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Old mineral baths a Rosedale landmark

(This is the seventh in a series of "then and now" articles on places of interest in Kansas City, Kan., compiled by area historian Margaret Landis in observance of the 100th birthday of KCK in 1986.

Much of the information has appeared in The Kansan.)

(Transcriptions are presented without changes except to improve readability.)

You didn't have to go too far to enjoy the mineral springs bath...only a 15-minute trip from both downtown Kansas City, Kan., and Kansas City, Mo.

What's more the baths were heated by natural gas from the site, something some businesses only dream about today.

The springs attracted people from far and wide from the late 1880s through the early 1950s to Rosedale at what was 2639 S. Mill Street.

Today, motorists traveling Interstate 35 Highway through that four-acre site in Rosedale little realize its historical significance. Ironically it was the construction of I-35 that spelled the demise of the mineral springs about 1959.

But let's back up a ways from when the mineral springs was such an attraction. From 1875 to 1883, the Kansas Rolling Mill Company in Rosedale was the largest manufacturer in Kansas. The rolling mill had 11 heating furnaces and consumed 12 carloads of coal daily. A short distance away a vein of cal (coal) about 10 inches in thickness at a depth of 330 feet was struck. A "coal rush began" because of the demand for coal by the mill.

A shaft was sunk on South Rosedale Avenue on the north side of Turkey Creek in search of more coal. The efforts did not yield any coal but rather a spouting of flaming gas and water.

Just when the water was first tasted and by who is not known. When it was discovered the water had certain medicinal qualities and that the people brought barrels on wagons and carried the water away by buckets, the owners then capped the geyser.



The Rosedale Baths and Hotel could "tone up your tired muscles and relax your tense nerves in the most modern and beautiful spa in the entire Middlewest" according to an ad in an area newspaper.