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CHAPARRAL GUIDE

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The Legend of St. Valentine

The history of Valentine's Day – and the story of its patron saint – is shrouded in mystery. We do know that February has long been celebrated as a month of romance, and that St. Valentine's Day, as we know it today, contains vestiges of both Christian and ancient Roman tradition. But who was Saint Valentine, and how did he become associated with this ancient rite?

The Catholic Church recognizes at least three different saints named Valentine or Valentinus, all of whom were martyred. One legend contends that Valentine was a priest who served during the third century in Rome. When Emperor Claudius II decided that single men made better soldiers than those with wives and families, he outlawed marriage for young men. Valentine, realizing the injustice of the decree, defied Claudius and continued to perform marriages for young lovers in secret. When Valentine's actions were discovered, Claudius ordered that he be put to death.

Other stories suggest that Valentine may have been killed for attempting to help Christians escape harsh Roman prisons, where they were often beaten and tortured. According to one legend, an imprisoned Valentine actually sent the first "valentine" greeting himself after he fell in love with a young girl–possibly his jailor's daughter–who visited him during his confinement. Before his death, it is alleged that he wrote her a letter signed "From your Valentine," an expression that is still in use today. Although the truth behind the Valentine legends is murky, the stories all emphasize his appeal as a sympathetic, heroic and–most importantly–romantic figure. By the Middle Ages, perhaps thanks to this reputation, Valentine would become one of the most popular saints in England and France.

Origins of Valentine's Day: A Pagan Festival in February

While some believe that Valentine's Day is celebrated in the middle of February to commemorate the anniversary of Valentine's death or burial–which probably occurred around A.D. 270–others claim that the Christian church may have decided to place St. Valentine's feast day in the middle of February in an effort to "Christianize" the pagan celebration of Lupercalia. Celebrated at the ides of February, or February 15, Lupercalia was a fertility festival dedicated to Faunus, the Roman god of agriculture, as well as to the Roman founders Romulus and Remus.

To begin the festival, members of the Luperci, an order of Roman priests, would gather at a sacred cave where the infants Romulus and Remus, the founders of Rome, were believed to have been cared for by a she-wolf or lupa. The priests would sacrifice a goat, for fertility, and a dog, for purification. They would then strip the goat's hide into strips, dip them into the sacrificial blood and take to the streets, gently slapping both women and crop fields with the goat hide. Far from being fearful, Roman women welcomed the touch of the hides because it was believed to make them more fertile in the coming year. Later in the day, according to legend, all the young women in the city would place their names in a big urn. The city's bachelors would each choose a name and become paired for the year with his chosen woman. These matches often ended in marriage.

Valentine's Day: A Day of Romance

Lupercalia survived the initial rise of Christianity and but was outlawed—as it was deemed "un-Christian"–at the end of the 5th century, when Pope Gelasius declared February 14 St. Valentine's Day. It was not until much later, however, that the day became definitively associated with love. During the Middle Ages, it was commonly believed in France and England that February 14 was the beginning of birds' mating season, which added to the idea that the middle of Valentine's Day should be a day for romance.

Valentine greetings were popular as far back as the Middle Ages, though written Valentine's didn't begin to appear until after 1400. The oldest known valentine still in existence today was a poem written in 1415 by Charles, Duke of Orleans, to his wife while he was imprisoned in the Tower of London following his capture at the Battle of Agincourt. (The greeting is now part of the manuscript collection of the British Library in London, England.) Several years later, it is believed that King Henry V hired a writer named John Lydgate to compose a valentine note to Catherine of Valois.

Typical Valentine's Day Greetings

In addition to the United States, Valentine's Day is celebrated in Canada, Mexico, the United Kingdom, France and Australia. In Great Britain, Valentine's Day began to be popularly celebrated around the 17th century. By the middle of the 18th, it was common for friends and lovers of all social classes to exchange small tokens of affection or handwritten notes, and by 1900 printed cards began to replace written letters due to improvements in printing technology. Ready-made cards were an easy way for people to express their emotions in a time when direct expression of one's feelings was discouraged. Cheaper postage rates also contributed to an increase in the popularity of sending Valentine's Day greetings.

Americans probably began exchanging hand-made valentines in the early 1700s. In the 1840s, Esther A. Howland began selling the first mass-produced valentines in America. Howland, known as the "Mother of the Valentine," made elaborate creations with real lace, ribbons and colorful pictures known as "scrap." Today, according to the Greeting Card Association, an estimated 1 billion Valentine's Day cards are sent each year, making Valentine's Day the second largest card-sending holiday of the year. (An estimated 2.6 billion cards are sent for Christmas.) Women purchase approximately 85 percent of all valentines.

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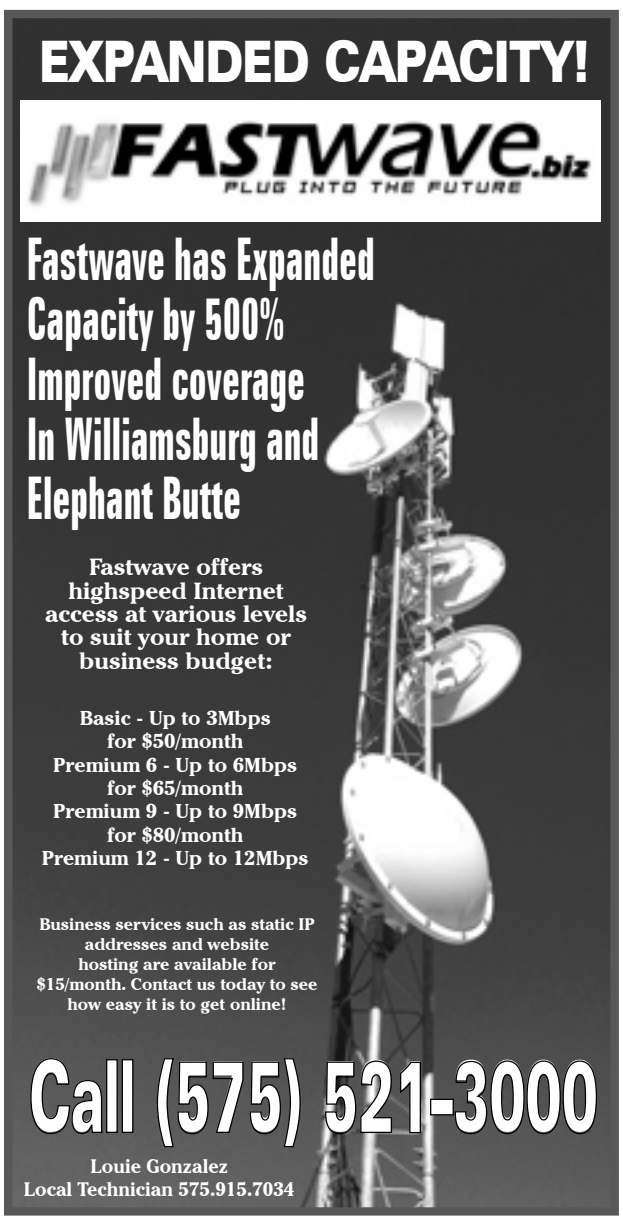


Truth or Consequences Hot Mineral Waters

The hot mineral baths truly are what started it all.

In 1950, during a story conference in a radio network's board room, Ralph Edwards said, "I could wish that some town in the United States liked and respected our show so much that it would like to change its name to Truth or Consequences."

That wish quickly reached New Mexico's bureau of tourism in Santa Fe and, almost as quickly, was transmitted to Burton Roach - cattleman, state senator and, at that time, manager of the Hot Springs Chamber of Commerce.

"Here's a chance," the state tourism officials said, "to get your mineral baths advertised all over the U. S. every Saturday night for free."

That was all "Super Booster" Roach needed. More quickly than you can say, "We'll be back right after this message," he had local bathhouse owners and other business persons lined up and backing a city election to officially change the city's name.

The hot mineral water is heated naturally. In fact, the entire downtown business section floats upon a thick layer of sand and quicksand which, in turn, covers a huge pool of 110 degree water.

The Apache Indians knew about the water, as did their ancestors before them, and told the Spaniards who traversed and settled the area before the American cattleman and farmer moved in for their

benefits. Some of the tales about the medicinal qualities of the baths undoubtedly were exaggerated, but they couldn't have stretched the truth any more than the fabled Seven Cities of Cibola, the cities of gold which attracted the Spanish (they turned out to be Indian Pueblos of adobe viewed from a distance in the golden Southwestern sun).

Almost all of the pueblos the explorers saw have disappeared, but the mud springs which gave youthful, uplifting spirit to those who took the baths are still flowing, even the Ponce de Leon spring in Truth or Consequences' Yucca Lodge.

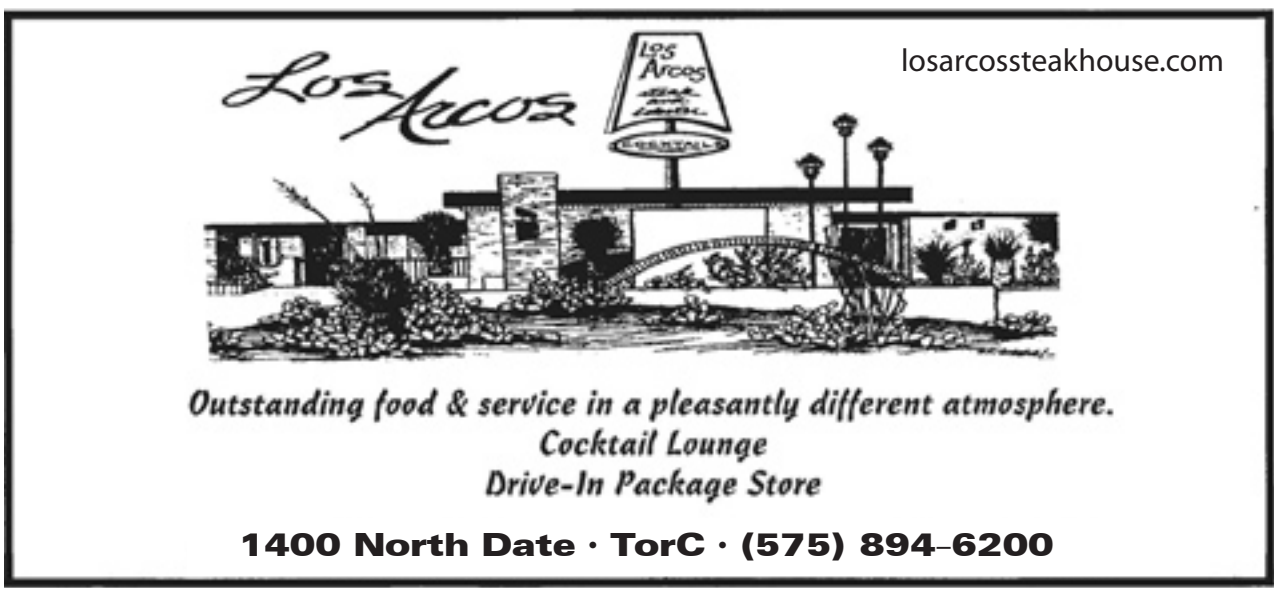
Everett Reb, writing in the Chaparral Guide several years ago, said no one seems to know just how the strongest of all the area's springs came to be known as Geronimo Spring, although there is no doubt that the Apache war chief was in this area and knew of its existence.

He was a good friend of Victorio, chief of the Ojo Caliente (Warm Springs) Apaches who inhabited this area, and the two spent some time together, as both were captured here at about the same time by the U. S. Army.

So important were the springs to the Indians that the area surrounding them, by unwritten law, was considered neutral territory.

No matter how often the different tribes warred with one another, the fighting ceased within the areas where the springs are located.

See **MINERAL** on Page C4



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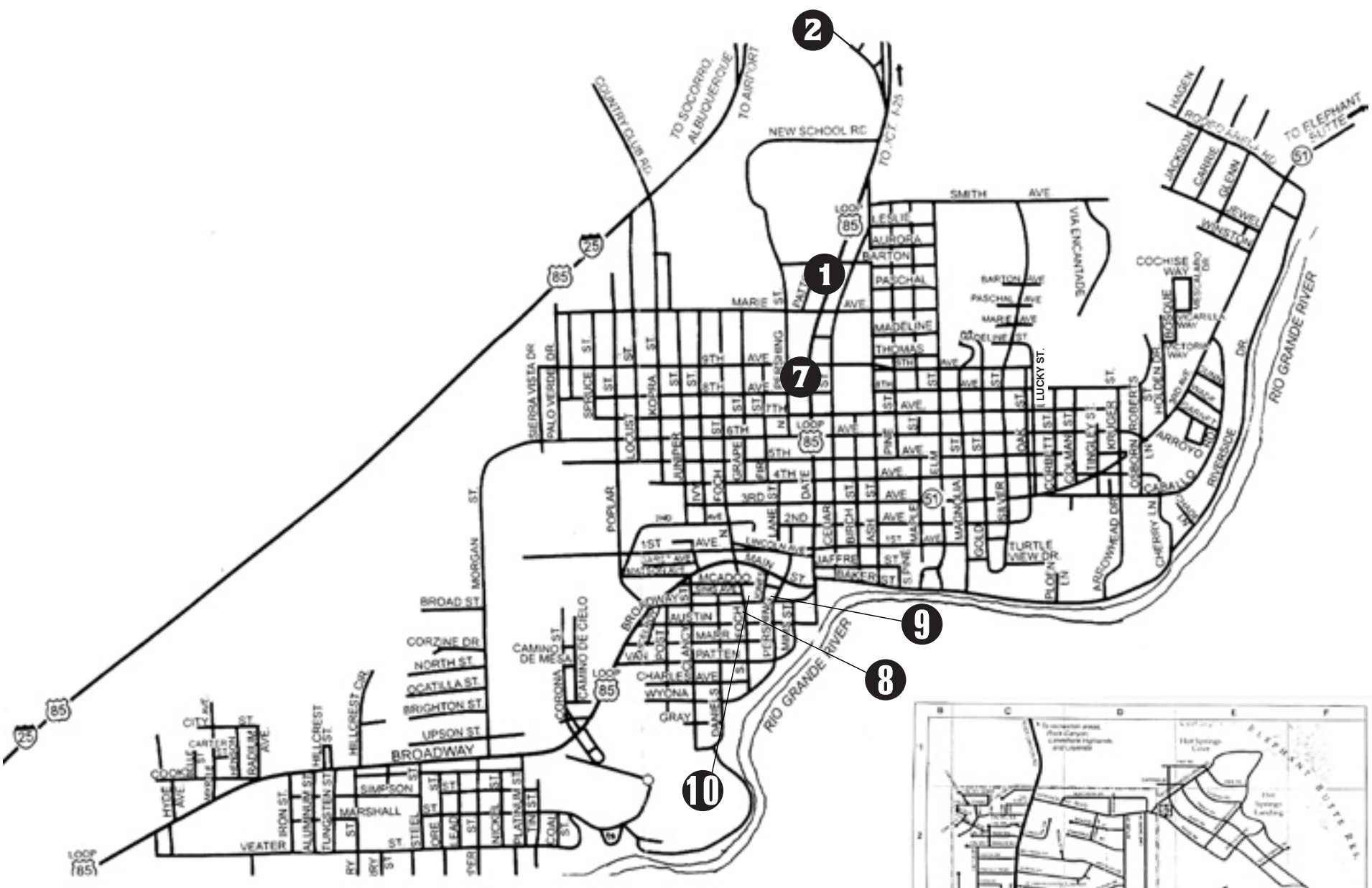

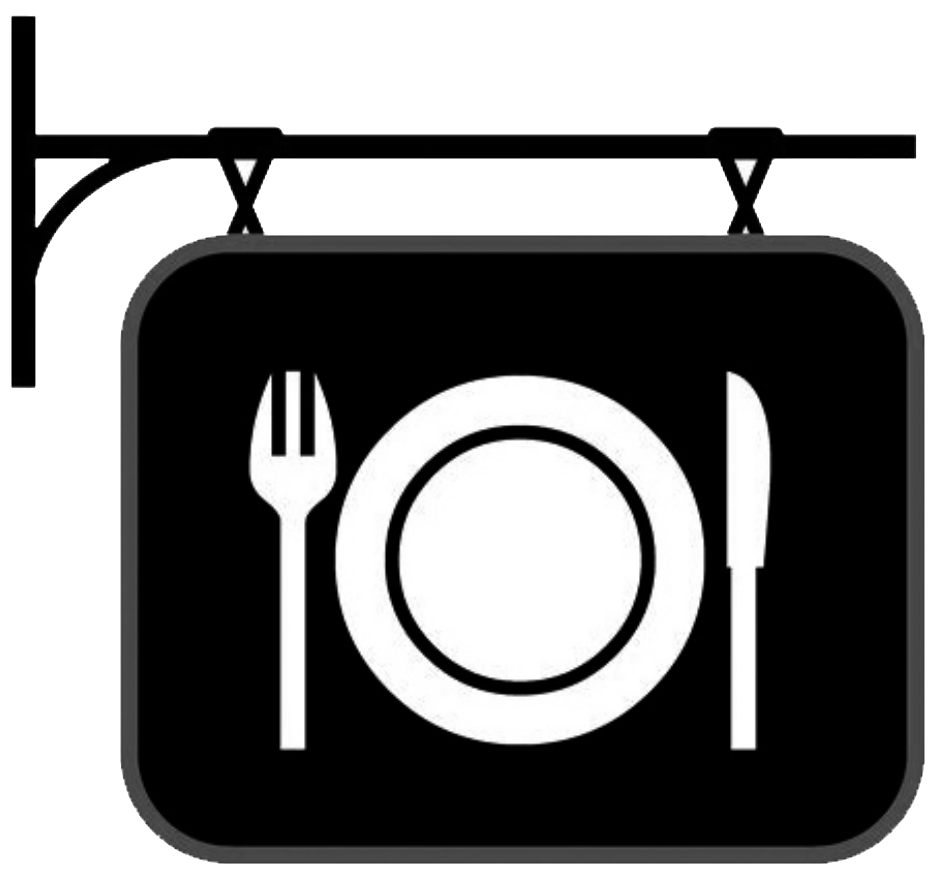

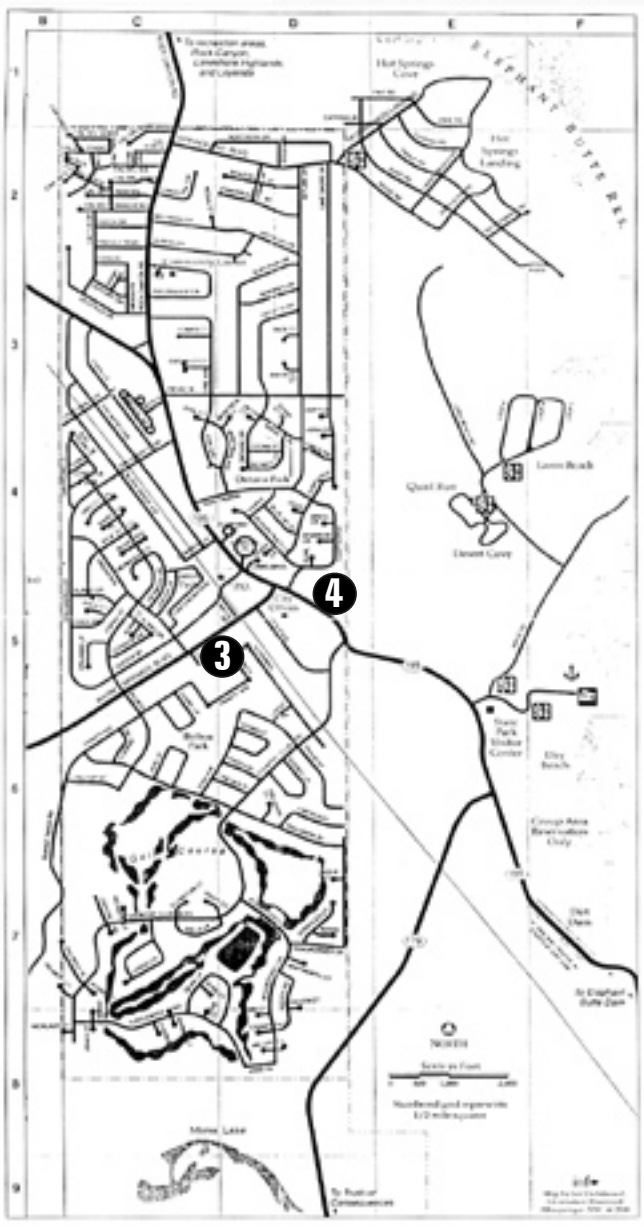

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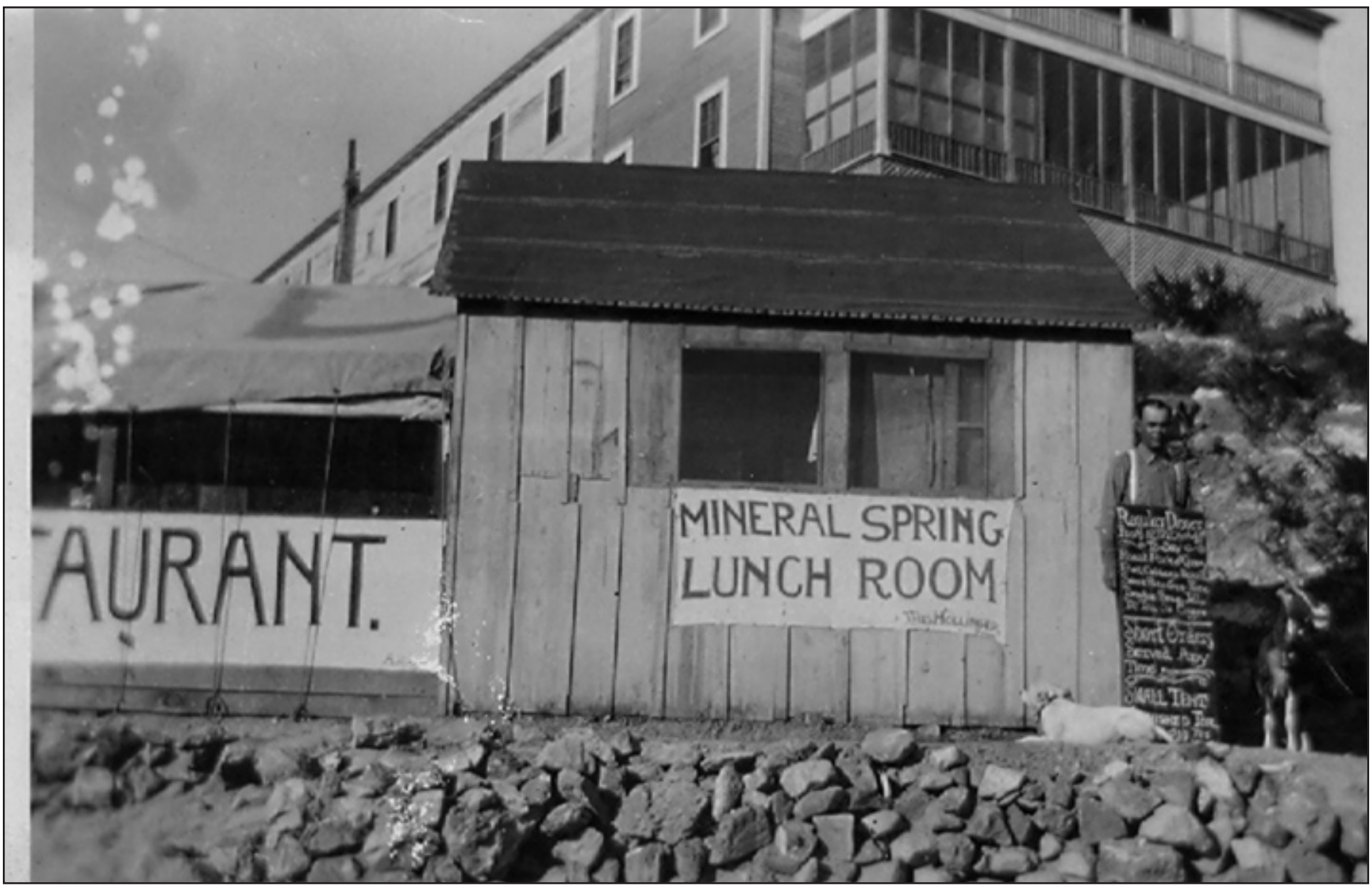

This old diner and mineral springs bath was located on the hill just north of the Healing Waters Plaza

MINERAL

Continued from Page A2

Some of the springs were said to have specific medicinal properties by the Indians.

Some were attributed with the power to cure skin diseases, while others took the ache from swollen joints.

The greatest cure of all was said to be the white mud found in some springs, which was said to have electric power. Women who used it as a face pack, it was said, would be transformed into beauties after only a few treatments.

Despite the fame of the hot springs, very little development of the area occurred until about 1856 when four Spanish families settled at Las Palomas Hot Springs.

The first bathtub, crude though it may have been, is believed to have been chipped out of stone by Union soldiers stationed here during the Civil War.

***

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This must have been a Chamber of Commerce photo promoting the hot mineral springs

History of the Healing Waters

By Carlos Padilla

Mimbres Indians and then Warm Springs Apache took to the waters for the healing properties found in the natural hot mineral springs located in present day Truth or Consequences. Many believe the area's first inhabitants considered the water sacred.

The Apache's sometimes deadly loathing for European and eastern pioneers kept the white man away from the area until after about 1900 when the United States Army cleared the way for settlement of the region.

Its bee n said that the first bathtub was chipped out of stone by union soldiers stationed at Ft. McRae on what is currently Elephant Butte Lake.

Documented in a diary of a U.S. military captain stationed at Ft. McRae was the soldiers bloody attempt at taking a bath in the mineral springs only seven miles south of his post. Apaches stormed the captain and his family while they were in the relaxing waters.

In all, two servants, two soldiers, his wife and children were killed in the ambush. Ironically, the captain was spared to write the story only after having to walk nude and barefoot back to the fort with an arrow piercing his torso.

Clearly, the Native Americans regarded the area where hot mineral water surfaced with great passion. This is, perhaps, further documented by Geronimo in his book, 'Geronimo's Story of His Life', having spent a year with local Warm Springs Apache Chief Victorio. Geronimo noted the water and said it was the most peaceful time of his life. In fact, during most of the book, which chronicles his life on the run from Mexicans and eventually the United States Calvary, he continually remembers his time with Victorio and the Warm Springs Apache and wished he could return.

As the mineral water became commercialized by settlers interested in building a town around the springs, it was discovered how many afflictions –such as rheumatoid arthritis, muscle pain and skin disorders, to name a few– the waters could treat. Hot Springs became a town synonymous with healing and hot baths. Healers came and opened up shops one at a time. Over 40 bathhouses accommodated visitors that would come to 'take the water'.

The town was built around the springs and on top of the springs. Originally, travelers would

See **HEALING** on Page C6

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HEALING

Continued from Page C5

come over the rugged desert on horseback to take the water. Eventually they came on the rail as trains would drop them off in Engle and shuttled them to Hot Springs.

A much more serious element of healers serviced a large portion of visitors to Hot Springs and worked in conjunction with the hot mineral water. The renowned Magnolia Ellis, whose specially constructed brick building remains a landmark in downtown TorC, was among the special group.

The town was initially given the name 'Palomas Hot Springs' during the turn of the last century. Eventually, the name was shortened to simply 'Hot Springs'.

During the construction and just after the completion of Elephant Butte Dam, workers with the Corps of Engineers from a settlement called Butte City, which was located under the dam and where workers lived, floated their homes down the Rio Grande to what is now downtown Truth or Consequences.

Prior to the mass move, the downtown area was a vast, swampy marshland that stretched from what is now called Water Tank Hill to Tingley Hill, so named because of the location of the Carrie Tingley Hospital For Crippled Children.

The hospital, now the New Mexico State Veterans' Home, utilized the hot mineral water for its great healing abilities. In fact, the Veterans' Home still uses the healing water in its aquatic therapy pool.

The Corps of Engineers dug a flood control channel, thus diverting the Rio Grande, and filled the marsh with a great amount of fill dirt.

Despite being covered with dirt, the water still found its way to the surface and bubbled up.

It has been said by doctors that every illness and every ailment can be traced to a mineral deficiency. With that in mind, it is easy to see why TorC's water –with its 38 minerals– holds a very special healing ability.

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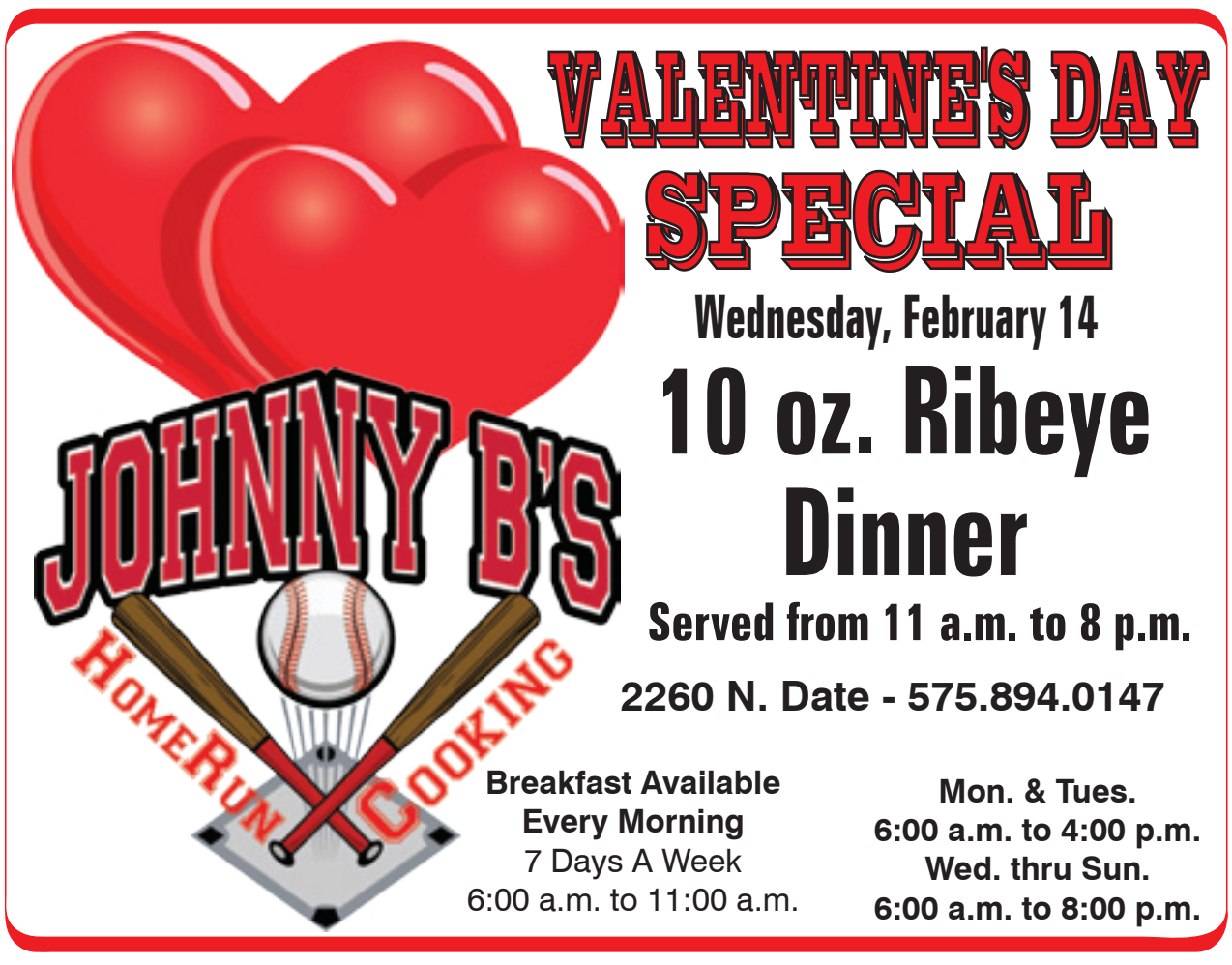

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133 Concord Chloride: Enjoy the peace and serenity in Chloride, from this cozy 2 bedroom 1 bath cabin. Enjoy the beautiful mountain views, walkthrough the historic town of Chloride. Home offers large open living area, hardwood floors, country kitchen, antique wood burning cook stove to add to the ambiance of county living. Relax in the gazebo while watching the plentiful wildlife. Basement area offers utility room and work area. Detached large garage, detached large barn with carport. $140,000. MLS 20175387.

632 Lakeshore Highlands: Lake and Mountain views from this 2.62 Acre lot in Lakeshore Highlands. Dont miss this lot priced to sell. Seller will Owner finance. $10,000. MLS 20173680.

175 Wade St: Cute 2 bedroom 1 bath on large fenced lot. Property offers 5 mature Pecan trees, 2 carports, large storage shed and covered patio. Open living area large walk in closet, bonus office or craft room area. This is a must see and priced to sell. $85,000. MLS 20175602.

56 Meritage: Custom Built home on 1.64 acre lot in Vista Del Lago. Breathtaking unobstructed views of Elephant Butte Lake. Home offers 2 large master suites, or could be used as a 4 bedroom family home. Ceramic tile through out home. Lake views from kitchen, living room, and both master suites. $699,000. MLS 20173937.

572 Bass Road: Breathtaking lake views from the wrap around covered deck with outdoor kitchen. Home offers newly remodeled kitchen with granite counter tops, and tiled back splash. Open living area with lake views, 2 bedrooms and 2 full baths upstairs. Downstairs offers full apartment with large kitchen, living area and bathroom. Plenty of room for all your friends and family. Property offer a large 0.57 acre lot with multiple carports and RV carport. This is a must see beautiful home. Call Rachel for more information 575-740-0012 $229,000. MLS 20174589.

13 Waterdog: .34 acre lot with 3 sided 25X40 pole barn. All utilities are on property, existing septic, electric and water. Cement runners ready to set your Manufactured home on. Don't miss this one priced to sale. $13,000. MLS 20160852.

100 Erie Ct at the Lake. Seller hates to leave this newly constructed home - BUT has a new job to relocate to! Built in 2016, home offers an open floor plan with over 1500 sq ft of open living area, 3BR, 2BA, vaulted ceilings, laminated wood floors, spacious kitchen with stainless steel appliances, granite counters, plenty of cabinets, formal dining area, large master suite with curbless entry shower, guest bedrooms share a roomy 2nd bath, refrigerated air. 2 car attached garage. Corner lot on a cul-de-sac, low maintenance yard with plenty of room for toys! Area of nice homes. Close to Marina's, golf, lake. Priced at 196,000. Call Cathy. MLS MLS 20176111n.

MLS 20171790 - 608 Grape St, in T or C, is a 4BR 2BA 1656 sq ft home offers GOOD OLD FASHIONED COUNTRY CHARM! Then add the updates performed in 2008 and this home is ready to move into. Magnificent copper colored roof, ref air, stucco, paint and a 6-car carport are a few of the updates! Dining room with built in hutch, pantry, Master bedroom with plenty of light. Two patio areas, southwest style landscaped yard, privacy wall, trees and gravel. Back building could be used as workshop/studio/office - 579 sq ft. This home is in immaculate condition, built in approx 1940. Pride of ownership throughout and a must see. Call Jeanette or Cathy. Price Reduced to $189,000.

908 Yucca: A fantastic family home. Offering over 2300 sq ft, 4BR, 3BA, remodeled/updated kitchen, huge living room, formal dining room, travertine tile in high traffic areas, ref. air, roof is under 10 yrs old. SW landscape, fenced back yard. MUST SEE. $179,000. Call Cathy. MLS 20172625.

502 Pike Rd. A great property with Elephant Butte as your neighbor! 3BR, 1 3/4 BA over 1450 sq ft lake house with rustic, country charm and unobstructed views. Home was built in the 1960's with updates performed in 1995 and 2008. Roof new in 2006, modern kitchen that opens to a family room with lots of windows for natural light and views. Living room with fireplace. Refrigerated air. Enjoy the evenings and entertain on the patio - privacy wall. Two garages - one measures 20 X 20 and the other is a 30 X 40 garage with oversized doors for large boat. Lot is .62 ac with room for all your lake toys. Must see. Priced at $255,000.00. Call Cathy. MLS 20170542.

308 Black Range, Elephant Butte. A very well cared for Cavco Mfg home offering 1680 sq ft of open living area. 3BR,2BA, handicap accessible, spacious kitchen w/eating area, large master suite w/his & her closets, dining room, refr. air, carpet, vinyl flooring. Approx 1/4 ac lot, fenced back yard, covered deck, 24 x 24 detached garage. Borders BLM land. Priced to sell at $115,000.00 Call Cathy 575740-0003. MLS 20174743.

511 N. Riverside, TorC. Looking for a beautiful riverfront property? This 120 X 350 lot with a 2006 Mfg home is available! Home offers 2BR, 2BA, approx. 1280 sq ft of living area, in good condition. The lot is spectacular and must be seen to fully appreciate. All city utilities. Priced at $200,000. Call Cathy. MLS 20173024.