

Mudlavia Springs Provided Health Benefits to Local Residents

While working in the mud to dig a drainage ditch near the town of Kramer in Warren County, Indiana in 1884, Civil War veteran Samuel Story took a drink from a natural spring nearby. He discovered that his rheumatism symptoms gradually disappeared. Warren County is the fourth county south of Lake Michigan on the state line between Illinois and Indiana nearly straight south of Chicago.

Harry L. Kramer must have thought that it would be a way to draw people to the area, so Hotel Mudlavia, also known simply as Mudlavia, was built on the site of the spring at a cost of \$250,000. It was originally known as Indiana Springs Company. The beautiful hotel and spa opened on December 25, 1890 and served guests from all over the world until it was destroyed by fire on February 29, 1920.

A smaller building was constructed after the fire and was operated as a rest home and later as a restaurant called "Pleasant Valley Lodge." After Pleasant Valley Lodge closed someone named this building the Mudlavia Lodge and operated it until it burned in 1974.



This photo shows Hotel Moldavia in Warren County, Indiana, where some Monroe residents went to get spa treatments in the early 1900s.

Later, water from the springs was bottled and sold by the Indianapolis-based Cameron Springs company, which was acquired by the Perrier Group of America in 2000 for about \$10.5 million. In 2008, the water was still being sold and was marketed under a variety of names.

As seen by the newspaper articles below, several people from Monroe found out about this beautiful spa a few years later. It had to be expensive to visit there as wikipedia.com posted that the \$250,000 expense in 1890 would have been equivalent to about \$47,000,000 in 2009. The trip would have been about 250 miles each way from Monroe, probably taking the train to get there.

"Mr. and Mrs. John Strahm arrived home last evening after spending five weeks at Mudlavia, where he took the mud baths for eczema. He has been much benefited by the treatment and expects to be about as soon as the weather becomes milder." This was an article in the March 24, 1904 issue of the Monroe Evening Times. The following reports also came from the Monroe Evening Times through the years.

On September 12 it reported that Mayor Willis Ludlow was going to Mudlavia, Indiana to take "the mud bath treatment for rheumatism." Ten days later it was reported that Janet Lysaght had also gone "to try the water and baths there for rheumatism." She returned home on October 4.

Three years later I found articles that Mrs. Lysaght returned to Kramer, Indiana for a “bath treatment for rheumatism” on the morning of March 7, 1907 and was gone for several weeks, returning on April 1. On August 6 of the same year, W. W. Chadwick took his sister, Amanda L. Patchin, to Attica, Indiana for her to “take the baths at Mudlavia for rheumatism.” A month later, Mr. Chadwick received word that Mrs. Patchin was not improving, so he left for the Indiana health resort on September 6. It was not stated in the article, but he probably brought her back since the treatments did not seem to be working.

Jane Lysaght must have thought that the treatments worked well for her as she went back to Mudlavia Springs for a 3-week-stay on March 4, 1908. It was reported on November 4, 1908 that, “Hez Howder went to Attica, Ind., this morning where he will take mud baths for his health.”