

TAMPA BAY AREA SPA HISTORY

The History of the Natural Mineral Springs at the Safety Harbor Resort and Spa Through the years Safety Harbor has been known as the Florida destination where “healing waters flow.” Indian shell mound builders inhabited what is now the Safety Harbor area almost 2,000 years ago, followed by the Tocobaga Indians and eventually the Seminoles. These early residents believed the mineral springs held mystical powers to help perpetuate youth and heal the sick.

In 1539 Spanish explorer Hernando De Soto reached the shores of what is now Old Tampa Bay, and discovered five natural springs. Believing he had found the legendary “Fountain of Youth” somehow missed by Ponce de Leon, De Soto established a camp here, naming Safety Harbor’s mineral springs Espiritu Santo Springs, or “Springs of the Holy Spirit.”

Around 1855 Colonel William J. Bailey, who had been stationed in the area during the Second Seminole War, purchased the springs and the surrounding land from the government, becoming the first person to own the springs after the U.S. bought Florida from Spain. He named the land “Bailey by the Sea,” but visitors called the natural springs “Worth’s Harbor” or “Green Springs.” The name Green Springs evolved thanks to crippled farmer Jesse Green, who was able to “throw away his crutches and resume plowing his fields” after taking the waters over the course of a year.

In the early 1900’s Safety Harbor became known as the “Health Giving City” and five different springs were identified for specific healing properties (Beauty Springs, Stomach Springs, Liver Springs, Kidney Springs and Pure Water Springs). The legendary curative powers of the springs began attracting health-conscious travelers, and the Water Tower Pavilion and other wooden structures at the end of what is now Safety Harbor’s Main Street became local landmarks. Locals and out-of-town visitors alike helped themselves to the springs, and the water itself was bottled in five-gallon jugs and shipped around the world.

The “Great Florida Land Boom” of the early 1920s

found Captain James F. Tucker and his wife Virginia, prominent local entrepreneurs who had taken over the mineral springs, promoting the Safety Harbor community’s well-situated and undeveloped lands. The pair formed the Espiritu Santo Springs Corporation and began developing the springs area in the eastern section of town, constructing The Safety Harbor Sanatorium (also called Espiritu Santo Springs), two pavilion buildings to replace the wooden structures destroyed by a 1921 hurricane. They also built the Espiritu Santo Springs Hotel located directly across the street (later known as the St. James and today the Harbor House), providing overnight accommodations for guests traveling to “take the waters” at the sanatorium.

Barth’s Baths also provided sleeping rooms, and was located on what is now the resort’s parking lot. Promotional pieces encouraged guests to “visit several times a year, to relieve nervous hypotension, irritability and sleeplessness, to forestall the onset of colds, flu and body aches... to visit the Sanatorium is to bestow upon yourself the gift of health brewed by the Great Chemist.” In 1936, the Tuckers sold the springs and sanatorium for back taxes to Dr. and Mrs. Alben Jansik. Under his personal supervision, Dr. Jansik restored the resort to a new glory, building a 45-foot by 95 foot swimming pool through which 8,000 gallons of spring water flowed daily. Tourist literature of the time highlighted the resort as “a Florida haven for those in search of health, recreation and rest.”

In 1945, Dr. Salem H. Baranoff bought the springs and sanatorium, turning it into a health spa and opening accommodations directly connected to the spa to overnight visitors. Dr. Baranoff extolled the benefits of naturopathic medicine combined with the therapeutic properties of the mineral water. His partnership with two other physicians in 1950 turned the resort, known then as The Safety Harbor Spa, into a modern health center offering massages, mineral and steam baths, health foods and hot packs.

In 1952, Dr. Baranoff’s interest in the Spa was purchased by Dr. Richard Gubner. A wide array of improvements was made to the Spa over the next forty years, including fully-equipped diagnostic facilities, full medical staff, baths, hydrotherapy and massage staff, solarium and an art studio. Today the springs serve as the primary source of water for the resort, used in the pools, restaurant, and, of course, the spa.

- For more information, visit www.safetyharborresort.com

SPRING CLEANING for Your Support System

By Coach Stacy McKay

Creating optimal health, fitness and wellbeing often means building a strong support system. Typically, this support system is comprised of social networks, family members and those closest to you that are committed to making or supporting positive changes in your life. But oftentimes, we overlook an underlying area of support which can clutter a healthy mindset and create a messy support system.

Creating a positive support system is more than just surrounding ourselves with uplifting people; it’s also ensuring that our home and work environments are structured in a way that makes it easy to stay focused on our goals. With spring in the air, it is a great time to take a fresh look at your physical environment at home and at work, acknowledging that the type of art, colors and music you surround yourself with influences your internal state. Do the pictures you have displayed evoke positive (supportive) or negative (detrimental) feelings?

A photo of yourself looking less than your best that you see every day is not inspiring. At the same time, posting a magazine picture of your dream body that seems unattainable can be depressing. Choose pictures that push you towards an uplifted state of mind. Consider adding a stimulating color to your living or work space (in any form) that will give you a boost. Display a picture or a souvenir from your favorite vacation spot where you would like to go and imagine yourself there feeling fit, energized and at peace. Hang your bikini or your favorite little black dress on your bedroom door as a reminder that summer is coming. While exercising, listen to music that inspires you “to go for it” or to a recording of your trainer’s voice. It may just be just the extra push you need to get out of bed at 5 a.m. or to head to the gym instead of the sofa when you leave work.

STACY MCKAY is a Fitness, Wellness and Empowerment Life Coach. A Fitness, Wellness and Empowerment Life Coach, Stacy will show you the tools to create a more loving, more powerful and more confident you. Fueled by the teachings of David Gershon and Gail Straub’s Empowerment Training Programs, Stacy uses her compassion, understanding and dedication to help women and children find personal power and inner knowledge. If you are interested in getting support with your health, fitness and wellness goals, contact Stacy at stacy@FitByMcKay.com or 813-943-1384.