

(1938, cont.)

Junghans and **Albert Kessler** were married; **Melvin Frederking**, 18, was killed by lightning as he stood in the doorway at the House Fruit Farm shed; and **M/M J. A. Breese** of Mt. Vernon moved here to the Schlosser property. Mr. Breese worked for the Paul Schulze Biscuit Co. of Chicago.

The September 22 edition carries an article giving the line-up for the WLS Talent Show starting that evening (museum scrapbook); the **Lions** met at the Evangelical Church Hall, where they decided to take out an ad in the WLS show program (wonder if any of those still exist); **H. P. Matzenbacher** and family moved from the Lietz property south of the M. E. Church to the **J. F. Kemper** place in Pinch; Rev. Koestering, retiring pastor at New Minden, wrote a long article of reminiscences.

On September 29 we read that **Angela Schlich** married Denver doctor **Maurice Stock**, with **Wilma Hughes** as bridesmaid and **Rossel Schlich** as best man; the First State Bank of Tilden, in business for 34 years, paid off depositors and went out of business; the Standard Oil bulk station was robbed; the St. Louis Dairy Co. was to take over the Addieville Creamery, which had for the past four years been operated by the Beatrice Creamery Co.; and **Harry Klauke**, **H. F. Kerksieck**, **W. G. Frank**, and **C. A. Abscher** were pictured with a five-gallon container of mineral water they were sending to President Roosevelt with a request to have it analyzed with a view of locating the veterans' hospital here (see below.)



*Harry Klauke, H. F. Kerksieck, W. G. Frank, and C. A. Abscher
send mineral water to President Roosevelt.*

The WLS Show drew a crowd of 1,500 here over three nights, with nearly 75 amateurs in the program. Talent awards went to **Carmett Blumenhorst** and his Hot Shots, who gave an imitation of the Hoosier Hot Shots as heard on WLS. **Bertha & Eva Stricker** and **Audrey Reidelberger** performed as the "Three Little Maids," and the **Coates Brothers** of Oakdale had a musical act all of their own that the editor said had to be seen to be appreciated. All won a chance to appear on WLS and possibly become a permanent part of the regular show. Gross receipts were \$334.00, and the **Community Club** gave the cast refreshments and a party at the **South End Restaurant**. The show was also already booked for the next year.

The October 6 issue says that business came to a stand still for a few hours and schools were dismissed as 600 vehicles and 2,100 men of the U. S. Cavalry passed through here; the Black Diamond Trail was completed at Nashville; **Rev. Barnard**, only 21 and the youngest minister in the Centralia District, was

PLAN RESTORATION

Buy Popular Hotel

Mineral Waters Attracted Many Tourists to Area

By GROVER BRINKMAN
News-Democrat Writer

OKAWVILLE, Ill. — The 50-room Original Mineral Springs Hotel and Bathhouse, long a Southern Illinois landmark, was sold this week to Mr. and Mrs. Albert Krohne, local residents. Purchased through the administrator for the late T. H. Rogers estate, the transaction included the hotel property, as well as two entire city blocks, and six acres of real estate east of the property. The hotel has been in operation since 1873.

It was one of two large hotels that gave fame to Okawville since the turn of the century as a health resort. More than 100,000 people have taken the mineral baths here.

Since March, 1962, the hotel has been operated with a skeleton force by the public administrator, following the death of the owner, T. H. Rogers, whose sudden demise, without leaving a will, or any known relatives, put the property into the hands of the state.

The medicinal springs at Okawville, known even before the Civil War, gave the Original its stature. The water used here, as analysis show, is almost identical in content to the famous springs in Arkansas, except the water is cold. People came here from all states in the union to drink it, and benefit from the baths. The registers at the hotel read like a "Who's Who" in midwest culture. At the peak of its popularity, the L&N railroad ran weekend excursions from St. Louis to Okawville to accommodate the people who came to the local hotels. The water was bottled, carried away, shipped all over the country.

No less a personage than the late president, Franklin D. Roosevelt, drank a sample of the Original's mineral water, back in 1938.

Today, the famous spring, located between the hotel and the bathhouse, is protected by an underground reservoir. An analysis of its water is available to the public.

Krohne stated he intends to reactivate the hotel, modernize it, and bring it back to its former stature.

One of the hotel's avid boosters was the late Herman A. Kretschmar, who lived there for years. He later fell heir to part of the huge Garrett snuff estate in Philadelphia, and after years of court wrangling, he was found to be one of three remaining nephews to claim the \$17 million fortune. However, fate was unkind to Kretschmar. He took ill and died about two weeks before acquiring his millions. So his money went to a relative in Mississippi, after the State of Illinois had deducted \$47,000 in inheritance taxes.



A HISTORIC SPOT in Okawville, Original Mineral Springs Hotel, also has been purchased by Mr. and Mrs. Krohne.

Washington Hotel's First Building



Pictured here in June, 1894, the Washington was under new ownership.

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One of the Greatest Health Resorts in America!

Quiet elegance and perfect rest are features that make these Springs the place par excellence for treatment or recuperation. Cuisine perfect—never meager or without variety. Mineral Waters of greatest value in the treatment of Rheumatic, Skin and Bright's Diseases. Over 20,000 persons have visited these Springs and many remarkable cures have been effected. Write for Circular.

Schreiner Bros., Prop'rs, Okawville,

Ad letting everyone know who was here first.



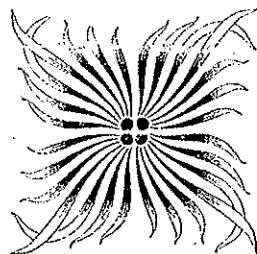
RHEUMATISM, NERVOUS DISEASES, ENLARGED JOINTS,

and

EYE AND EAR DISEASE

ARE CURED AT THE
THE ORIGINAL OKAWVILLE MINERAL SPRINGS

OKAWVILLE, ILL. 39 MILES FROM ST. LOUIS.



ANALYSIS OF THE ORIGINAL OKAWVILLE MINERAL SPRINGS.

1.197	----	Bicarbonate	Calcium.
.642	----	"	Magnesia.
.038	----	"	Oxide Ferri.
1.093	-----	Sulphate	Aluminum.
.445	----	"	Magnesia.
1.255	----	"	Potass.
.071	-----	Chloride	Calcium.
.051	-----	Silicic	Acid.

4.792 Solid parts in one thousand
parts of water,

ENNO SANDER, ANALYTICAL CHEMIST.

Schreiner Bros. Props.

OKAWVILLE ILLS.

These renowned Springs have been visited by people from all parts of the United States. Discovered in 1867, being tried in various ways, have always proven themselves to be as represented. 20,000 Patients have been benefited by their curative virtues, and many cures effected. Over 200 Physicians are sending their patients to the "ORIGINAL OKAWVILLE MINERAL SPRINGS" to be cured of Chronic Diseases. We ask all Physicians and Chemists to compare analysis of these Waters with any Waters of the World and you will be convinced of its superiority and its virtue. Cures are always made with pure mineral water. Give us a trial and convince yourselves of the fact.

PROFESSIONAL ATTENDANTS IN BATH-ROOM.

The last spa on the prairie

Landmark hotel, bathhouse refurbished

SHERA GROSS
Associated Press

OKAWVILLE, Ill. — The paint is peeling and flaking, the carpet is thin, and the decor is dated. But the Original Springs Hotel, "the last spa on the prairie," is springing back from a long spell.

"We think this is an idea whose time has come again," said Linda Kaat, one of the new owners of the landmark, smiling from a wicker chair on its long, curving front porch.

The 56-room hotel was built in 1867. For more than a century visitors from across the nation came here, lured by the supposedly restorative powers of its natural mineral spring, the full-body massages that went with them and the charm of the hotel itself.

To weary wayfarers of the '20s and '30s, the hotel's heyday, said Kaat, this was the remedy for a hectic pace — a mineral bath and a massage.

Kaat and her friends Don and Mary Rennegarbe, all Okawville natives, bought the three-story brick and frame building in May from longtime proprietors Ab and Doris Rohne.

"There is so much charm here that it just has to be cleaned up and exposed," Kaat said. Indeed the hotel's architecture, its wide hallways and high ceilings, helped put it on the National Register of Historic Places.

"It is really the last spa on the prairie," she said.

Well, at least the Illinois prairie. According to the Illinois Department of Tourism, the Original Springs Hotel is the last of several spas built in the state around the turn of the century. In fact the Okawville area became something of an oasis for

travelers crossing the prairie.

Today, guests fill the hotel on weekends, despite its yellowed linoleum and exposed pipes in the bathing areas. They come for the mind-calming 20-minute soaks in the sweet-scented mineral-spring whirlpool baths and the 30-minute Swedish massages.

Many of the guests are here for brief visits from Illinois and Missouri or on tour buses from Florida en route to St. Louis and other cities. Some stay for a week at a time. Okawville, a town of 1,300, is 25 miles east of St. Louis just off Interstate 64.

Then there are local regulars who come for their once-a-week rub-downs, said head masseur John MacMiller. The work of the masseurs and masseuses is the biggest draw, he said.

MacMiller has kneaded hands, backs and feet in the steamy men's bathhouse for 22 years. One of his customers, he said, was Lyndon B. Johnson. MacMiller said many of his clients have high-stress jobs. Besides relaxing them, he says, his massages help their blood circulation and digestion.

"They are like putty in my hands," said MacMiller. "They come out like wet noodles."

Mount Vernon resident Marvin Lynn is one who travels the 25 miles to Okawville regularly. He says he has patronized the baths for 51 of his 73 years.

"I first started coming when it was wintertime. You took the mineral baths to keep away colds and stop rheumatism," Lynn recalled as he soaked in a steamy, bubbling bath. "I remember when I was a kid, doctors would come here. Even they believed it would work."

Brochures from the 1940s list 14 minerals in the spa's water, including iron, calcium, magnesium, sul-

phate and aluminum, touted to be good for what ails you — inside and out. The hotel bottles nearly 700 gallons a day. Local lore has it that morning water is best for drinking, so the hotel bottles only from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. Unless guests specify otherwise, it also uses the mineral water for mixed drinks at the hotel bar.

Kaat says local demand for the water has boomed lately. When word reached Okawville that a climatologist in New Mexico had predicted that the chances for an earthquake in this area in early December were better than usual, it started a run on the bottled-water supply in case the fount went dry.

Kaat and the Rennegarbes said they aim to go slowly with changes at the hotel. The old hotel hasn't had a major renovation since the 1960s, they said, and they want to give the locals and longtime patrons a chance to adjust.

"This is one of the focal points of the town," said Mary Rennegarbe. It's also the town's largest employer: 37 jobs. Mary Rennegarbe's first job was waiting tables there.

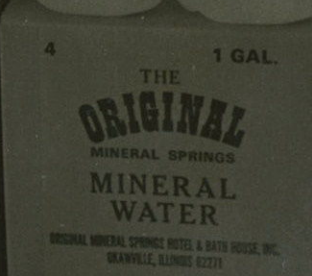
An overnight stay at the hotel can cost as little as \$17 if the guest doesn't mind using a restroom down the hall. Refurbished rooms run \$49 for a single. A bath costs \$8.25, and a massage is \$8.

The proprietors plan to refurbish all the rooms in the style of the late 1800s and to modernize the bathhouses. They figure it will take about three years. They also envision walking trails in woods behind the hotel and bike tours of the town's other restored 19th-century storefronts.

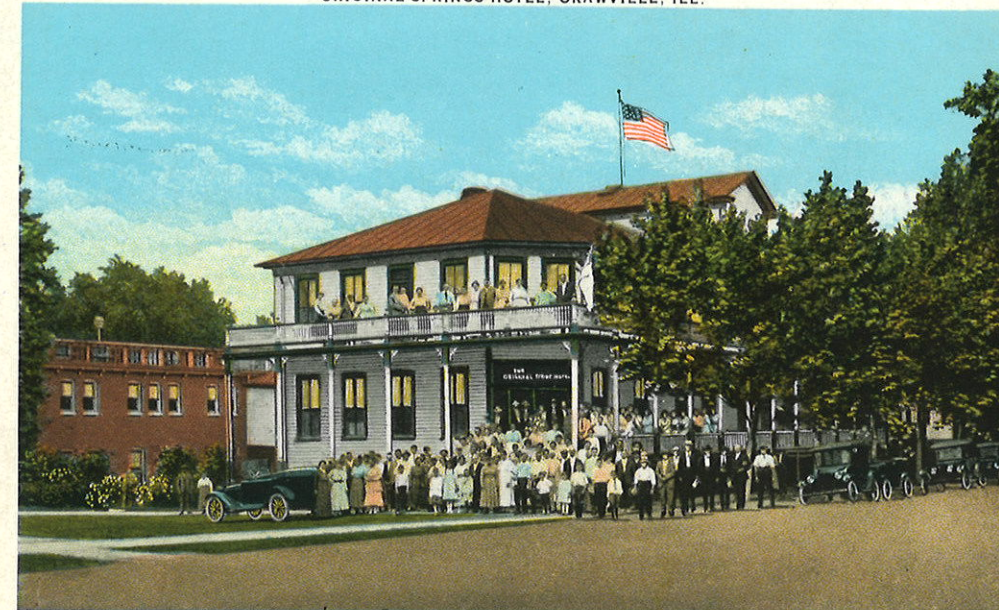
"We are just at the baby stages," Kaat said. "We are working with this old historic lady, and we are taking our time and doing it right."

ORIGINAL MINERAL SPRINGS
WATER

Here's Where It Comes From - - -
Over 100 years in business we go back a long way
If your water doesn't taste good - Try ours

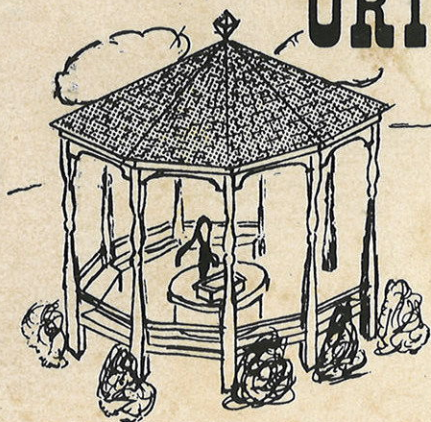


ORIGINAL SPRINGS HOTEL, OKAWVILLE, ILL.



"WHERE RHEUMATISM MEETS ITS WATERLOO"

92788



ORIGINAL MINERAL SPRINGS

WATER

Here's Where It Comes From - - - -

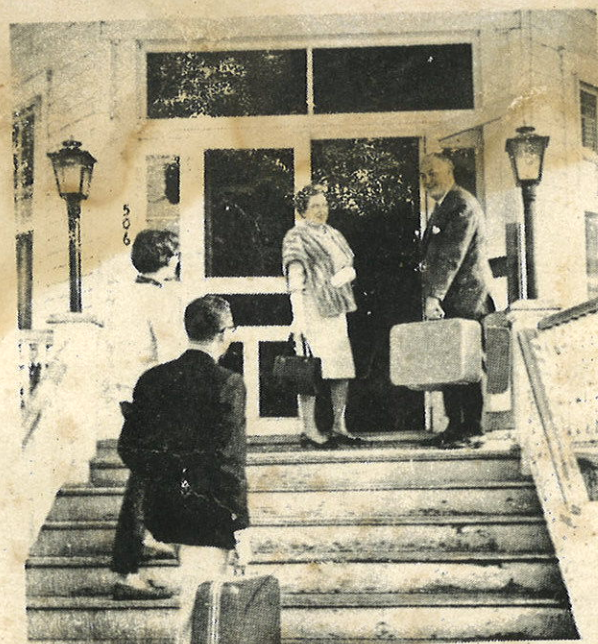
Over 100 years In Bussiness We go Back a longway

If your water doesn't taste good - Try ours.

Makes everything taste better!

Coffee - Tea - Soup -

Mixed Drinks - Etc.



Many business groups discover their executives relax and unwind at Mineral Springs. Meeting and banquet facilities are available to make your holiday one to remember!



THIS WAS OUR BEGINNING

In 1867, Rudolph Piegge, who lived and conducted a saddlery and harness shop on the grounds now occupied by the Original Hotel, noticed that water from his well differed from most of the water he had come in contact with. He called the attention of August Schulze and Dr. James McIlwain, Sr., to the fact, and they decided to have the water analyzed. Dr. McIlwain made some simple tests such as his equipment would permit and discovered magnesio in the water. He knew that there must also be sulphuric acid, for this is the only chemical that will hold magnesio in solution. Samples of the water were sent to Prof. Enno Sanders in St. Louis and his analysis showed very strong medicinal qualities.

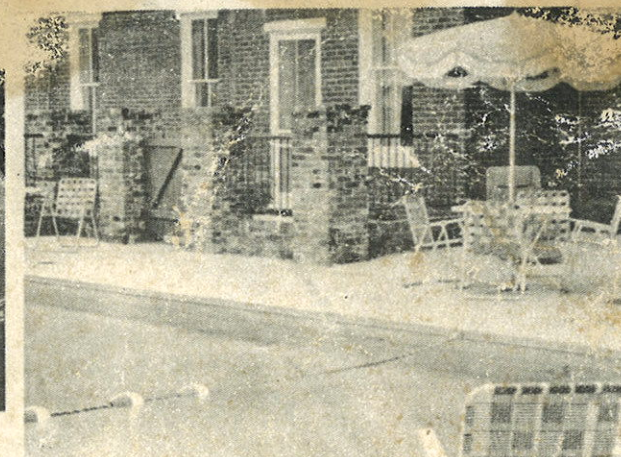
C. H. Kelle lived on a farm near town. Mr. Piegge knew that he had served in the famous

baths at Baden-Baden, Germany, before coming to this country. So he consulted him and together they decided to build a small bath house and treat rheumatism and other diseases in the way they were treated with the famous waters of Europe. Dr. McIlwain, Sr., was given charge of the medical end of the institution. The business thrived in a small way, and later was sold to Rev. J. F. Schferbaum, who erected a modern institution. Later he sold out to Schreiner Brothers and in 1892 the buildings burned. They were rebuilt during the fall and winter and with the additions since made constitute the present Original Hotel.
(Excerpts from Magazine "Egyptian Hustler". Dated 1919.)

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