

Bathhouses for the Jefferson Pools to be restored at the Homestead Resort

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It was announced this week that the Homestead Resort (<http://www.thehomestead.com/>), in Bath County intends to restore the historic bathhouses that surround their famed mineral pools (now called the Jefferson Pools). Thomas Jefferson is just one of the thousands of Virginians, aristocratic and ordinary, who have sought the comforts of the waters over the course of two and a half centuries. In his Notes on the State of Virginia (<https://www.monticello.org/research-education/thomas-jefferson-encyclopedia/notes-state-virginia/>), Jefferson wrote of the "Warm spring" that was to become the resort:

The Warm spring issues with a very bold stream, sufficient to work a grist-mill, and to keep the waters of its bason, which is 30 feet in diameter, at the vital warmth, viz. 96^o. of Farenheit's thermometer. The matter with which these waters is allied is very volatile; its smell indicates it to be sulphureous, as also does the circumstance of its turning silver black. They relieve rheumatisms. Other complaints also of very different natures have been removed or lessened by them.

While he did indeed take the waters in at the age of 75 in 1818 to combat "rheumatisms," he also sought relief for another complaint "of very different nature." In an August 21 letter to his daughter Martha (<https://www.monticello.org/research-education/thomas-jefferson-encyclopedia/martha-jefferson-randolph/>), he discussed the effect of the springs:

I do not know what may be the effect of this course of bathing on my constitution; but I am under great threats that it will work it's effect thro' a system of boils. A large swelling on my seat, increasing for several days past in size and hardness disables me from sitting but on the corner of a chair. Another swelling begins to manifest itself to-day on the other seat. It happens fortunately that Capt. Harris is here in a carriage alone, and proposes to set out on the same day I had intended. He offers me a seat which I shall gladly accept...Perhaps these swellings may yet disappear, but I have little hope of that.

For more on the plans for restoration of the bathhouses, including the one that Jefferson would have used, check [here](http://www.roanoke.com/news/roanoke/wb/177358) (<http://www.roanoke.com/news/roanoke/wb/177358>). You may also be interested in our TJ Encyclopedia entry on [medicinal springs](https://www.monticello.org/research-education/thomas-jefferson-encyclopedia/medicinal-springs/) (<https://www.monticello.org/research-education/thomas-jefferson-encyclopedia/medicinal-springs/>).

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ADDRESS:

931 Thomas Jefferson Parkway
Charlottesville, VA 22902

GENERAL INFORMATION:

(434) 984-9800