

Ney Springs Now Fading Ghost, But Beauty Stays

By J. O. McKINNEY

Ney Springs, six miles southwest from Mount Shasta was a going concern around the turn of the century. It carried a price tag of \$250,000 in a day before inflation became a dirty name. People came there to stay a week, or a month, to fish in nearby Sacramento River, to drink healing water, or bathe in the huge bath house where many pains of the flesh were washed away.

The canyon in which the springs are located was, and still is, a beauty spot. A waterfall there is an almost exact duplicate of famed Seven Fall near Colorado Springs. Virgin stands of timber covered the slopes, while wild deer came down to drink the mineral water.

Today the air of enchantment is gone. The springs and scenery remain. The pine forests have been

logged away and the buildings present a scene of utter desolation and ruin. What time and neglect have not accomplished human hands have. No longer do people go there to rest. They go either for curiosity, or to hunt wild animals that now occupy the premises. John Ney, original owner, and developer of the property, would rest uneasy in his final abode if he could but note the change. These changes are disquieting to those who have but a faint memory of the old days.

The mineral springs were the chief attraction. Most ills of the flesh were benefited, or even cured by drinking the waters, and bathing in its healing blanket. Loggers would often come there to "boil out" in the spring before going away to work, and to rid their systems of the accumulation of the

results of intemperate living through the winter. Or at times they would come there for treatment in the fall before embarking on a winter of living it up during the period of idleness.

Fishing in Sacramento River around the turn of the century was fishing at its best. The scenery was restful, and re-creating. Eating at the hotel table was something not to be discounted anywhere.

These were the days when transportation was largely limited to railway travel, or to horse drawn vehicles. People went to a place and remained there throughout the entire time of their vacation stay. At Kantera Loop, a mile away, a flag stop allowed passengers to get off the trains and be hauled to the hotel by John Ney and his horse drawn carriage. There they

enjoyed life and soaked up health. But changing times brought other transportation. Automobiles and good roads encouraged seeing more country, not staying in any place very long. Mineral springs became more-or-less passe.

The clientele fell off and New Springs became a liability instead of a source of steady income. The property changed hands. The timber was finally sold and hauled to mills to be sawed into lumber. The owners moved from the premises. Then is when the final disaster struck. Vandals moved in and did their work.

The old hotel, dormitory, bath house, board walk that united several springs with easy access, even the barn where the carriage and horses were housed, were a shambles in the end. A retaining wall which kept the creek from encroaching on the land, or the land from sliding into the creek, resisted their efforts, but everything else suffered. Doors were splintered, and walls of building were kicked into scrap heaps of lumber.

Today, aside of the accumulated evidence of decay and destruction, all that remains is the canyon, with its scenery somewhat marred, but still attractive, the springs which still gush their health-giving waters, and the many wild beasts that come there because of its wilderness. While but a few miles from the highway and railroad the atmosphere of Ney Springs is one of remoteness and mystery. The aroma of the mineral springs permeates the air, and the tracks of bear, deer, and mountain lions are to be seen in the soft soil. It has gone back a long way in the last quarter century.

There may be a chance that this spot may regain some of its former glory. A dam at Box Canyon is being planned. If this is built, Ney Springs is nearby and may attract someone with money who will either restore it as a health resort, or have a retreat for a fine private home. The waters remain, and the scenery will be an asset any time.

The world will lose if the beneficial waters are never again used, but are allowed to flow away and be lost to ailing humanity.



SOLID AS THE ORIGINAL ROCK is the old retaining wall at Ney Springs near Mount Shasta. It is about the only thing left intact of the once busy health resort.

—Photo by McKinney



THE OLD DORMITORY was a busy place when Ney Springs was in its glory. Now all that remains is this battered wreck, blank windows staring out over the lush vegetation.

—Photo by McKinney



ALL THAT REMAINS of the old hotel at Ney Springs is this tumbled down ruin, torn by age, weather and vandals.

—Photo by McKinney

President Woodrow Wilson made his noted "The Fourteen Points" speech before the U.S. Congress on January 8, 1918.



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