

“OPEN SPRINGS”

Two springs behind the Maurice Bathhouse show the hot water bubbling to the surface from deep within the earth. A pool fills, then ponds the water for additional display. The water, which is naturally heated to a temperature of 143 degrees F. by hot rocks some 4,000 feet below you, flows to the surface as a result of hydrostatic pressure. The collecting pool will give you an opportunity to test the temperature of the water. Slowly place your hand below the surface. The nearby drinking fountain will enable you to taste the water. Note that it is almost tasteless and odorless.

The hot springs water, often called “mineral” water by those who use it for special drinking and bathing purposes, is actually very low in mineral content. Nonetheless, nearly 1,300 pounds of minerals in solution are contained in the maximum flow of approximately one million gallons of water that issue each day from all of the 47 springs and two

springs on the grounds of the Hot Springs Rehabilitation Center.

Long before the hot spring waters were captured for bathing purposes, these minerals were deposited on the surface of the land in this area. These deposits created the terraces and cones of “tufa” rock, some of which are still visible, but others are covered by vegetation.

The green boxes you see on Hot Springs Mountain and on Bathhouse Row are springs which have been covered to prevent contamination. Since most of the hot water no longer runs freely off the mountain, but is contained in a piped system, vegetation which could not tolerate the hote water in earlier days now grows well. You will notice that several kinds of blue-green algae are the only life-form that lives in the hot springs.

