



Ritter Hot Springs sits in a bend of the Middle Fork John Day River near Long Creek in northern Grant County.

EO Media Group photos/E.J. Harris

RITTER

Far away
in time and distance

By E.J. Harris
EO Media Group

If you are looking for a health spa with herbal wraps, cucumber water and Yerba mate lattes, then Ritter Hot Springs is not for you.

However, what Ritter might lack in posh accouterments, it more than makes up for with scenic beauty, a rich history and plenty of hot, healing spring water.

Ritter was first discovered and homesteaded by William Neal McDuffee in the 1850s and was originally named



A cabin still sits on the original site homesteaded by William Neal McDuffee.

McDuffee Hot Springs. One of McDuffee's original cabins can still be found on the site today. McDuffee was an interesting character, according to current Ritter owner Mike Tilly of Walla Walla. Tilly, who has studied the history of the hot springs, says McDuffee was a miner, a water-master and even spent time in prison for murdering a man on the property.

"(McDuffee) was an out of luck miner and he struck gold with hot water," Tilly said.

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