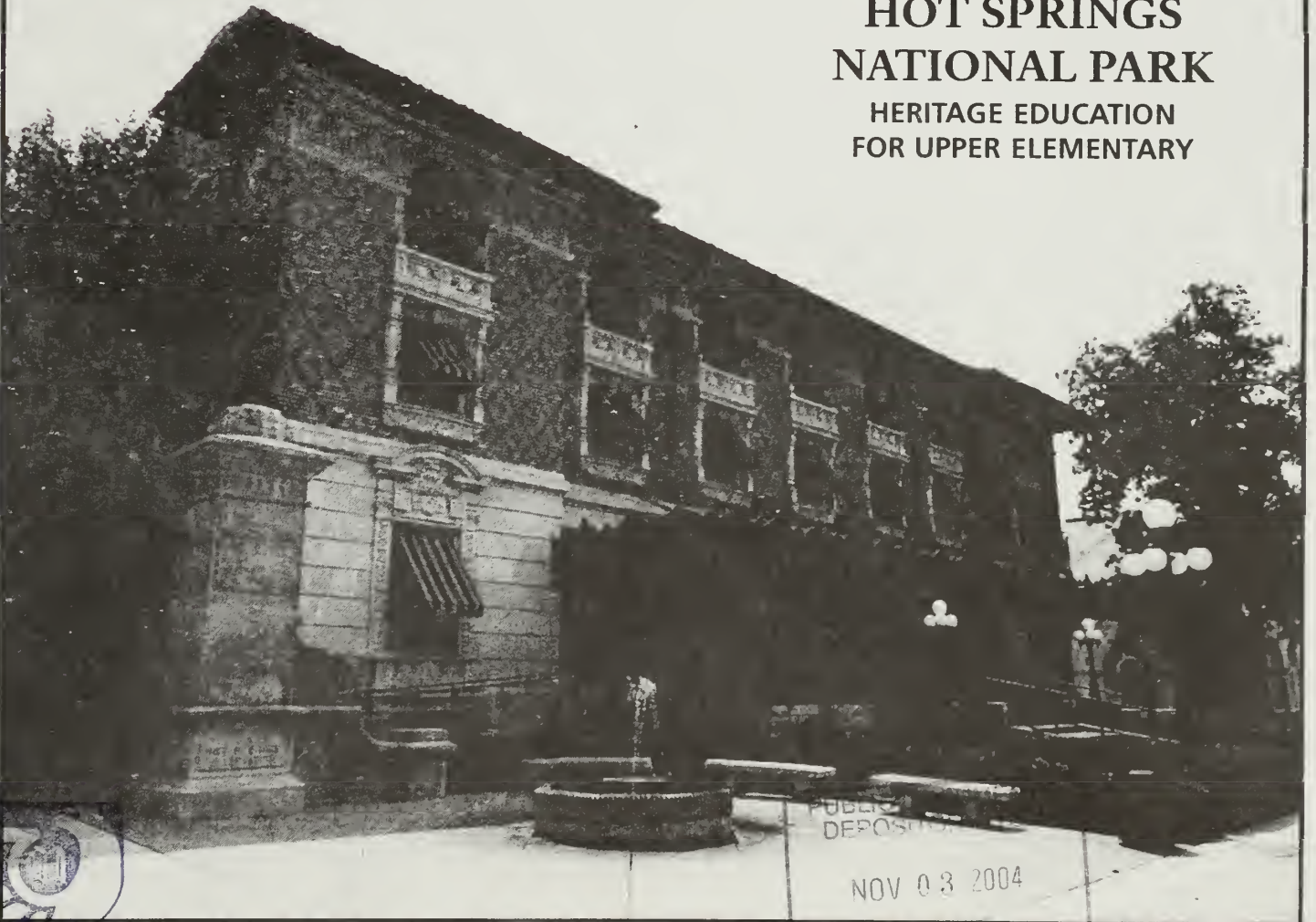




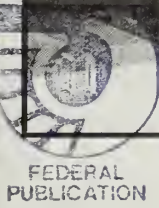
The Golden Age of Bathing

At the Fordyce Bathhouse Visitor Center


**HOT SPRINGS
NATIONAL PARK**
HERITAGE EDUCATION
FOR UPPER ELEMENTARY



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The Golden Age of Bathing

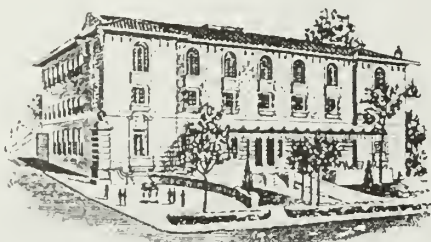
On the following pages are letters were written by modern-day National Park Service employees to give you an idea how Hot Springs National Park was in the early days the 1900s. They are letters similar to what a teen-aged boy would write home to his older sister, describing to her the sights and conditions he experienced on his vacation to Hot Springs National Park.

You may have a hard time reading some of the words in these letters, because we tried to make them as authentic as possible, and times have changed in letter-writing the same way they have in almost everything else.

For one thing, the letters are written with what is called a "dip pen." This is a stick of wood (about the length of a pencil) that a metal point is stuck into. The metal point looks very similar to the point of a fountain pen. You write with a dip pen by dipping the point in an inkwell or bottle of ink, then writing until you run out of ink. You can sometimes tell in these letters where "John" ran out of ink: the writing gets lighter, then suddenly darker. Whenever you see that, you know that "John" had to stop and dip his pen for some more ink. On average, the pen was dipped in ink about once every line of the letter.

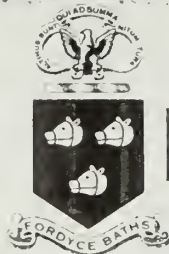
Dip pens were found in just about all the public places in Hot Springs back in the days "John" was writing home: hotels, banks, and the post office all had inkwells and dip pens for their patrons and customers to use. In fact, since only the wealthy could afford fountain pens, and ball-point pens and felt tip pens ("Sharpies") had not yet been invented, most people either wrote with dip pens or pencils.

Handwriting was a little different in the early days. For one thing, handwriting was much more important then than now, since typewriters were very rare and even the most important documents were hand-written. Special schools were started all around the United States to teach people fancy (or "Spencerian") handwriting. Some of the letters have changed over the years, too. In "John's" letter, the small letter "r" is written like this: *ŕ* That is called a "Palmer r," and it may be difficult for you to read until you get used to it. You will also notice that many of the letters look a little fancier. This is partly because of the handwriting system, and partly because a dip pen was used.



BYRON L. NEIMEYER
MANAGER

FORDYCE BATHS



HOT SPRINGS NATIONAL PARK
ARKANSAS

March 28th 1916

My dear Katrina —

Where to start? What an unusual place this is! There are colorful buildings and fountains everywhere. And, everyone isn't rushing around like downtown at home. All kinds of people walk up and down carrying cups, stopping at the fountains and drinking the waters, cold and hot.

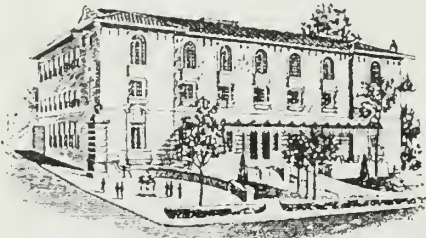
Some boys my age fill up water carriers at some of the cold springs and take the water off to sell it. — They seem to make a lot of money! Of course, the hot spring water is always free.

The water creates an unusual rock called "tufa." The rock reminds me of the rich coffee-flavored icing that drips down the sides of Mother's yellow cake. — When the water no longer flows over the rock, it stops building and becomes an old gray color.

The water in the springs is so hot that great clouds of steam rise up from the ones that aren't covered, especially in the cool mornings. It's easy to see why the Indians thought this place was so special. I like to imagine that all the people I see are Indians who have come to sit in the steam huts and smoke the ceremonial pipe. — I would sit nearby and listen to the tales of hunting parties. Mother would catch me and drag me off by my ear if I touched a pipe.

I'd better stop this dreaming and stop this letter. — I wish you could have come along, but I know that you have to take care of yourself until my new nephew or niece arrives in the fall. — But I'll tell you all about it. More later.

As Always, Your Brother,
John
L



BYRON L. NEIMEYER
MANAGER

FORDYCE BATHS



HOT SPRINGS NATIONAL PARK
ARKANSAS

Dear Katrina—

March the 31st, 1916

I forgot to tell you about the train in my last letter. I would have taken a day train but Papa insisted that we get here as soon as possible so he could start the baths. — I hope we leave in the morning when we return so I can see the countryside. I've had quite enough of the "Sunshine Special—Out of St. Louis at Sunset—Into Texas at Sunrise."

I didn't get much sleep because at every stop there was so much commotion, with the other passengers getting their bags and the conductor coming through shouting the names of the stations—

"Poplar Bluff! Bald Knob! Little Rock! Benton!" Papa sat there, snoring away all the while.

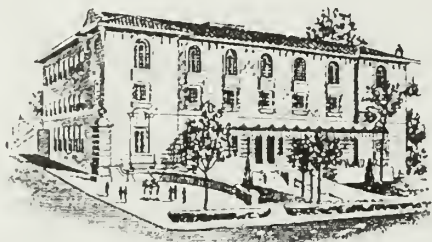
Finally, we arrived at the station here in Hot Springs. It was such a relief to step off the stuffy car and breathe the fresh, early morning air. — It was a bit brisk, but warmed up as soon as the sun climbed over the top of the mountain.

The Waukesha Hotel is very nice. — They have just barely been open a month since they completed remodeling. We took a room without a bath — to economize, Papa said. All rooms have telephones! Papa said that maybe we could place a call to you before we come home.

I think that Papa should take his baths at one of the houses on the Reservation, but Papa said it's more convenient to go next door — to the Rector Bath House. There's elevator service with a steam-heated hallway connecting it to the hotel. As it has just been re-modeled and is under the regulation of the federal government, Mama says that it is just as good. The price is very reasonable, too — just \$11.00 for 21 baths.

Mama is calling me to get ready for dinner. I'll have to write again and tell you more. I hope that Papa will let me go horseback riding. Mama sends her love.

Your loving brother,
John
L



BYRON L. NEIMEYER
MANAGER

FORDYCE BATHS



HOT SPRINGS NATIONAL PARK
ARKANSAS

April 4

My dear Katrina —

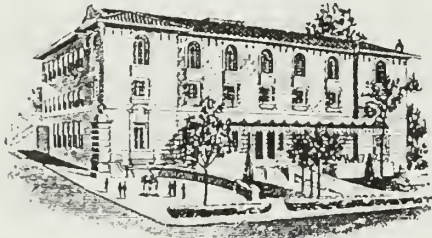
How is the St. Louis weather? The days here are wonderfully warm. The redbud trees on the mountains are beautiful and soon the dogwoods will bloom. I am still trying to talk Papa into letting me go on a trail ride. There are groups going every day, some for all-day rides.

I want to go on a ride with Chief Gray Horse. — He is a real Indian chief who leads riders on the trails through the surrounding mountains. Chief Gray Horse tells all about how the Cherokees used to come into Hot Springs to trade and use the hot water. If you write Papa, please tell him that you think it would be all right for me to go. I can't seem to get him interested in horse-back riding. — But we have done so many other exciting things here.

Several times we have gone to Happy Hollow to McLeod's amusement park. It is nearly out our front door. Mr. McLeod has a shooting gallery, a zoo with wild wolves, bears, monkeys, and some deer, and a photography studio where you can dress up and stand in different pictures. We had a photo taken yesterday. — I was an Indian, Papa a frontiersman and Mama on a burro. It is quite comical! Mr. McLeod also rents burros to ride up the Reservation hills on the trails.

I got Papa to walk up to the top of the Hot Springs mountain with me. There's an observatory tower at the top. We could see for miles and miles! — One lady nearly fainted from the height. There are many wonderful roads and trails on these mountains. I should like to explore them all before we leave.

Your Brother,
John
L



BYRON L. NEIMEYER

FORDYCE BATHS



HOT SPRINGS NATIONAL PARK
ARKANSAS

April 8th, 1916

Dear Katrina —

Yesterday we went to the Grand stand at the Grand Entrance to the Reservation and listened to the Army and Navy band play. — They played all the Sousa marches. The soldiers looked really splendid in their uniforms. We then went to tour the Hospital. It is filled mostly with men who fought in Cuba and older ones who fought in the Civil War. In fact, that is why the government built the hospital — because the baths were drawing so many of the veterans.

The man responsible for getting the hospital built here was Col. Samuel Fordyce I remember hearing about him in St. Louis, too, because he lives there when he isn't here in Hot Springs. He has built a beautiful bath house as his monument to the healing properties of these hot springs. He is himself a veteran of the Union Army, from Ohio. His health had failed so that his doctor had given up all hope for

his recovery. After several weeks at the baths, his health began to improve, and he was totally cured in about six months!

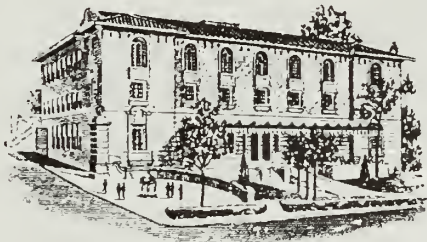
Papa says that Hot Springs is fortunate that Col. Fordyce's health failed. But it is more fortunate that he came to Hot Springs and was cured. He has invested in many businesses and improvements all over the city. We are right across the street from one of his hotels, the Arlington.

Papa's hands are much improved since he began the baths. He consulted Dr. Deaderick, as recommended by Dr. Hammel at home. Dr. Deaderick's office is right next door to the hotel, as are many other doctors' offices. It seems a great many people come to the baths with rheumatism. Papa has talked to several who are bathing at the Rector who come every year for the baths, always taking a course of 21 baths, as Dr. Hammel had told us. Wouldn't it be wonderful to come to Hot Springs every year? Dr. Deaderick told Papa to begin to use his hands a little to see how the baths were helping. He has decided to alter my coat to match a new style we saw a young boy my age

wearing. He was able to work at it about an hour without pain. Papa has suggested that Mama try a bath but she has not yet decided if she will.

It is time once again to take our evening stroll, carrying our cups to drink the water. I shall write you again, dear sister, to tell you more. — Give Henry my greetings.

As Always,
Your Loving Brother,
John
L



BYRON L. NEIMEYER
MANAGER

FORDYCE BATHS



HOT SPRINGS NATIONAL PARK
ARKANSAS

April 10th

My dear Katrina —

Papa has consented! I get to go on chief Gray Horse's trail ride! In fact, we are going tomorrow. Papa doesn't want to go, but I became acquainted with a boy at Happy Hollow and he and his father are going. — David is almost 12. His family is staying at the Eastman, across from the Reservation office, and his father and mother are taking baths at Col. Fordyce's bath-house. What a monument that building is!

David got permission from the manager to let me tour the building. — First we went all the way to the third floor to the gymnasium. It is the best in the state. While we were there, we talked to some members of the Pittsburgh Nationals. They are in town for spring training. They showed us how to properly use all the exercise equipment. — My favorites are the horse and the travelling rings. The Boston Red Sox are due to arrive soon. I would love

Red Sox are due to arrive soon. I would love to see them play. They generally have an exhibition game at the ball field on Whittington Avenue, across from the alligator farm and the ostrich farm.

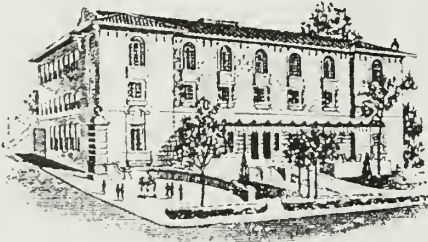
After the gymnasium, David took me to the roof garden. What a beautiful view! We could see all of Central Avenue, overlook the grand entrance, and see right into the bandstand. — We could see many people riding Mr. McLeod's burros up the mountain trails. Then David took me downstairs to the bath hall. What an impressive room! In the center is a fountain that's a model of the Spanish conquistador Hernando de Soto getting a peace offering from an Indian maiden. Overhead is a stained glass window covering nearly all the ceiling with fish, frogs, mermaids, and other water creatures. There's a stained glass ceiling upstairs in the music room, too. I've never seen so much colored glass outside of a cathedral.

David's father is vice-president of a bank in Chicago. He has rheumatism, too, and ailing kidneys. He has to drink a lot of the hot spring water and the water from the Potash Sulphur springs, too. David took a bath when they first arrived, but he isn't fond of sitting still for 20 minutes in the tub when there is so much excitement going on outside.

We are going to have such fun riding tomorrow! — I'd better get to bed early tonight.

Yours always,
John
L





BYRON L. NEIMEYER
MANAGER

FORDYCE BATHS



HOT SPRINGS NATIONAL PARK
ARKANSAS

April 15, 1916

Dear Sister,

How the time has flown! Before long we shall be boarding the train to go back to St. Louis. I shall be glad to see you again but I will miss all the excitement here.

I met another boy last week, too, a Negro boy named Samuel. His mother works as a bath attendant at the Rector. He comes in on Saturday and does odd jobs for the manager. — Samuel's father teaches at the Negro high school but his mother started working at the bath house so his oldest sister could go to college. — She wants to be a teacher, too. Mother says that it is a shame that the bath house workers have to work on the Sabbath but that since they are helping sick people, it is all right.

Samuel lives on Whittington Ave., near the Government Lake Park. He was the first to tell us about that. There are

lawn tennis courts, and many gazebos for picnics and concerts. Beyond the Alligator Farm and ostrich farm, the city has an amusement park with a roller skating rink, and the highest roller coaster that you've ever seen. — It must be just like Coney Island. The street trolley cars go right to the park.

Papa is going to spend the afternoon at the horse races, then we are going to a Vaudeville show at the opera house. Papa is anxious to get back to the shop, now that his hands are relieved. — Give my greetings to Henry.

Your loving Brother,
John
L

HOW WOULD YOU TRAVEL TO HOT SPRINGS?

Travelers going any distance went by train in 1916.

If you traveled between small towns that didn't have train service, you might have gone by horse and buggy. Or you might have already bought a "horseless carriage."

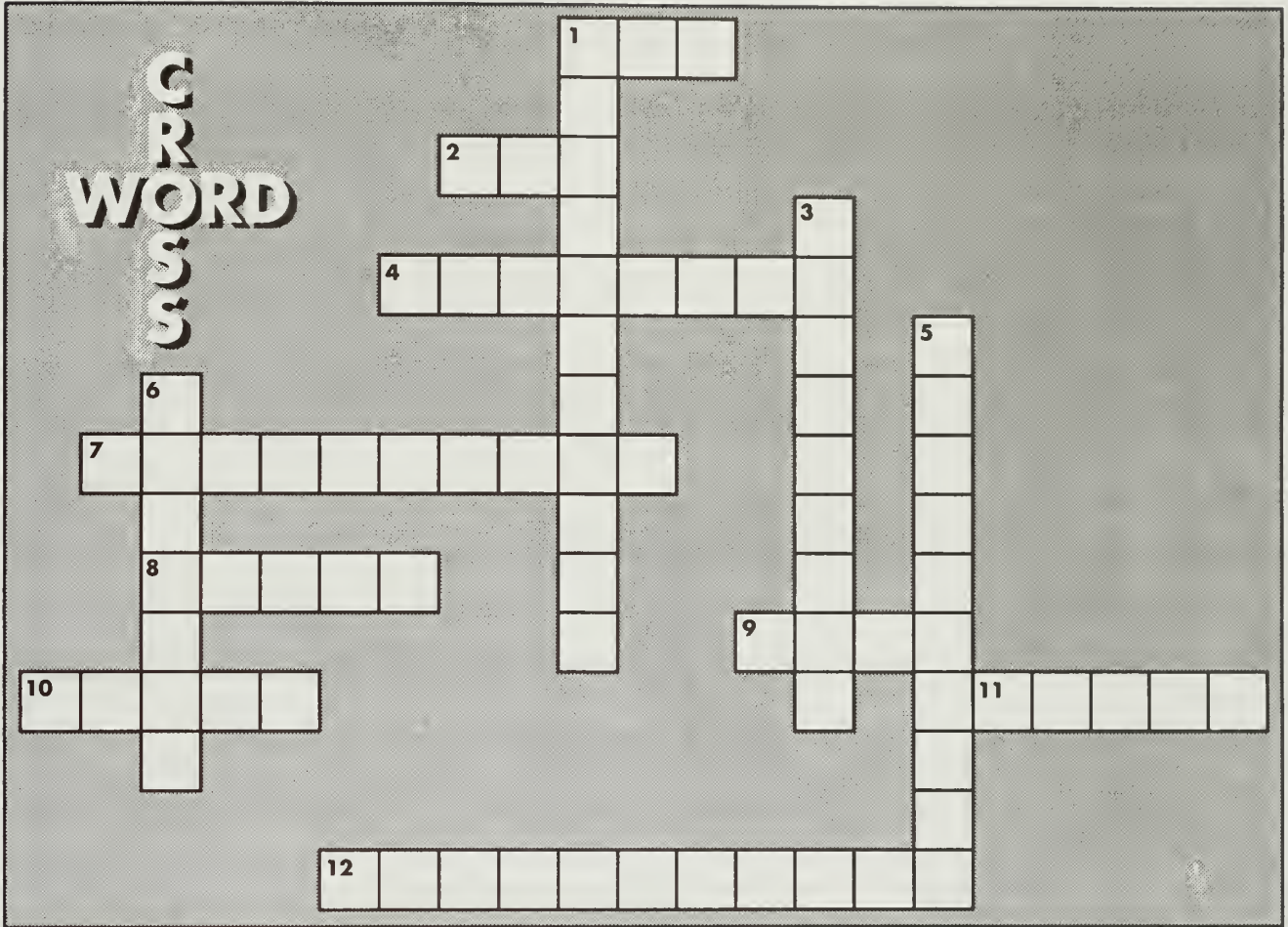
Can you think of ways that our lives are different from our great grandparents because we have cars and trucks?

How has modern air travel changed our lives?



Missouri Pacific train station in early 1900s. The depot is now used as the Transportation Depot for the city of Hot Springs.

CROSSWORD



1. Down: Amusement area famous for its photography studio.
1. Across: ___ Springs Reservation became ___ Springs National Park.
2. What visitors carried to drink the spring waters.
3. Room where people exercised.
4. The ___ - ___ Hospital was built to treat Civil War veterans who came for baths.
5. A disease that causes swelling of joints; now called arthritis.
6. A large hotel that used to be where the Federal Building now is.
7. A type of musical variety theater show that was popular in the early 1900's.
8. For how many weeks did doctors recommend the baths be taken?
10. The method of travel used by most visitors to come to Hot Springs in 1916.
11. What profession would require using the hands a lot for sewing?
12. The place where large birds imported from Africa were grown so their feathers could be used to decorate ladies' hats and gowns and visitors could see them.

Bathhouse Vocabulary

Bath attendant: A man or woman who works in the bath hall taking people through the bath routine. He or she keeps up with how long the bather is in the bath tub, sitz bath, and vapor cabinets.

Sitz or Seitz bath: A bath taken in a sitz tub. This is a small tub that you sit in so that only your bottom, lower back, and thighs are in the water.

Vapor cabinet: A "sweat box." It is a box made out of marble, just big enough for a person to sit in, with hot spring water trickling from a pipe to make steam in the box.

Hot pack: Folded towel that is placed in the hot spring water, wrung out, and placed on sore muscles and joints of bathers.

Pack attendant: An attendant is a man or woman who works in the hot pack room. He or she puts hot packs on the bathers and makes sure that they aren't left on too long.

Massage: The rubbing of muscles to relieve stiffness and pain.

Masseuse: (Rhymes with caboose) A masseuse is a woman who gives massages. It is a French word.

Masseur: (muh-soor') A masseur is a man who gives massages. It is a French word.

Hydrotherapy: (hydro- means water) Hydrotherapy is using water as a treatment for ailments, such as water massage or whirlpool.

Physical therapy: A treatment for hurt or crippled people that includes exercising in or out of the water. Example: If a person has been in an accident and has both legs broken, after the casts are removed, his legs will be too stiff to walk. His doctor will write out special instructions for exercises, starting with easy ones and building up to harder ones, until the person's legs are strong again.

Polio: A disease caused by a virus that attacks the nervous system, causing crippling. A vaccine to prevent it was discovered in 1954 and polio is not very common today.

Rheumatism: Is an old name for arthritis. Arthritis is an illness that affects a person's joints, causing them to swell and stiffen. It can be very painful. People of all ages can have arthritis.

Chiropodist: (ki-rah'-po-dist) Someone who specialized in treating foot problems like corns, ingrown nails, and bunions. This profession is now called podiatry, instead of chiropody. (pod means foot)

Hubbard tub: A large, specially designed tub used for physical therapy.

Needle shower: A special shower stall fitted with a cage-like set of water pipes which have lots of little holes in them. The person in the shower gets sprayed all over with a fine mist of water, like being under a water sprinkler.

Electro-mechano therapy: Electro-mechano therapy was using different kinds of vibrating machines, like a hand-held massager, or electric shock to treat some ailments. It was used in the bathhouses in the early 1900's, but now these types of treatments are generally only done in hospitals by trained technicians.

Gymnasium: A gymnasium is a room with exercise equipment: a gym.

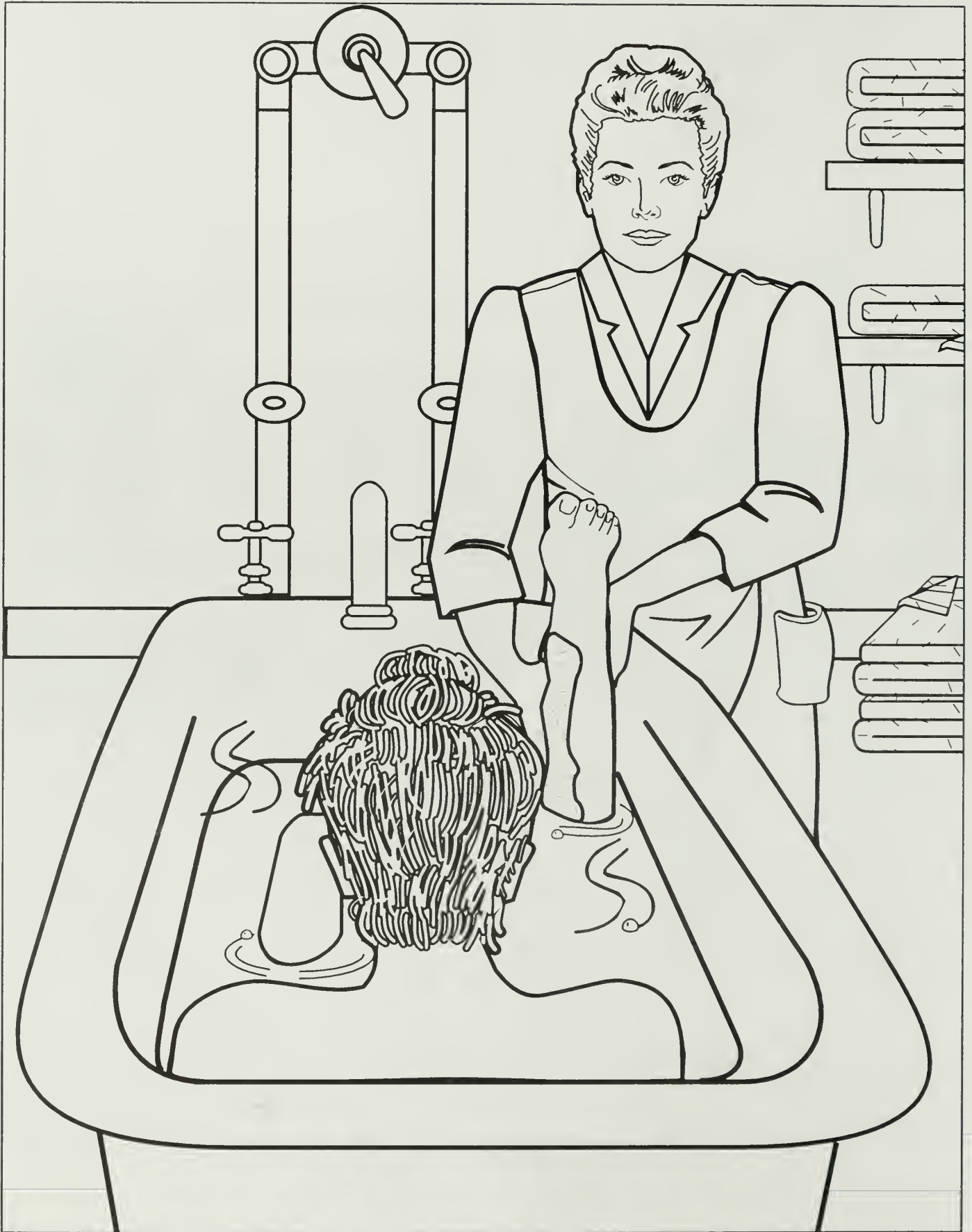
State room: A state room in a bathhouse is a small room that the bathers could use as a private resting room. (A state room on a cruise ship is the room you spend the night in, like a hotel room.)

Billiards: Games similar to pool, except they are played on a table that is smaller than a pool table.

Roof garden: A roof garden is like a patio or deck area on homes today. They were popular in the early 1900's. It was an area on a flat roof, with potted plants and yard furniture.

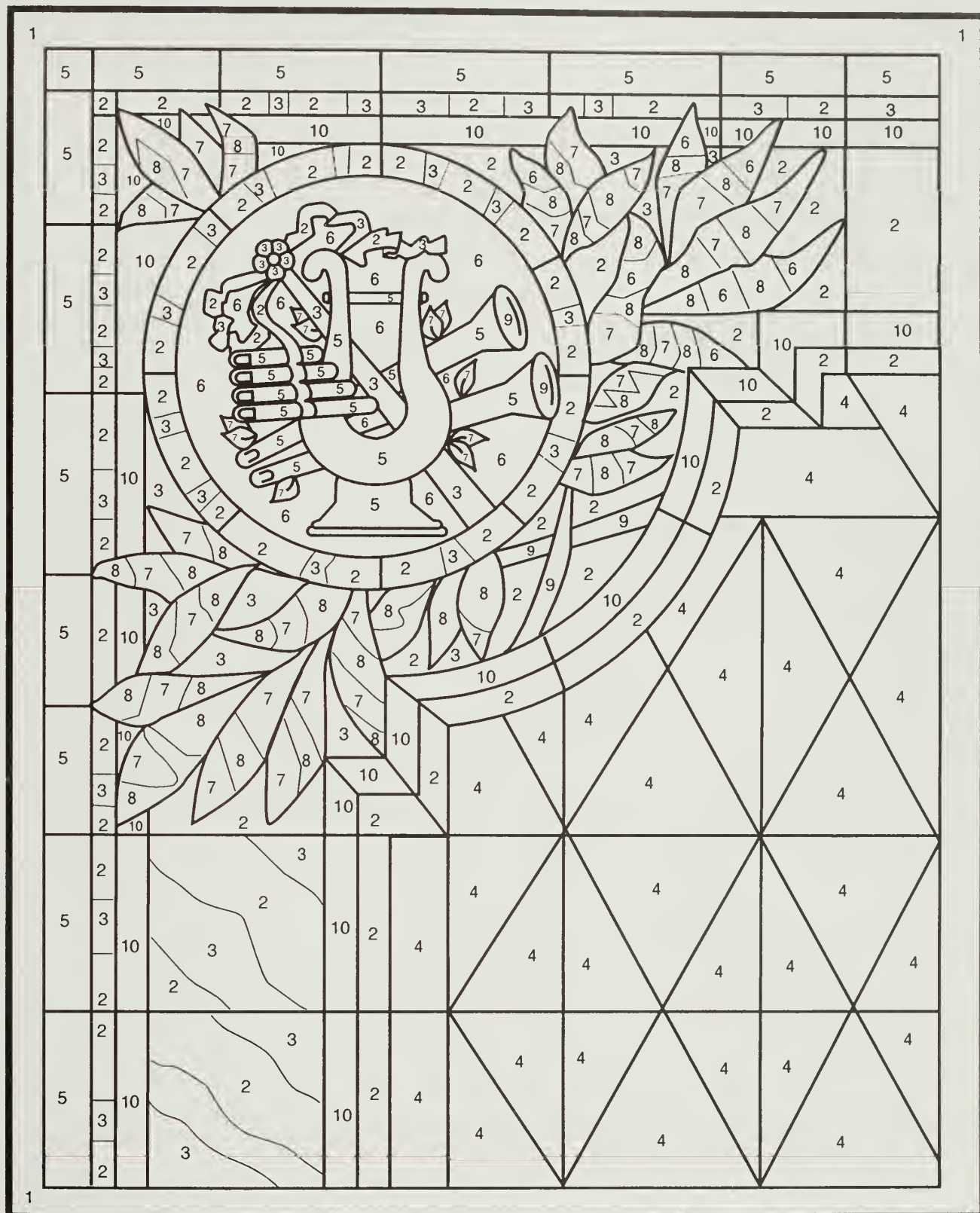
Victrola: An early type of record player. It had a handle to wind its motor because it was invented and used before many homes had electricity.





Bather in the Women's bathhall being assisted by a bathing attendant

COLOR THE STAINED GLASS



This is a stained glass window in the ceiling of The Fordyce Bathhouse. Color it by the numbers and see how beautiful it is. Remember stained glass is not smooth, there will be dark and light streaks in the same color.

1-Black, 2-Blue, 3-Light Blue, 4-No Color, 5-Gold, 6-Yellow, 7-Green, 8-Light Green, 9-Brown, 10-Light Brown,

STAINED GLASS TREASURE HUNT

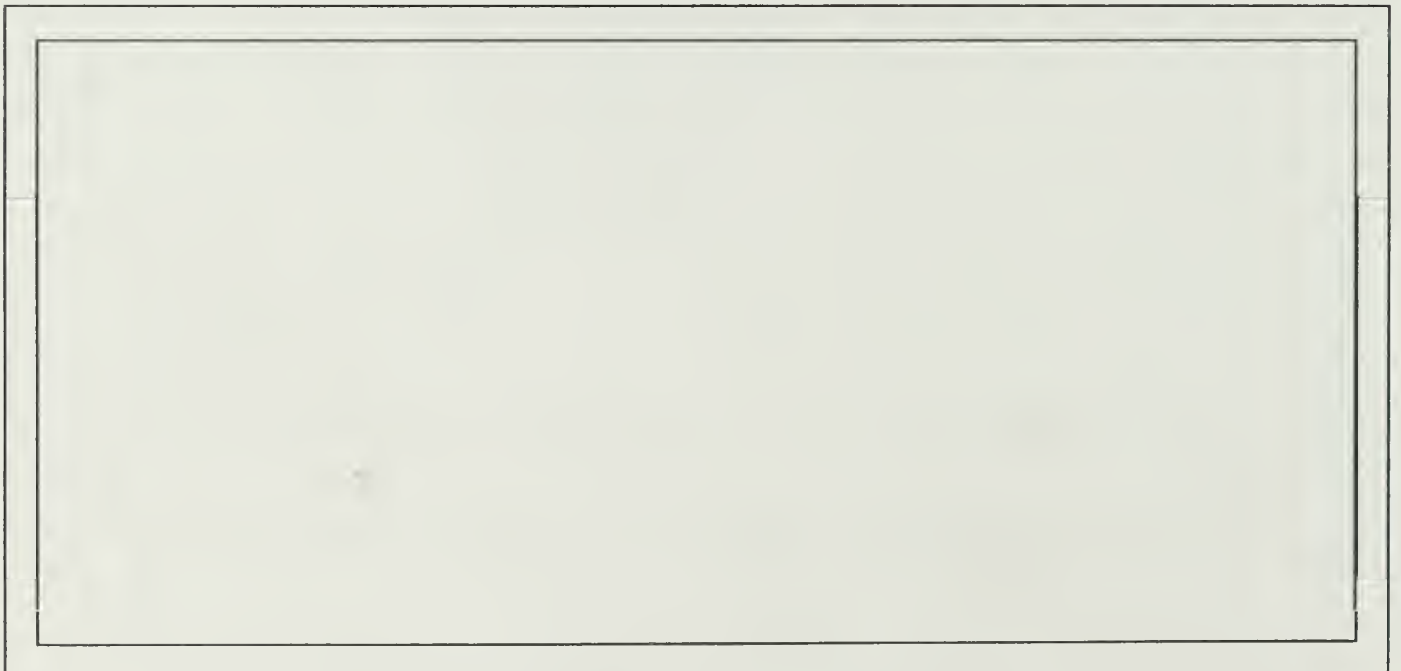
O P A R H S I F A R C Y M B A L S N
I N T A O Y P E S U O H H T A B H S
F U R A T C O T E B L S Z I D J G Y
R F O Q S T R U D L E A T I O O W L
O O M A P N I L O I V W A O L C I I
G R I H R E M D U T E M A Y P T L L
L D X T I P E G Q A R A O T H O P R
D Y E O N T R I D E N T D H I P I E
E C R N G U L L M A P O R I N U C T
A E T E S N S R C L I J O N U S E A
S T A I N E D G L A S S W I N D O W

Can you find these words hidden in the puzzle above? Be sure to look for the horizontally, vertically, diagonally, backwards and forwards.

STAINED GLASS WINDOW
LYRE
TRIDENT
MERMAID
FROG
FORDYCE

LUTE
NEPTUNE
VIOLIN
OCTOPUS
HOT SPRINGS

BATHHOUSE
CYMBALS
WATER LILY
DOLPHIN
FISH



Draw a stained glass in the box above.

WHAT IS IT?

Can you recall what these items, that once could be found in the bathhouses, are? Match each picture with one of the words by writing the number next to the word.

___ NEEDLE SHOWER

___ VAPOR CABINET

___ GYMNASIUM

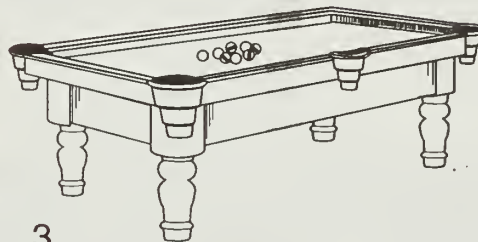
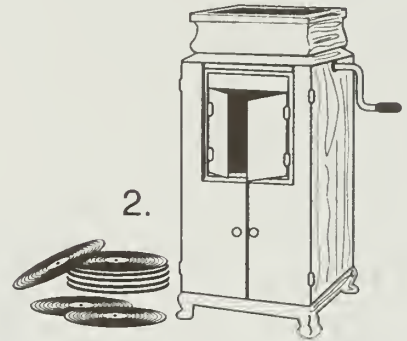
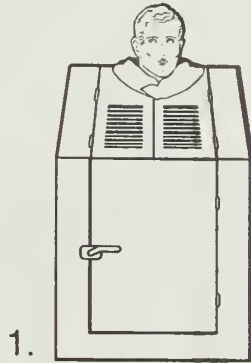
___ MASSEUR

___ BATH ATTENDANT

___ SITZ BATH

___ BILLIARD TABLE

___ VICTROLA

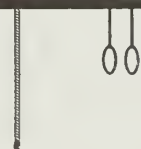
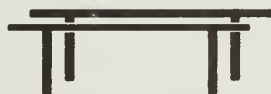


6.

7.

5.

8.



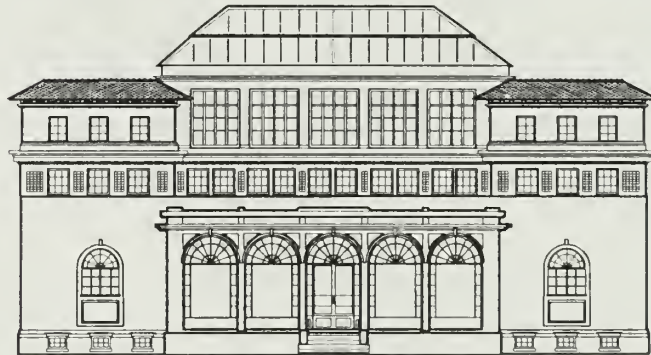
CAN YOU NAME THE BATHHOUSE?

These are three of the bathhouses on Bathhouse Row.
Write the name in the space provided next to each bathhouse.

1. _____

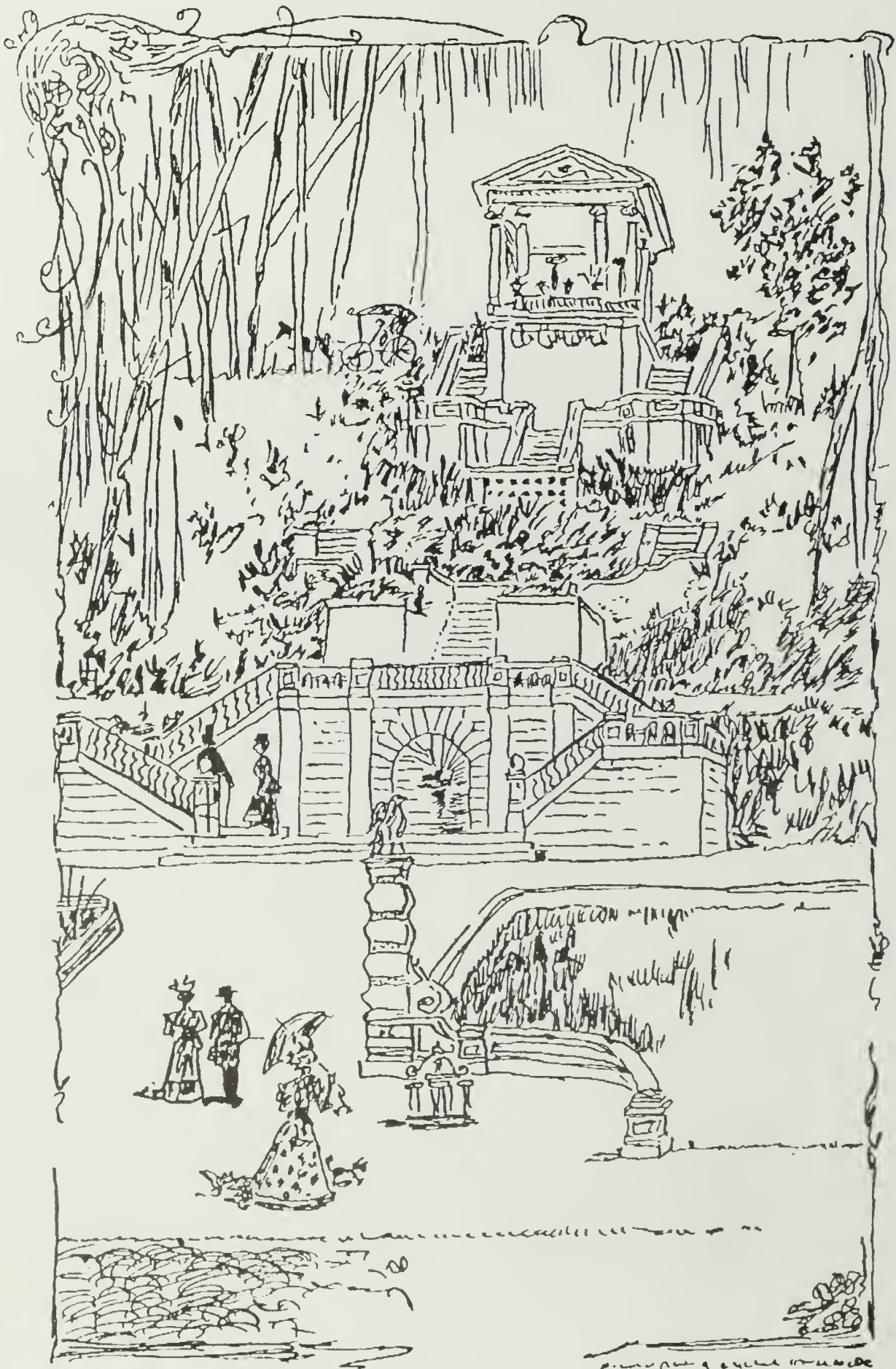


2. _____



3. _____





1895 Illustration of the Formal Entrance to the Hot Springs Reservation