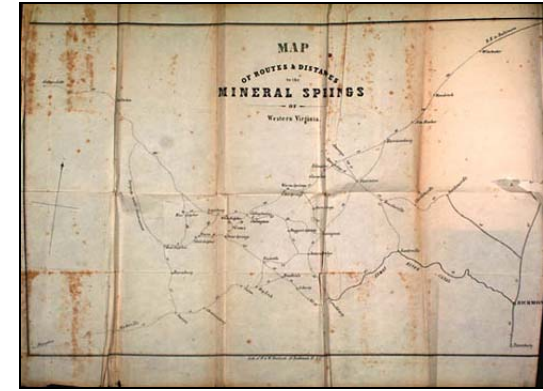
Peregrine Prolix (Philip Holbrook Nicklin) also adopted the 'Picturesque' when he described the scene at the 'White':

Thomas Bullitt, a frontier militiaman, about 1765 acquired 300 acres of land here and built a hotel. Overshadowed in the early days by the fashionable Warm Springs, to the extent of once having been called 'Little Warm Springs,' this hotel had little expansion until it was acquired in 1832 by Dr. Thomas Goode. Peregrine Prolix spoke of 'The old frame hotel' and of its proprietor, 'Dr. Goode, an intelligent physician, who is using great exertion and investing much money to render the establishment pleasant to travelers, and comfortable and useful to valetudinarians.' Prolix described the baths as 'the Spout and the Boiler; the former is said to be preferred by Orators, the latter by Poets and Warriors.' The Spout, Prolix explained, was made by the direction of the spring water through a 'perforated log . . . affording the bather an opportunity of receiving the stream upon any part of his body or limbs, into which rheumatism has thrust his uncomfortable claws.' The Boiler was a hot pool, into which the patient submerged his body. The water, 'a little scalding at first, becomes pleasant as soon as the bather is chin deep in the health-restoring fluid.' Adjoining both baths were rooms into which each bather retired, wrapped in blankets. 'Perspiration soon starts from every pore . . . Sometimes it penetrates the blankets, mattress and sackonbottom, and streams on the floor. (Reniers, 1982)'

The journalist Edward Pollard (1870) referred to the 'Picturesque' qualities of Virginia's mountain regions when declaring "The springs region of Virginia (also know as "America's Sanatorium") commences at Allegheny Springs, extends south and west and running north in a crescent to end in Bath County" in his 'Virginia Tourist. This tourist guide included in depth descriptions of many of the Springs as well as the wild scenery in which they were located.

MEDICAL ACCOUNTS

The early 19th century marked the high point of medical studies focused on the Virginia Springs. Physicians such as J.J. Moorman (1859), William Burke (1846) (1851) and Thomas Goode (1846) wrote surveys aimed especially at providing a medical legitimacy to the annual retreat to the Springs Counties. Following the Civil War, the medical community seems to have stepped back from some of its previous claims for the chemical benefits of 'taking the waters'. Still, Moorman (1873) and Crook (1899) published works during this time period that maintain earlier attitudes towards the healing powers of the Virginia Springs, both as bathing and drinking places and as healthful outdoor environments. Martindale (1994) stresses the local economic benefits, especially in the form of public investment in infrastructure associated with the region's reputation for healthfulness.



(Fig. 3.2) 'MAP OF ROUTES AND DISTANCES TO THE VIRGINIA SPRINGS',

Photocopy of map, (Library of Congress)

(from *The Virginia Springs, and the Springs of the South and West* by Moorman)

No date, HABS WVA,-13-WHISP,1-1

Thomas Jefferson (1781) reported on the healing powers attributed to many of the Virginia Springs in his *Notes on the State of Virginia*:

There are several Medicinal springs, some of which are indubitably efficacious, while others seem to owe their reputation as much to fancy, and change of air and regimen, as to their real virtues. None of them having undergone a chemical analysis in skilful hands, nor been so far the subject of observations as to have produced a reduction into classes of the disorders which they relieve, it is in my power to give little more than an enumeration of them.

Notes on the State of Virginia – Thos. Jefferson

Heath (1835) adds: The efficacy of the White Sulphur is principally confined to affections of the liver, and derangements of the sanguiferous and biliary systems. Where there is any tendency to pulmonary disease, the use of this water should by all means be avoided. Its exciting effects are exceedingly prejudicial to such constitutions. A continued use of the water will occasion a rapid progress of the disease. Individuals of a consumptive habit have been known to hasten their end by a residence at the White Sulphur. One case at least has become within my own observation.

While never the sole reason for the success of the Virginia Springs, the medicinal qualities of their waters were essential in their reason for being and so deserve mention. While there are not records of doctors having specifically designed buildings or laid out site plans at any of the springs, the role played by the waters and the setting in the healing process is

quite powerful. Even into the middle of the 19th century the theory of the humors of the body held sway in the medical world.

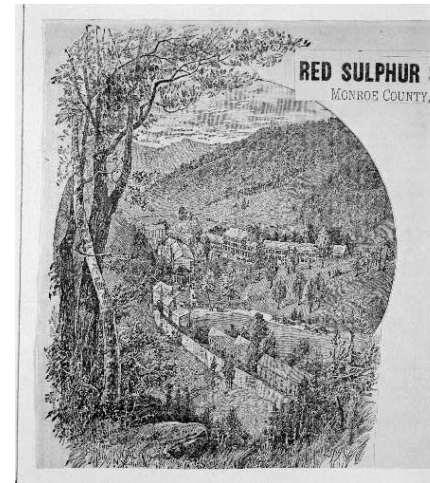
It's important to remember the 'classical science' underlying the medical uses of spring water well into the 19th century in the United States. John Stilgoe (1982) briefly discusses the assumptions at work under a "classical model of the body in a chapter entitled 'Elements'. Robert Burton's 1621 work, *The Anatomy of Melancholy* divides the four elements of the human body and of the universe into blood (fire), phlegm (water), yellow bile (air), black bile (earth). Imbalances in the human body among these elements result in a melancholic state, which along with sanguine, choleric and phlegmatic form the fours for humors or states of mind and body associated with a 'superabundance' of a given element. Medicine, as practiced under such assumptions called for balancing the humors by the application of an affliction's opposite directly to the affected body part or area.

Site plans for the Virginia Springs featured buildings and structures that allowed patrons to drink and bath in local waters. There is great variety in the built forms developed to accommodate these essential functions. Similarly individual Springs developed reputations for being especially effective at treating certain conditions, and marketed themselves accordingly.

GRAPHIC REPRESENTATIONS



(Fig. 3.3) Undated print of Old Sweet Springs, Monroe County, WV
Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division,
Historic American Buildings Survey, (HABS WV-55)



(Fig. 3.4) Red Sulphur Springs, late 19th century (Photocopy of advertisement)
Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division,
Historic American Buildings Survey, (HABS WVA.32-RESU,1-2)

Through out their history, the Virginia Springs have been the subject for sketches, drawings, paintings and eventually photographs. During historic research, graphic representations of the Virginia Springs were very important in getting a sense of how these places functioned. Such sources include a number of types. The oldest include folk representations, field notes and sketches of the earliest visitors. The formalization of the Springs Tour during the early parts of the 19th century coincided with a series of picturesque depictions of the Virginia Springs landscapes. The 'Springs Tour', though not promoted as such provided stage companies and railroad lines with an annual flush of passengers. Advertisements for the Virginia Springs dating from the early 19th century onward especially articulated a romantic natural setting for retreat featuring healthful and sociable communities.

DOCUMENTATION AS HISTORIC PLACES

Buildings and structures at the Virginia Springs have surveyed and documented as significant properties since the 1930s as a part of the ongoing Historic American Building Survey and the Historic American Engineering Record (HABS/HAER). Primarily large-format photographs, this documentation was able to capture images of some sites before they were allowed to naturalize completely, such as Sweet Chalybeate Springs (see below).



(Fig. 3.5)
Sweet Chalybeate Springs,
Alleghany County, VA
(Library of Congress),
Prints and Photographs Division
FROM THE WEST
HABS VA,3-SWECH,1-1



(Fig. 3.6)
Sweet Chalybeate Springs,
Main Building
(Library of Congress),
Prints and Photographs Division
EAST FRONT AND SOUTH SIDE
HABS VA,3-SWECH,1A-2



(Fig. 3.7)
Sweet Chalybeate Springs,
Spring House
(Library of Congress),
Prints and Photographs Division
FROM PORCH OF MAIN BUILDING
HABS VA,3-SWECH,1E-1



(Fig. 3.8)
Sweet Chalybeate Springs,
North Guest Range & Cottages
(Library of Congress),
Prints and Photographs Division
EAST FRONTS AND SOUTH SIDES
HABS VA,3-SWECH,1B-1

Some Virginia Springs sites, such as Salt Sulphur Springs in West Virginia, have remained remarkably intact since they were originally photographed (see Figs. 3.9 – 3.12 below).



(Fig. 3.9)
Salt Sulphur Springs,
LOOKING NORTH
(Library of Congress)
Prints and Photographs Division
HABS WVA,32-SALSU,1-1



(Fig. 3.10)
Salt Sulphur Springs, Bath House
SOUTHEAST FRONT
(Library of Congress)
Prints and Photographs Division
HABS WVA,32-SALSU,1F-1



(Fig. 3.11)
Salt Sulphur Springs, Cottages
SOUTHWEST FRONTS
(Library of Congress)
Prints and Photographs Division
HABS WVA,32-SALSU,1D-1



(Fig. 3.12)
Salt Sulphur Springs, Main Building,
NORTHEAST FRONT
(Library of Congress)
Prints and Photographs Division
HABS WVA,32-SALSU,1A-1

While Mineral Springs resorts with similar site plans in Tennessee (Beersheba Springs), Indiana (Baden Springs), Kentucky and Arkansas (Hot Springs National Park) have been the subject of intensive documentation efforts by HABS/HAER, the Virginia Springs have not been surveyed as landscapes, only as individual buildings and structures. Cohen's (1997) work especially continues in this vein of documentation of existing conditions at known historic sites.

SCIENTIFIC SURVEYS

From the first, scientific surveys of the Springs region noted this unique landscape feature. Jefferson's *Notes on the State of Virginia* makes mention of Bath County's two most famous springs as well as placing them within the upper reaches of the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

The most efficacious of these are two springs in Augusta, near the first sources of James river, where it is called Jackson's river. They rise near the foot of the ridge of mountains, generally called the Warm spring mountain, but in the maps Jackson's mountains. The one is distinguished by the name of the Warm spring, and the other of the Hot spring. The Warm spring issues with a very bold stream, sufficient to work a grist-mill, and to keep the waters of its bason, which is 30 feet in diameter, at the vital warmth, viz. 96x of Farenheit's thermometer. The matter with which these waters is allied is very volatile; its smell indicates it to be sulphureous, as also does the circumstance of its turning silver black. They relieve rheumatisms. Other complaints also of very different natures have been removed or lessened by them. It rains here four or five days in every week.

The Hot spring is about six miles from the Warm, is much smaller, and has been so hot as to have boiled an egg. Some believe its degree of heat to be lessened. It raises the mercury in Fahrenheit's thermometer to 112 degrees, which is fever heat. It sometimes relieves where the Warm spring fails. A fountain of common water, issuing within a few inches of its margin, gives it a singular appearance. Comparing the temperature of these with that of the Hot springs of Kamschatka, of which Krachinnikow gives an account, the difference is very great, the latter raising the mercury to 200x which is within 12x of boiling water. These springs are very much resorted to in spite of a total want of accommodation for the sick. Their waters are strongest in the hottest months, which occasions their being visited in July and August principally.

The Sweet springs are in the county of Botetourt, at the eastern foot of the Alleghany, about 42 miles from the Warm springs. They are still less known. Having been found to relieve cases in which the others had been ineffectually tried, it is probable their composition is different. They are different also in their temperature, being as cold as common water: which is not mentioned, however, as a proof of a distinct impregnation. This is among the first sources of James river.

Jefferson also discusses the success of the more established 'Town of Bath', now known more frequently as Berkeley Springs.

On Patowmac river, in Berkeley county, above the North mountain, are Medicinal springs, much more frequented than those of Augusta. Their powers, however, are less, the waters weakly mineralized, and scarcely warm. They are more visited, because situated in a fertile, plentiful, and populous country, better provided with accommodations, always safe from the Indians, and nearest to the more populous states.

From *Notes on the State of Virginia* – Thos. Jefferson (1954)

Cohen (1997) also emphasizes the physical qualities of the Springs. He states, their source is the Oriskany sandstone and Hilderberg limestone underlying the Blue Ridge Mountains and the Allegheny Front. Both of these date from the Devonian period of geological history. Cohen defines mineral water as simply natural water with foreign substances, giving it taste and/ or odor. There are six categories of water in the Virginia Springs region, Saline (dissolved salts of calcium, magnesium or sodium), Sulphur (hydrogen sulfide), Chalybeate (iron minerals), Alkaline, Calcic (lime), and thermal water (those with temperatures between 62 and 106 degrees Fahrenheit).

More recent scholarship has included surveys such as those conducted by the United States Geologic Survey (Price, et.al., 1936) (USGS, 1932) (USGS, 1979) to determine the chemical and thermal content of the Springs. Although primarily quantitative in focus (that is measuring trace elements such as sulphur, sodium, iron, etc.) Many surveys refer to the Springs Counties of both Virginia and West Virginia. They also tend to recognize their cultural value. Unless kept in continual development as part of a resort such as The Greenbrier or the Homestead, Virginia's Springs would seem to be most valued currently as natural resources, extensions of a carefully monitored groundwater system. This represents a significant shift in thinking about this unique landscape feature. Once centers of healing for human beings they now serve as barometers for the health of a larger hydrologic and geologic network.

SIX PERIODS OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Virginia Springs did not result from a single design, a specific designer or even a simultaneous building pattern, but rather evolved over time from rustic, makeshift camps into complex, seasonal population centers. They represent both vernacular and designed historic landscapes. Six successive periods of growth marked their development over more than three centuries. Their evolution also marks significant changes in how wild nature has been perceived in this country.

The Mythic past –

Prior to European settlement of the trans-Alleghenies, the Virginia Springs were believed to have been places of healing among Native Americans (Cohen, 1997, Ingalls, 1946). Early accounts of medicine and healing practices among the Native Americans of Virginia are rare but those that survive tell as much about the European views towards healing as of those they encountered. From the late 17th century comes a letter from John Bannister outlining how sweating was induced, its benefits and the role played by the landscape in the process.

They have a very odde, but Experience the best Master tells us, it is an exceeding good way of Sweating. By the River side, they dig a little hole like an Oven open at theTop, but to Cover with a Stone. Every Town has one of these Sweating Houses in it & a Doctor paid by the Publick to attend to it: when they would sweat (as they do when they are weary) the Dr gets 4 or 5 pretty big Stones heats them real hot and lays them in the middle of the House. This done they get in Stark-naked 6 or 8 of them, as many as can sit round, & the mouth is clos'd. Then the Dr to raise Steam casts water on the Stones and Sweat begins which you may imagine is very violent. He now and then as he thinks fit casts cold water on tham, perhaps to keep them from fainting: when they have sweat their time which is about ¼ of an hour, he rolls away the Stones and they get out, & plunge into the River which closes the Pores, so that they catch not cold. The heat being driven from all parts to the heart makes them weak and faintishy but presently recover, & their joints are limber and Supple as if they ne'er had ravel'd. I know a gentleman cur'd of a Violent Fever by this way of Sweating.

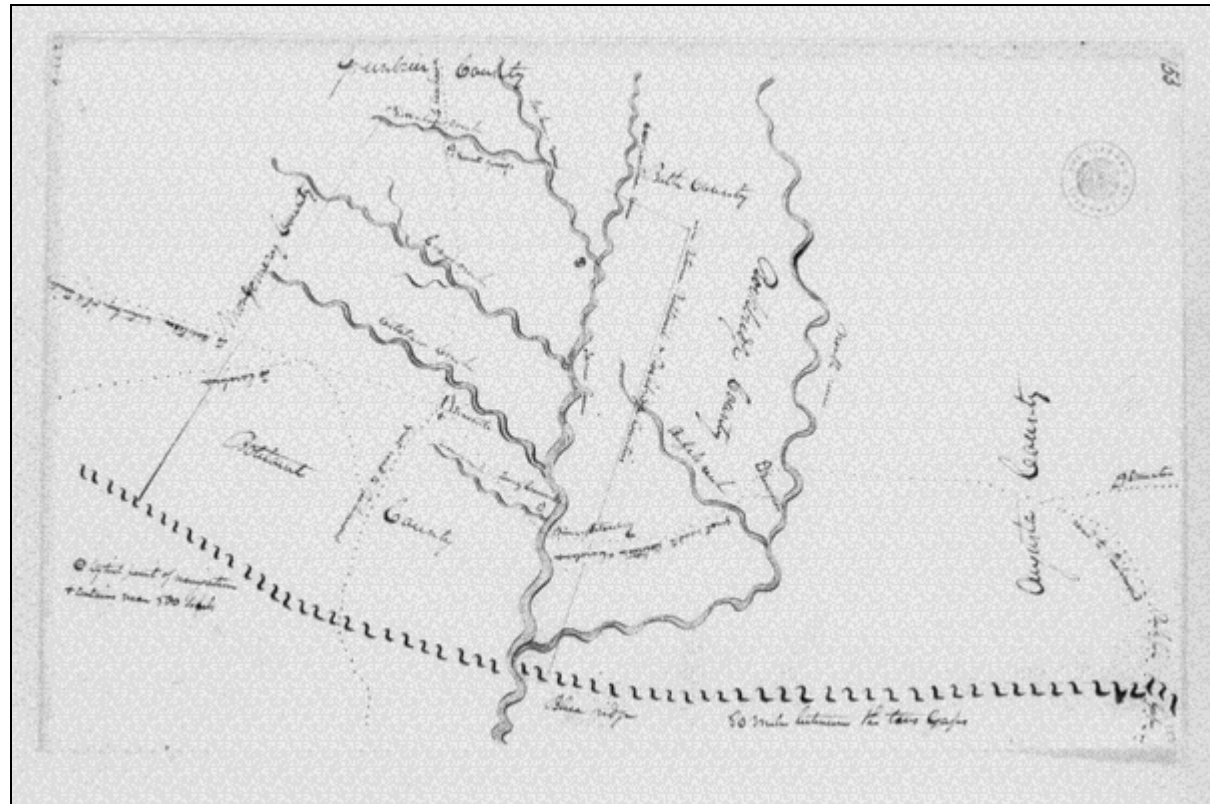
- John Bannister, from *Letter to Robert Morison* (1680) from 'Height of Our Mountains' (Branch and Philippon, 1998)

J. B. Jackson's essay on the Virginia Springs emphasizes that the early settlers of the Chesapeake experienced the world through their senses and practiced what he refers to as a "classical science" (Jackson, 1997). This same science informed medical practice focused on the four humors so important to the ideas of healing that structured the spring going experience.

Colonial 18th century -

By the middle of the 18th century, the Virginia Springs were securely within the frontiers of English settlement. Accommodations were mostly non-existent for the visitor, who was required to bring or construct their own on site. Colonial historians paint a picture of life at the Virginia Springs as rustic and temporary. Reniers (1982) reminds us that

“After the Indians had been driven back by the tide of settlement following the Revolution, the wealth and fashion of the Tidewater journeyed to the mountains to escape the miasma of lowland summers, and resorts flourished”.



(Fig. 3.13) Map to Sweet Springs, Virginia, (Library of Congress) James River Navigation Company; Potomac Navigation Company, 1795, George Washington Papers at the Library of Congress, 1741-1799: Series 4. General Correspondence. 1697-1799

Securing the frontier and the extension of Tidewater culture westward were significant developments that allowed for and encouraged the growth and development of more permanent building at the Virginia Springs. The earliest hotels date from this time period (Cohen, 1997).

The Colonial American historian Carl Bridenbaugh (1946) has emphasized the role of the Virginia Springs prior to and during the American Revolution in providing an environment for the newly developing American character. He believes they represented unique places where people of varied backgrounds were able to interact at leisure. Although several resorts developed along the eastern slopes of the Appalachians prior to the Revolution, they were initially derivative of English spas such as Bath. Of the Virginia Springs, Berkeley Springs is singled out as the most venerable.

Most renowned of the back country watering places were those of Virginia. Before the arrival of white men these had been frequented and valued by the Indians. Preeminent among them were the 'Fam'd Warm Springs' in Berkeley County whose waters George Washington first sampled in March 1748... Lord Fairfax gave the springs and a tract of land to Virginia in 1756 "that those healing waters might be forever free to the publick, for the welfare of suffering humanity". (Bridenbaugh, 1946)

While Spring spas in New England and the Middle Atlantic tended to develop into urban centers, the Virginia Springs were early on known for their remote and wild locations. Bridenbaugh sees their development as linked to frontier culture. The egalitarianism and rustic conditions that survived at many of the Virginia Springs well into the 19th century can be traced to their earliest development.

Berkeley Warm Springs had become by 1770 a place of great resort where the planter aristocracy, Jefferson's sturdy yeomanry, and coonskin democrats of the backwoods mingled at the baths much as did all classes of England in the pump room at Bath...the result was something less than Arcadian, but on the whole it was exceedingly human and very American. (Bridenbaugh, 1946)

Reasons cited for their popularity inevitably mention health.

Fear of the fevers and a desire to escape the humid heat of the southern and insular colonies literally drove planters, officials and merchants northward and westward, while at the same time the noise and summer discomforts of burgeoning urban centers of the New England and Middle colonies induced an exodus to the more salubrious air of the country.

Most important to Bridenbaugh remains the role played by the Virginia Springs as gathering places.

Those resorts proved a potent factor in promoting colonial union and in nourishing nascent Americanism. They were the most significant intercolonial meeting places (and)... it may be confidently asserted that these watering places provided a powerful solvent of provincialism at a time when it was most needed. (Bridenbaugh,

Henry Lawrence (1983) also emphasizes the multiple sources for the built form that evolved at the Virginia Springs.

The southern resort tradition that was centered in the mountains of western Virginia developed from an amalgam of cultures. The pre-Revolutionary springs were frequented by tidewater planters like the Custises, Carrolls and Washingtons, as well as by backwoods farmers and frontiersmen who came from the territory stretching

from Pennsylvania to the Carolinas. The early rustic conditions encouraged an egalitarian spirit of camaraderie. But as facilities developed, different springs began to cater to particular clientele, and a network of distinct social circles emerged. (Lawrence, 1983)

From the first, the Virginia Springs were places for sociability amidst the wilderness.

Early and Mid 19th century

With American independence from England came further expansion and settlement into Appalachian Virginia. The Virginia Springs were located in a region that remained sparsely populated if still in close physical proximity to the expanding areas of the rest of the new nation. Once again Appalachian Virginia was neutral territory between varied regions. During the early part of the 19th century, many of the Virginia Springs grew from having a single hall or hotel for visitors to the inclusion of rows or clusters of cabins and cottages, often clearly defining the open space associated with resort.

The site plans of these nascent resorts would have contrasted dramatically against the larger mosaic of small scattered agricultural holdings and vast stretches of uninterrupted forest. Lawrence sees the Virginia Springs assuming their definitive ‘cabin and campus’ plan to accommodate increasing popularity. Significantly, the open spaces and nearby wild nature provide an important contrast for spring-goers from early in their development.

The rustic heritage of the spring camping community as well as the romanticism of the antebellum elites were incorporated into the architecture and site planning. The early Virginia springs typically had a modest two- or three-storey hotel flanked by lower wings or rows of cabins on both sides. These enclosed a park like open area with spring houses, bath houses and music and gaming pavilions. (Lawrence, 1983)

By the 1820s and 1830s, the site plans of the Virginia Springs were seen as consisting of several elements used to effect by Thomas Jefferson.

Jefferson's plans emphasized the harmonious and symmetrical placement of the main house and the smaller structures as a group. He also gave careful attention to topography to take advantage of vistas, breezes, drainage and opportunities to develop a coordinated system of indoor and outdoor spaces.



(Fig. 3.14) Old Sweet Springs,
Main Hotel, (Library of Congress)
Prints and Photographs Division
HABS WVA,32-SWESP,4-4



(Fig. 3.15) Old Sweet Springs, Main Hotel
Main Hotel, (Library of Congress)
Prints and Photographs Division
HABS WVA,32-SWESP,4-1

The most direct descendents of the Jeffersonian design were the spring resorts in the mountains west of Charlottesville. [The hotel building Old Sweet Springs (ca. 1826) is attributed to Jefferson, but no documentation of this exists]. (Lawrence, 1983)

While representing an early form of recreational space, the Virginia Springs' fame grew based especially on their healing powers.

The major resorts were founded on the premise that their waters, no matter what type, could cure common diseases at a time when medical science really could not do much for patients. Lured by the advertising, patients came and drank the water, bathed in it, or rubbed it on themselves, and the resorts prospered. (Cohen, 1997)

According to Cohen, the spread and outbreak of two diseases contributed to the growth and popularity of the Virginia Springs, yellow fever and cholera. Neither of these diseases occurred in the mountains. Cholera is water borne (cholera vibrio) and flows away. Yellow fever is spread by a mosquito carrier that is a coastal species. The high elevations appealed to Southern planters as healthful places. Long distances meant that stays at the springs tended to be longer than at the northern springs, often at one resort or as part of a circuit (dubbed The Springs Tour by contemporary writers).



(Fig. 3.16) Baltimore Row, White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia (Library of Congress), Prints and Photographs Division, (LC-D4-500590)



(Fig. 3.17) Paradise Row, White Sulphur Springs, (Library of Congress) Prints and Photographs Division, Prints and Photographs Division, Historic American Buildings Survey, (HABS WV-131-B)

Percival Reniers documents the ‘new’ springs (those built during the 1830s and later 1830s) related to the Cotton Boom. His is the first and most in depth discussion of the social activity that characterized these places of resort. He especially focuses on the antebellum period which saw a series of real estate booms and busts. The landscape at the Springs provided a contrast between rustic and civilized so important to self image at this time. For example this passage which he attributes to a “New York Dandy” is rich in landscape imagery:

“On a little greensward” he said “skirting the foot of a steep mountain, at least a hundred gay people of both sexes were rambling along among the trees, just in the twilight of a mild summer evening. Even my philosophy shook in the wind at this view of so many fair damsels, every one of whom dressed in white, put me in mind of white fringe upon a green petticoat...There was something exquisitely exhilarating, thus to break upon people resembling our accustomed associates, sporting gaily in the midst of the wild mountains.” (Reniers, 1948)

We also have Reniers to thank for reviving the name ‘Springs Tour’, which he found to be an important component in antebellum life:

“By the 1830s, after more than a half century of trial and error, the Southerner had evolved this method of taking the waters: he took them in quantity and he took them seratim. That is, he made the Springs Tour, visiting as many resorts in a season as time and money would allow. The phrase at home in the lowlands was, he was going ‘up to the springs’, always in the plural. He might own a cottage at the White Sulphur and expect to put in most of his time there, but he went to ‘the Springs’ just the same; it was taken for granted that before he returned to the lowlands again he would sample the water and the company at anywhere from three to half a dozen other places, a few days here and a week there, if water and company agreed with him.” (Reniers, 1948)

Reniers details the social life associated with the Virginia Springs as an extension and even the highlight of the year for elite southerners (and many northern and foreign visitors as well). By the end of September:

“During the final sad-happy week they exchanged their souvenirs and their mutual invitations for long visits; they gave each sprigs of arbor-vitae, symbols of eternal friendship; they counted over the summer’s gossip gathered from place to place and they soaked the accumulated minerals out of themselves in the delicious pool. For the last time that season they looked upon Colonel Fry and his fat wife and his fine ham and mutton and iced tea, and for the last time Charley mixed them an incomparable brandy julep downstairs. Then one September morning early Fry would boost them into their coaches and they would be off, toiling slowly up the steep road to the toll gate on the sky line. Until another year the Springs Tour was behind them.” (Reniers, 1948)

More recently Charlene Boyer Lewis (2001) documented a seasonal social cycle focused on visits to the Virginia Springs amongst 19th century elites. While decidedly not urban, the seasonal communities functioned as gathering places for 19th century elites, many of whom were confined to an isolated agrarian life for much of the rest of the year.

In the service of refinement, the architecture and landscape of the Virginia Springs became something like backdrops or stage sets for the genteel visitors who were simultaneously actors and audience, observing, judging and performing for each other as they moved from resort to resort. The usually graceful and attractive buildings and grounds set the scene for the drama of class-formation and the rituals of planter power at the springs. (Lewis, 2001)

The predominant aesthetic of the country house and landscape park is acknowledged along with many of the surviving mannerisms found at the Virginia Springs and “(t)hat the architecture and landscape designs – and the very act of spa-going – were based on English models made them seem even more refined”. (Lewis, 2001)

At the same time, the layouts and landscapes of the resorts created a fantastic and romantic realm, a retreat from the normal world of the visitor’s plantations and towns. This beautiful retreat provided the best stage upon which the all-important creation of class and regional identity took place. (Lewis, 2001)

While the resorts kept expanding and remodeling over the decades, their architectural styles and landscapes changed little. The main buildings and grounds consistently followed British models adopted to their Virginia context. The Greek Revival style dominated resort architecture. (Lewis, 2001)

Civil War

The Civil War marked an interruption of the development of the Virginia Springs. The resorts were located in strategic territory for both armies and many were used as headquarters or field hospitals (Cohen, 1997).



(Fig. 3.18) Fauquier Sulphur Springs, Va. Hotel (Library of Congress), Prints and Photographs Division Civil War photographs, 1861-1865, LC-B815- 542

Head Quarters,
DEPARTMENT OF SOUTH-WESTERN VIRGINIA, }
SALT SULPHUR SPRINGS, August 1862. }

GENERAL ORDERS, No.

By direction of the General Commanding is hereto appended a list of those absent without leave from the 2nd Brigade of this Command. All such absentees are ordered to report to their respective Regiments, Battalions or Companies within ten days from the publication of this order. Those so reporting within this period will be assigned to duty without further trial. Those failing to report within the prescribed limit of time will be proceeded against as deserters. The absentees from Maj. Jackson's Battalion of Cavalry will be allowed fifteen days to report.

By Order of
August 20th, 1862.

Maj. Gen. W. W. LORING.
W. B. MYERS, A. Adj. General.

A List of Men absent from the 8th Va. Cavalry.

B. F. Allen,	R. B. Digg,	Andrew Greer,	William Lacy,
John P. Allen,	Knaer,	Henry Davis,	Ransom Simmons,
J. W. Anderson,	Smith,	Stephen F. Jones,	J. E. Beckwith,
W. Anderson,	Spencer,	D. A. Taylor,	Smoot,
J. Anderson,	Coleman,	C. Wesley,	W. W. Hamilton,
D. W. Bass,	Kidd,	J. Conant,	J. Baker,
J. H. Copenhagen,	Poetry,	Wm. M. Boone,	T. R. C. Blackship,
S. M. Copenhagen,	Thornhill,	J. W. Boyer,	W. H. Busel,
Wm. K. Copenhagen,	Partridge,	Wm. R. Thomson,	A. Hornslet,
W. W. Thompson,	Ferguson,	A. J. Woodall,	Edwin Lambert,
J. Park,	Stewart,	H. Davidson,	Paul C. Smith,
Thomas Copenhagen,	Jones,	Fletcher,	J. W. Harman,
A. R. Cook,	Staples,	Moss,	Wm. C. Squires,
A. P. Cole,	Bellon,	A. R. Nash,	J. E. Maurion,
John J. Hoster,	Spencer,	J. D. Morton,	M. B. Rimbree,
S. T. Morrison,	Joseph Faber,	J. B. Poole,	William Stevens,
L. G. Maspin,	H. A. Bourn,	S. W. Sinclair,	J. Strider,
J. E. Saunders,	J. D. Pickett,	Ely,	J. J. Stafford,
J. L. Thomas,	J. Austin,	Thompson,	A. T. Snyder,
James E. Evans,	William Austin,	A. F. Hambley,	P. E. Snyder,
James Nuckles,	Martin Nelson,	P. M. Hessel,	W. G. Parsley,
Thomas Smith,	Henry Nelson,	J. V. Hales,	J. F. Lambert,
John C. Hiss,	M. Hink,	J. K. Shaben,	T. F. Howford,
James W. Mathews,	E. W. Greer,	A. Page,	William A. Smith,

J. M. CORNS,
Col. 8th Va. Cavalry.

A. C. BAILEY,
Adj. 8th Regt. Va. Cavalry.

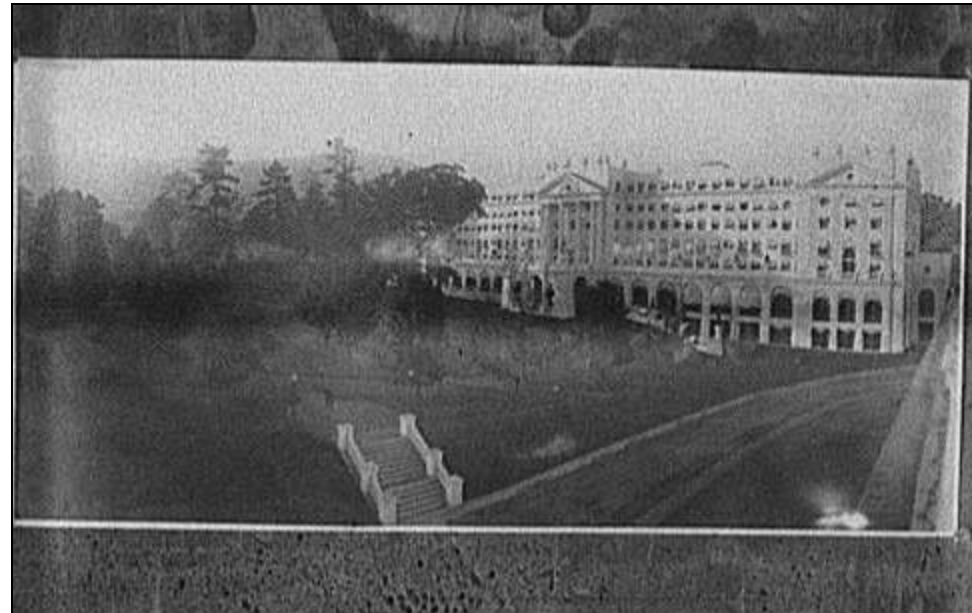
D. A. ST. CLAIR'S POWER PRESS, WYTHEVILLE, VA.

(Fig. 3.19) Headquarters at Salt Sulphur Springs -1862, (Library of Congress), Printed Ephemera Collection; Portfolio 245, Folder 9

Fauquier (Fig. 3.18) and Salt Sulphur (Fig. 3.19) Springs were typical of sites converted to military use during the war. While few battles took place at Spring spas, the resorts fell into decline as result of effective cancellation of the springs seasons from 1861 to 1865.

Post War a first revival

Many of the Virginia Springs were pushed to financial ruin by the Civil War. The economy of Virginia and of the South could ill afford to indulge in the seasonal pageants that characterized the antebellum Springs Tour. Reconstruction saw the transfer of ownership as well as the adaptive re-use of many of the Virginia Springs. Several were converted to academies or female seminaries. Others found new life as church camps. Eventually, with the promotion of Virginia's highlands as the site of natural tourism (anticipating the efforts of the National Park Service and the State Park systems in many ways), many of the Springs were 'rediscovered' during the late 19th century. The Greenbrier resort (at White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia) and the Homestead (at Hot Springs, Virginia) emerged as the most robust financial players. Both benefited from the development of good railroad connections.



(Fig. 3.20) The New Greenbrier, White Sulphur Springs, W. Va., (Library of Congress), Prints and Photographs Division LC-D4-68375

Following the Civil War, Lawrence (1980) believes that American resort architecture 'rediscovered' the Virginia Springs, or at least its architecture and site planning tradition:

Although the mood of the times had changed, the architecture that answered the new needs did not spring full-blown to grace the popular resorts of the era. It had roots in the antebellum spring resorts of the South. There the campus plan, the cottage system, connecting walkways and integration of indoor and outdoor spaces had been developing for decades before the war, building on the Jeffersonian-Palladian tradition.

Lawrence also believes that the Virginia Springs declined as a result of changes in the way that medicine and healing were conducted:

Improvements in public health, sanitation, and pharmacology in the last decade of the (19th) century cut deaths sharply. American doctors became increasingly skeptical of claims about mineral waters as they became infatuated with pharmaceutical chemistry. The American Medical Association criticized the overblown claims of resort owners and mineral-water bottlers, and in the early decades of the twentieth century the group joined the Federal Trade Commission in a campaign to stop misleading advertising. (Lawrence, 1980)

During the late 19th century the railroad expanded the popularity of the Virginia Springs. The Atlantic, Mississippi & Ohio the Shenandoah Valley, and the Virginia & Tennessee Railroads and later the Norfolk Western and the Chesapeake & Ohio Railroads all extended into the Springs Counties, making them both accessible and less exclusive. (Cohen, 1997)

20th century changes in transportation/ growth and expansion of tourism

By the turn of the 20th century, the Virginia Springs were being adapted to a new type of tourism developing within the United States. No longer able to claim the mantle of medical legitimacy, their appeal ranged from local popularity to international clientele. The experience of local landscapes formed an important part of the automobile tourism that developed in Virginia from the 1910s onward. State Route 11, The Lee Highway, is an especially rich repository of such roadside features as motels, auto camps and motor courts that grew up to accommodate a new type of tourist. While Cohen (1997) has contended that the expansion of auto-touring spelled the end for the Virginia Springs, many smaller resorts enjoyed a modest prosperity by adapting site conditions to resemble those found at motels or even State Parks. The 'Springs Tour', that is a large community of spring-goers circulating between the various resorts of the region over the course of several weeks during the summer, can probably be said to have ceased to exist this time.

Late 20th and early 21st century a return of springlore?

While several of the Virginia Springs were used for holding prisoners during World War II, they remained for the most part outside the mainstream as destinations. The exceptions to this general decline were the Greenbrier and Homestead resorts that increasingly resembled international destination hotels. Perhaps spurred by the visible decline of several of the Virginia Springs, Marshall Fishwick (1978) called for a rediscovery of the 'springlore' associated with Appalachian Virginia. While linked to the increased environmental awareness under cultivation in the country as a whole, Fishwick, like J. B. Jackson (1997), appreciated the experiential demands placed on the spring-goer. Even in ruin, the Virginia Springs retain an identity as a distinct type of place, with a social spirit. The writer Noah Adams (2001) encountered such a place in Shatley Springs, just south across the North Carolina border when he paddled the New River a few years ago. The waters of Shatley remain free for the taking. The basic elements of its site plan, an inn with restaurant, a porch complete with white rockers, a pavilion for music, eleven cottages, and a fish pond are remarkably like the key ingredients found at most of the Virginia Springs throughout their history.

This history suggests that the Virginia Springs have been what the tourist industry now refers to as a 'destination' for a long time. While they have enjoyed a reputation for healing, they have also been places of sociability and of retreat. The numbers of people accommodated, as well as the variety of activities that took place at a given spring resort were surprisingly large and diverse. Advertisements for the Virginia Springs, especially those featuring a graphic representation of the landscape 'thereat' give some sense of the dynamic encountered by the visitor. However, the sites themselves remain the most telling record of how the Virginia Springs functioned. The site plans that evolved combined elements of both designed and vernacular landscape traditions. Site visits informed by the archival research undertaken to this point in the project proved crucial in understanding how the Virginia Springs retain a common design vocabulary amidst the adaptations to varied site conditions.

IV. Regional Pattern – survey and documentation

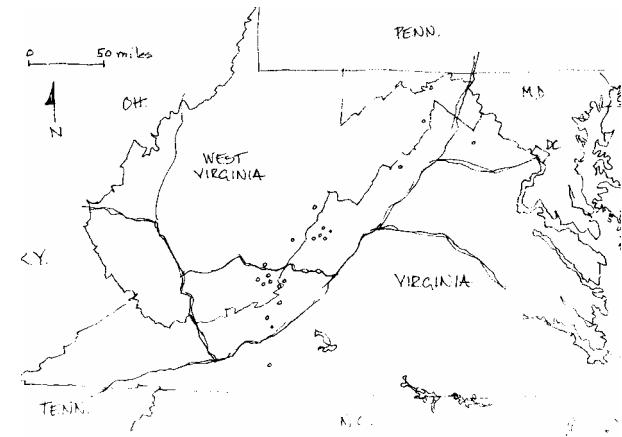


(Fig. 4.1) Jefferson Pools, Warm Springs, Virginia

In addition to archival research, site visits were made to several Virginia Springs. This allowed for the comparison of existing conditions with the growing understanding of historic context. It also provided the chance to observe how such sites have been adapted or re-used for current needs. In fact many sites have been either allowed to naturalize or have been adapted for re-use in one way or another. As is perhaps inevitable when site surveys like this are conducted, possible designs and plans for redevelopment began to suggest themselves.

Cultural landscape studies have emphasized the value of comparing existing conditions with historic accounts or as in the case of the Virginia Springs, contemporary graphic representations when available. Many springs are still identified on maps and some have even been commemorated with state and county historical markers. Many have naturalized but remain legible. What emerges is an 'anatomy' of a typical Virginia Springs site plan.

While the *Secretary of Interior's Standards* were useful in focusing on a particular landscape's design elements and components, they were not followed strictly. Each site was approached as a potential source for current design proposals as well as data for the documentation of a larger regional historical pattern. As the Virginia Springs were landscapes that evolved for a similar purpose and at roughly the same time period, similar form has resulted. Still, the variety of responses to often difficult sites is what give the landscape's their charm. These along with the slight variance in chemical qualities in the waters are what gave each Spring its 'personality' according to Reniers (1982). Proposed design within this historic context can benefit from exploring and witnessing such innovations. Site visits revealed both similarities and variation.



After visiting and photo-documenting a number of Virginia Springs in various states of operation, a clear set of patterns or typology emerged. Many sites contained an original building of prominence, often a hotel. The sense of enclosure provided by local topography was often accentuated with buildings or structures to accommodate a larger number of visitors. These were sometimes attached to the main building as ranges or rows. Some were free standing. The landscapes associated with the resorts were often still recognizable even in a ruined state as having been planted and maintained as a grove or parkland, a structured outdoor space. Springs were marked by fountains, pavilions or

'springhouses' for drinking springs and bath houses for bathing. Some springs include water contained in pools both as ornamental reflecting pools and as swimming pools.

A variety of smaller buildings and structures were also often located within the grove, and were contained to some extent by the residential wings or ranges built off of the main hotel. The physical setting played a significant role in giving each site its character, with nearby ridgelines or peaks often visible from within the resort. Stream courses were also visible in almost every case, a reminder of the regional hydrologic pattern associated with the Karst topography of the Ridge and Valley region, that includes springs as well as sinkholes, caves, and rich bottom land often used as pasture.

HOTEL

A significant feature often still prominent in the landscape is a hotel or a main building. This building often has a commanding view of the locality. While not always the original building, this landmark structure represents a consistent and definitive architectural presence at the springs. Examples include the Pence Hotel (see below) in Greenbrier County, WV, a galleried hotel at Red Sulphur Springs (see below) and the hotel at Capon Springs, WV (see below).



(Fig. 4.2) Pence Hotel, Pence Springs, WV



(Fig. 4.3) Red Sulphur Springs, WV



(Fig. 4.4) Hotel at Capon Springs, WV



(Fig. 4.5)
Hotel at Old Sweet Springs, WV



(Fig. 4.6)
Backside Cascade Inn
Healing Springs, VA



(Fig. 4.7)
Hotel at Capon Springs, WV



(Fig. 4.8)
Front Porch – Pence Hotel
Pence Springs, WV



(Fig. 4.9)
Porticoes - Old Sweet
Springs, WV

ENCLOSURE BY RANGES OR ROWS OF DEPENDENCIES

Another significant architectural element still visible at many of the springs are buildings for additional accommodations located nearby such as cabins or cottages. At the larger resorts like the White Sulphur or the Hot Springs, these were often arranged in clusters, rows or even attached to one another as ranges. Cottages and cabins are usually sited along natural terraces surrounding the springs, acting to preserve the bottom land.



(Fig. 4.10) Cabin at Warm Springs, VA



(Fig. 4.11) Row of Cabins, Warm Springs, VA



(Fig. 4.12) Cottage in ruin – Warm Springs, VA



(Fig. 4.13) Cottages at Salt Sulphur Springs, WV



(Fig. 4.14) Terrace and Cottages at Salt Sulphur Springs, WV (Fig. 4.15)



(Fig. 4.16)
Brick Cottage under Repair
Old Sweet Springs, WV



(Fig. 4.17)
Back side of Range at Capon Springs, WV



(Fig. 4.18)
Range with Portico at Warm Springs, VA

OPEN SPACE AT THE CENTER

Probably the most striking landscape feature at the Virginia Springs no matter their condition is a defined outdoor space at the center of the 'campus'. This open space often reveals the local topography. Many elements act to define and enclose such a space which is focused on the spring itself.



(Fig. 4.19)
Range and green at Capon Springs, WV



(Fig. 4.20)
Cottages at Salt Sulphur Springs, WV



(Fig. 4.21)
Range and Hotel at Capon Springs, WV



(Fig. 4.22)
Square at Berkeley Springs, WV



(Fig. 4.23)
Square and pools at Berkeley Springs, WV



(Fig. 4.24)
Bath House and pool at Hot Springs, VA



(Fig. 4.25)
Green at Pence Spring, WV



(Fig. 4.26)
Main lawn at The Homestead, Hot Springs, VA

SPRINGS FOR DRINKING AND FOR BATHING

Of the structures found at a given site, spring houses and pavilions, bath houses, and even pools show the most variety in form. Some sites (see 4.35 or 4.40) have retained only a spring house, still used as a hint of their former development.



(Fig. 4.27)
Pools and channels at Berkeley Springs, WV



(Fig. 4.28)
Stone-lined pool at Berkeley Springs, WV



(Fig. 4.29)
Roman Bath, Berkeley Springs



(Fig. 4.30)
Bathing pool at Berkeley Springs, WV



(Fig. 4.31)
Gentlemen's Bath House - Warm Springs, VA



(Fig. 4.32)
Ladies Bath House - Warm Springs, VA



(Fig. 4.33)
Stone Bath Houses - Salt Sulphur Springs, WV



(Fig. 4.34)
Spring House - Craig Healing Springs, VA



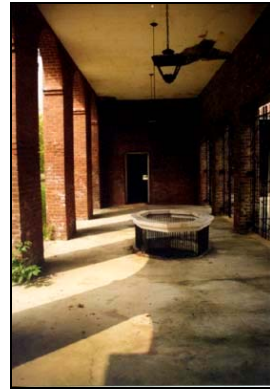
(Fig. 4.35)
Spring House - Blue Sulphur Springs, WV



(Fig. 4.36)
Reflecting Pool - Hot Springs, VA



(Fig. 4.37)
Drinking Spring – Pence Springs, WV



(Fig. 4.38)
Drinking Spring at Old Sweet



(Fig. 4.39)
Cold Water Pool – Capon Springs, WV



(Fig. 4.40)
Bear Wallow Spring Pavilion – Orkney Springs, VA

ASSOCIATED BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES

The open space at the center of the Virginia Springs was often populated with smaller buildings, structures and facilities associated with daily life at the resort. The grove often contained smaller structures such as bathhouses or other recreational facilities such as billiard halls, band stands, dance halls and other gathering for gathering.



(Fig. 4.41)
Ladies Bath house Warm Springs, VA



(Fig. 4.42)
'Campus' – Warm Springs, VA



(Fig. 4.43)
Bath house Old Sweet Springs
Sweet Springs, WV



(Fig. 4.44)
Exterior of bath house – Old Sweet Springs, WV

PHYSICAL SETTING – RIDGELINES AND PEAKS

Looking beyond the cultivated landscape within the immediate proximity to the spring, we see a relationship with the locality, especially with the distinctive patterns of the ridge and valley landscape. A visual sense of boundary is the result.



(Fig. 4.45)
Ridgeline visible at Warm Springs, VA



(Fig. 4.46)
Ridgeline above Old Sweet Springs, WV



(Fig. 4.47)
Ridgeline at Blue Sulphur Springs, WV



(Fig. 4.48)
Ridges above cabins - Warm Springs, VA

PHYSICAL SETTING – KARST TOPOGRAPHY AND HYDROLOGIC PATTERN

A visible, sometimes channelized stream is a reminder that the Virginia Springs occupied the bottom land of valleys.



(Fig. 4.49)
Capon Springs, WV



(Fig. 4.50)
Berkeley Springs, WV



(Fig. 4.51)
Salt Sulphur Springs, WV



(Fig. 4.52)
Berkeley Springs, WV



(Fig. 4.53)
Blue Sulphur Springs, WV-
Pavilion in pasture



(Fig. 4.54)
Stone channel at Berkeley Springs, WV



(Fig. 4.55)
Warm Springs Run below Gentleman's Bath
Warm Springs, VA



(Fig. 4.56)
Stone channel at Old Sweet
Springs, WV

VANTAGE POINTS FOR VIEWING SCENERY AND SURVEYING THE SITE

Building at the springs often took advantage of varied local topography, allowing for views into, out of and through sites.



(Fig. 4.57)
'Berkeley Castle'
Berkeley Springs, WV



(Fig. 4.58)
Cottage with broad porches at Red Sulphur
Springs, WV



(Fig. 4.59)
Front porch with view from promontory at
Pence Hotel, Pence Springs, WV



(Fig. 4.60)
Cottage on terrace above
Capon Springs, WV

AN INTEGRATED CIRCULATION SYSTEM

Articulated systems of circulation, such as paths, roads, walkways, porches and colonnades are another feature readily apparent even in ruined springs landscapes. Circulation is more than metaphor



(Fig. 4.61)
View from bath house at
Old Sweet Springs, WV



(Fig. 4.62)
20th century colonnade and walkway at
The Homestead, Hot Springs, VA



(Fig. 4.63)
Covered walkway at front of bath house
at Old Sweet Springs, WV



(Fig. 4.64)
Walkway to spring house from Pence Hotel,
Pence Springs, WV

A CONNECTION WITH TRANSPORTATION NETWORKS



(Fig. 4.65)
Crossroads in the valley, road and cottage - Red Sulphur Springs, WV



(Fig. 4.66)
Road and cottage - Red Sulphur Springs, WV



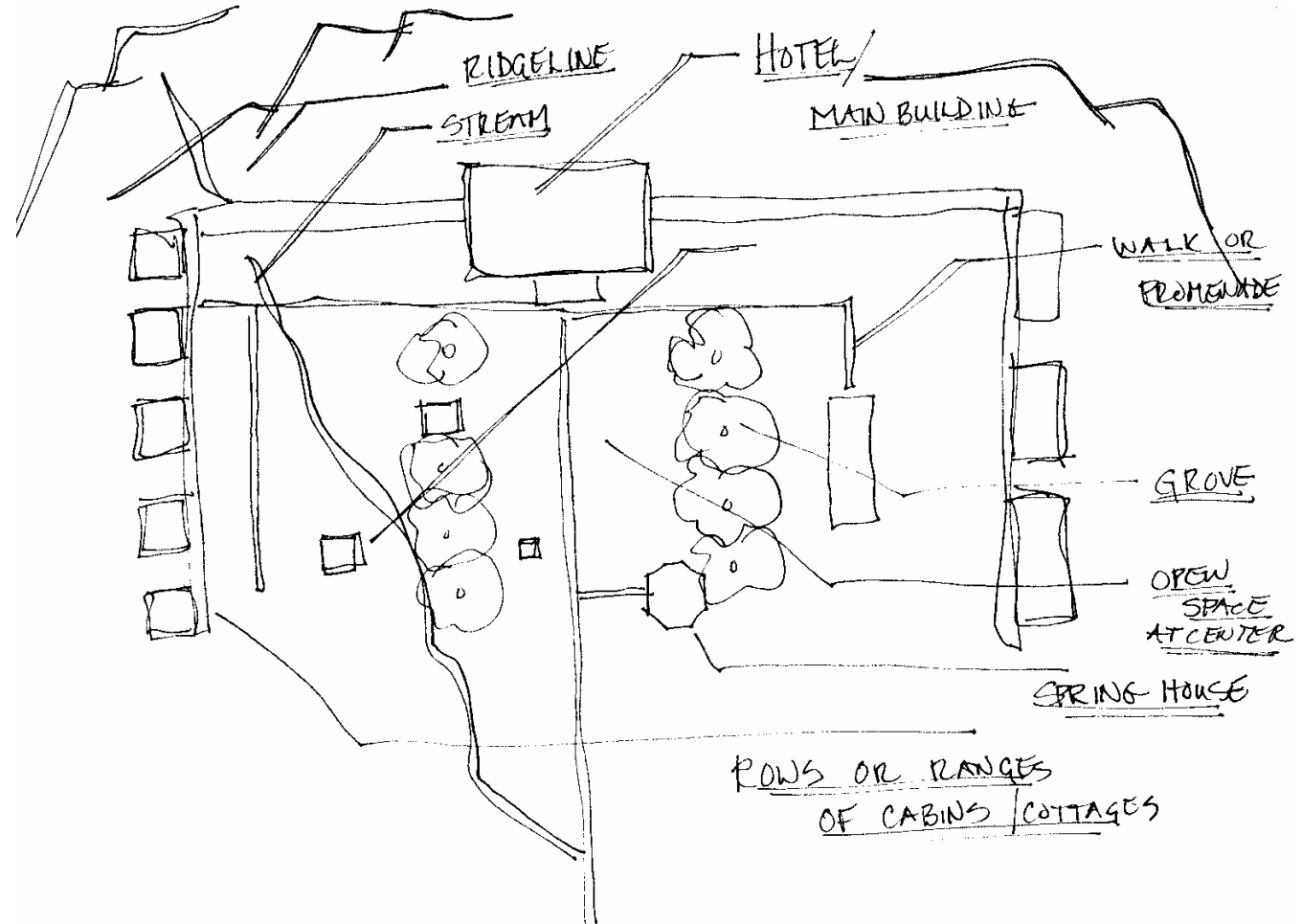
(Fig. 4.67)
Stone general store and church along highway
Salt Sulphur Springs, WV



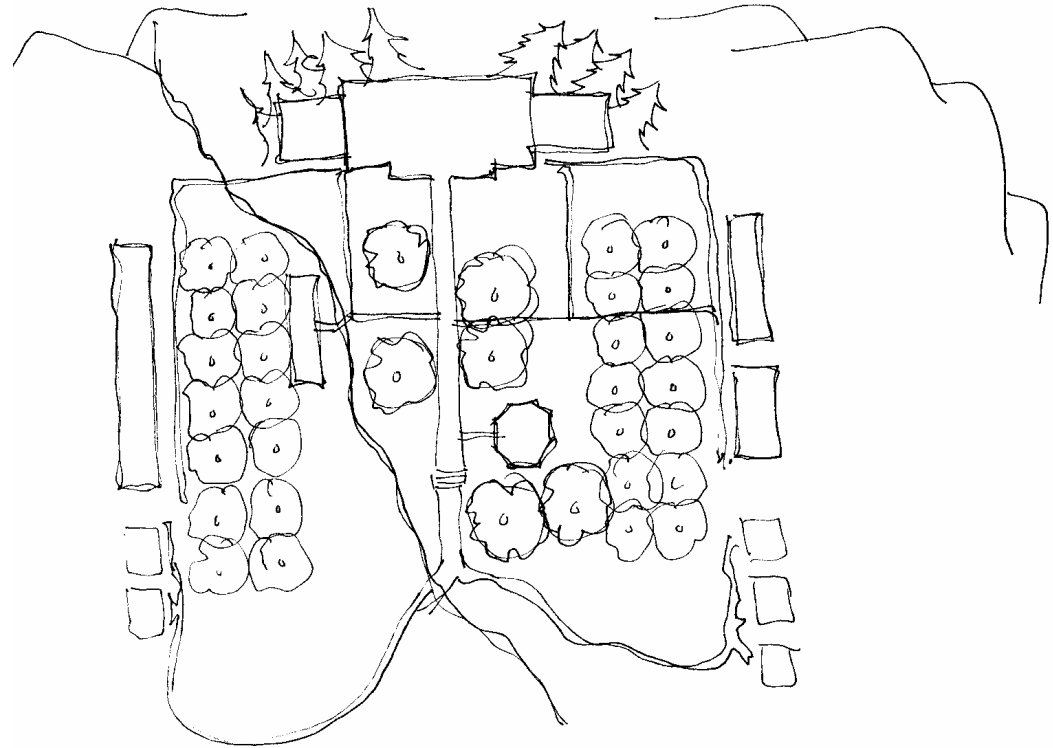
(Fig. 4.68)
State highway through hamlet
Warm Springs, VA

In short a set of 'rules' for building at the Virginia Springs have emerged from these surveys and site visits. Though not codified as 'treatments' per the Secretary of the interior's Standard's, they can be used to structure the program for the redevelopment of a given Virginia Spring site.

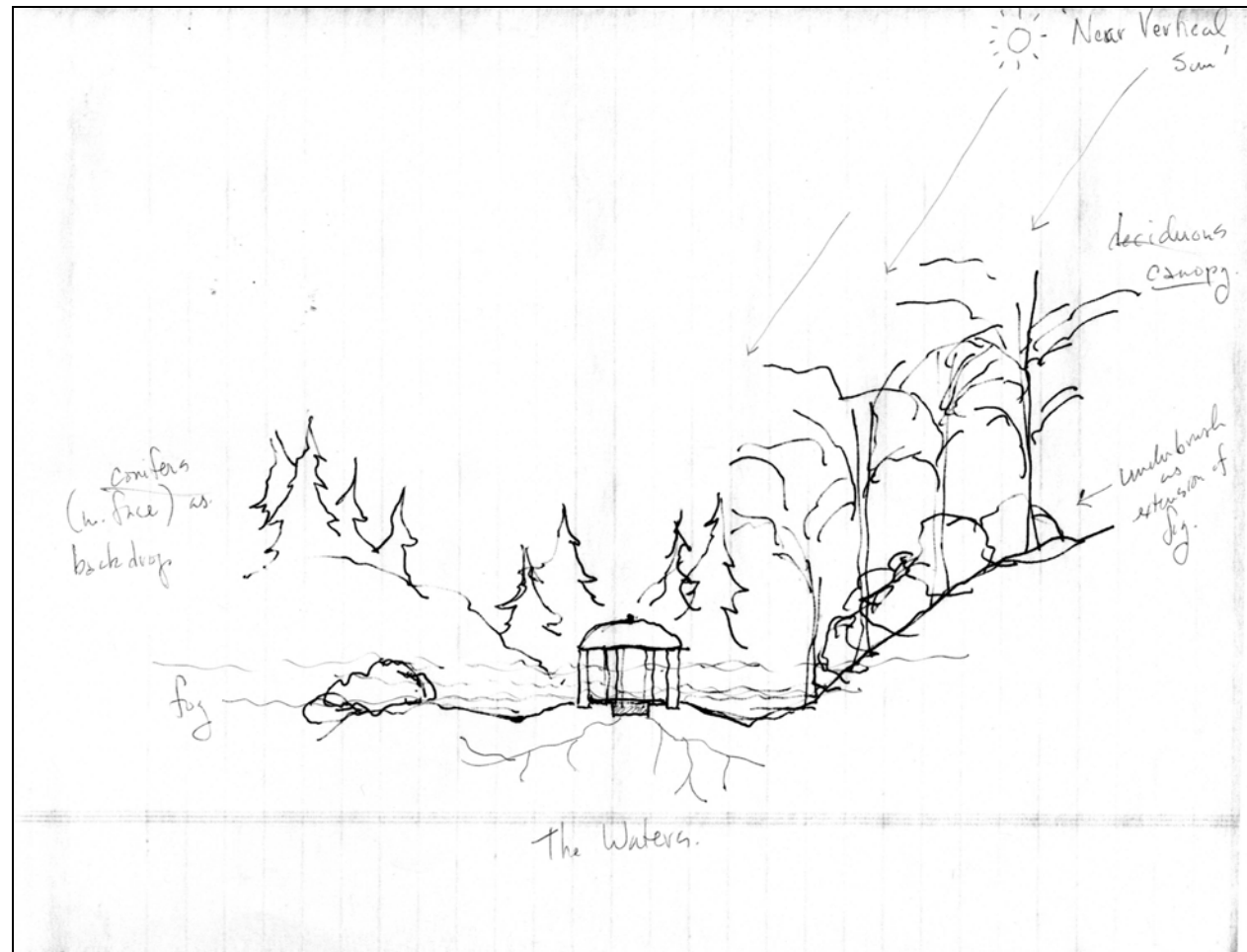
'ANATOMY' OF A TYPICAL VIRGINIA SPRING LANDSCAPE



A diagram of a 'typical' Virginia Spring can be generated. It should be noted that much of the charm of a given resort is a result of the adaptation of this generic site plan to the conditions of locale. While many building techniques and arrangements are shared, each of the Springs has its own 'personality'. Historically this was often personified by the proprietor, a host of some sort or even a loyal retainer (often a slave) (Reniers, 1982) (Ingalls, 1949) (Fishwick, 1978). Such characters along with the unique chemical or healing qualities associated with a Spring's waters might be said to constitute its *genius loci*, a very ancient idea in landscape design.



V. Distillation – context for design



(Fig. 5.1) Conceptual section through showing natural air circulation, ornamental and scenic forests, and healing waters

The Virginia Springs are a significant cultural landscape. According to J.B. Jackson (1997), they represent a relationship with the natural world rooted in classical science that survived in the Chesapeake region much longer than in the rest of the country. Medical practice well into the 19th century believed sickness to be the manifestation of an imbalance among elements or humors found in the body (indeed in the universe as a whole). Only by applying an opposite element directly to the afflicted area or condition could healthfulness (humor) be restored. The healing powers attributed to the waters as well as their remote locations out of the disease-ridden lowlands, meant that retreat to the springs was a seasonal affair. Many spring goers spent the summer months circulating among the various watering places, spending days or even weeks at a given resort before moving on.

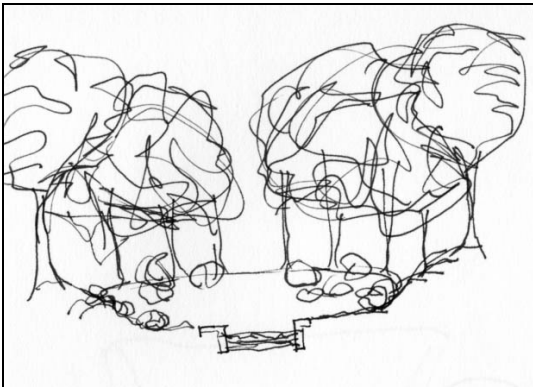
Seasonal communities with many characteristics of urban centers developed to accommodate the unwell in addition to those traveling with them and those seeking to escape unhealthy environments, including boredom and social isolation. The built form and landscapes that evolved to provide for these visitors expressed both this classical view of the body and its workings and the newly evolving landscape aesthetic linked to Romanticism. This view of nature was most clearly articulated by landscape tourists who visited Western Virginia to take the waters, circulate socially as well as to view and experience the wilderness of Virginia first hand.

The abandonment of such healing practices as were developed at the Virginia Springs by the American medical profession during the late 19th and early 20th centuries meant that the Virginia Springs had to compete with other resorts across the country that offered a similar array of activities for the guest (Lawrence, 1983). This coupled with the decline in the regional economy following the Civil War meant that many Spring Spas struggled to remain economically viable. Not surprisingly many of the spas closed and those that remained open began to court railroad connections and eventually the automobile tourist (Cohen, 1997). An interesting side note involved the diversification of programs articulated at spring spa sites. Often located with good connections beyond the region, many of the Virginia Springs became schools, church camps, old age homes, penitentiaries, and so forth, a testament to earlier craftsmanship in building and site planning.

Design drawing on the historic context of the Virginia Springs would do well to consider what elements of the site plan most contributed to their healthfulness. Three constants emerge from the historic research as character-defining landscape features.

Mountain air was described variously as bracing, invigorating or refreshing. Whatever the adjective its effect was seen to be restorative to health. Site plans of the springs took advantage of the microclimate unique to the Appalachian region, especially pronounced during the summer months. After dark, cooling air and even fogs were observed advancing through low hollows in the topography as a result of breezes from the southwest. These cool air masses reached their height in the pre-dawn hours, enveloping the lowest regions in a canopy of thick, gently circulating air. Morning sun burned away much of the accumulated fog, especially in areas with a high tree canopy and cleared ground beneath.

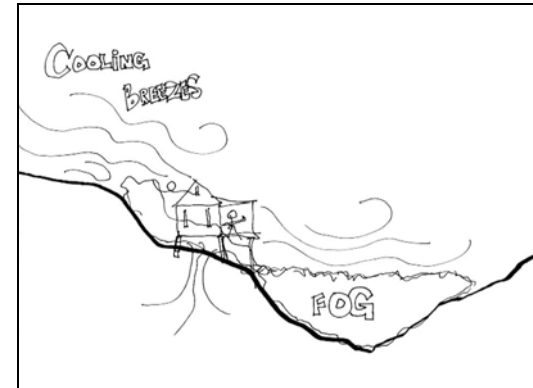
The cycle repeated itself through the summer months and into the fall, creating air circulation patterns that contrasted markedly with those found in other geographic regions. In pre air-conditioned days, those who were able to left the low-lying areas along the coast. Management of local forest conditions, the wide spread inclusion of elevated galleries on even the tiniest buildings and the careful attention to aspect in site design reflect the value that such cooling breezes had for the builders and visitors alike.



(Fig. 5.2)
Overhead canopy of trees, open bottom lands

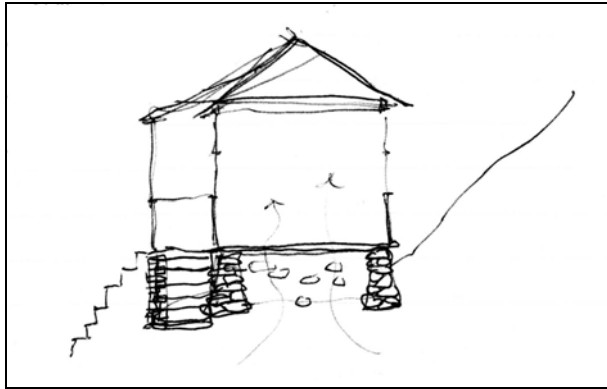


(Fig. 5.3)
Building construction allowing for circulation

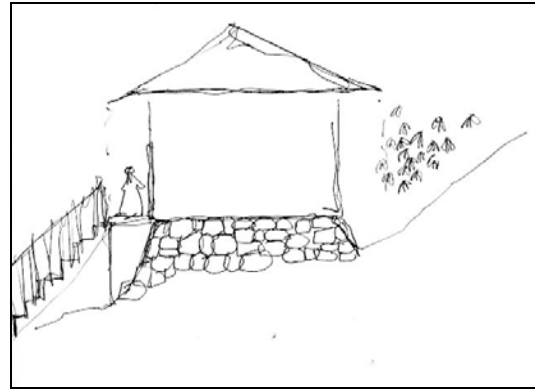


(Fig. 5.4)
Diagram of cooling microclimate found at many springs

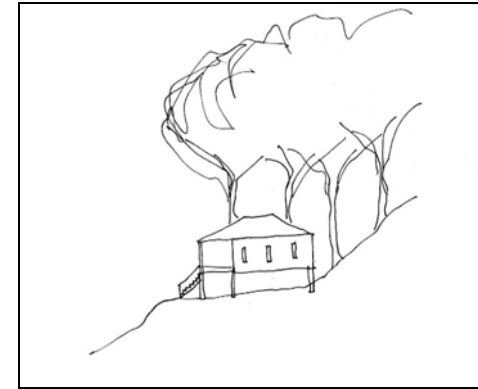
The presence and movement of cool air and fog in the tiny coves and valleys of the Appalachian landscape are the most distinctive quality associated with the “mountain airs”. They moderate temperature as well as creating a unique and ever-changing visual atmosphere.



(Fig. 5.5)
Stone foundation walls allowed cooling from below



(Fig. 5.6)
Raised building creates space for outdoor circulation of air



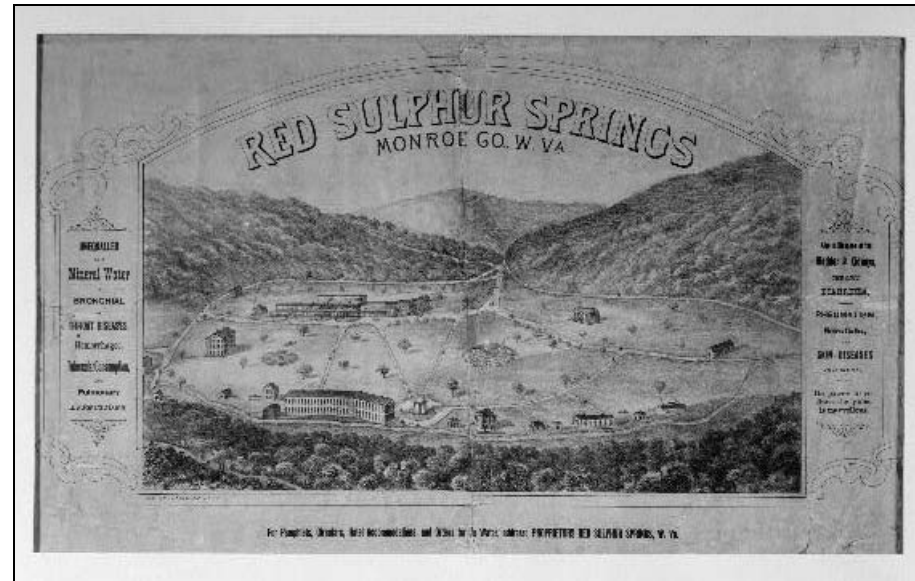
(Fig. 5.7)
Cabins located near limbed up trees enjoy shade

Also apparent at the Virginia Springs are the use of terraces and pier construction to provide elevation. The inclusion of galleries and balconies on buildings, as well as broad porches allowed for circulation and outdoor activity, all to take advantage of the mountain air.

Wild Scenery was a second element at the Springs. Although frequently depicted as framework in the tradition of classical landscape compositions, wild nature was also an integral part of the retreat experience. Circulation patterns within the sites, while driven by utilitarian concerns, also represent an extension of the wilderness experience. Footpaths, open spaces, promontories, gazebos and galleries all allow for and encourage the visual experience of the landscape from a variety of perspectives. Activities at the spring spas often included horse back riding or racing, hunting and fishing, dancing, bowling, golf, skiing, hiking, all set within wild nature. The surrounding wilderness contrasted dramatically with the civility of the social life at the Springs.



(Fig. 5.8) Spring pavilion White Sulphur Springs WV (Library of Congress), Prints and Photographs Division, HABS WVA,13-WHISP,1A-2



(Fig. 5.9) Red Sulphur Springs, Monroe Co., W Va., (Library of Congress), Prints and Photographs Division, HABS WVA,32-RESU,1-1

Design applications include maximizing views of surrounding scenery and landform, providing circulation patterns that connect promontories and overlooks, recognition of the role of the forest as backdrop and the seasonal changes, alignment of new construction with topography as well as removing old buildings, and contrasting the architecture with the wilderness.

Healing Waters represent the key element in the Virginia Springs landscape. The presence of thermal, mineral water at the center of a rural retreat gave it a distinctive atmosphere, setting the community apart from religious retreats, hunting or fishing camps, agricultural operations and industrial works.

Medical practice of the late 18th and early 19th century held that health was actually a balancing act between the humors of the body, most of which had a spiritual and a social or behavioral component as well. The unwell were characterized as being “out of humor”, meaning a fundamental imbalance was at work. Medicine sought to return a body to balance by

manipulating the superficial manifestations. 'Taking the waters' meant both submitting to a regime of drinking spring water at proscribed times of the day, as well as bathing



(Fig. 5.10)
Stone bath house at Salt Sulphur Springs, WV
(Library of Congress), Prints and Photographs Division,
HABS WVA,32-SALSU,1F-1



(Fig. 5.11)
Bath house and mineral pool at Warm Springs, Va



Cool, circulating air, natural scenery and readily available supplies of the healing waters made up the most important elements in the healing powers of the springs. Reviving the relationships with these elements can guide the redevelopment of a historic site such as Healing Springs, Bath County, Virginia.

