The Story of the West Baden Springs Hotel

John William O'Malley
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THE STORY OF THE WEST
BADEN SPRINGS HOTEL

by

John W. O'Malley, S. J.

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School
of Loyola University in Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts

January

1957
LIFE

John William O'Malley, S. J., was born in Tiltonsville, Ohio, on June 11, 1927.

He was graduated from Warren High School, Tiltonsville, Ohio, June, 1945. In February, 1946, he entered the Chicago Province of the Society of Jesus at Milford Novitiate, Milford, Ohio, and enrolled in the undergraduate division of Xavier University, Cincinnati, Ohio. In August, 1950, he transferred residence to West Baden College, West Baden Springs, Indiana, and enrolled in Loyola University, Chicago, Illinois. He was graduated from Loyola University with the degree of Bachelor of Arts in June, 1951.

From 1953 until 1956 the author taught history at Saint Ignatius High School, Chicago, Illinois. During the summers of the same period he continued his work in the graduate school of Loyola University, Chicago, Illinois.
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CHAPTER I

GENERAL BACKGROUND

"The Eighth Wonder of the World"—this was the magic phrase which drew thousands of guests to the West Baden Springs Hotel in southern Indiana. The hotel easily justified this extravagant claim to fame. Its unique circular structure boasted the world's widest unsupported dome, two hundred feet in diameter, surpassing in breadth the majestic grandeur of St. Peter's Cathedral in Rome. Even today visitors to West Baden College, now housed in the hotel building, marvel at the strength and beauty of the dome of this colossal "round house."

It is the story of the one-time famous West Baden Springs resort that this thesis purposes to tell. The West Baden Springs Hotel in its day held an important place in the pattern of mid-American social living, and, as a matter of fact, mirrored the social tastes and customs of the American people during the eighty years its doors were open to receive guests. The hotel's own newspaper, The West Baden Journal, is itself a record of quaint Americana, and has left us a rich source for discovering the recreational habits of an earlier generation. The hotel's unique destiny is an added reason for reviewing its history: The West Baden Springs Hotel closed in 1932 only to open again two years later as West Baden College, a school for young men of the Society of Jesus preparing for the priesthood of the Roman Catholic Church. A complete transformation took place, symbolized by the life-sized statue of the Sacred Heart which now
dominates the magnificent Atrium, or "Pompeian Court."

The story has been reconstructed as well as was possible in the absence of many vital, primary-source documents. The hotel and its records have been plagued with fires. This made it necessary at times to rely on oral testimony when information could be obtained in no other way. In each case, however, the witness's reliability and opportunity to have first-hand access to the facts were carefully weighed. It frequently was found that the oral testimony gave a flavor and personal touch to the facts which no written document could ever have preserved. The West Baden Journal, of course, was an invaluable source of information; the records of the Orange County Court House, Paoli, Indiana, and the Archives of the Chicago Province of the Society of Jesus were also very useful, as were the few records and letters preserved at West Baden College itself. Principally on these documents our narrative has been built, and carries us from the earliest history of the region to the final closure of the hotel and its acceptance by the Society of Jesus for use as a seminary.

The mineral springs found in the West Baden area are the key to the hotel's story. Without the springs there would have been no Buffalo Trace to lead the white man into the Indiana interior, and without the springs there would have been no incentive to develop a country inn into a health resort for all mid-America.

Orange County, Indiana, is limestone soil.\(^1\) Rain entering this soil near

\(^1\)Cf. W. S. Blatchley, *The Mineral Waters of Indiana* (Indianapolis, 1903), pp. 102-103, for a detailed account of the waters and their content.
Paoli, the county seat, sinks to a depth of about one hundred feet, and then
flows underground until it reaches West Baden Springs. Here the hydrostatic
pressure forces the water upwards through the fissures in the Chester limestone.
Chemical analysis shows that these waters forced to the surface belong to the
saline-sulphuretted group and have a very similar mineral content. 2

The first human beings of whom we have evidence in Orange County are the
Mound Builders of the Indian Knoll culture, which is dated at approximately
3500 B.C. There are also evidences of the Woodland culture and the Fort An-
cient culture. But besides the fact of the mere presence of man in the region
from time immemorial, little else is known concerning these prehistoric days.

The French Jesuit missionaries from Quebec were the first white men to
penetrate the southern Indiana territory at the beginning of the eighteenth
century, and were soon followed by the famous fur traders, the coursers de
bois. 3 Vincennes, at the falls of the Wabash, was founded in the early
eighteenth century and gained fame almost immediately as a fur post. 4 It is

2Blatchley, Mineral Waters, p. 109, gives an analysis of Spring Number
Seven on the West Baden Springs Hotel grounds:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Substance</th>
<th>Parts to 1,000,000</th>
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<tr>
<td>Silica</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calcium Sulphate</td>
<td>1962.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magnesium Sulphate</td>
<td>781.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magnesium Carbonate</td>
<td>251.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potassium Chloride</td>
<td>64.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sodium Sulphate</td>
<td>52.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sodium Chloride</td>
<td>1264.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Total solids)</td>
<td>4384.9</td>
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</table>

3Logan Esarey, A History of Indiana (Indianapolis, 1915) II, 15.

4Roy Pierre-Georges, "Sisur de Vincennes Identified," Indiana Historical
Society Publications VII (Indianapolis, 1923), 91-92.
entirely possible that present-day Orange County was visited by some of the roving traders, but whether they actually penetrated as far as the present towns of French Lick and West Baden Springs, as legend would have it, seems destined to remain a historical mystery. At any rate, the French made no permanent settlement there, and any control they may have had over the entire southern Indiana area disappeared in 1763 with the signing of the Treaty of Paris.

Just twenty years later another Treaty of Paris again changed the government of Indiana, and made it part of territorial United States. The young American nation, however, found itself faced with a serious problem in this frontier land, especially in and around the Vincennes settlement. Besides an ineffectual local government and the perennial friction between the old French settlers and the incoming Americans, there was new experimentation with the explosive mixture of British whiskey and Indian temperament. By August, 1786, the Indians of the whole Northwest were on the warpath and no American lives or property were safe. When the Congress of the Confederation failed to

5 Cf. Joseph Karol, S. J., "The French at French Lick, Fact or Fiction?" Indiana Magazine of History (June 1954) 139-144, for a long and careful discussion of this point. Father Karol finally concludes that there is no conclusive evidence one way or the other. Cf. also Richard W. Haupt, History of the French Lick Springs Hotel, Unpublished Master's Thesis, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana, 1953, 10-11, n. 15, for another good discussion of this problem, published, however, before Father Karol's research was available. Haupt concludes that George Rogers Clark should be given credit for the name, probably because of a French Lick on the Cumberland River in Tennessee.

take any serious measures to halt the trouble, the Kentucky authorities, fearful for the safety of the whole frontier, appointed George Rogers Clark head of an expedition directed against these Indian uprisings. This force of nearly one thousand men met in the summer of 1786 at the Falls of the Ohio to prepare for a march over the Buffalo Trace to the source of the trouble.

The Buffalo Trace led overland from the Wabash River at Vincennes to the Falls of the Ohio. This trail had been cut by the American bison, or buffalo, in his search for water and salt when he came east from the western prairies during the late spring or early summer. The buffalo preferred damp, swampy lands, for it was here that he could make his wallows and lie in them in hot weather. The springs in the West Baden area seem to have suited the buffalo perfectly and to have drawn as many as five hundred during the summer months. This Buffalo Trace, already cut through the wilderness and, therefore, easy to follow, became the natural overland route to Vincennes soon after that settlement began to be of some importance. The good hunting usually to be found at the "lick" was another reason why the Trace was the best trail to follow.

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7. Haldeman's is the best account of the expedition.

8. Other names for the Trace were: "The Mud Holes," "The Governor's Trace," "Kentucky Road," "Louisville Trace," and "Vincennes Trace." Cf. George R. Wilson, History of Dubois County (Jasper, Indiana, 1910) p. 27.


It was natural, then, that Clark would choose it for his expedition. On his way overland he camped at French Lick, perhaps within less than a mile of the future site of the West Baden Springs Hotel, and thus gave us the first authoritative account of the white man's presence in that vicinity.11

Clark's expedition had moderate success in quelling the Indian uprising, and also was able to apply some indirect pressure to the Congress to pass the Northwest Ordinance in the next year.12 Gradually Indiana began to move toward statehood, as provided in the Ordinance. In 1799 the first legislature of the Northwest Territory met at Cincinnati and almost immediately passed a bill creating Indiana a territory. President John Adams then appointed Lieutenant William Henry Harrison governor of the territory, whose capital was to be Vincennes.

By 1800 the population of the Indiana territory was about six thousand and five hundred. About one-third of these lived at Vincennes, and another thousand lived at Jeffersonville. The region around the "licks", as might be supposed, was very sparsely settled. As late as 1828 William Cobbett, an immigrant sight-seer, described the French Lick area thus: "...no house of any description, within many miles."13

The Northwest Ordinance specifically provided that the lands and property of the Indians should not be taken from them without their consent. Conse-

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11 Temple Bodley, George Rogers Clark (New York, 1926) p. 287.
quently, William Henry Harrison opened negotiations with the Indians in 1801 and carried them on until 1809. These various agreements with the Indians, however, were not able to stanch the flow of hatred, fear and indignation which the Indian felt as he saw his home and his hunting grounds being invaded by the cursed white man. The gifts received for the land began to look cheap indeed, and soon the treaty-makers were repudiated by their own people for a betrayal of their trust. Warfare once again burst out upon the frontier. Tecumseh and The Prophet organized the entire Northwest in a furious attempt to drive out the whites.

In the spring of 1807 the United States Rangers began patrolling the frontier regions of the Indiana Territory and all settlers were urged to build blockhouses. Five years later the settlers were again told to build blockhouses and warned of the seriousness of the situation. Once of these blockhouses, probably built by the Rangers themselves and used by them as an outpost, was located at French Lick on the present site of the French Lick Springs Hotel. Although this fortification was in use until 1815, the Indian menace was substantially removed by the end of the year 1812 after the great battles of Tippecanoe and Fort Wayne.

The removal of the Indian menace and the end of the War of 1812 speeded up

14Cf. Haupt. French Lick Springs Hotel for a fuller treatment of these treaties.


16A stone marker erected by the Lost River Chapter of the D. A. R. calls attention to the site.
immigration into the Indiana Territory. Agitation for statehood increased in proportion to the growth of population. The census of 1815 showed that Indiana exceeded the 60,000 minimum required by the Northwest Ordinance, and had ten times as many inhabitants as she had had a mere fifteen years before. On December 11, 1815, the United States Congress adopted a memorial from the Legislative Assembly of the Indiana Territory asking for admission into the Union as a full-fledged state. Events moved rapidly. In April, 1816, Congress approved the Enabling Act, and in June the Indiana Constitutional Convention drew up the state's first instrument of government. On August 5, 1816, elections were held to choose state officials and representatives to the legislatures of the United States and of Indiana.

The first permanent white settlers in Orange County came about 1810 or 1811,17 and were mostly Quakers from Orange County, North Carolina. The years between 1812 and 1815 were the years of extensive settlement in the area.

On December 26, 1815, Orange County was formed by a statute which would go into effect on February 1, 1816. The boundaries were changed on March 1, 1818, and received their final form on March 16 of the same year, when Lawrence County was formed directly to the north of Orange. Thus Orange County came to be bound on the west by Dubois and Daviess County, on the north by Lawrence County, on the east by Washington County and on the south by Crawford County.18

One of the most pressing problems of the early pioneers was how to pre-

17 History of Lawrence, Orange and Washington Counties (Chicago, 1884) p. 290.

18 Nellie Armstrong and George Pence, Indiana Boundaries, Indiana Historical Collections, XIX (Indianapolis, 1933) 636-641.
serve their food from corruption. Smoking, drying and salting were the primary methods used on the frontier. In their search for salt the pioneers in Indiana soon gave attention to the salt crusts left by the waters at French Lick and its environs. The Enabling Act of 1816 granted thirty-six sections of land to the state for saline reserves, controlled by the state legislature and not to be sold or leased for any period longer than ten years. 19 A committee of the Indiana Constitutional Convention of June, 1816, including Jonathan Lindley of Paoli, chose the land surrounding the French Lick Springs for this saline reserve. 20

These early law-makers hoped that the saline reserves would be a plentiful source of salt to the settlers. These hopes were soon proved empty. At first huge kettles were used to boil the water until only the salt remained. 21 In less than two years after the reserves had been set up even the governor realized that they would be of no value in the manufacture of salt, at least by the kettle method, and he promptly suggested their sale to the general public. In 1819 he repeated the suggestion but no action was taken on it. 22 In 1826 the General Assembly passed an act authorizing boring for salt at French Lick, hoping that by boring deeper water might be found with a higher

19 Charles Kettleborough, Constitution Making in Indiana, Indiana Historical Collections, I (Indianapolis, 1916) 76.

20 Ibid, 125.


22 Messages and Papers of Jennings, Boone, Hendricks, Indiana Historical Collections, ed. Logan Esarey (Indianapolis, 1924, XIII, 67, 78.
salt content. This plan also failed, and within a year the General Assembly was petitioning Congress for permission to sell the saline reserve. At last the United States Congress approved the petition and granted its permission for the sale of the land on July 3, 1832. On February 2, 1833, at the next session of the Indiana legislature, the state cleared the way for the sale. William Lindley was made commissioner for the sale of the lands, which were to be auctioned publicly at a minimum price of $1.25 per acre.

The period from 1816 to 1825 had been one of unprecedented immigration into Indiana. As Indiana grew, so did Orange County. By 1833 Paoli boasted a population of four hundred people, and possessed six stores, three taverns, several mills of different types and two tanneries. It also boasted a jail, a seminary and the county court house.

Among those who came to Paoli in search of better fortune was a certain Dr. William A. Bowles. Dr. Bowles, who had been born in Maryland in 1799, moved to Paoli from Washington County, Indiana, in 1828, and soon bought a lot

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23 *General Laws of Indiana, 1825-1826* (Indianapolis, 1826) p. 79.

24 *General Laws of Indiana, 1827-1828* (Indianapolis, 1828) p. 103.


27 *Cemetery Records of Orange County, Lost River Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution (comp.), Paoli, 1947*, 313. For this information, as well as other valuable leads, the author is indebted to Mrs. Myrtle Cavity of French Lick.
there. Bowles was a large and handsome man, possessing a great deal of ambition and natural ability. These qualities seem to have been coupled with a congenital facility for becoming involved in questionable transactions and for making himself the center of violent controversy. In a community of four hundred people a man like Bowles was certain to make a name for himself.

As soon as the saline lands were offered for sale Dr. Bowles became interested. His father, Thomas C. Bowles, purchased some of the lands and shortly afterwards assigned them to his son. Included in the real estate purchased by Bowles was the land on which the French Lick Springs were located. Just why Bowles had this interest in the saline lands is not known. Perhaps, as a doctor, he had some idea that the waters might be of use as a medicine. More likely, he calculated that the sandstone in the area could be profitably

28 For a full account of the bizarre career of Dr. Bowles confer Haupt, French Lick Springs Hotel, 30-77, as well as for more details on the early history of the county. In 1847 Bowles's conduct in the Mexican War was subjected to a court of inquiry. His innocence in ordering a disastrous retreat was vindicated after some vicious charges were made by both defence and prosecution. The trial, however, won for Bowles the intense dislike of many Indiana because his vindication cast doubt on their bravery. In 1864 Bowles was tried for treason because of his connections with the Knights of the Golden Circle, a secret pro-Confederacy organization. Along with two other men by the names of Horsey and Milligan he was sentenced to be hanged. The case was eventually appealed to the Supreme Court of the United States, and Bowles's life was spared by the famous Ex Parte Milligan decision. In 1868 Bowles was sued for divorce by Eliza, the second of his three wives. The stormy case shocked the county. Bowles and Eliza both died before their estates were finally settled, but not before Bowles had time to marry his third wife, Julia, and have a certain amount of rather justifiable suspicion cast upon him that he may have been responsible for the "accidental" death of dear, long-suffering Eliza.

29 These lands were bought by Bowles in 1833 and 1834 according to the Sale Lands Book in the Orange County Court House, Cf. Tract Book 3, 48. They could not have been purchased in 1832, as indicated in most secondary sources, for they were not up for sale until 1833.
quarried for the manufacture of whetstones. At any rate Bowles did nothing to develop the springs for over a decade. In Paoli he became closely associated with The Paoli Times, and continued to practice medicine. In 1839 he ran for the state legislature as a Democrat and was elected. He was re-elected for each term until 1841. He was again elected in 1843, after having suffered two defeats in his campaigns for a state senatorship.

By 1845 Bowles had begun to concentrate more heavily on his business interests, and probably in that year he founded the first hotel at French Lick. To Bowles must be given a great deal of credit for having sufficient vision to conceive of the murky, smelling swamps at French Lick as the site for a hotel. Bowles located the hotel on the higher ground above the springs, at approximately the same location as where the blockhouse had stood more than thirty years before.

On May 13, 1846, the United States declared war on Mexico. Three days later the Secretary of War called on the Governor of Indiana to furnish three regiments of volunteers. Among the many who responded to the call was William A. Bowles, who promptly was elected a colonel by the Indiana Men gathered at Camp Clark.

30 Members of the House of Representatives, 1816–1913 (Indianapolis, 1913) p. 11.
31 Cf. Haupt, French Lick Springs Hotel, 40, n. 53.
32 Scott, Gazeteer, 74.
33 R. C. Duley, "Indiana in the Mexican War," Indiana Magazine of History, XV (September 1919) 270.
It was probably at this time that Dr. Bowles leased the French Lick House and property to a certain John A. Lane. Thus, unsuspectingly, the seed was sown which would later grow into the West Baden Springs Hotel. Lane, during his management of the French Lick House, would determine to open similar establishment nearby if he were not able to renew his present lease.

The actual date is shrouded in contradictions: The History of Orange County, 44, states that the lease began in 1846 and ran for five years. Lane's obituary states that the lease began in 1849 and ran for five years. Paoli Republican, March 26, 1884, 2. The Paoli American Eagle, July 13, 1855, 3, states definitely that Lane's lease ran out "last season." Haupt, French Lick Springs Hotel, 50, favors an eight year lease beginning in 1846 on the grounds that Lane would lease the hotel in the year he went away to war; by 1849 we know he was back in Paoli and could have run the hotel himself. Haupt, however did not have the obituary reference in the Republican when he made his inference. Nonetheless, the reasoning is sound, and seems to be the more probable solution to the problem.
CHAPTER II

A HOTEL IS BORN

John A. Lane was born in Jefferson Valley, New York, on March 11, 1811. 1 "Doctor" Lane eventually took up the peddling of patent medicines throughout the mid-west, and on one of his business tours in 1846 he married Mary Polk, a widow from Kentucky. Sometime in the later part of the 1840's he came to Orange County and decided to take up Bowles's offer to lease the new French Lick House. Dr. Lane probably prospered during the years he held the hotel, and enjoyed the security of an existence more stable than that of an itinerant salesman. He soon seems to have determined, once he discovered that he would not be able to hold on to the French Lick House, that he would build another hotel or inn nearby. There were some sulphur springs a mile north of French Lick, located in a low, swampy area—worse even than that of the French Lick Springs. It was at this place, first called Mile Lick by Lane, that he decided to build his rival establishment. 2

1 Paoli Republican, March 26, 1884, p. 2.

2 Apparently there was ill feeling between Lane and Bowles before the lease expired, perhaps because Bowles realized Lane was planning a rival inn. At any rate the History of Orange County, 394, tells us that Lane held possession of the inn down to the last legal minute he was allowed.
Probably in 1855 Mile Lick Inn opened its doors for the first time.  

The exact date is not known. The one commonly given in the secondary sources is 1852, and that is the one Father Joseph S. Karol, S.J. accepted for his "Mile Lick Milestones." Indiana History Bulletin, XXX, Indianapolis, July, 1953, 116-119. Father Spalding in his diary and scrapbook gives 1856 as the date, 3; and Blatchley, Mineral Waters, Ill, says that Lane bought the land in 1846, thereby implying an early opening of the inn. However, there are certain problems connected with these dates, once primary sources are consulted: 1) It is certain that Lane's lease on the French Lick House lasted until the fall of 1854. Cf. Paoli American Eagle, July 13, 1855, 3, where it states, "Mr. Lane's lease of the Springs was out last season and Dr. Bowles, the proprietor of the Springs, has them in charge himself, this season, and is well prepared to accommodate all who may call upon him." It does not seem at all likely that Lane would open a rival inn while he himself was running French Lick House. 2) Lane began to buy real estate in the present town of West Baden Springs as early as 1851, not, however, in 1846, as stated by Blatchley. He continued to buy until 1856, but the precise parcel on which the inn was to be located was purchased in 1852: "The east half of the northwest quarter of Section 34, township 2 north, range 2 west," cf. Ralph E. Pinnick, "Map of West Baden Springs Company," May 21, 1934, Procurator's Office, West Baden College. This piece of land Lane bought from the heirs of William Wolfington, who had received the land from Thomas C. Bowles, and received final title for it on August 6, 1852; cf. Deed Record Book 15, 135, December 21, 1852. Although negotiation for Lane's purchase had begun some months earlier, it does not seem likely that he would begin to build until the title were perfectly clear; cf. Deed Record Book 15, 133, December 22, 1852. 3) The Tax Duplicate and Delinquent List, Orange County, 69, for 1853 records no improvements on the land owned by John A. Lane in French Lick Township. This assessment may have been made as early as May, 1852, but that itself shows that there was no hotel or inn open for the 1852 season, which would have begun about the first of June. The Tax Duplicate for 1854, 86, shows improvements to the extent of $100, which does not indicate a building of substantial proportions, even though the assessment represents only a fraction of the real value. The Tax Duplicate for 1855, 112, shows improvements to the extent of $290, which is still a very moderate amount when compared with other assessments in the township. However, the records for 1856, 117, show improvements of $460, which could possibly represent an inn of small proportions. This assessment was probably made in 1855, and thus gives us our date. 4) An inscription under a portrait of Lane in the lobby of the Homestead Hotel in West Baden Springs gives 1855 as the date for the founding of the hotel. This portrait also gives the accurate date for Lane's death, and in this way establishes some sort of reliability in the matter of dates. 5) The obituary of Lane in the Paoli Republican for March 26, 1884, p. 2, states that it was after his lease expired on the French Lick House that he opened his hotel in West Baden. This information must certainly have been obtained from Lane's daughter, with whom he was living at the time of his death, and who must have heard the story many times from her father's lips. 6) We know of the ill-feeling between Lane and
Located on lower ground than the French Lick House its site was less desirable. Lane, however, went to work with vigor, and, inspired by his success at French Lick, set out to make Mile Lick just as successful. In addition to his original capital he borrowed $1800, built a sawmill, and from its lumber constructed his frame hotel and a bridge across French Lick Creek, which flowed in front of his building. By 1857 his improvements were assessed at $570, by 1858 at $1270, and by 1859 at $2300. It must be remembered that these assessments indicate only a fraction of the estimated value of the property, just as today in Orange County the assessment rate is one-third of the real value.

It can be seen from these figures that John A. Lane was seriously concerned with making the inn a success, and did not hesitate to pour money into its improvement. Sometime during this period, probably in the very first years, he hit upon the idea of changing the name from Mile Lick Inn to West Baden Inn. This change, he felt, would make the inn more attractive to guests.

Bowles, caused probably by Lane's plans for his own inn. It seems likely that Lane would plan to open his own hotel in 1855, the very season after his lease expired, so as to be able to take his customers with him to the new place, rather than let them get acquainted with French Lick House under the management of Dr. Bowles.

An early visitor to West Baden, ca. 1850, described it: "... swamps and a slimy pool of water colored by forest leaves until one felt that here was nature's laboratory for manufacturing ink." Sturm manuscript, French Lick Springs Hotel Public Relations Office, p. 4.


and at the same time free it from even nominal relationship with French Lick House, from whose location the name originally was derived.

A curious phenomenon of the hotel under Lane's management was the absolute lack of advertising in the Paoli newspapers. French Lick House, on the other hand, carried advertisements for several weeks at the beginning of each season, and sometimes extended them throughout the whole summer. During this period S. D. Hudelson of Orleans frequently ran advertisements telling of his "Daily Line of Hacks from Orleans to the French Lick Springs, during the watering season," and there were also advertisements by the French Lick House telling of the "daily line of Stages from New Albany to the Springs, by way of the New Albany and Vincennes Turn Pike Road," but never a mention of Mile Lick or West Baden. Perhaps Hudelson used the term "French Lick Springs" to cover both places. More likely, French Lick greatly overshadowed its younger, and unwanted, sister establishment.

At any rate, by 1860 both hotels were well established and were the most prosperous of the five mineral springs resorts in Indiana. By 1865 the improvements on Lane's hotel were assessed at $3,500. This was the year in

9 Cf. The American Eagle for June 8, 1855, p. 3; April 25, 1857, p. 3; June 2, 1859, p. 3; June 13, 1861 p. 2. These advertisements usually were rather lengthy, running fifteen to twenty printed lines.

10 Cf. e.g. The American Eagle, June 9, 1854, p. 3.

11 Ibid., June 22, 1855, p. 3.


which Lane decided to lease the hotel for a period of ten years to Robert and Josephine Warren at the rate of $2,000 per year,\textsuperscript{14} beginning on April 1, 1865. By the next January the Warrens had transferred the lease to Hugh and Mary Wilkins, who presumably ran the hotel for the next nine years.\textsuperscript{15}

Lane again took over the proprietorship of the hotel when the lease expired.\textsuperscript{16} By this time the hotel had gained recognition in the county as a fine place for local get-togethers, and, in fact, was chosen in 1874 for one of the county's big celebrations of the Fourth of July.\textsuperscript{17} The hotel's facilities were elaborate enough to attract the county residents, a fact also suggested by the fact that the tax evaluation on the hotel had risen to $6,000 by 1875.\textsuperscript{18}

On December 8, 1875, Lane mortgaged his real estate for $25,000 at an interest rate of nine per cent per annum.\textsuperscript{19} The mortgage was held by a man named Willis Webb, and probably was for the purpose of further improvements on the hotel property. The fact that Webb was able to issue a Quit-Claim on

\textsuperscript{14}Deed Record Book 22, February 15, 1865, pp. 383-384.

\textsuperscript{15}There is no marginal notation on the release or cessation of the lease in Deed Record Book 22, nor any other indication of it in Deed Record Books 22 to 30. Therefore, all we can do is presume the lease ran the agreed ten years. Possibly the Recorder simply forgot to make the proper notation.

\textsuperscript{16}History of Orange County, p. 394, gives the date as 1874, but assumes the lease began in 1864. Blatchley gives 1873, p. 111, but is notoriously unreliable on dates.

\textsuperscript{17}American Eagle, June 14, 1874, p. 3.

\textsuperscript{18}Tax Duplicate, 1875, p. 140.

\textsuperscript{19}Deed Record Book 30, 280-282, December 28, p. 1875.
April 30, 1877, may give us some indication of the hotel's earnings at this time. 20

Lane continued to manage the hotel until 1883, but on October 4 of that year sold it to a company made up of Amos and John Stout, James and Lydia Braden, George W. Campbell and Elvit B. Rhodes. By this time Lane was seventy-two years old, and probably in rather poor health. He died at Paoli on March 16, 1884, five months after the sale was completed. 21

The Stouts assumed control of the company. 22 They were merchants from Paoli, and were more interested in a general merchandise business in West Baden than in the hotel. 23 However, in their first year of ownership they spent some $11,000 on improvements. 24 During these years the Stouts kept the hotel open only during the summer months, or the "watering season" as it was called. 25 There was no doubt now that West Baden had assumed its proper place as one of the county's favorite spots to gather on big holidays. In 1886 there were huge celebrations of the Fourth of July at the French Lick hotel and at West Baden hotel, both dutifully reported by the Paoli Republican. 26

20Deed Record Book 32, July 30, 1877, p. 78.
21Paoli Republican, March 19, 1884, p. 3.
22Tax Duplicate, 1883, I, p. 169, marginal note.
23History of Orange County, p. 394.
24Ibid. This would have occurred just a year before the History was written, and, therefore, can be taken as rather accurate. Blatchley's account, ill-112, is woefully inaccurate.
25Cf. the Sinclair Questionnaire.
26Paoli Republican, July 7, 1886, p. 3.
The year 1887 marked the turning point in the history of West Baden and French Lick. On April 1 of that year the Monon Railroad, which on March 1, 1886, had bought the old Orleans, West Baden and French Lick Springs Railroad, completed the construction of its line to the Springs. This event would eventually change the two hotels from gathering places for the residents of Orange County to resort hotels for all America.

The accounts in the Paoli Republican gradually grow ecstatic as the West Baden proprietors find their business starting to boom. The reports begin with modest surprise when guests arrive at the hotel as early as April:

"Several guests are already visiting the Springs, and the owners are expecting the biggest season yet." By June the prospects have grown even more rosy:

"In consequence of the advantages offered by a railroad, this place is daily receiving new guests, ... a great many of whom have never been here before." And finally by July:

"The hotels at both places have never had such a run of custom [sic] as they have this season. ... Both places are going to build large additions as soon as the present season closes. ... A building boom has struck this place." The railroad brought many new guests to the West Baden Springs Hotel, but


28 Paoli Republican, May 11, 1887, p. 2.

29 Ibid., June 1, 1887, p. 2.

30 Ibid., July 27, 1887, p. 3.
none of greater importance than a Salem gentleman by the name of Lee Wiley Sinclair. He probably became interested in the hotel during its first boom year, 1887. It was Sinclair who would have the vision, courage and financial wizardry to transform it from a country inn to an American resort in less than ten years time.31

Lee Sinclair was born at Cloverdale, Indiana, on February 18, 1836. His parents were farmers. At the age of sixteen Lee Sinclair left the farm for the business world, and by 1866 owned and operated a woolen mill in Salem, Indiana; in 1875 he built a larger mill in South Chicago, Illinois. Sinclair also ran a large department store in Salem, and eventually became president of the Bank of Salem.32 Both of his mills burned: the South Chicago mill in 1878, just three years after it was built, and the Salem mill in 1884. "Colonel" Sinclair used proudly to refer to his service in the Grand Army of the Republic during the Civil War,33 and also to his term in the Indiana House of Representatives, 1887-1889, as the only Republican elected from Washington County.34

31Paoli Republican, June 19, 1901, p. 2.
33Cf. The Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Indiana, 1861-1865, VI (Indianapolis, 1866) 269. "Colonel" Sinclair was a private in Company A, and served in the GAR for a full sixty days.
34Cf. Journal of the House of Representatives of the State of Indiana, Fifty-Sixth Session of the General Assembly, 1887-1889 (Indianapolis, 1887) especially pp. 93, 216. Sinclair served on the committee for Banks an on Affairs of State Prisons, and he introduced several innocuous measures. It is interesting to note that Sinclair was not even mentioned in the History of Washington County, published in 1916, the year of his death. Possibly he was overlooked because of his long residence in West Baden. However, The West Baden Journal constantly mentions his return to Salem "to look after business interest in that place."
Orange County was surprised when, in February 1888, the Stout Brothers announced that they had sold their one-third interest in the West Baden Springs to Lee W. Sinclair, of Salem, for $28,000. Although the Stouts had managed to increase the business at the Springs more than five hundred per cent in the past five years, they perhaps felt that the increase was due more to the coming of the railroad than to their own knack for the hotel business. When Sinclair offered them his generous price, and also agreed to sell his own store in Salem, which was supposed to invoice almost forty thousand dollars, the Stouts probably felt that they were getting out of a business for which they had little relish and into one which they understood. Sinclair took up active interest in the hotel immediately, and planned to move to it his forty head of horses for the hotel stable. Before the summer season was over, on July 16, 1888, Sinclair also bought out Dr. James Braden and his wife, paying them $33,333 1/3, thus acquiring a two-thirds interest in the property. And so, by the end of the season, Lee Sinclair had gained controlling interest in the West Baden Springs Company, with George Campbell and E. B. Rhodes sharing equally the other one-third interest. Sinclair would soon leave upon the company his indelible imprint.

35 Deed Record Book 38, March 20, 1888, 505, gives $28,000 as the price for the land. This sum seems nearer the truth than $84,000, the sum announced in the Paoli Republican, February 22, 1888, p. 3. The later figure probably represents the total value of the property rather than the one-third interest of the Stouts.

36 Paoli Republican, February 22, 1888, p. 3.

37 Ibid., July 18, 1888, 3. Deed Record Book 39, July 30, 1888, p. 84, gives the purchase price as $25,000. There may of course have been other considerations for other items. Dr. Braden's family then moved to Indianapolis while the doctor himself went prospecting out west.
What kind of man was Sinclair? Acquaintances tell us that he was sincere, short-spoken and strong-willed. He was strict with his employees and found it hard to delegate authority. Hard-bitten and proud, he had to dominate every activity in which he took part. Perhaps his life's history speaks more eloquently of his character and personality than any other source: from a poor farm boy he rose to a position of wealth and influence; the disaster of three major fires did not daunt his courage or still his determination to make his mark; the hotel he built, still unique after half a century, reveals in an undeniable way his desire to be different and to startle the crowd. Sinclair had the American desire to succeed, and he had the frontiersman's will of iron to implement that desire. In later years his strength of will might degenerate into mere stubbornness, but it would still be merely the obverse side of his finest virtue.

Sinclair ambitioned to make the West Baden Springs Hotel one of the outstanding hotels of the country. His actions do not leave any doubt on that point: the constant improvement, the unique building, the extensive use of the West Baden Journal as an advertising unit, the sending of his baseball team of the hotel's colored waiters around the country on tour. The Journal itself at times modestly hints at the hotel's superiority: "Copies of the menus of some of the leading hotels of the country on that day [Thanksgiving] may be seen at the office and from a comparison West Baden does not bring up the rear by any means."38 And a note of envy: "RIVAL OF WEST BADEN: New York City can claim of having the costliest hotel in the world. It is the Astoria adjoining and

38Journal, December 4, 1894, p. 4. Cf. the Appendix for a sample of the hale and healthy breakfast menus of those days.
part of the Waldorf. It was built by the Astors and cost six million. 39

Sinclair set about his task with vigor. During the year 1888 the hotel was open for the whole year instead of just during the "watering season". 40 In the same year he built a laundry and engine house. 41 The next year he prevailed upon Rhodes and Campbell to mortgage their property to the amount of $50,000 "For improvements on the West Baden Springs property." 42 Before this mortgage would be completely satisfied George Campbell sold his one-sixth interest to Rhodes, thus giving Rhodes a full one-third. This transaction took place on April 10, 1893. 43 All the evidence indicates that Rhodes never exercised any more than one-third of the policy-making power, if even that. Eventually Rhodes would take charge of the kitchen and dining room and Sinclair would do all the rest. Sinclair had controlling interest, and he knew how to use it. 44

Each year saw some improvement; about 1893 the first bottling works and the first Opera House were erected on the grounds. 45 In 1894 a "Commodious and


40 The Sinclair Questionnaire.

41 Paoli Republican, June 5, 1889, p. 3. Lake so many of Sinclair's projects, this one too was consumed by fire—just a year after it was finished.

42 Cf. the mortgage note in the West Baden College files.

43 Deed Record Book 43, April 15, 1893, p. 153. The price here indicated is $30,000.

44 Journal, June 8, 1897, p. 3; cf. also Rhodes's Quitclaim in the West Baden College files.

45 Journal, November 26, 1895, p. 2; November 26, 1899, 1.
tasty new hotel office" was added,46 and an addition was made to the hotel which increased the number of rooms by about two hundred, making it possible for the hotel now to accommodate between six hundred and seven hundred guests. By 1895 a casino had been finished on the grounds. The entire first floor was a ballroom, the second floor contained clubrooms and on the third floor were the offices of The West Baden Journal, "a sparkling newspaper, of which W. J. Prow is the editor."47

At the same time as the West Baden Springs Company was expanding the hotel it extended its activity into other fields in some way related to the hotel business. In 1894, for instance, the company let contracts for the building of ten cottages in the town of West Baden, to be rented or leased by workers and their families.48 Sinclair himself was proud of the fact that his hotel brought prosperity and employment to the townspeople and provided a market for

46Ibid., November 6, 1894, p. 4.

47Journal, August 14, 1894, p. 1. The West Baden Journal began publica-
in March, 1894, under the ownership and editorship of Mr. W. H. Murray. It did not take Sinclair long to see the potential publicity organ it could be for the hotel, and in May of that same year he and Rhodes bought the paper and put Mr. W. J. Prow in charge as editor. Cf. Journal, May 25, 1894, p. 4. The paper, which would have had a hard time making its way on its own, having a circulation at its peak of only three thousand, was a success when subsidised by the hotel and made its official publication. The last issue was published on September 24, 1918. It is to this unique newspaper, more than to any other one source that we owe our knowledge of hotel life and management. All news was hotel news, reported in the elaborate and charming style of the nineteenth century. Possibly the only complete file of the paper in existence is in the West Baden College library. Mr. Laff Prow, son of the editor and present Reservations' Clerk at the French Lick Springs Hotel, says that all of the family records and copies of the paper have been destroyed.

48Journal, October 30, 1894, p. 4.
some of the products of the surrounding farms.\textsuperscript{49}

By 1895 the hotel was equipped with five hundred rooms which were lighted by electricity, heated with steam and connected with the lobby by a system of electric bells.\textsuperscript{50} In 1896 the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad announced that it would begin a through Pullman sleeping car from St. Louis to the Springs, which would leave St. Louis every Friday night and arrive in West Baden at 6:20 Saturday morning. The car would leave the Springs Sunday evening at 9:05 and arrive in St. Louis early the next morning.\textsuperscript{51}

One of the hotel's most interesting buildings was constructed in 1896. This was the huge, double-decker bicycle track, located just a few hundred yards south of the hotel. This track was a third of a mile long; 409 feet on each of its parallel lines and 472 feet on each of its curves. The track was twenty feet wide and had a total inside length of 709 feet, or better than the length of two football fields. It had a total inside width of 300 feet. The track was built of wood, and the lower level was twelve feet high; this level was used as a Shetland pony track for the children. The upper level was built in regulation style for a track of those days, having a grade of from two and one-half feet on the curves. Both levels were equipped with electric lights. The field inside the track was used as a baseball diamond. By building this track Sinclair apparently hoped to attract some ball clubs to West Baden as a

\textsuperscript{49}\textit{Ibid.}, November 26, 1895, p. 2.

\textsuperscript{50}\textit{Ibid.}

training quarters. The pony track for the children, the upper level as a bicycle track for the younger set and as a promenade in the evening for the more mature—the bicycle track was one of the hotel's best investments. 52

In 1897 the hotel installed a new six ton ice and refrigerating plant. 53 In the following year Sinclair began the construction of the "Catholic cathedral," Our Lady of Lourdes, and the company expanded its activities further by opening an undertaking establishment. 54 Also in 1898 the hotel staged the formal opening of "The West Baden Natatorium," a swimming pool 135 feet long and thirty-five feet wide, enclosed by a frame structure two stories high. Around the pool on the ground floor were the dressing rooms, and from the ceiling hung rings, ropes and trapezes. The second story was a balcony, from which spectators could watch the swimmers and from which, on gala occasions, the West Baden Military Band would add to the festivities. The opening took place on July 25 at 8:30 in the evening with exhibition diving, log-rolling contests and trapeze acrobatics. After the show "about thirty persons donned their suits, and disported themselves in the pleasant water to their own liking till the hour for closing arrived." 55

The "Gay Nineties" were the beginning of the heyday for the mineral

52 Ibid., February 9, 1897, p. 3.
53 Ibid., March 16, 1897, p. 3.
54 Ibid., October 4, 1898, p. 4; "The West Baden Springs Company has added to their equipment an Undertaking and Embalming branch, and is prepared to furnish the best of everything pertaining to the Undertaking business. A FINE NEW FUNERAL CAR is used for all calls received. Calls to the country will be given prompt attention. EMBALMING A SPECIALTY."
55 Ibid., August 2, 1898, p. 1.
spring resorts in Indiana. 56 These spots provided a varied vacation program, which was hallowed in a smoke-screen of high-sounding medical phrases. During the nineties West Baden began to take the lead in the state of Indiana, and by the turn of the century she stood at the summit. Mr. Dooley even saw fit to mention West Baden in the same breath with Paris as a rendezvous for the weary rich: "If these people didn't let go with their coin here, they'd take it away with them to Paris or West Baden, Indiana, an' spend it instid in puttin' it in circulation amongst th' florists an' dressmakers an' hackmen they'll have to hire." 57 Dooley had paid West Baden a high compliment, and suggested that the dream Lee Wiley Sinclair had dreamed ten years earlier had almost come true.

The past ten years had been very good to the West Baden Springs Hotel.

By 1900 West Baden had trains direct from Chicago, Louisville and Cincinnati at a round-trip rate of $12.45, $4.00 and $5.00 respectively. 58 The Monor Route of the Orleans, West Baden and French Lick Railway arrived three times a day: 6:20 A.M., 11:05 A.M., and 6:20 P.M. 59 Hotel advertisements stressed the hotel's central location in the mid-west: 280 miles from Chicago, 80 miles from Louisville, 150 miles from Cincinnati and 237 miles from St. Louis.

The hotel building had sprawled out in the four directions of the compass as addition after addition was found necessary. The four wings of the hotel

56Haupt, French Lick Springs Hotel, p. 87.
57Peter Finley Dunne (Mr. Dooley), In Peace and in War, Boston, 1899, p. 158.
58Journal, November 26, 1895, p. 2.
were joined to a central building and contained all together about five hundred rooms. The dining room could seat about four hundred and eighty persons at one time, and was under the very special supervision of Mr. Rhodes. The building was situated on a slight mound amidst a grove of trees, and overlooked the French Lick Creek. It was supposed to contain verandas of about five thousand feet in total length.

On the grounds were the Opera House and the Casino with their game rooms and ball rooms and the gymnasium with its billiard rooms, ten-pin alleys and shooting gallery. There were also the riding stables and carriage sheds, the bicycle track the swimming pool, the baseball diamond, the handball courts and croquet grounds. There were the small pagodas sheltering the springs, and near Number Seven was the bottling works. Also near the springs was the hotel's own small hospital building, where the two resident physicians—Doctors Ryan and Sherrod—were always on call.

Considering the many facilities the hotel offered, the rates were rather modest: $2.00 to $3.00 per day, children and servants at half rate. These were approximately the same as the French Lick Springs Hotel for the same period.60

The hotel guests at this time were drawn from all over the midwest, with about fifty percent coming from the city of Chicago. Louisville, St. Louis and Cincinnati also supplied a large percentage. The proprietors seemed somewhat puzzled by the fact that they drew so few patrons from Indianapolis;

60Haupt, French Lick Springs Hotel, p. 84.
at this early date the phenomenon could not be explained by the presence of Tom Taggart at French Lick. Sinclair carried on the tradition of not advertising in the Paoli newspapers. Perhaps he thought that the advertising of The West Baden Journal was adequate, or perhaps it was part of his scheme to take the West Baden Springs Hotel out of the class of a mere local gathering spot and to give it a more cosmopolitan clientele. At any rate, there were still occasional Orange County celebrations at the hotel and an occasional excursion from towns such as Lafayette and Bedford.

The rivalry between West Baden and French Lick began as soon as the first guest arrived at Mile Lick Inn in the 1850's. The rivalry continued through the years, but West Baden played second fiddle until Lee Sinclair appeared on the scene. It was during the nineties that West Baden overshadowed French Lick, in the brief era before Thomas J. Taggart of Indianapolis took over the management of the French Lick Springs Hotel in 1901. During the latter part of the nineties The West Baden Journal liked nothing better than to print disparaging remarks about the French Lick Springs Hotel, especially if the remarks could be passed off as reprints from other newspapers. For example:

Most of the excursionists went to French Lick, where for some reason they were charged 75 cents for dinner, while those who got off at West Baden were given the best in the house with the regular guests for half a dollar.”

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63 *Ibid.*, reprinted from the *Bedford Democrat*. 
been made.\textsuperscript{64} "Over at French Lick the grounds are naturally pretty. . . . Yet it seemed to lack in some way the life enjoyed at West Baden, where there is always something new and strange.\textsuperscript{65} In 1900 the French Lick Springs Hotel was assessed for improvements to the extent of $75,000, whereas the West Baden Springs Hotel was assessed for $101,925.\textsuperscript{66} According to the Minute Book of the French Lick Springs Hotel the gross income for the year 1900 was somewhat more than $12,000,\textsuperscript{67} whereas according to a statement of Sinclair made in 1901 the net annual income of the West Baden Springs Hotel for the years 1899 and 1900 ranged between $70,000 and 72,000.\textsuperscript{68} At least for this brief period the West Baden Springs Hotel seems to have outshone its neighbor.

It would be foolish to exaggerate the proportions of the hotel’s success during these early days. Its name was in no way synonymous with "vacation" for most Americans of the vacationing class. Even at late as 1899 several outside business men, including Thomas J. Taggart, would comment that neither hotel was equipped to meet the demands of a patronage desiring first class hotel accommodations.\textsuperscript{69} Nonetheless, the hotel’s growth in the past ten years had been staggering, and it had achieved some importance as a resort for mid-

\textsuperscript{64}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{66}Tax Duplicate, 1900, I, 238; II, 235.
\textsuperscript{67}Haupt, French Lick Springs Hotel, p. 67.
\textsuperscript{68}Sinclair Questionnaire.

\textsuperscript{69}Henry Hickman, "Testimony," New York, 1920, p. 1. This sworn statement is now in the vault of the French Lick hotel.
Americans. Under the management of Sinclair the hotel reached a mature and lucrative status. The past ten years had been good to the West Baden Springs Hotel.

But now the hotel faced a new century. What would it bring? As Lee Wiley Sinclair and Elvit B. Rhodes stood on the brink of the twentieth century and peered into it, trying to divine what it held for their West Baden Springs Hotel, they could see only the promise of golden years—progress, prosperity and an unruffled future.
CHAPTER III

FROM ASHES TO GLORY

It was one o'clock in the morning, June 14, 1901. The night watchman was making his usual rounds. All was hushed. As he opened the door to check the kitchen, he suddenly staggered backwards. Flames leaped out at him angrily—FIRE! The watchman tried desperately to put out the flame with a few small hand grenades. The action was pure reflex, for in a moment he saw that the fire was already out of control. He rushed to the night clerk, sounded the alarm, and together they dashed through the long hallways of this sprawling hotel and shouted their warning. The clerk fired his revolver into the air to make sure of arousing the guests, thus unwittingly adding to the fright and confusion. Within a matter of minutes the electric light circuit burned out. Darkness and terror suddenly snatched the hotel in their twin grasp, and threatened to destroy all life that they found within it.

Lee Sinclair, his wife and his daughter were roused immediately, and, forgetting their own personal safety and property, went to the rescue of the hotel's 268 guests.

Fortunately most of the guests were living in the east wing, which had just recently been equipped with a new fire-escape. Quickly they were able to make their way to safety, even amid the confusion and darkness, and fifteen
minutes after the alarm had been sounded most of them were safely outside of
the flaming building. Only a dozen or so were able to salvage their personal
possessions. However, there were no deaths or serious injuries, which was a
matter of much greater moment, and the Journal would proudly be able to report
a few days later that the only loss of life were "Prince" and "Old Bingham",
two dogs which had long been hotel fixtures. ¹

Once Sinclair and the other hotel officials were assured that all of the
guests were safe they turned their efforts to trying to save the hotel. But
it was too late. The fire had a healthy start of half an hour, and voraciously
devoured the dry old wood of the hotel. Sinclair, who had adequate experience
with the destructiveness of fire, had taken the precaution in 1896 of pumping
water from the Lost River to a reservoir above the hotel which was capable of
pumping a million gallons of water a day at a pressure of over eighty pounds.²
But the excitement and the confusion were too much. The fire whipped through
the building, and the four hundred and fifty thousand gallons of water which
eventually were poured into it were all in vain. Within an hour and a half
Lee Wiley Sinclair had nothing left of his grand dream except ashes, a few
gaunt chimneys and the blistered fire-escape, which must have leared at him
cruelly as he stood amid the ruins.³

Besides the hotel itself, the following buildings or units were also

¹Cf. the Journal, June 18, 1901, p. 1, and The Louisville Courier-Journal
June 15, 1901, p. 1, for details on the fire and its aftermath.

²Journal, July 21, 1896, p. 3.

³The Louisville Courier-Journal for the following day reported that the
fire was actually visible in parts of Louisville. That seems to stretch one's
credulity.
destroyed: the new swimming pool, whose loss alone was reckoned at $16,000,
the bath house, the electric light plant, the laundry, the dance hall, the ice
plant, the gymnasium, the handball courts, the barns and the employees quarters.
The total loss was calculated at about five hundred thousand dollars. In-
surance covered only one hundred thousand dollars of the damage.

Luckily there was little wind during the night, and the rain offered at
least some small protection to the other buildings. As a result, the Opera
House, print shop, bottling works, bicycle track and new Catholic Church were
saved. Mrs. Sinclair, however, lost over three thousand dollars worth of
jewelry.

As the fire had raged through the hotel the dispossessed guests had stood
for a while on the grounds watching the blaze and huddled together for pro-
tection against the rain, many clad only in their night shirts. Soon the Monor
was ready for boarding, and thus provided the guests with shelter and warmth
for the rest of the night. The officials of the railroad, realizing that most
of the guests had lost their belongings and their liquid capital in the fire,
invited them to proceed to Chicago or any other point on their line free of
charge.

The next morning the guests, assured that the hotel vault had withstood
the effects of the fire and that whatever valuables they had stored in it were
safe, were also assured that no lives were lost.\footnote{It is ironic that the valuables of Mrs. Sinclair were not stored in the vault.} Feeling a sense of deep re-
lief, they began to recount over their breakfasts some of the more amusing in-
ocidents of the fire. A classic case was that of a Mr. Clark from Chicago, who in the excitement and alarm of the fire grabbed Mrs. Clark and carried her screaming from the building. It was not until he reached the lawn outside the burning hotel that he realized that the woman he had grabbed was not Mrs. Clark at all. He immediately dashed back into the building and soon emerged with another screaming Mrs. Clark—this time the correct one. 5

But Lee Wiley Sinclair and Elvit R. Rhodes found little to amuse them on that bleak morning of June 14. Fourteen years of labor had ended in heartbreak.

What ideas were running through the mind of Sinclair on that June morning? He must have seen clearly the decision which was his to make: to stop here, say that his life's ambition had been achieved, and that he had at one time raised the hotel to its proper and mature status; or, at the age of sixty-five, to risk all and begin again. Years later official publications of the West Baden Springs Company liked to state that the idea of the new hotel "Came to the Honorable Lee W. Sinclair on the night of June 13th, 1901, as he stood by the smoking ruins of the old West Baden Springs Hotel." 6 The Louisville Courier-Journal on the very day after the fire stated: "... and already plans for a new hotel on a grand scale are being made. It will probably be


6 "West Baden Springs," brochure, West Baden, Indiana, ca. 1905, p. 5.
build of brick, stone and iron. But The West Baden Journal for June 18, 1901, the issue which covered the fire, was uncharacteristically silent about plans for a new hotel. It is certain, however, that if Sinclair did decide to build on June 14, 1901, soon afterwards he changed his mind and tried to sell the property to the French Lick Springs Company. The offer was rejected.

The rejection of his offer by the French Lick Springs Hotel Company must surely have been the catalyst Sinclair needed. Taggart during the early years of the present century, when the rivalry was the keenest, regarded with a rather condescending smile Sinclair's sometimes outlandish schemes to make West Baden outshine French Lick. Perhaps a bit of this condescension was all Lee Sinclair needed to spur him on and make him determine to conjure up a new hotel from the ashes of the old.

Once Sinclair decided to build he went about the task with characteristic

7 The Louisville, Courier-Journal, June 15, 1901, p. 1. The legend in West Baden Springs has always been that on the night of the fire Sinclair dramatically drew a huge circle in the midst of the ruins and solemnly proclaimed that the new hotel would rise from that spot within a year. No first-hand substantiation, written or oral, has been found to support this story, although it fits in perfectly with Sinclair's personality and with the actual events which ensued.

8 Of Hickman's "Testimony," p. 7: "During the late winter or early spring of this year [1901] the hotel and all of the other buildings of the WEST BADEN SPRINGS COMPANY were totally destroyed by fire and its park damaged. This property, as it then stood after the destruction by fire, without buildings or improvements of any value, ... was offered for sale with the purchase price fixed at $700,000." Haupt, French Lick Springs Hotel, p. 102-103, quotes a similar notarized statement by Taggart, which was not available to the author, in which the detail is added that the French Lick Springs Company offered to pay $6,000,000, but that the amount was rejected. This is obviously a typographical error, the amount most probably being $600,000.
energy and vigor. The new French Lick Springs Company had incorporated on June 24, 1901, just ten days after the fire at West Baden. The Monon Railroad now held a $300,000 interest in the new enterprise, which the new manager, Taggart, evaluated at $1,200,000. Taggart's hotel experience and success, his political and social connections, and the improvements which he planned for the French Lick Springs Hotel—all told Sinclair that the race was on and that his hotel would have to be marvellously good in order to beat the pace Tom Taggart was setting.

Sinclair early made two unusual, but characteristic, decisions as regards the new hotel: 1) it would be circular and would support the world's widest dome, and 2) it would be built within a year. Just where and how Sinclair conceived the original idea for the unique structure is not known, but there can be no doubt that the final implementation and particular details of the hotel's lay-out were absolutely his own. 10


10 There is a story to the effect that Sinclair took a trip to Europe for his health after the fire, and that he got the idea there. But time hardly seems to allow for that; things moved too fast to give Sinclair time for a trip to Europe, it would seem. Haupt, French Lick Springs Hotel, 103, quotes Raymond P. Stout, president of the Paoli Bank, as saying Sinclair got the idea from a trip to Europe previous to the fire. The author was not able to check with Mr. Stout, who died in the spring of 1955. Stout's explanation, however, seems to be somewhat satisfactory and was accepted, even if not proffered, by many of the people interviewed by the author. The Dome of St. Peter's Cathedral in Rome and the Colosseum are supposed to have been the inspiration for the hotel's unique design. The West Baden Journal, October 21, 1902, p. 1, however, denies that the building is patterned after any historical structure. Each of the blueprints for the hotel specified that the plan for the hotel was Sinclair's and that the architect is merely executing what Sinclair presented. Cf. the blueprints in the West Baden College vault. The West Baden Journal is equally categorical in attributing the basic design solely to "the Honorable Lee W. Sinclair."
The time limit was also typical of Sinclair. Valley legend has always held that Sinclair made a huge bet that he could have the building finished within a year from the date of its destruction. That certainly would not be out of keeping with his character, but no real documentation, written or oral, has been found for it.11 Aside from the possibility of a bet, Sinclair was probably determined to meet the French Lick competition as soon as possible and not allow the new management to get too much of a head start on him. He determined, therefore, to have the hotel completed within a year from the day it burned.12 An added, and surely a cogent, reason for wanting to build the new hotel as expeditiously as possible was the lush profit of $70,000 a year which Sinclair and his associate had been reaping from the old hotel.13

However, the unusual design and the seemingly unreasonable time limit set by Sinclair seem to have been too much for Elvit Rhodes, and he decided to get out while he was able. On June 20, 1901, he issued a Warranty Deed for his share of the West Baden Springs Company to Lee Sinclair, and received in return $150,000.14 Sinclair was now free to move ahead alone.

In the meantime Sinclair set about organizing and incorporating a new

11Statements of W. W. Cave, Laff Prow and Elmer Thacker to the author.
12Cf. Sinclair Questionnaire: "When do you expect it will be completed." A. "Contracted to be completed by May 21, 1902." Cf. also the terms of the contract itself: "ARTICLE VI. The Contractors shall complete the several portions of the work comprehended in this agreement within two hundred (200) working days. From Oct. 1, 1901, or forfeit one hundred dollars ($100) for each day completion postponed beyond the expiration of that time, this basis being agreed upon as liquidated damages for delay."
13Cf. Sinclair Questionnaire.
14Deed Record Book 51, July 25, 1901, p. 346.
West Baden Springs Company under the new rules for corporations passed by the General Assembly of Indiana in March of that year. The capital stock of the company was $1,000,000, divided into 10,000 shares of $100 dollars each. Sinclair had interested another Salem business man by the name of James F. Persise in the new hotel, and Sinclair, his wife, Caddie, and Persise were the incorporating members of the company. The first board of directors of the company was made up of Sinclair, his wife, his daughter, Persise and his wife. Obviously the board was a mere technicality to qualify under the new laws. The Articles of Incorporation were notarized and recorded on August 13, 1901.

On September 18, 1901, the board of directors of the West Baden Springs Company decided that it would be necessary to borrow money to the extent of $500,000 upon its bonds, to be issued and secured by a mortgage or trust deed by the Equitable Trust Company of Chicago. The agreement was signed on October 1, and the West Baden Springs Company had issued in its name 1000 bonds of the sum of $500 each. The maturity date set for these bonds was October 1, 1913, and the company agreed to retire $50,000 worth of them annually, beginning on October 1, 1904. The interest rate on the bonds was five percent per annum, payable semi-annually. On March 1, 1902, Sinclair entered into an

15 General Laws of Indiana, 1901, Indianapolis, 1901, p. 289.

16 All of these details are taken from "The Articles of Incorporation," Miscellaneous Record Book 2, August 13, 1901, p. 523, in the Orange County Court House. It is interesting to note the seventh article: "The seal of this corporation shall be a circular disc bearing the words 'The West Baden Springs Company' on the outer edge, and the monogram 'L.W.S.', with the word 'seal' thereunder in the center thereof." There was to be no doubt as to the person behind the company's name.

17 For all the details on this transaction cf. Mortgage Record 17, October 3, 1901, p. 153, Orange County Court House.
agreement with four Chicago men who consented to buy $400,000 par of the mortgage bonds at the price of eighty-seven cents on the dollar. Note the huge profit rate on this loan: thirteen per cent plus the original five per cent—eighteen per cent profit. Sinclair probably felt that he could afford this rate, for in October, 1901, he had predicted to the Equitable Trust Company that the annual net income of the new hotel would be something like $109,500.

Once Sinclair was assured of the financing of his project he signed Caldwell and Drake of Columbus, Indiana, as the Contractors. He agreed to pay them $414,000 for "work and material" specifying that the work be completed two hundred days from the signing of the contract on October 1.

Sinclair chose a young architect named Harrison Albright from Charleston, West Virginia, to execute the plan he had in mind. Other architects had refused the job, saying that the dome could never stand the effects of contraction and expansion. Albright, a young man at the time, had no reputation to lose if he failed and fame to gain if he succeeded. Sinclair explained to Albright what he wanted, and Albright put the ideas into concrete, practicable

18Cf. the West Baden College files for a copy of this agreement.

19Sinclair Questionnaire. This would mean a return of about eleven per cent on the capital stock, which seem like a gigantic sum. Sinclair's estimate may be somewhat exaggerated, but Haupt, French Lick Springs Hotel, 116, gives $276,000 as the total profits of that hotel for 1912. These were the days before the heavy government taxes began to eat profit out of business.

20Cf. the contract in the West Baden College files. At the time the building began Sinclair valued the property at $600,000.

21Journal, November 4, 1902, p. 1
And so the work began. Few details have come down to us of the actual building of the hotel. We do know, for instance, that on Thanksgiving Day, 1901, 516 men were employed on or around the building, and twenty teams of mules and horses were used to transport materials from the railroad to the grounds. The bricklayers were paid fifty-five cents an hour from December, a raise of five cents an hour over their original wage. The common laborers got a dollar a day. There were no serious accidents during the whole building program and there were no lives lost, an enviable record even today. Perhaps the closest the hotel came to tragedy during the building were the explosions of the pent-up nerves of owner and architect. We have only one account of how Sinclair was reacting to Albright by the end of November. In a conversation between Sinclair and the contractor, Caldwell, Sinclair had this to say about some changes proposed by Caldwell in the original plans: "I do not want to change nothing sic and I do not propose to do it, then he Albright can’t blame it on me... You and him have to fight it out. He is away and I don’t want him to be able to say if anything goes wrong that Sinclair agreed to it. Here is Albright away half the time!"

22Journal, November 4, 1902, p. 1
24In the year 1900 the average wage for laborers in the United States was $13.00 per week. Round steak, however, cost $.13 a pound. Oscar Barck and Nelson Blake, Since 1900 (New York, 1952) p. 10.
Although the details on the construction work are meager, a few statistics on the materials used and on the vastness and massive proportions of the building will in themselves tell a sufficiently dramatic story.\textsuperscript{26}

Materials:

45 cars of steel
13 cars of stone
187 cars of sand
171 cars of gravel
62 cars of cement
26 cars of lime
242 cars of cinders
51 cars of lumber
16 cars of red brick, trimming
450 cars of white brick\textsuperscript{27}

Four tons of lead and zinc were used in painting the interior.

Dimensions of the hotel:

\textsuperscript{26} For this information we have to rely almost exclusively on the data given by The West Baden Journal since all more authentic accounts seem to have been lost or destroyed. In general, however, the information should be accurate, for the Journal did not publish during the year the hotel was being built, and would have the leisure and the opportunity to consult the actual documents. The Journal resumed publication in October of 1902.

\textsuperscript{27} Cf. Harrison Albright, "Specifications for Hotel for West Baden Springs Company," West Baden, Indiana, p. 7, in the West Baden College files for more details on type and quality of materials used, especially the brick; "The entire outside of the building, above grade, except trimmings will be faced with Chicago Buff brick which will be delivered F.O.B. cars on the grounds by the owner for $6.20 per M. . . . All brick trimmings will be red brick . . . . for $7.75 per M." The Bedford Blue Stone used for the foundation was quarried on the grounds. Cf. Journal, October 21, 1902, p. 3, and "Specifications", p. 5.
The new hotel was an octahedron, made up of fifteen sections, each sixty feet long. The outer circumference of the building, including the circular lobby, was 1010 feet. The inner rooms formed a perfect circle around the court or atrium, and rose in circular tiers to the height of six stories. The diameter of the entire hotel, including corridor and outer rooms, was 343 feet. There were 708 rooms, each guest room being supplied with bath, lavatory, telephone, hot and cold water, steam heat and electric lights. In the building proper there were three thousand closets and a total floor space of 237,720 square feet. Ten thousand yards of carpet were required for the corridors and halls alone.

The atrium and dome, however, were the most striking and unique feature of the new hotel: the dome was two hundred feet in diameter, had six hundred feet of inner circumference, and was 130 feet high. The hub of the drum of the big dome was itself ten feet high, sixteen feet in diameter and weighed eight and one-half tons. From the hub twenty-four ribs of steel, each weighing four and one-half tons, radiate to the pillars which support them. The expansion and contraction of the dome was taken care of by rollers on top of the twenty-four columns. The "factory strength" of the dome, according to the contractors, was six.28

The 10,000 square feet of glass in the dome was laid in seven days, and

28 By "factory strength," according to the lucid explanation of the Journal, "is meant a breaking point that to reach you must have a weight to equal the weight of the materials used in its construction, to which is added the estimated weight of eighteen inches of wet snow, and this amount multiplied by six." October 21, 1902, p. 4.
consumed three and one-half tons of putty. There were 60,000 square feet of painted surface in the dome. The floor space in the atrium was 62,832 square feet, and the air space 2,730,000 cubic feet. The hotel, grounds and furnishings Lee Wiley Sinclair estimated to be worth $1,200,000.00 when the job was done.  

The work had proceeded at feverish pace, as Caldwell and Drake tried to achieve the impossible in the two hundred days allotted to them. A sixty hour week was standard for all labor in the year 1900, and certainly would be the minimal for anyone employed in the building of the hotel. Through rain, snow, flood and holiday the work went on, and finally, except for a few details and clean-up, the hotel was ready on schedule. The race had been won. On September 12, 1902, the final settlement was made between Caldwell and Drake and the West Baden Springs Company.

True to form, on the first anniversary of the fire, June 14, 1902, Lee W. Sinclair moved into his rooms in the new hotel, and that morning had Mr. and Mrs. J. E. Callahan of Chicago as his guests at breakfast. Sinclair's triumph was complete. Three months later the formal opening was held, and business began again.

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29 Cfr Sinclair Questionnaire. The Tax Duplicate, 1905, II, 315, gives only $165,000 for improvements. Of course this does not include land and other buildings or furnishings and represents only a fraction, probably one-third, of full value.

30 Cf. Barck and Blake, Since 1900, p. 10.


The hotel's day of formal christening came almost seven months later on April 16, 1903. The day, overcast and chill after three days of steady rain, dawned glorious. Eight enormous American flags flew triumphantly in the breeze from atop the eight Moorish towers, and this octet was fittingly crowned by the most enormous flag of all flying from atop the dome of the grand atrium. The hotel swarmed with guests, dignitaries and sightseers. The ceremonies began at 2:30 in the afternoon with speeches in the atrium, as Governor Durbin, Senator Fairbanks, and other notables marveled, wondered and exclaimed with delight. Seldom in the history of the human race has any one day heard so many superlatives.

Governor Durbin's address, an elaborate eulogy of Sinclair, was typical of the event and the times: "I myself wrote him a letter on the subject, in which I used every argument I could possibly employ to convince him of the hazards involved in this plan. Afterwards, ... I had a personal interview with him along the same lines. ... He told me in that interview that practically every friend he had in the world was opposed to his project, but that in spite of all opposition he was determined to go on." The keynote had been struck.

After the speeches Sinclair was presented with a portrait of himself, and the formal program was thus brought to an appropriate close. At six o'clock in the evening eight hundred specially invited guests were feted with a banquet in the hotel's grand dining room, probably a welcome substitute for the barbecue which the damp weather had cancelled. The banquet was followed at

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33 The details on the celebration are from the Journal, April 21, 1903.
8:30 by a ball, "where more than 200 couples," said the Journal, participated in the execution of the elaborate dancing program."

Thus ended the great day. A dream had come true. The Journal, in its quaint, solemn and Victorian manner, caught the spirit of the day's festivities as well as anyone: "The new West Baden stands today, risen like the Phoenix from the ashes of despair to the very acme of its olden joy. The new hotel building of the West Baden Springs Company might very properly be called the eighth wonder of the world."34

34 Journal, October 21, 1902, p. 4.
CHAPTER IV

LIFE IN THE HOTEL

The mineral springs had been the original magnet drawing people to the West Baden-French Lick area. Because of them the Buffalo Trace led George Rogers Clark through the area to Vincennes, and because of them Dr. Bowles built his French Lick House and prospered with it. During the twenty years between 1890 and 1910 it was still the springs which drew people to the area, or at least occupied the most prominent place in the advertising recommending the hotel. Perhaps in the nineties the advertising reached its most ridiculous heights, but even in the first decade of the present century the waters were the excuse, if not the reason, for coming to the West Baden Springs Hotel. In 1893 a hotel brochure modestly listed over fifty diseases which the waters cured or helped to cure. 1 It would take the "Muckrakers," the Pure Food and

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1 Taken from the brochure, "Carlsbad of America," 1893-1894 (West Baden, Indiana, 1893) p. 13.

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<tr>
<th>alcoholism</th>
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<td>venereal diseases</td>
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<td>white swellings</td>
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Drug Laws and the growing spirit of public criticism of medical quackery to push the springs and their miraculous medicinal powers into the background, and force the hotel to place greater emphasis upon modern recreational facilities.

In the fall of 1892 Spring Number Seven was discovered in midstream of the French Lick Creek, thus bringing the number of springs on the grounds to four: Numbers One, Three, Five and Seven. Spring Number Seven was by far the largest, and in 1900 it was producing about twelve gallons of water per minute. The discovery of prolific Number Seven raised the possibility of bottling the water for commercial sale throughout the country. Crude attempts made to store the water in kegs and jugs had failed because the water immediately went flat, and then produced a sediment and coloration. The water stored in this manner developed a very disagreeable odor, and actually became unfit for human consumption. To avoid this reaction the gases in the water had to be thrown off by boiling, and during this process epsom salts and glauber salts were added. These two salts could be held in solution by this process, so that in reality the only change that took place was a strengthening or fortifying of the original water.

Sinclair and Rhodes built their first bottling works on the approximate

2 "The Carlsbad of America" (West Baden, Ind., ca. 1900) p. 11

3 The Journal, November 26, 1895, p. 2, estimated Seven's capacity at about two thousand barrels a day.

4 Journal, November 26, 1895, p. 2. As early as 1851 a barrel of mineral water was advertised for sale in Paoli, most probably from the French Lick House, then under the management of John A. Lane. History of Orange County, p. 390.

5 Cf. Haupt, French Lick Springs Hotel, pp. 127-128, for details of the process as done at French Lick "Pluto."
spot where Spring Number Seven stands today. By 1895 the sale of bottled "Baden Sprudel" was a fairly well organized business. Under the direction of Eugene Heim, one of Sinclair's most trusted assistants, a special office was set up at 269 Dearborn Street in Chicago, where he supposedly sold about three hundred cases a month during the year 1895. The company also was represented by John Graf in Milwaukee, and by Whitehead and Company in Cincinnati. The price of the water was $2.50 per case, which allowed a $.50 rebate on empty Sprudel bottles. At that price Heim must have grossed approximately $9,000 in 1895 on the waters alone. This represents, of course, almost pure profit, for the only cost would be the process, and shipping rates. The Sprudel water was such a profitable source of income by 1903 that Sinclair decided to build a new bottling plant, just about twenty feet from the old one. The old plant was difficult to approach because of the low swampy ground surrounding it, and frequently was flooded by the creek nearby.

6 It is hard to say whether West Baden or French Lick took the lead in the process of bottling the water. The great impetus in Pluto advertising began in 1903 when the bottling works were improved and modernized. Just how long before the hotel had been bottling water there are no documents to tell us.

7 Blatchley, Mineral Waters, p. 108.

8 Journal, November 26, 1895, p. 2.

9 There are no figures available of the success of Sprudel sales after 1895. We do know that by 1903 Pluto sales exceeded $52,000 and by 1915 jumped to more than $500,000; Cf. Haupt, French Lick Springs Hotel, 114-116. For this reason it is hard to understand why Sinclair dissolved the West Baden Springs Water Company, chartered on October 25, 1901, and incorporated it into the West Baden Springs Company on September 17, 1907. The reason given was "indebtedness." Cf. Cause #3779, Orange County Circuit Court, Clerk's Office, Paoli, Ind. It is almost impossible to believe that Pluto was so prosperous and the Sprudel could not make ends meet. The West Baden Springs Water Company, capital stock $10,000, was sold for $7270.09. In the Water Company Sinclair held fifty-one shares, Persis forty-eight and Ballard one. Perhaps
There was no end to the powers of the waters. But in time the hotel's claims for them became more and more tempered by prudence, and the advertising emphasis shifted from diseases cured to the chemical content, letting that bit of scientific analysis speak for itself, either to leave the reader unmoved or to overwhelm him with its factuality. Even today medical men do not perfectly agree on the precise value of the waters, but they are in complete agreement as to the general healthfulness of the regimen prescribed by the hotel for those "who wanted to get the full benefit from the waters": "two or three glassfuls before breakfast, three or four glassfuls in the forenoon, and a like quantity in the afternoon, with an interval of fifteen or twenty minutes between each glassful. A brisk walk, not too tiring, after drinks aids the action of the waters. There should be two hours of complete rest after each meal. ... Alcoholic stimulants and this mineral water will not mix, and it is positively dangerous to have them in the stomach at the same time." This program of rest, relaxation and moderate exercise surely performed more medical miracles than the waters, and must have been the heart of the West Baden plan. This sane routine, coupled with fine food, change of scenery, and the psychological lift coming from drinking such marvelous waters, could hardly fail to put the sick businessman in more cheerful spirits and in a mood to

the company was so prosperous that Sinclair wanted to get a greater share of the profits—but even this explanation does not satisfy. At any rate, the bottling continued until 1918 when a run-in with the Department of Agriculture seems to have closed down the bottling for good.


11 *Journal*, November 4, 1920, p. 3.
acknowledge he felt better. And of course there is nothing to compare with the sense of relaxation and well-being which comes from baths and massages.

By 1910 West Baden had at least nine different types: 1) electric light bath, 2) mud bath, 3) Turkish bath, 4) Russian Bath, 5) West Baden Turkish Bath, 6) Sulphur bath, 7) shampoo bath, 8) alcohol rub, 9) salt rub (or Glow). These various rubs, baths and massages were expertly administered by such a professional as Dr. Maximilian Lund, "formerly in the German army and bodyguard to the King of Saxony. . . . He is tall, of magnificent proportions; his scars show that he has done his Heidelberg duels."12 Surely, what Maximilian's alcohol rub would not cure his salt rub (or Glow) would.

And cure the treatment did. One "Illinois patron" wrote in 1896: "Send me one case of mineral water. I can't do without it. It has done wonders for me."13 Miss Emily Brensell of Chicago, severely afflicted with inflammatory rheumatism, arrived at the hotel on crutches. Having drunk the waters faithfully during her stay, she found at the end of the week that she no longer had any use for her crutches.14 One of the waters most elaborate encomiums came from Mr. C. L. Pratt & Co., manufacturers of Havana Cigars, Chicago." Mr. Pratt wrote:

Lee W. Sinclair, West Baden

Dear Sir:

It has now been over sixty days since I returned from the


13 Journal, April 7, 1896, p. 1.

14 Journal, July 14, 1896, p. 3.
Springs, and I wish to say that I have visited all springs of any fame in this country for my trouble, which has been for twenty years catarrh of the bowels and stomach and enlarged liver. I have paid out to eminent physicians over $7,000 during this time, with no permanent relief. I am getting old now, and yet since visiting your Springs have taken new hope, not for a return of youth, but having been much better since returning from the Springs than I have been for twenty years, I really believe the waters will effect a permanent cure for me. As yet I have had no return of the old symptoms. West Baden water, beyond a doubt, for all chronic troubles, are the best in America, and if all the poor sufferers knew the truth as I do, the hillsides would be covered with the multitudes.

Yours truly,
C. L. Pratt. 15

The proprietors of the Springs at times seem to have been dismayed by the manner in which their patrons disregarded the careful ritual for the drinking of the waters. But eventually they took a cherry view of even this abuse, and reported in the West Baden Journal: "In fact, it may be said that the very fact that West Baden Springs have become popular in spite of the carelessness of the treatment—the mere drinking of the waters in unlimited quantities—is the best proof of their real virtues." 16 That is the last word as regards mineral springs cures.

The raison d'être of even a health resort hotel, however, is to provide conveniences and recreational facilities for its guests. The story of the West Baden Springs Hotel, above all others, would be incomplete and unbalanced without the story of how the guests spent their time and what provisions were made for their enjoyment. 17

15Journal, July 14, 1896, p. 3.
17For this chapter alone chronological treatment has been abandoned in order to give a comprehensive coverage of this aspect of the hotel's story from 1890 to 1910.
If the guest arrived at the Springs on the early morning train from Chicago, he would be met by one of the hotel porters at the new depot, built on ground originally belonging to the hotel and located just a few hundred yards from the lobby. He might notice there the schedule of outgoing trains: one in the morning and evening for Chicago; one in the morning and afternoon for Louisville; one each for St. Louis and Cincinnati in the morning. The hotel carriage or limousine would carry the guest across the wooden bridge the few hundred yards to the lobby steps. There he would see the chauffeurs driving the cars of the guests, perhaps even the red Buick of Colonel Sinclair, to the new garage which was built in 1908 just to satisfy the automobile fad. As the guest mounted the hotel steps he would gaze up at the buff bricks of the mammoth hotel, let his eyes wander up to the Moorish towers and then marvel at the scientific achievement of his age.

Once inside he would spot the registration desk on the far side of the lobby, just outside the gigantic atrium—of which he could catch only the most telescopic of glances. To his far right as he moved through the lobby toward the desk were the double doors of glass which lead into the executive offices, and to his left was the cigar stand and drug counter, run by Dr. Hassenmiller, good friend of Colonel Sinclair and later to be vice-president of the West

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18. This ground was sold to the railroad on June 16, 1905; cf. Deed Record Book 56, June 20, 1905, p. 343.


Baden National Bank. Outside the lobby on the other side of the cigar stand was the Western Union office; nearby were the ladies' and gentlemen's writing rooms and the public telephones.

After registering at the Front Desk—American Plan, single room: $2.50–5.00 a day—the guest might choose to wander around the first floor corridor before going into the atrium to meet some of the other hotel guests. Walking through the corridor towards the "Springs Entrance" he would find private rooms on his left and two meeting rooms on his right, the first with a capacity of fifty and the second with a capacity of 125. After passing the "Springs Entrance" he would find the corridor on the left still given over to private rooms, but on his right would be a large room under the proprietorship of Logan and Bryan, Brokers. Here would be the ticker tape and stock market scoreboard. Next to Logan and Bryan was the small movie theater where every night at seven o'clock young Elmer Thacker would run a movie for the hotel guests. The only event which could upset this ritual was the tardy arrival of Colonel Sinclair, for no movie was ever begun until he appeared upon the scene.

Near the "Taxi Entrance" were the Men's Rest Room, the freight elevator and the Ladies' Rest Room. Next on the right was the barber shop and then the manicure shop. On the left were small meeting rooms. On each side of the short corridor leading into the large dining room was a small private dining room for special parties. The corridor leading back to the lobby had on the

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21 This bank was organized by Sinclair and the Articles of Association were signed on August 4, 1902. Sinclair was the first president, and he and his daughter held controlling interest in the stock, the next largest number of shares being held by Charles E. Ballard—thirty shares. Until 1917 the bank would be located in the hotel itself. The original capital stock was $25,000. Cf. Minute Book, West Baden National Bank, I, 1–27.
left offices and more small dining rooms and on the right the Oriental Shop for
gifts and souvenirs.\textsuperscript{22}

By this time the guest would have come to the two elevators just outside
the lobby and probably be ready to go to his room. As he left the elevator on
the third floor he might be told that Colonel Sinclair's apartments were just
a few doors to his right. On his way to his room the guest would pass the par-
lor, an alcove overlooking the atrium near the dining room stairs. There were
corresponding parlors on each of the floors, each one dedicated to a different
nationality.\textsuperscript{23} One of the most fetching of the parlors was the Japanese parlor,
decorated with all of theunction which current fashion demanded:

\begin{itemize}
\item the prevailing colors are gold, red and black. The paper on
the ceiling and side walls is of yellow tint, with Moorish arches
outlined in black in free hand decoration. At the windows are red
Holland shades, richly embroidered in black, with transparent
Oriental medallions in the center. Two black reed grills, of
wrought iron effect, from domes over the windows, and from each
of these depend two rich Oriental satin full-sash curtains, with
sash fringe, twelve inches wide, matched and looped back with camel
trappings. The doors leading to the hall are draped with Arabian lace
medallions on brass rods. From the ceiling are suspended two
reed lanterns of wrought iron finish, each having six electric lights,
with opalent globes, covered with silk netting, the body of each
lantern being lined with red silk, with an electric light in the
center.\textsuperscript{24}
\end{itemize}

Once settled in his room the guest would wander down into the huge atrium
to meet some of the other hotel guests. There, amid its heavy mahogany colors
and huge, rough-brick columns, he would see a cross section of mid-American

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{22} Cf. hotel diagrams and scrapbooks in the West Baden College files for
these details.
\item \textsuperscript{23} \textit{Journal}, December 9, 1902, p. 1.
\item \textsuperscript{24} \textit{Journal}, November 25, 1902, p. 1.
\end{itemize}
society, where, as Katherine Blake of the Chicago Daily News described the scene: "Diamonds are spread abroad—it is the proper thing to wear a white sweater with a large diamond in the front, or if perchance an alderman, an aldermanic star." Here, perhaps seated in front of the red brick fireplace, were the playboys and politicians, the athletes and show-people who made the West Baden Springs Hotel their vacation headquarters and gave it some of their own color and glamor. At different times the hotel played host to many of America's notables: the governors of Indiana, especially Governor Durbin and Governor Small, Mayor Swift, Mayor Carter Harrison and Mayor "Big Bill" Thompson of Chicago; the famous Catholic philanthropist, John A. Creighton of Omaha; Frank Parmalee, founder of the famous bus and transfer service; America's World War I hero, John J. Pershing; J. M. Studebaker and Robert Graham of automobile-world fame; Richard Croker, chief of New York's Tammany

25The difference in dress and manner between the guests and French Lick and those at West Baden is supposed to have been startling. The French Lick guests were characterized as "eastern and tuxedo," whereas the West Baden guests as "mid-western and sweaters." Statements of Elmer Thacker and Glenn Marlette, old hotel employees. Thacker used to run the projector for the hotel's movies and Marlette managed the taxi stand.


27 Ibid., February 3, 1903, 1. The burning of the Guest Register has made this list more sketchy than we should like. These names have been pieced together from various reliable sources.

28 Picture Album, West Baden College files.

29 Journal, November 6, 1897.

30 Picture Album, West Baden College files

Hall; and at a little later day one of the hotel's most faithful visitors, chief of the Chicago underworld, Al Capone.

It would seem that during the years on either side of the turn of the century prize fighters loved to make the West Baden Springs Hotel their training headquarters. James J. Corbett trained at West Baden before the Corbett-Sharkey battle in November 1898, and followed faithfully "the usual Springs customs in the use of the mineral waters." Thomas J. Sharkey came to West Baden, and the _Journal_ found itself able to say of him: "Socially, Mr. Shaakey [sic] is an agreeable gentleman, and is always surrounded by a coterie of admiring friends." And, of course, the greatest of them all, John L. Sullivan, also found his way to West Baden. The _Journal_ reported a speech John L. gave from the stage of the West Baden Opera House after his days of glory, when he had only his memory to tell him of this greatness:

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33 Statements of Glenn Marlette and Elmer Thacker. Marlette used to drive Capone frequently in his cab, i.e. when Al did not care to use his black, bullet-proof Lincoln. This fabulous car, with fenders of steel and doors with combination locks, was a frequent sight at the hotel. Cf. Emmett Dedmon, _Fabulous Chicago_, New York, 1953, 298. Whenever Capone put in an appearance the employees would eagerly scan the Chicago papers to see why Al got out of town. The bowling alleys were cleared when Al decided to drop in, and a bouncer was stationed at each door and window.

Also at a later date the following people were making annual visits to French Lick: Nicholas F. Brady, R. E. Forest, Gene Tunney, Leon Errol, Irving Berlin, Mary Roberts Reinhart, the Vanderbilts, Al Smith and Roger Sullivan. Cf. Haupt, _French Lick Springs Hotel_, 142-143.

34 _Journal_, January 15, 1901, p. 1 and October 25, 1898, p. 3.

35 _Journal_, January 15, 1901, p. 1 and October 25, 1898, p. 3.
"They say I am an old man," said John L. Then he closed his eyes as if in deep thought. "Me an old man!" he suddenly exclaimed. "Why, don't you know that President Roosevelt is only twelve days older than I am? And who ever said Roosevelt was an old man? I may be a little heavier than the President of the United States, but I am just as lively as he is and I feel as young as he does. My neck today measures twenty-one inches. That's what it measured twelve years ago. My arms are as strong as they ever were, my eyes are in perfect condition, and I can dance an Irish reel with the best of them. I don't deny that my stomach protrudes more than Teddy's, but I can get it down. 36

After meeting some of the guests in the atrium, our friend might walk out to the bicycle track before lunch. There he will see one or the other of the major ball clubs working out. It was in 1897 that the Louisville Colonels arrived at West Baden for spring training, mainly, it seems, because of the troubles experienced by the team in changes of diet and climate in the south. 37 The Colonels started a fad, for the next year the St. Louis Browns reported in March at West Baden, where Manager Tim Hurst outlined this program for the club: "Long walks and short runs will be taken each day, in addition to the use of the mineral waters and the baths for the first few days, but a little active work will be taken on the Springs diamond, located in the center of the covered bicycle track. After the men are properly limbered up games will be played daily. 38 From that time many of the major league clubs made West Baden the spring training quarters: the Chicago Cubs, 39 the Pittsburgh

37 Ibid., March 30, 1897, p. 3.
38 Ibid., March 15, 1898, p. 1.
39 Ibid., March 5, 1907, p. 1.
Pirates, the Philadelphia Phillies, the St. Louis Cardinals, and the Cincinnati Reds.

If the guest had spent an hour or so watching the clubs work out he would find that it was almost time for lunch. However, on his way to the dining room, he might have a few minutes to stop in the parlor of "Mlle Louise, the celebrated palmist." Mlle Louise had studied under the great Professor Zanzigs and received her diploma from him. Mlle Louise was supposed never to fail to convince a patron that there is "something extraordinary in the art of palmistry."

After lunch the guest could hire a hack and ride the short distance to the top of Mount Arie where proprietor Ed Buerk had an observatory. Atop "this mountain top, once the habitation of wild beasts, outlaws and desperadoes, now by the magic touch of the hand of industry been made a thing of beauty and a joy forever," he might rest his eyes on the luxurious greenery of southern Indiana hillsides and hear the proprietor tell of the "good old days" when the Archer boys terrorized the valley and its environs. The guest was surely invited to join one of the expeditions to Outlaw Cave or the Gorge.

40 Ibid., March 12, 1907, p. 1; March 12, 1912, p. 1.

41 Ibid., March 5, 1912, p. 1.

42 Ibid., March 4, 1913, p. 1.

43 Journal, November 4, 1902, p. 1. Before Mlle Louise took up palmistry she had been a school teacher in Decatur, Illinois. Mlle Louise was known at that time as Ida Hookinberry.

44 Ibid., August 21, 1894, p. 1.
Upon returning to the hotel he might again wander out to the track, there to watch Mr. Studebaker challenge one of his friends to a bike race, or to watch Fred H. Schinneer, the world's champion cyclist, practice on the famous West Baden track. Or perhaps he would watch Mayor Swift of Chicago, captain of the "Hots of Number Seven," lead his team to victory on the diamondover the "Colds of Number Five," captained by Senator Mason of Illinois. If there were no ball games between the guests the hotel's own "Black Diamond" team, made up of the colored waiters from the hotel, played for the enjoyment of the guests.

On the way back to the hotel after the game the guest would notice the faithful gathered under the wooden pagodas at the various springs for the afternoon potation, and would be reminded that he also was thirsty. Rather than brave the waters of Numbers One, Three, Five or Seven, he would prefer to imbibe the happier waters of "Spring Number Eight," located in the town of West Baden, whither many of the men folk disappeared everyday. The water of "Number Eight" by official policy was unavailable in the hotel itself, but could always be purchased just outside the hotel grounds.

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46 Ibid., June 29, 1897, p. 1.
47 Ibid., October 26, 1897, p. 3; November 2, 1897, p. 3.
48 Ibid., September 12, 1896, 1. There was no permanent bar in the hotel itself, although later temporary bars might be set up for conventions, etc. The spring waters actually do cause repercussions when mixed with alcohol, and hence the fame of the spot grew as a place to take the "cure." Statement of Mrs. O'Neill to author.
After dinner there would be a show at the new Opera House during the season from fall to spring. Here the guest might see "What Happened to Jones," or "The Banker's Child," or perhaps even one of the Schubert productions, which would be advertised as "clean and really humorous ... a sensational terpsichorean novelty." During the summer months traveling drama companies pitched their tents inside the bicycle track area. There, for instance, the Crescent Comedy Company would feature the "well known Hawthorne Sisters, Misses Kittie and Maude, who have been footlight favorites throughout the United States for the past twenty years," and then as a desperate afterthought, "beginning their stage career while quite young in years." Or perhaps the Krichfield Company would be giving their production of "Uncle Tom's Cabin." If so the guest would have the high privilege of watching "The Best


The new Opera House was built in 1901 and was under the management of W. J. Prow, editor of The West Baden Journal. Under his direction the quality of the shows seems definitely to have improved, partly because of the enlarged and modernized facilities and partly because of his good management. This Opera House burned in 1917 and was never rebuilt, probably because gambling by that time was a better attraction.

50 It was in this Opera House that a colored quartette is supposed to have introduced the State Song of Indiana, "On the Banks of the Wabash" by Paul Dresser. Dresser is supposed to have composed the piece while a guest at the hotel. Cf. advertisement for the fiftieth anniversary of the West Baden Springs National Bank in The Springs Valley Herald, October 2, 1952, pp. 4-5. No first-hand documentation or confirmation of this story has been found.

Tam, The Cutest Eva, The Funniest Topsy," all at the nominal cost of twenty-five cents for adults and fifteen cents for children. Some evenings during the summer season there would be exhibitions in the natatorium. One of the favorites there was the "World's Water Wonders" of Capt. T. J. Q. Meier and his family. Miss Bessie Meier, fourteen years old, "sews, undresses, dives into the pool in a sack and other feats that are remarkable." And "the little tots, Minnie and Elma, aged 2 and 4 years, respectively, rowing the smallest boats ever used, in races and evolutions, captivated everyone."

Some gentlemen and ladies who did not care for such passive entertainment might wander into the club rooms of the Casino on the grounds near the springs. Under the management of "Ed" Ballard the Casino became a prosperous and necessary adjunct of the hotel and grew in importance as the years moved on.

Some evenings, of course, were dedicated to a ball. The St. Patrick's Day Ball was always a favorite with the guests. Sometime in the afternoon, after the parade through town, a notice such as the following might be posted: "St. Patrick's Day, General Order No. 2—All Irish Patriots (sex or color no bar) are cordially invited to visit the annual ball of the sons of Erin, to be held on Tuesday night, March 17. Grand March at 8:30. N. B. Ladies must not appear in green bloomers. Gentlemen must wear more than their complexion."

53 Ibid., May 1, 1900, p. 1.
54 Journal, March 24, 1896, p. 1. Once, as a special treat, the hotel advertised that Burrell Faulkner was preparing "his den of fifty trained rattle-snakes" for an appearance at the hotel. After this brief announcement, however, no more was heard of poor Faulkner, "the renowned snake Hypnotist," Perhaps
The Grand Ballroom on the third floor that evening would be decked in green finery, outdone only by the beautiful gowns of the ladies. This ball would be a marvelous climax to a week's vacation spent at the West Baden Springs Hotel.

West Baden was growing into a resort which reflected the recreational tastes of mid-America in all their unsophistication and healthy exuberance. It was a huge hotel and a gigantic business enterprise, but all during the Sinclair era it retained its homespun atmosphere and its American penchant for the biggest and the best. The West Baden Journal reported the hotel "doings" with all of the affection and indulgence of a doting father. No claims were too great, no praise too lavish—the years continued to smile kindly on this phoenix risen from the ashes. They continued to smile kindly on the "Eighth Wonder of the World."

Sinclair discovered that that type of performance did not draw the lady guests, especially when they found out that the snakes were to be captured within a two mile radius of the hotel. Cf. Journal, December 15, 1896, p. 3.

55 The Journal, December 18, 1900, p. 1, printed the following without batting an eye; a poem by guest, Frank Howard Collier:

West Baden Springs! The West Baden Springs,  
Ever to each sick man a choice blessing brings.  
Surely, there you will find the Carlsbad of this nation.  
Truly, there you will gain health, rest, recreation.

Beautiful are thy hill, and thy slopes ever green,  
And pure is thy water as ever was seen.

Dear health it brings back, and your spirits will rise;  
E'en as you quaff, you're filled with surprise.  
Now drink deeply, my friend—take plenty of Seven.  
Sure, alternated with Five, you'll feel just like heaven!

Really, 'twill reduce the too fat, and the too thin make fatter  
I bring you this message from Colonel Sinclair.  
Now, when you receive it you'll all feel much jollier.  
Great and healing are the powers of the waters so rare.  
Sure they had that effect upon ——Frank Howard Collier.
CHAPTER V

A NEW ERA BEGINS

At 8:30 A.M., Thursday, September 7, 1916, Lee Wiley Sinclair died after a brief illness. An era in the hotel's story came to an end. For several years the active management of the hotel had been in the hands of Mr. Sinclair's son-in-law, Charles B. Nefuord, and for several weeks Mr. Sinclair had been bedridden. Finally the burden of his eighty years became too heavy, and he peacefully passed to the next world.

The funeral was held in the atrium at 2:30 P.M. on Sunday, September 10, 1916. A massive bronze state casket was placed just to the left of the east entrance, and two aged veterans, companions of Sinclair in the Grand Army of the Republic, sat at the head and the foot of the casket, forming a military guard of honor. The casket was unrubrically covered with a large American flag of silk, and backed with a huge mountain of flowers. It was here that the body lay in state from 9:00 A.M. until 1:00 P.M. on Sunday. It was here that over four thousand friends, employees and curiosity-seekers gathered for the funeral service of this stubborn, crotchety, yet admirable, old man.

Reverend Joseph A. Gaines, pastor of the First Baptist Church, was

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1For details cf. the Journal, September 19, 1916 and The Louisville Courier-Journal, September 8 and 11.
assisted by three other Protestant ministers in conducting the services. It was a typical funeral of that age: the hotel orchestra played three of Sinclair's "favorites," at the request of the family—"Nearer My God to Thee."

There has always been a persistent story that Sinclair died a Catholic. The records for Our Lady of Lourdes, the West Baden Church, and Our Lady of the Springs, French Lick, show no record of Sinclair's baptism. Cf. Registra Baptismorum, Matrimoniorum et Defunctorum in Ecclesia Our Lady of the Springs, French Lick, Indiana, and Our Lady of Lourdes, West Baden, Indiana, ab A. D. 1905, Rectory Office, Our Lady of Springs. However, this register is admittedly incomplete, and the absence of Sinclair's name in no way proves that he was not baptized. Mrs. O'Neill told the author in an interview that Father Mattingly, pastor at the time of Sinclair's death, told her personally that he had baptised Sinclair two weeks before his death. He had stationed two bell boys outside of Sinclair's room to warn him of the approach of any member of the family. Mrs. O'Neill is a very reliable and competent witness, for a long time auditor for the West Baden Springs Hotel Company and personal Secretary of Mr. C. E. Ballard, and there seems to be no reason to deny that Sinclair died a Catholic. Sinclair's family, of course, would not hear of a Catholic funeral and insisted upon the ceremony as it was actually carried out.

Sinclair had always shown a great deal of favor toward the Catholic Church. In his early years at West Baden he provided a bus for his Catholic guests and employees to get to Mass on Sunday, according to Mrs. O'Neill. In 1898 he began to lay plans for the hotel's own church, which was dedicated in 1903. Cf. the Journal, March 3, 1903, p. 1. It is true that this church was built for the guests, and may have been a shrewd business move on the part of Sinclair. However, if such a motive entered Mr. Sinclair's thinking, it must eventually have been somewhat sublimated, because of the exceptional effort he put forth to make the church outstanding. On July 18, 1898, Tony Pastor came from New York to act as Master of Ceremonies at a testimonial benefit in aid of the church. Cf. Journal, July 26, 1898, p. 1. This church was completed before the fire of 1901, but the re-building program on the hotel held up the dedication. On March 6, 1902, Sinclair gave the real estate to the Right Reverend F. S. Chatard, Bishop of Indianapolis. Cf. Deed Record Book 52, March 11, 1902, p. 226. In the fall of that same year Sinclair had an extensive system of chimes installed in the steeple, which rang the famous Westminster Peal every quarter hour. Cf. Journal, Oct 21, 1902, p. 1. The church itself, always referred to in hotel literature as "the Catholic Cathedral," was situated on the hill just behind the taxi entrance and was approached by a double flight of almost one hundred steps. It was built of pressed brick and trimmed with Bedford limestone, at a total cost of about $40,000. The church was named Our Lady of Lourdes, the the Journal adds the pertinent comment, "the appropriateness of the name having been suggested by its similarity to the original church of that name, which is located at one of the most famous watering places of France." Cf. Journal, March 3, 1903, p. 1.
"A Perfect Day," and "The Star Spangled Banner." The Reverend Gaines read a poem written by a guest about Sinclair, and the Reverend Taylor delivered a eulogy. After a few prayers the funeral was over.

The next day the body was enclosed in a solid copper vault case and carried to Louisville in a special chartered train. There it was to remain in a vault in Cave Hill Cemetery until a suitable mausoleum could be built at West

On February 27, 1903, Bishop O'Donoghue, auxiliary bishop of Indianapolis, dedicated the church. The Journal gives us part of his address on that occasion:

Most of you will ask yourselves, as you look around and behold the attractive features of this edifice, how comes this beautiful building here? You probably know that the Catholic Church has no organisation and but few communicants resident in this village. This magnificent temple of worship is here because of the generosity of Mr. L. W. Sinclair, who formerly owned the ground upon which it stands, and who himself cheerfully bore all of the expense of its construction. He devised the plans for the structure in his own fertile mind and watched its development as tenderly and eagerly as if it had been the apple of his eye. Mr. Sinclair is not a member of the Catholic faith, and I do not care to discuss the motives which prompt this benefaction. Whether it was a matter of business or sentiment makes little difference. The Catholic Church teaches charity and accepts good gifts from whatever source when properly offered. I feel that Divine Providence will find some way to reward Mr. Sinclair as he deserves. The property was once his, the ground, the building and its contents all belonged to him. He transferred it unconditionally to the Bishop of this Diocese, and now with his consent and authority I again transfer it to God. In your presence, by virtue of the powers bestowed upon me, I transfer it to the great Head of the Church and dedicate it to His glory.

Mass was celebrated in the church every Sunday at 8:00. The pastors resided in the hotel until it closed in 1932. For a few months of that year the pastor stayed at the French Lick Springs Hotel until Mr. Ballard could see to the building of the present rectory at French Lick, according to Mrs. O'Neill. "I feel that Divine Providence will find some way to reward Mr. Sinclair as he deserves," said the bishop. There seems to be no reason to doubt that Divine Providence did not reward Mr. Sinclair with the best of all gifts.
Baden, "The place he loved so well." As Sinclair's body was carried in the funeral train to Louisville "the good old days" ended, and a new age was ushered into the cosmos of the West Baden Springs Hotel.

America was entering a new age. The World War had been going on for almost two years in Europe, and America was already reaping questionable benefits in a boom of prosperous living and easier morality. By 1916 money was flowing rather easily in America and industry was prospering. Henry Ford had democratized the automobile, and America was entering the fast-moving and fast-spending age whose speed the years would only accelerate.

America's recreation tastes were changing. The water cure no longer convinced a generation shocked by Samuel Hopkins Adams's sensational expose of the patent medicine business, The Great American Fraud. Fast-moving America was no longer attracted to a resort merely because it was near at hand and easy to reach; Florida vacations, once the prerogative of only the wealthiest, were now becoming more and more possible for Mr. Average American, who could travel there enjoyably and economically in his Ford flivver—a tourist boom hit America, and the far West and the lower South profited most by it. Fast-living America was no longer satisfied with the homely entertainment of Uncle Tom's Cabin or Captain Mier's Water Wonders. A generation raised on

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3 *Journal*, September 19, 1916, p. 1. This promise was eventually forgotten or neglected, and the only monument to Sinclair in West Baden is the hotel he built.


5 Slosson, *The Great Crusade*, p. 240. This confirmed by Elmer Thacker who spent the 1916 season in Florida.
Yellow-Press journalism and war tensions was seeking a life of thrills and itching for the roaring pace of the 1920's. The post-war era of disillusionment and booming prosperity would only aggravate a spirit already grown restive. The West Baden Springs Hotel had to meet the needs of this new age, this new type of social living. Lee Sinclair had geared it to a slower pace.

The hotel also had to meet the ever-threatening competition of the French Lick Springs Hotel. Lee Sinclair's taciturn and increasingly autocratic manner was no match for the genial handshaking Tom Taggart. Sinclair's stubborn Republicanism was no match for Taggart's unquestioned leadership of the Democratic party. By 1916 Taggart had been time and again mayor of Indianapolis, and for a dozen years national chairman of the Democratic party. Sinclair, on the other hand, in the very year of his death would not merit a mention in the History of Washington County, the county whence he had financed his hotel, and which he had served in the Indiana legislature. The competition between the two hotels was naturally keen, and Sinclair's pride and resentment of Taggart's successes made it even keener. People were thinking that West Baden Springs Hotel needed a new policy and a new hand to direct that policy. It was at this time that Charles Barton Rexford appeared upon the scene.

Lillian Sinclair, the only child of Lee and Caddie Sinclair, spent her "first season in society" in 1894. From that time her name appeared frequently in the Journal as an accomplished and popular young lady. All who

6Journal, August 14, 1894, p. 1.
ever knew her concur in this opinion. It was not, however, until 1911 that she gave her hand in marriage to Charles B. Rexford of Fresno, California. Rexford had some money in his own right and his family ran a packing house in Fresno, but his wealth could not compare with that of his father-in-law. They were married on October 5, 1911, in their apartments in the hotel, and shortly thereafter left for their honeymoon in Fresno.

Some time later Sinclair made Rexford manager of the hotel, in spite of Rexford's lack of experience. Sinclair was now in his late seventies and certainly was preparing Lillian's husband to take over the complete handling of the hotel. Rexford quite willingly assumed the responsibility.

Rexford sensed that America's social temper was changing, and that the West Baden Springs Hotel would have to modernize its facilities and adapt its recreational program. The original mortgage on the hotel had been paid off by January of 1913, and Rexford saw no reason for not beginning some extensive improvements. Sinclair, with the characteristic conservatism of old age, opposed drastic remodeling, but was over-ridden by his daughter and son-in-law. And so the program began.

7Statements of W. W. Cave, President of the French Lick State Bank since 1903 and personal friend of C. E. Ballard, and Laff Prow to author.

8Statement of Laff Prow.


10Mortgage Record Book 26, Orange County Court House, June 20, 1913, p. 102.

In June 191312, just two years after the wedding, the first change was made: a set of bells and chimes were installed in the atrium. This set, installed by the manufacturers, the Yerkes Sound-Effects Company of New York, was the largest in the world at that time, and consisted of 170 Swiss resonator bells, ranging from low C to high G, and thirty-six chimes.13 The dedication took place on June 17 with a program of selections from Straus, Friml and Victor Herbert.

Early the next year, after the old wooden bridge was torn down, began the paving in vitrified brick of Sinclair Boulevard, leading from the Monon depot to the West Baden Springs Hotel. At sixty foot intervals along the boulevard the famous "Boulevard Standards" were installed, "the same as are in use on the boulevards of Paris, France, and the high class lighting systems of the United States."14 These curiosities of a bygone age each contained five lights in cluster form, the large central light having a sixteen-inch globe surmounted by a large bronze American eagle. The Journal heartily recommended an evening stroll along this "Great White Way." While the road was being paved and the lights installed, the huge arch at the end of the boulevard was also being

12 The only indication we have of the hotel's finances during this period is a $1,500.00 mortgage of Charles E. Ballard against the West Baden Springs Company, dated March 3, 1913. Cf. Mortgage Record Book 26, March 3, 1913, 409. A marginal note tells us that the mortgage was "fully paid and satisfied" by June 2, 1914. This sum seems almost trifling in an era when the French Lick Hotel profits reached $276,000 annually. Cf. Haupt, French Lick Springs Hotel, 116. It is impossible to believe that this mortgage is significant in the hotel's financial story.

13 Journal, June 17, 1913, p. 1.

14 Ibid., May 12, 1914, p. 1.
built. This arch was supported by three concrete piers, five feet by six feet, which stood ten feet high and were surmounted by a double arch spanning sixty-four feet in width. The total weight of steel used in the construction of the arch was forty-four tons. Large figures of "Sprudel" were placed on each side of the arch, and the Journal, with blind loyalty, maintained that they added "to the attractiveness of the structure." It also stoutly maintained that "the tourist who has visited in Germany or France is reminded, by gazing on the attractive arch at the end of Sinclair Boulevard at West Baden Springs, of the Brandenburg Gate at Berlin . . . and the Arc of Triumph, at Paris, situated at one end of the Champs Elysees."15

The next year saw a new telephone system installed, which gave complete and instantaneous service throughout the hotel and to long distance lines.16 In April of that same year work began on the eighteen-hole upper golf course.17 This work was under the special supervision of Charles Rexford, and gave promise of being the "sportiest" course in all America.

Sometime around 1915 or 1916 a theater was proposed to the right of the road leading south from the hotel. Plans went so far as to have this building

17 Ibid., April 13, 1915, p. 1. It was at just about this same time that the French Lick Springs Hotel was building its upper course. The course at West Baden never quite worked out as planned. It was too difficult to entice many amateurs, and very few lady guests cared to "golf among the clouds" because of the persistent rumors of rattlesnakes in said clouds. Even some caddies refused to look for lost balls in the high grass. Taxi service to the course was another expense which did not add to the course's popularity. Statement of Elmer Thacker to Joseph T. Tobin, S. J., and author, June 28, 1955.
included on a blueprint submitted to the management of the hotel. These plans never went into effect, however, perhaps because of the tragedy of February 11, 1917.

About 7:15 P.M. on the night of February 11 the fire alarm suddenly clanged. Flame and smoke poured out of the second floor of the hospital building, and within a matter of minutes had spread to the Opera House which adjoined it. A few moments more and Pavilion Number Seven, which housed the bottling works, had also caught fire. In spite of frantic efforts to put out the blaze the hospital and Opera House were soon nothing more than smouldering ruins. The Pavilion, constructed of brick and concrete, had been badly gutted and the bottling works ruined. Once again the "Fire Fiend" had struck angrily at the work of Lee Sinclair, and had his usual success. But the West Baden Journal, perennially optimistic, reflected hopefully two days after the fire: "West Baden Springs has been severely scourged in the past by both fire and water, but Phoenix-like has always arisen to greater and better things." 

Once again the West Baden Springs Hotel had to set itself to the task of re-building. Rexford secretly may have welcomed the fire, for he now had a good excuse for remodeling on a drastic scale. Shortly after the fire contractors were called in, and the hotel girded itself for its most extensive face-lifting job since the new hotel had been built sixteen years before. All during the spring and summer seasons the place swarmed with architects, brick-

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18 Cf. blueprints in West Baden College vault.

layers and common laborers. Money seemed to be no obstacle, as Sinclair's brick was covered with Rexford's marble. Finally, on October 27, 1917, the work was finished and the Grand Opening held.

On the evening of October 27 a program for twenty-five hundred people was held in honor of the event with speeches, tableaus, banquet and ball. Charles W. Fairbanks, Carter H. Harrison and Helen Keller highlighted the evening. But the extravagance of the program played a dull second to the improvements which were being honored: the low, and even recently, swampy front lawns were being completely re-done into formal gardens, Italian style, by landscape architects from Chicago. A flood control system was complementing the garden work. To fit in with the garden scheme beautiful new spring houses—Hygeia, Apollo and Sprudel—had been built of white brick to replace to old frame pagodas. A beautiful new building had also been built to house the bowling allies, billiard room and shooting gallery. Inside the hotel the dining room had been completely remodeled and the lobby had been repainted. Every one of the private rooms had been done over and refurnished in "individual" style.

These improvements would have been more than adequate for one year's work.

20 Few guests must have been attracted by the constant uproar of the remodeling, which took place during the lucrative spring season and continued into the summer. This added to the already heavy expense.


22 Cf. program for this event in the West Baden College files.


But the most striking and expensive change was the transformation of the Atrium into the majestic "Pompeian Court." Scarcely a reminder of the old days remained: the prosaic cement floor had been replaced with a pavement of over twelve million marble mosaics, laid in an intricate and very beautiful design. The old hickory chairs had been replaced with marble benches specially designed settees, tables with Verte Tinos marble tops and specially designed Iridescent Tiffany globes. The facade of bricks had been covered with a wainscoting of Hauteville marble twelve feet high, which rested upon a nine inch base of Belgium black marble. A frieze, similar in color and design with the mosaic floor, relieved the outer circumference of the dome. The hub of the dome was hidden now by an immense electric light fixture, which could give every shade of light from noon-day brightness to the dimness of moonlight. The brick of the twenty-four huge columns of the atrium had been covered with canvas, and brought into sharper relief by a "frescoed" strip of amethyst jewels, laurel and oak leaves on the wall next to each. At each side and slightly above the twenty-four balconies on the sixth floor were forty-eight symbolic figures done by the muralist, Arthur Young. The old brick fireplace had been replaced with a pictorial tile facing, done by Rookwood Pottery of Cincinnati. The tile depicted a gnome bidding the waters of Sprudel to burst forth from a rock, with the West Baden Springs Hotel appearing mistily in the background. Four statues of the Muses in Caen stone, after the original Scofas in the Vatican, were mounted on onyx pedestals at the four principal quarter-sections of the Pompeian mosaic. To complement the statues were eight large and eight small urns.

25 Work done by Casini Tile of Cincinnati. Contacted by mail, but no reply received.
of the same material, filled with palms and ferns. The magnificent Pompeian Court was worth of its name. Wonders had once more transformed this "Eighth Wonder of the World."

But even the Pompeian Court was not enough. There were plans for more improvements. Sometime during this period the large veranda, stretching from the lobby to the "Springs Entrance" was added. Plans for a new and very elaborate two-story bath house were submitted and re-submitted. These plans, as well as all others, were laid aside finally in June of 1923 when Rexford was no longer in charge. A new management had taken over and decided that for the time being the West Baden Springs Hotel had enough improvements.

The external gilding of the hotel had not necessarily been a true indication of its financial health and prosperity. Absence of authentic records make it difficult to speak with confidence of the hotel's financial situation, but the few facts available do not give a particularly prosperous picture. From 1902 until 1913 the hotel had been burdened with a heavy debt and an excessively high interest rate which must have eaten up from $50,000 to $75,000 of the profits each year. From 1913 onwards the cost of the various improvements also cut deeply into the hotel's profits. By far the most expensive improvements, of course, were those of the spring and summer of 1917. But the years 1917 and 1918 did not bring a correspondingly heavy influx of guests to the

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The coat of arms in the floor of the porch represents that of the Sinclair family, and was put there out of regard for Lee Sinclair and Mrs. Rexford. The design is authentic and represents the Sinclairs of Ulbster. The only question can be concerning the genealogy of Lee and Lillian. Cf. Bernard Burke, The General Armory of England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales (London, 1884) p. 929; and Francis L. Filas, S. J., "An Age-Old Shield from Caithness Shire," Jesuit Bulletin, (Feb. 1938) II, 4-5.
hotel, for the war robbed America of her vacationing manpower. Just as the war ended the United States government requested the use of the hotel as General Hospital 35. From October, 1918, until April, 1919, the hotel as such was out of operation. 27 When the hotel opened for the late spring season of 1919 it hit the bubble of postwar prosperity which lasted from May 1919 until the middle of 1920. But the bubble burst, and with dramatic suddenness the country found itself in the midst of a severe depression which lasted through the rest of 1920 and through most of 1921. The national income fell from $75,000,000,000 in 1920 to $59,000,000,000 in 1921. 28

Rexford's financial resources could take only a limited number of these financial reverses. At first he borrowed heavily from his wife until she either could not or would not lend him more. 29 Then Rexford turned to Charles Edward Ballard for help. By the end of 1921 Rexford must have owed Ballard about half a million dollars, 30 a burden he was finding too heavy to bear in


28 Barck and Black, Since 1900, p. 396.

29 Mrs. Rexford later divorced her husband and married a Mr. Harold Cooper, who is still living in Santa Monica, California.

30 This is the figure offered by W. W. Cave. These, "West Baden College, Eighth Wonder of the World," 64, puts the figure at $1,000,000 of stock. There is no mortgage record at the Paoli Court House which could possibly correspond to the Rexford-Ballard transaction. Ballard was noted for his deals by word of mouth and his sterling honesty in abiding by his word. Perhaps Lillian Rexford sold Ballard some stock at first, and later her husband borrowed from Ballard, using more hotel stock as collateral. When the Rexfords saw how deeply they were in debt to Ballard they may have decided it would be easier to sell him the rest of the stock than to try to repay what they owed.
the midst of a depression. Within a year the Rexfords decided that they would do better to settle their debts and let controlling interest in the company fall into other hands. The hands were those of Mr. Charles Edward Ballard.31

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31 We have no documentary record of the precise date on which Ballard got control. Mrs. O'Neill gives 1923 as the year, and she was in a position to know. However, human memory for dates is too tricky for us to accept this date without caution. Fathers Spalding and Tresa both give 1922 as the date, without noting their source. A note on one of the blueprints for the proposed bathhouse is dated June 18, 1923, and is addressed to Mr. Rexford. That certainly corroborates Mrs. O'Neill's testimony, although Rexford possibly could still have stayed on as manager for a while after Ballard got control. The Minute Book of the West Baden National Bank, II, 126, tells us in the entry for January 10, 1922, that Ballard's "Lost River Investment Company" now controlled 290 shares of the bank's 420 shares, whereas in the previous year it had had none. Therefore, at least by this date Ballard was moving into the Rexford holdings, for they had lost controlling interest by this time.
CHAPTER VI

THE BALLARD ERA

Charles Edward Ballard was born a few miles outside of West Baden in the little village of Hillham, Dubois County, in September, 1874.1 Ballard's father was a farmer who got into serious financial trouble by signing the note of a friend, and then having to pay the friend's debt. This misfortune, besides embittering the man, brought serious poverty to himself and his family. Mr. Ballard hired out for odd jobs to friends and neighbors, and Mrs. Ballard took in laundry.2 "Ed" Ballard had to quit school after fourth grade, and went to work setting up pins in the village bowling alleys. Eventually he got a job carrying mail on horseback, and then started to work as a porter in a saloon. Ed Ballard, honest, thrifty and ambitious, soon saved up enough money to open his own saloon in West Baden just across the railroad tracks from the hotel. This was the famous "Spring Number Eight." In December, 1894, Ballard's name appeared for the first time in the West Baden Journal:

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1 This date and information comes from the Ames Chapel cemetery records. Walter Moore, interviewed June 27, 1955, by the author, gave 1873 as date of birth, stating Ballard was a year older than himself, almost to the day.

2 Most of these details on Ballard's early life were given by W. W. Cave, life-long friend of Ed Ballard, to Joseph T. Tobin, S. J. and the author on June 30, 1955. Mr. Cave's fine memory and intimate friendship with Ballard through many years make his testimony especially valuable.
ED BALIARD
**Proprietor**
West Baden Saloon & Restaurant
Finest Brands Liquors and Wines. Imported and Domestic Cigars.
Fresh Beer always on tap, including the celebrated Milwaukee Export
Beer. Opposite the Depot. Warm Lunch at All Hours, Day or Night.

Ballard was about twenty-one years old at the time.

The very next week Sinclair's newspaper decided to give Ballard a little
free advertising by this remark: "Ed Ballard has a restaurant in connection
with his place of Business, and will serve Baltimore oysters, in any style, at
all hours. He also has a nice line of fruits, confectionery, cigars and to-
bacco."4

Ballard discovered that few things attracted customers so easily to his
saloon as a card game or a roulette wheel, and the upstairs rooms of the saloon
soon had a few gaming tables, which proved far more lucrative to Ballard than
his Baltimore oysters.

Lee W. Sinclair also had noticed the strange power that gambling had to
attract guests and to make money for the proprietors of the tables. Sinclair
liked this ambitious young man who was pulling himself up by his bootstraps,
much as Sinclair himself had done forty years earlier.5 By 1895 the Casino on
the grounds of the hotel had been completed, and soon afterwards Sinclair asked
Ballard to run the games in it for him. Ballard agreed, borrowed $6,000 to

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3 *Journal*, December 18, 1894, p. 1.
5 Ballard had the single technical share of stock in the West Baden Springs
   Water Company and was one of the original stockholders in the West Baden
   National Bank.
equip the rooms, and within two years had paid back the loan and was making a nice profit for himself and the hotel. 6

Ballard then began to buy up available real estate in the valley, and, as early as 1903, began taking mortgages on the property of his friends and neighbors. 7 These loans and mortgages seem to have been more gestures of friendship than serious business enterprises. Ed Ballard, almost on principle it would seem, refused to make money off old friends and neighbors, and used his own wealth to help them when they needed help.

The fire of June 14, 1901, brought a temporary halt to the gambling at the West Baden Hotel. 8 But a much more serious set-back came in 1905 when Governor Frank Hanly decided to clamp down on gambling within the state. 9 Some of the more righteous citizens of Orange County had complained to the governor about the gambling, and he found it difficult to ignore them when the Hearst newspapers took up the cry against Taggart's Casino at French Lick. 10 By August 9, 1905, the French Lick Casino had been closed tight, and very shortly afterwards the West Baden Casino was also closed. A charge was placed against both hotels

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6 Statement of W. W. Cave to author.
7 Cf. Mortgage Record Book 5 at Paoli.
8 The "dance hall" was destroyed by the fire; cf. Journal, June 18, 1901, p. 1. This probably refers to the casino, the first floor of which was the ballroom of the hotel. It was perhaps after this fire that gambling was moved temporarily into the hotel.
10 Paoli Republican, August 16, 1905, p. 1, and statement of Elmer Thacker.
of violation of their charters by constructing a "large casino" in defiance of state law. The case came to trial at the Orange County Circuit Court, with Judge Thomas B. Buskirk presiding. Judge Buskirk, good friend of Sinclair and regular patron of both hotels, to the amazement and dismay of the state officials, handed down a decision in favor of the hotels.11 On November 26, 1907, the state filed its case with the Appellate Court of Indiana, and this time secured a decision against the hotels. Petitions of the hotels for a rehearing were denied on October 6, 1908, and it seemed as if gambling had ended once and for all at the two hotels.

The management of the French Lick Springs Hotel, however, was not easily dissuaded from so profitable an activity. In October, 1905, just a few weeks after the French Lick Casino had been closed, William E. Ryan and Albert H. Brown agreed to build a hotel just a few hundred yards from the French Lick Springs Hotel.12 Al Brown had been brought to French Lick from up-state Indiana by Taggart to run the casino at his hotel. Taggart disclaimed all connection with the new Brown's Hotel, and official county documents confirm this claim. Later Taggart would even go so far as to threaten Edna Ferber with a law suit unless she withdrew a few lines from Showboat which implied he was.

11 No record of this Circuit Court trial could be found at the Clerk's office in Paoli, although the clerk, Mr. John Boyd, and the author made a careful search. The only official record is of the trial in the appellate court: "State, ex rel. Voyles, v. French Lick Springs Hotel Company. State, ex rel. Voyles, v. West Baden Springs Company," 42 Ind App 282, May Term, 1908.

connected with the gambling.\textsuperscript{13} However, documents and public proclamations to the contrary notwithstanding, there can be no doubt that there was an intimate link between Brown's and the French Lick Springs Hotel: for years the Brown was heated from the other hotel; for years the Brown was a sort of front office for the French Lick Springs Hotel and was where its employees had their own rooms. Reliable witnesses state that forty percent of the profit from Brown's Hotel went to the French Lick Springs Hotel during Taggart's days. At any rate, Al Brown set up his tables in the upstairs of the new "hotel" and the gambling soon resumed.

By 1908 Indiana had a new governor, Thomas R. Marshall, good friend of Tom Taggart. Marshall found it difficult to implement the decision of the appellate court and the complaints against gambling since, as he said, the Orange County officials would not cooperate. A marvellous impasse ensued! This marked the end of officialdom's interference at French Lick until 1949, long after our story has ended.\textsuperscript{14}

Within a few years Al Brown and the management of the French Lick Springs

\textsuperscript{13}Edna Ferber, \textit{Showboat}, New York, 1926, 303: "Next week we'll run down to West Baden. Do us good. During the day we can walk and drive or ride. ... In the evening we can take a whirl at Tom Taggart's layout."

"Oh, don't play there—not much, I mean. Let's try to keep what we have for a little while."

"After all, we may as well give Tom a change to pay our expenses. Remember the last time we were down there I won a thousand at roulette along—and roulette isn't my game."

\textsuperscript{14}Cf Haupt, \textit{French Lick Springs Hotel}, p. 130.
Hotel seem to have had a serious disagreement, and Brown left French Lick to set up in business in the Dakotas. His place in the club rooms was taken by Ed Ballard, who managed to be a good friend of both Taggart and Sinclair—no mean accomplishment. By September, 1915, Ballard owned Brown's completely and soon was running one of the most famous gambling establishments in the whole mid-west. A strict code of rules was enforced: no liquor sold to guests; no local residents allowed into the gambling rooms; no employee could place a bet. It was neither mineral springs nor spectacular buildings, but gambling which now attracted guests to the West Baden and French Lick resorts. And gambling was controlled by Charles Edward Ballard.

About 1915, the year he acquired Brown's, and just two years after his marriage to Dolly Finfrock, Ballard bought the Hagenbeck-Wallace circus "for less money than the circus had made in any one year." Within a short time

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16 Taggart's influence in local and national politics is comparatively well known. Ballard also exerted a certain amount of influence in local and state politics, but in a manner entirely different from Taggart. Ballard never entered politics actively, but contented himself with financial aid to candidates he thought needed and deserved his help. In 1916, for example, Ballard sent an unsolicited check for $5,000 to Goodrich who was running for governor. Goodrich, wealthy in his own right and determined to finance his own campaign, returned the check with his thanks. Later the state chairman had Mr. Cave ask Ballard for $5,000 for Senator Watson's campaign. Ballard complied, but only out of friendship for Cave. Since Ballard was a Republican and Taggart a Democrat, they had little to fear from a change of administration in the state.

17 Statement of Ballard to Cave, reported by Mr. Cave to the author, June 30, 1955. Wallace, owner of the show, was getting old and was involved in some litigation with the railroads over some circus accidents. A story in the region is that Ballard was too poor as a child to go to the circus, and then determined he would some day own one. In 1928, just before the depression struck, Ballard sold the circuses.
he owned several other circuses—Sells-Floto and John Robinson—and managed them through his business associates, Burt Bowers and Jerry Mugigan. Under this arrangement the circuses and their gaming tables began to prosper, and Ballard had discovered another gold mine.

In September, 1915, Ballard brought his Hagenbeck-Wallace show to West Baden for a one-day stand, and was greeted with all of the eclat of a returning hero. A crowd estimated by the optimistic Journal at about ten thousand people turned out for the event. Sinclair and Ballard rode in the same car, and were acclaimed as the greatest benefactors of the town of West Baden. Ballard's announcement that West Baden would be the winter quarters for the circus won for him from the Journal this superlative compliment: "Mr. Ballard is easily the most popular man in these parts."19

It was to this man that Charles Rexford turned when he needed help, and Ballard, whose heart seems to have been as big as his bankroll, and who probably felt that he owed a debt of gratitude to Lee Sinclair, responded. He ambitioned someday to own the hotel,20 and so, when the Rexfords decided to settle their debt, he was agreeable to taking hotel stock as his share of the bargain.

Ballard soon installed Perry McCart, his attorney, as president of the

18 Statements of Mrs. O'Neill and W. W. Cave.

19 Journal, September 14, 1915, p. 1. Mr. Ballard was spontaneously generous to churches. When Mr. Ballard first met Mrs. O'Neill and found out that she was a Catholic he thrust a crumpled $100 bill into her hand and asked her to put it in the collection for him.

20 Statement of W. W. Cave.
West Baden Springs Company, and contented himself with directing affairs from the background. McCart carried on the general policies inaugurated by Rexford with the exception of the lavish spending on improvements. More emphasis was placed on conventions, but that was a general development in such hotels throughout the country. The standard rates for conventions during this boom era of the 1920's were: $7.00 to $9.00 for single; $10.00 and up with bath; $14.00 to $17.00 double, $18.00 and up with bath. These rates are American plan and included use of both golf courses, swimming pool, tennis courts, etc. Prices for display booths in the atrium from Monday morning until Friday noon might run from $75.00 to $150.00. In the atrium about one hundred and fifty to two hundred booths were set up. But the conventions came because of the gambling, and during these lush days the hotel found itself ever more dependent upon the gaming tables for its continued success and its increase in

21 It is interesting to note that never in its history was the hotel under the management of a real "hotel man." This hotel was Sinclair's first and only venture, and his a-social habits and dogmatic manners did not suit him for it. Rexford had had no experience when he took over. McCart, though an excellent lawyer, was also inexperienced and seems to have been too much of a desk executive to be an outstanding success. Ballard was shy and disliked meeting people, so much so that within a short time he seems to have felt that he made a mistake in getting into the hotel business at all, according to Mr. Cave. French Lick, however, had the geniality and hotel experience of Taggart.

22 Some of the conventions held in 1925: Master Plumbers' Association, Kappa Alpha Theta, Business and Professional Women's Clubs, Association of Electragists, Federation of Women's Clubs, National Funeral Directors' Association, United Roofing Contractors' Association, etc. From brochure, ca 1925. Notice that the income bracket implied in these conventions is middle.

23 Hotel brochure advertising conventions, 1929.

profits. This was an age when profits were high. The business slump of 1921 was merely a bad dream.

One unique attraction was added to the West Baden Springs Hotel during these years: circus performances in the atrium. The first mention we have of such a performance is the Christmas program for the patients of General Hospital 35 in 1918. It deserves description:

After dinner every one repaired to the atrium or occupied the windows of the floors above, because a circus was to be exhibited there. At the west entrance to the Atrium was erected a regular size circus ring, and inside of it was erected a cage with protective top. And at 2:30 P.M. several acts from the Hagenbeck-Wallace circus began. Through a runway, built from the ring to the outside of the building, came five huge lions and Mr. Schweyer, their trainer. He put the beasts through several stunts with absolute fearlessness, although one of the lions, Brutus, threatened to tear him to pieces several times. Finally, Mr. Schweyer compelled the lions to jump over a three foot fence, the bar of which was ablaze. The cage was taken down and Mrs. Cottrell gave a graceful exhibition of equestrianism. ... Following this came an act by five very large elephants, which performed very intelligently, although they had not gone through their stunts since last autumn. Our hospital, having been built for hotel purposes and not expecting to be used for a circus performance, considerable trouble was experienced in getting the elephants in and out of the place. [sic]

During the time of Ballard's ownership circus performances in the atrium seem to have become rather standard convention fare during the proper seasons.

It was during this era that the Kentucky Derby drew guests to the hotels in such numbers. Several days before the Derby special trains arrived at West Baden and French Lick. Many of the guests had to live in the trains, for both

25 Spalding, Diary, p. 85, states that Ballard's real source of income during these years was Brown's Casino, not the West Baden Springs Hotel.

hotels would be booked months in advance. At about 3:00 A.M. on Derby Day the first of the sixteen or eighteen special trains would pull out for Louisville, to return late that same night to the hotels. Derby Day marked the grand climax of the spring season, and more than made up for the slight slackening of guests during the summer and winter.27

And so, during this fast-moving, fast-spending and fast-living era the West Baden Springs Hotel, that Eighth Wonder of the World, prospered and waxed strong, with few set-backs to mar its gilded career. The only loss which struck the hotel was more sentimental than real: the old bicycle track, last reminder of the original hotel, was destroyed by a windstorm in 1929. Even the rivalry between the French Lick Springs Hotel and the West Baden Springs Hotel had subsided very considerably since Mr. Ballard had assumed ownership at West Baden. The personal friendship between Ballard and Taggart and their many successful business dealings made any strong rivalry impossible. Besides, by this time it was obvious that each hotel drew its own particular type of guest and that there was little danger of cutting in on another's profits.

The West Baden Springs Hotel could accommodate one thousand guests,28 had a convention hall which could, and did, display a steam shovel, and banquet facilities to wine and dine fourteen hundred guests at one meal. The indoor

27 Statements of Glenn Marlette and Laff Prow.

28 The assessment on the hotel building itself for this period was $500,000.00, "West Baden Springs Hotel Company," Transfer Book, West Baden, 1927-1929, Auditor's Office, Orange County Court House. This represents one-third of real value, or $1,500,000, exclusive of real estate. Mrs. O'Neill gives $1,700,000 as the figure. The sum of $3,000,000 has also been given as hotel's worth, perhaps including real estate and other considerations.
nine-hole putting course, some forty thousand square feet in area, was another
unique feature of the magnificent Pompeian Court and the West Baden Springs
Hotel. Stock market dividends rose, and the revenues of the hotel rose with
them. The "Big Bull Market" boomed, and so did the West Baden Springs Hotel.
The lean days of 1920 and 1921 seemed a nightmare forever put to rest. The
year was 1929.

Then the crash! Wall Street crashed, and with it crashed the cosmos that
was the West Baden Springs Hotel. The ticker tape of Logan and Bryan brought
the incredible news to a shocked and desperate group of men who crowded into
that little room just inside the "Springs Entrance." The lines of the tele­
phone exchange outside the lobby brought confirmation of the news to the
despairing men who fought for a line as viciously as starving men for food.
It was true. The market had crashed. 29

Within hours guests began to check out, determined to get home and there,
perhaps, find some security against the utter destitution which threatened
them. The trickle of departing guests turned into a torrent as the panic
spread. Men, with irrational impatience, tried to hail overworked bell boys
and cabbies; women sobbed at their sides. They had lost everything.

For two days the lobby of the West Baden Springs Hotel was feverish with
insane rush. For two days the bell boys, room clerks and cabbies worked at
breathtaking pace to keep up with the check-outs and departures. For two days
the men argued, and the women sobbed. Then it was quiet. In the midst of the

29 Details supplied by Glenn Marlette and Laff Prow.
fall season the hotel discovered that it was empty of guests and that its life-
blood had been drained.

A reflective and pessimistic few predicted that the hotel’s days were
over for good, but the majority of its friends said that this temporary slump
in the money market would pass and that within a few months the hotel would
again be the bustling “Eighth Wonder of the World.” The West Baden Springs
Hotel had never had an easy time. Fire, flood and mismanagement had not been
able to kill it. Neither would a flurry on Wall Street! So the hotel girded
itself for a tight fall season, perhaps even a tight spring season, but deter-
mined to carry on “business as usual.”

The fall season, ending at tremendous financial loss, stretched into win-
ter. On January 1, 1930, one guest registered at the hotel; two registered
the next day. 30 A guest registered on January 18th and one on January 30th.
The average number of guests per day for January was seven. During the spring
season, usually the best, the number increased only slightly. The summer
of 1930 saw the loss of even this small gain. How long would the depression
drag on? The average number of guests registered for September, 1930, was
twenty-four——capacity one thousand. The average for October was fifteen,
for November ten, and for three days in December not a single guest was regist-
ered. By the end of December the average number of guests per day for that
month was five. The depression had to end soon. Fewer guests than ever

30 These figures are from Father Spalding, Diary, P. 131. Unfortunately
the primary sources have been destroyed. However, Father Spalding wrote in
1934 and certainly wrote with access to the documents. His general accuracy
and carefulness allow us to accept the figures as authentic.
registered for the spring of 1931. The summer was worse. During these months of 1931 the golf courses were grossing an average of $45.00 per week. This sum eventually fell to $28.00 per week.

Finally in the fall of 1931 the strain proved too great, and the hotel closed its doors. This was the first time the management had deliberately closed them since 1887, the year before the arrival of Lee Sinclair. The hotel promised, however, that it would re-open for the spring season of 1932 to take care of a few previously-scheduled conventions and, thought the diehards, perhaps to make a fresh start. But the spring season proved to be no better than had been the two previous ones. In June, therefore, Perry McCart called the heads of the various departments to his office, told them that the hotel was closing, and that no one knew when, if ever, it would open again. McCart also told them that Mr. Ballard had provided jobs for the summer for every one of the hotel employees at the Grand Hotel on Mackinac Island if the employees themselves were willing to make the trip.31 Those who were willing to go would receive free transportation both ways.

This time Mr. Ballard meant business. All the beds and furniture were

31 These details are from statements of Mrs. O'Neill, Glenn Marlette and Laff Prow. Glenn Marlette's nine Cadillac cabs were used to take the employees to Mackinac and he himself drove one of the cabs. Laff Prow, then desk clerk at the hotel, made the trip in 1932 and for the next three summer seasons. The Grank Hotel had at one time been owned by Logan Ballard and at another by Joseph Ballard, brothers of Charles E. Ballard, but in 1932 it was in receivership. Ed Ballard had sufficient connections with it even in 1932 to secure these jobs for his employees. The fact that he did so gives us a real insight into his character. In 1933 W. S. Woodfill got control of the Grand Hotel and has it even today. Some of the original West Baden employees are still working there.
covered with newspapers, the hotel silverware and dishes carefully stored away and arrangements made to have the grounds tended for an indefinite period of time. On June 30, 1932, the last payments were made to the cooks, maids, florists, bell boys—that immense army of manpower which makes up a hotel—and the hotel auditor left that same day. On July 1, 1932, the executive office was closed.
CHAPTER VII

A PRINCELY GIFT

The story of the West Baden Springs Hotel properly ended on that first day of July, 1932. But not everyone realized how fatal was the coma which had struck the hotel. Many old-timers clung to the theory that in the fall—for the "fall season"—the hotel would open again. Or surely for Derby Day next spring! After all, prosperity was just around the corner. Even Mr. Ballard probably did not fully realize that the end had come, although by this time he must have been quite ready to get out of the hotel business. He was sixty years old, never had felt comfortable as a hotel man, and now was cherishing the hope of settling down to enjoy life.¹

Summer dragged into fall, fall into winter, winter into spring; prosperity did not return. Ballard began to look for a buyer for the hotel, but no one wanted to invest in a resort hotel in 1933. No one wanted to invest in anything in 1933. Recalling the use of the hotel by the army during the World War I days, Ballard offered to sell the hotel to the United States government for use as a hospital. At first the prospect looked hopeful, but suddenly the government lost interest and the hotel was on its own again.

About this time Mr. Robert Graham, of Graham-Paige automobiles, heard of

¹Statement of Mrs. O’Neill to the author, June 27, 1955.
Ballard's problem and seized upon the idea of the hotel as a huge Catholic re­
treat house. He contacted Reverend Hugo F. Sloctemyer, S. J., president of
Xavier University, Cincinnati, Ohio, and presented the plan to him. Father
Sloctemyer investigated the possibilities but found the idea impractical on
two counts: first, the hotel was much too large for efficient retreat use;
secondly, the Chicago Province of the Society of Jesus could not meet even a
nominal price. Consequently, Father Sloctemyer suggested to some sisterhoods
that they buy the hotel for use as a hospital. Nothing eventuated from this
suggestion, although Mr. Ballard was willing to sell the hotel for $350,000.,
one-tenth of its assessed value. 2

By autumn, 1933, Mr. Ballard began to despair of soon finding a buyer for
the hotel, and intimated to some acquaintances that he might be interested in
donating the hotel to some Catholic community, provided it be used for a re­
ligious or educational purpose. 3 Father Sloctemyer again contacted some Sisters
for Mr. Ballard. The Sisters considered the offer, inspected the hotel, and
wrote one non-committal letter to Mr. Ballard, but beyond that they did nothing.
As the months passed Ballard became somewhat concerned over the detached atti­
tude of the Sisters; he was tired of paying the $40,000 per year upkeep on the

2Details from a letter of Very Reverend Charles H. Cloud, S. J., to Mr.
Alfred Talley, Attorney at Law, February 21, 1934. Archives, Chicago Province
of the Society of Jesus. File: "West Baden College—Acquisition."

3At this time Mr. Ballard had the auditor of the West Baden Springs Hotel
Company, Miss Winifred Daley [Mrs. O'Neil], draw up a four page report on the
hotel. This report is now in the Archives of the Chicago Province under the
file, "West Baden College—Acquisition." The report notes an $18,000 reduction
in taxes in the past year and states that the hotel earned $21,239.62, net
profit, for the last three months operated.
closed hotel, and he was determined not to subsidize further Franklin Delano Roosevelt's "New Deal" projects with his own earnings. He asked Father Sloczemeyer to contact another sisterhood for him.

In early January, 1934, the Very Reverend Charles H. Cloud, S. J., Provincial of the Chicago Province of the Society of Jesus, visited Xavier University, Cincinnati. In the course of the visit Father Sloczemeyer mentioned to Father Cloud that Mr. Ballard now was willing to give away the West Baden Springs Hotel, and had asked Father Sloczemeyer to make some contacts for him. It immediately occurred to Father Cloud that the hotel might possibly be adaptable for use as a house of studies, or scholasticate, for the student-members of the Chicago Province, a project which very much concerned Father Cloud.

The Chicago Province of the Society of Jesus was a young province, having been established by decree of the Father General, Very Reverend Wlodimir Ledochowski, S. J., on July 2, 1928. Father Cloud had been appointed provincial of the new province on June 19, 1930, and since his very first days in office had been considering various plans for establishing a scholasticate within the boundaries of the province. This problem was the subject of many letters from the provincial to the Father General, letters which reached a sort of climax in the year 1932.

On July 14, 1932, Father Cloud sent a long letter to Father Ledochowski in which he outlined a plan for a theologate at the old University of Detroit High

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5Details from letter of Father Cloud to Mr. Talley, February 24, 1934.
School on Jefferson Avenue, Detroit. He told the General that he felt it was time for the province to begin to provide for the larger number of scholastics expected in the near future, and that it would be more economical in the long run to establish a new scholasticate in Detroit than to send the scholastics to St. Mary's College, St. Marys, Kansas, the theolgate of the Missouri Province. Father Cloud added that he had sufficient professors of sacred theology to staff a theolgate. Father Ledochowski replied on August 21, and showed himself less than enthusiastic for the plan. He felt that providing a faculty for a theolgate was more of a task than Father Cloud realized, to say nothing of the financial problem involved in remodeling and furnishing the old high school building for a scholasticate; the assembling of a suitable library would in itself be an expensive and long-term project. The Father


Expensae mucho minuentur. Nam a) Collegium Sanctae Mariae tam longe a nobis distat ut expensae itinerum nimirum magna sint, quod idem valet de domibus studiorum in aliis Provindis. b) Idem dicendum de itineribus Scholasticorum a Collegio Sanctae Mariae ad villas. Villas enim aptas et prope ad Detroit facile invenire possumus. c) Expensae quoad victum mucho minores erunt in proprio Scholasticatu quam quas in alienis munc solvimus.

General, however, deferred a final decision until Father Cloud would send him more details as to faculty and financial arrangements. Father Cloud obliged this request on September 13, 1932, and Father Ledochowski replied on October 1, suggesting that Father Cloud consult further with the provincial of the Missouri Province, Very Reverend Samuel H. Horine, S. J., especially concerning the disposition of professors of the Chicago Province teaching at St. Mary's College. It was not until December 14, 1932, that the Father General's final answer came: quibus omnibus diligenter perpensis, ad conclusionemdeveni vos nec debere nec posse de proprio Theologatu apariendo cogitare ante plures annos. The Father General gave two main reasons for his refusal: the province did not have readily available enough professors to staff a new theologate, and permission from the Sacred Congregation on Seminaries for the theologate to grant pontifical degrees could not possibly be obtained within the foreseeable future. That settled the question of the theologate for the time being.

It was against this background that Father Cloud, undaunted, conceived the idea that the West Baden Springs Hotel might be converted into a scholasticate. He acted with decision: in the company of Father Sloctsmeyer he stopped

9Letters in Chicago Province Archives: "Petitions for Theologate."

at West Baden on his return to Chicago. Convinced that the hotel could be used for the purpose he had in mind, he immediately instructed the members of his advisory board, his "consultors", to go to West Baden and investigate the hotel building and grounds. The consultors of the provincial of the Chicago Province in 1934 were: Rev. Aloysius H. Rohde, assistant to the provincial; Rev. Francis A. McKernan, rector of Milford Novitiate, Milford, Ohio; Rev. Benedict J. Rodman, president of John Carroll University, Cleveland, Ohio; and Rev. Samuel K. Wilson, president of Loyola University, Chicago. Father Wilson's report to Father Cloud was pointed:

In company with Fathers Socius [Rohde], O'Connell, Rodman, McKernan and A. Breen I inspected the West Baden, Indiana, proposition, Wednesday, January thirty-first and submit these statements as my report.

In my opinion, if Mr. Ballard's offer to hand over gratis this entire property holds good in our favor, the offer is such that one suspects there still must be a catch somewhere. It is quite evident that a sisters' sanitarium would bring a constant inflow of cash into this (apparently) one man town and the presence of a scholasticate might not be that productive. However, that is Mr. Ballard's problem and if he makes in our favor the same offer he made to the sisters through Father Sloctemyer, I believe we should snap up the property as fast as we can get permission by cable to do so.

On the very same day that Father Wilson submitted his report to the provincial Father Sloctemyer wrote him that he had made an appointment to see Mr.

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11 Letter of Father Cloud to Mr. Talley, February 24, 1934.

12 Catalogus Provinciae Chicagiensis Societatis Jesu, Inseunte Anno, MCMXXXIV (Chicago 1934), p. 3.

Ballard in New York and that, along with Father Rohde, he was setting out "to have this famous conference." He also told the provincial that Fathers Breen and McKernan had come back from their inspection tour of West Baden "dazed with the extraordinariness of the offer and have been dazed ever since." He asked the provincial to "Pray that the Holy Spirit may inspire me to say the right thing at the right time."

Father Cloud's prayers to the Holy Spirit were most efficacious. On Wednesday evening, February 7, 1934, a telegram from Father Sloctemyer arrived at the provincial's residence, Loyola University, Chicago, announcing that Mr. Ballard had agreed to give the hotel to the Chicago Province. The next morning Father Sloctemyer penned the following letter:

Very Rev. and dear Fr. Provincial: P. C.

I sent you a telegram last night telling you the good news. I wanted you to retire feeling a great elation of spirit. The hotel and property is ours, pending Vr. Rev. Fr. General's acceptance and the failure of verbal negotiations with another party recently entered into. . . .

Mr. Ballard has some one to whom he has offered the hotel for $250,000.00 to $300,000.00, depending upon the method of payment chosen. Ballard would rather have us have it as a gift than to sell it to this other fellow and have it fail after a few years and then be sold to some one else. He sees great permanency for the "apple of his eye" if we get it. He was delighted with our proposition and is most satisfied with the purposes for which we wish to use it. Tears came to his eyes when he spoke of his satisfaction with our having it. He is a wonderfully good man. I am sure that he impressed Father Rohde greatly.

Our problem is to get the other fellow out of the picture. Mr. Ballard says that very probably he will try "chisel" on the price. Whereupon Mr. B. [sic] will say that the deal is off and

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hand us the property. This is Mr. Ballard's hope and he is a sincere man. Now we have to get some prayers for a "special intention of Vy. Rev. Fr. Provincial." . . . As for Fr. General, as you said in Chicago: "He must accept (salva Reverential)." It was a big day! Excuse the scribbling—old age!

In Domino,

Hugo F. Sloctemeyer, S.J.15

The acceptance of the West Baden Springs Hotel by the Chicago Province hinged on the two conditions mentioned by Father Sloctemeyer: first, the failure of the pending purchase to materialize, and, secondly, the acceptance by Father Ledochowski before March 15, a deadline later set by Mr. Ballard and agreed to by Father Cloud. It soon became apparent that the prospective purchaser had failed to meet Mr. Ballard's stipulations and that the only obstacle in the way was the formal permission of the General allowing the provincial to accept the gift. In this regard Father Cloud may have been caught in the wake of Father Sloctemeyer's enthusiasm—"He must accept (salva Reverential)"—and dispatched to Rome a letter asking permission to accept the hotel, "donum plane eximium" and ". . . omni ex parte splendidum, Provinciaeque nostrae et Societati maxime desiderandum."16 He followed the letter with a cablegram: "Letter coming of greatest importance Stop Remarkable gift Stop Means far more than million Stop All hoping praying permission—Cloud."17


17Chicago Province Archives, file: "West Baden—Acquisition."
A few days later, February 26, Father Ledochowski cabled his reply in the form of a bombshell: "Cannot possibly grant permission to accept property offered. Letter follows—Ledochowski." In the General's explanatory letter he listed three reasons for refusing to grant the necessary permission: first, hotels such as the West Baden Springs Hotel are not easily adapted to the needs of a house of studies because of their general physical lay-out and their elaborate, even luxurious, furnishings and atmosphere; secondly, the province did not have an immediate need for a scholasticate, and, therefore, should not open one until it had prepared the necessary faculty members; thirdly, several houses of the province were in the most serious kind of financial difficulties, and no new burdens should be added until these were lightened.

Father Cloud, however, immediately upon receipt of Father Ledochowski's

18Ibid.


... invitus quidem, sed intuuitu Majoris Dei Gloriae, facultatem de-

negavi... 

Prima et maxima mea objectio est quod hospitia seu diversoria (hotels) prout ubique terrarum existunt, minime adaptata sunt ad nostras formationis Studiorumque Domus. Dispositio atriorum, cubiculorum, scalarum angustia et obscuritas corridoriorum, etc. generatim tales sunt quae bonam ordinem et disci-iplinam religiosam difficilem, ne dicam impossibilem, reddunt. Nec minores difficulitates ratione religiosae paupertatis praeberet aedificium pro divitibus exstructum, ubi totus apparatus et tota supellex luxum mundum sapiunt... Deinde non puto ullam urgentem necessitatem nunc adesse ad instaurandum talem scholasticatam... et quia copiam Professorum bene praeparatorum non habets...

Denique multum me angunt difficulitates oeconomicae valde graves, quibus quaedam Collegia iatrius Provinciae nunc laborant, et nolim ut RVa veteribus novas addat..."
cablegram and before receiving the letter, cabled another urgent request:
"Cablegram received Stop Refusal of property offered means irreparable loss Stop I earnestly urge permission to send Socius to Rome immediately Stop Consultors unanimously urge same Stop Cable answer— Cloud."

The next day, February 28, Father Ledochowski made his counter-proposal:
"Will send Grattan immediately to examine offer Arrives NewYork thirteenth—Ledochowski." The General had deputed Father John Grattan, Assistant Secretary for the American provinces of the Society of Jesus, to make a thorough study of the West Baden Springs Hotel and to refer to Rome his opinion as to the advisability of accepting Mr. Ballard's gift. Father Grattan arrived in NewYork on March 13, and at once proceeded to West Baden for his inspection tour. Finally, on March 17, two days beyond the original deadline set by Mr. Ballard, Father Grattan cabled the following message to Father Ledochowski: "After thorough investigation can conscientiously recommend

20Chicago Province Archives, file: "West Baden—Acquisition."

21Ibid.

22Letter of Very Reverend Wlodimir Ledochowski, S. J., to Very Reverend Charles H. Cloud, S. J., Rome, February 28, 1934, Chicago Province Archives, file: "Father General's Letters, 1934." He explains his alternate plan: Accetto RVae telegrammate, statim per filum telegraphicum respondi me sine mora ad vos missurum esse Patrem Ioannem Grattan, Assistentiae Americae Substitutum, qui de negotio doni Dai Ballard, re juxta instructiones a me sibi datas diligenter examinata, ad me referat. Hunc modum procedendi, ob varias rationes, praeferendum esse putavi RVae consilio Patrem Socium Rohde Romae mittendi. Scio me prudentiae et experienciae Patris Grattan plane fidere posse, qui ex una parte optime cognoscit qui in nostris domibus probationis et studiorum requiritur; ex altera parte bonum tam materiale quam spirituale istius Provinciae cordi habet, atque in re tanti momenti libenter vos adjuvabit."
acceptance of hotel Stop Necessary alterations feasible Bishop's permission obtained Stop Provincial requests cabled reply- Grattan. The next day, without further ado, came the laconic answer: "West Baden permission granted- Ledochowski."24

On March 19, 1934, Father Grattan sent to Rome an eight-page typewritten report on the hotel, covering in some detail the following items: location, appearance, shape, corridors, stair, appearance of interior, separation of grades, doister, infirmary, private rooms, baths and toilets, dining room, kitchen, heating plant, plans, water and supplies, accessibility, extra building grounds, privacy and neighbors, ministry, and permission of the Ordinary.25 The report was in every way favorable to the acceptance of the hotel by the Jesuits, and seems in some particulars especially designed to allay the fears the General expressed concerning the hotel's suitability as a house of training. For instance, describing the general appearance of the interior the report stated: "It is one of plain solid convenience, but there are no traces of luxury, such as you would find in a modern hotel de luxe."26 Concerning the circular shape of the building: "Briefly—I decided after thorough investigation that this shape would not be either a species luxus, nor would it impede domestic dis-

23Chicago Province Archives, file: "West Baden—Acquisition."

24Ibid.


26This report is also in the "West Baden—Acquisition" file. The statement quoted can be found on page 3.
Concerning the atrium: "The only decorations are the border between the columns and a frieze of draped conventional figures near the base of the dome. There is very little echo in this atrium, so it will not be noisy." Concerning one of the modern conveniences: "Needless to say, none of the elevators will be used, or rather only one, and that in the case of the aged or infirm."

The provincial, too, sent a letter to Father Ledochowski, thanking him for the permission to accept the gift. He mentioned: "Your cabled permission reached us on the eve of the Feast of St. Joseph for whose intercession with the Sacred Heart we have pleaded in our prayers for more than a month." In this letter Father Cloud asked permission to place the new scholasticate under the patronage of St. Robert Bellarmine and to name it West Baden College. "We know that it will please both Mr. Ballard and the people of West Baden to give it the name of the town."

Father Ledochowski replied some time later, after conferring personally with Father Gratian. He congratulated the province upon the acquisition of the hotel and laid down merely a few general norms for adapting it to the needs of a scholasticate: "Prindec, cum nihil magis mihi cordi sit quam recta formatio

27 Ibid., p. 2.
28 Ibid., p. 4.
29 Ibid., p. 3.
30 Letter of Very Reverend Charles H. Cloud, S. J., to Very Reverend Wladi-
imir Ledochowski, S. J., Chicago, March 22, 1934, Chicago Province Archives,
file: "West Baden—Acquisition."
Meanwhile legal negotiations between the attorneys of Mr. Ballard and the attorneys employed by the province were carried on. Ballard urged an early completion of the transaction, but was constantly frustrated because the title to some of the real estate was not perfectly clear.

At length, on June 28, 1934, the long-awaited telegram from Father Rohde in West Baden was delivered to the provincial's residence in Chicago: "Arrived safely last evening Deal closed today." Thus, quietly and unobtrusively the West Baden Springs Hotel passed out of existence, and West Baden College was born.

The provincial notified the members of his province of the gift, prepared a press-release for the newspapers, and wrote a short but touchingly sincere letter of thanks to Mr. Ballard. In his letter he promised the continued prayers of the members of the province for Mr. and Mrs. Ballard and invited them to visit West Baden College: "I wonder how soon you and Mrs. Ballard will return to this treasured spot of your lives. Father Rohde and the other Fathers

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32 Chicago Province Archives, file: "West Baden—Acquisition."

33 Word had slipped out through a relative of Mr. Ballard, and a story was carried by the Indianapolis Star on Sunday, May 20, 1934. The news, however, was not known generally.
at West Baden would be delighted to have you pay them a visit at any time."34

Mr. Ballard answered Father Cloud with equally transparent sincerity:
"I want to thank you for your wonderful letter and wish I could find words to
tell you how happy it made Mrs. Ballard and myself."35 He concluded: ". . . and
I wish to assure you that I am at all times ready to help in any way possible."36

And so the news was out! The West Baden Springs Hotel had been given to
the Chicago Province of the Society of Jesus for use as a seminary. The re-
actions to the transfer were varied. People in Orange County were apprehensive,
if not actually hostile. Said an editorial in The Paoli Republican: "In the
estimation of many of our people, the Jesuit college at West Baden will not

34 Chicago Province Archives, file: "West Baden—Acquisition."

35 Ibid.

36 The members of the Chicago Province were shocked when just two years
later, November 6, 1936, Mr. Ballard was murdered in a room of the fashionable
Arlington Hotel at Hot Springs, Arkansas. He and Mrs. Ballard were vacationing
at Hot Springs, and met there Robert ("Silver Bob") Alexander, one-time asso-
ciate of Mr. Ballard in the management of the Palm Olive Club at Midway Beach,
Florida. Alexander, unjustly bitter towards Ballard over an unsuccessful law
suit against him for $250,000, called Ballard to his room, quarreled violently
with him, and in his frenzied anger attacked him. The two struggled. Ballard,
crippled with diabetes, tried to use his cane to ward off the attack, but was
unsuccessful. Alexander drew a gun and fired. The bullet struck Ballard in the
heart. Alexander then turned the gun upon himself. He died, a suicide, on the
way to the hospital.

Ballard's body was returned to West Baden, and on Monday morning, November
9, was brought to the atrium of West Baden College where it lay in state until
the funeral at two o'clock that afternoon. There, in the midst of that
"treasured spot" of his life, "Ed" Ballard received the last marks of respect
and affection from his family, the residents of the valley, and the Jesuit
community of West Baden College. The Reverend Thomas J. Donnelly, S. J., presi-
dent of the college, conducted the simple ceremonies. Mr. Ballard was buried
at Ames Cemetery just a few miles from West Baden. Cf Time, (November 16 1936),
27, and West Baden College News (November 16 1936). Interview with Mr. Cave.
prove an asset to Orange County." 37  *Time* magazine, July 9, 1934, commented in a rather detached, perhaps slightly cynical, manner on the transfer. Father Ledochowski was referred to as "that formidable cleric," and the progress of the negotiations was described thus:

Until the depression West Baden Springs Hotel prospered. With the decrease in business, Mr. Ballard made ready to sell out and retire. In casting about for a buyer two years ago, he met Rev. Hugo F. Sloctenmyer, Jesuit president of Xavier University in Cincinnati. Would the Jesuits be interested in buying at a low price, No, said Father Sloctenmyer. But learning that Mr. Ballard wished to have his hotel maintained intact, as a landmark, the Jesuit promised to help him try to dispose of it. Months passed and the business association between the two became friendship. Last week came announcement that persuasive Father Sloctenmyer had obtained hotel, spa and grounds as an outright gift. 38

Perhaps Will Rogers, the great American humorist, spoke for most Americans:

Well, all I know is what I read in the papers, or see or hear. . . . Some of these news item I had overlooked, some of em I hadent. Maby some of em might be new to you. I had overlooked Ed Ballard, of West Baden, Indiana, who earned his money in circuses, gave a seven million dollar hotel to the Jesuits for a college. Thats that beautiful big hotel you all seen and stopped at. And he wasn't even a Catholic.

I knew a Jesuit was the Highest educated of all religious orders, but I didnt know he had to study 15 years to complete his college course after high school. My, imagine a four year college mans embarrasement if he had to tangle intellects with a Jesuit! Then our gang get what they call a masters degree in five years. (Or one extra.) Now what an ignorant bird he would be stacked up against one of these. 39


38 *Time*, (July 9 1934), pp. 28-30.

39 Will Rogers, *Chicago Herald and Examiner*, July 22, 1934, p. 18. This excerpt is taken from Will Rogers syndicated column which appeared in many newspapers throughout the country.
But no matter how outsiders looked upon the transformation which had taken place! The members of the Chicago Province of the Society of Jesus rejoiced with an exceedingly great joy as they saw established within the boundary of their young province a house to provide new laborers in the vineyard of the Lord for years to come. Father Francis X. McMenamy, S. J., Instructor of the Tertian Fathers at St. Stanislaus Novitiate, Cleveland, Ohio, expressed the sentiments of his fellow Jesuits when he wrote Father Cloud a letter of hearty congratulation on June 29, 1934, and urged the provincial to call for special prayers for Mr. Ballard as a token of gratitude for what Father McMenamy so accurately described as "a princely gift."  

40Chicago Province Archives, file: "West Baden—Acquisition."
APPENDIX I

AN AUTHENTIC CHRONOLOGY OF THE
WEST BADEN SPRINGS HOTEL

1854
John A. Lane loses his lease on French Lick House.

ca. 1855
John A. Lane opens Mile Lick Inn.

October 4, 1883
Lane sells to Amos Stout, John T. Stout, James Braden, Lydia Braden, George W. Campbell and Elvit B. Rhodes.

April 1, 1887
The Monon completes its track to West Baden and French Lick.

February 20, 1888
John T. Stout and Amos Stout sell to Lee W. Sinclair.

July 16, 1888
James Braden sells to Lee W. Sinclair.

April 10, 1893
George W. Campbell sells to Elvit B. Rhodes.

June 14, 1901
The hotel burns.

July 20, 1901
Elvit Rhodes sells to Sinclair.

August 13, 1901
Sinclair and Persise form the West Baden Springs Company.

October 1, 1901
Contract signed with Caldwell and Drake for the new hotel, calling for completion within two hundred days.

June 14, 1902
Sinclair moves into his apartment in new hotel and has breakfast there.

April 16, 1903
"Grand Opening" of the new hotel.
January 30, 1913
Mortgage on the hotel paid in full.

September 7, 1916
Lee Wiley Sinclair dies.

February 11, 1917
Fire breaks out. Destroys hospital, Opera House; damages Pavilion Number Seven.

October 27, 1917
New Opening, remodeled after fire. New Pompeian Court.

September 24, 1918
Last issue of The West Baden Journal.

October 16, 1918
Hotel becomes General Hospital 35.

April, 1919
Hotel turned back to owners, the Rexfords.

ca. 1922
Charles E. Ballard assumes ownership.

July 1, 1932
Final closure of the hotel.

June 28, 1934
The Chicago Province of the Society of Jesus takes possession of the property. West Baden College.
APPENDIX II

AN AUTHENTIC CHRONOLOGY OF THE FRENCH LICK SPRINGS HOTEL

ca. 1845
Building of the first hotel or inn.

ca. 1846
Leasing of hotel by Bowles to Lane.

November 1, 1864
Samuel Ryan leases hotel for ten years from Bowles at $1,000 per year.

September 29, 1887
Hiram E. Wells, sole owner of hotel, sells entire property to French Lick Springs Company for $122,000 in cash and $100,000 in capital stock.

June 24, 1901
French Lick Springs Company incorporates, with Thomas J. Taggart a member. Estimated value of hotel: $1,200,000.

1905
Taggart buys out his partners.

1912
Hotel profits reach $276,000.

March 6, 1929
Taggart dies at Indianapolis.

November 29, 1946
Hotel bought by syndicate headed by John B. Cabot.

1952
Massachusetts Life Insurance Company wins ownership of hotel.

1955
Hotel bought by Sheraton Hotel Company.

1 These dates are taken from Haupt's History of the French Lick Springs Hotel.
APPENDIX III

TYPICAL BREAKFAST MENU, 1902

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fruit</th>
<th>Sauce</th>
<th>Stewed Prunes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grape Fruit</td>
<td>Apple Sauce</td>
<td>Baked Apples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sliced Bananas</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clam Bouillon in Cups</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ralston's Breakfast Food</td>
<td>Rolled Oats</td>
<td>Grape Nuts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malta Vita</td>
<td>Shredded Wheat Biscuit</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fish</th>
<th>Breakfast Items</th>
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<tr>
<td>Broiled Whitefish, Maitre d'Hotel</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broiled Salt Mackerel</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meat</th>
<th>Breakfast Items</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Broiled Tenderloin or Sirloin Steak, Plain or Creole</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breakfast Bacon</td>
<td>Sugar Cured Ham</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chicken Hash</td>
<td>Green Peppers</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Breakfast Items</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Broiled Calf Liver</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scrambled Brains, aux Fines Herbs</td>
<td>Fresh Cornmeal Mush</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pork Chops</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Eggs</th>
<th>Breakfast Items</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eggs as ordered</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potatoes</th>
<th>Breakfast Items</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>POTATOES—Lyonnaise</td>
<td>Hashed in Cream</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Baked</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bread</th>
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<tr>
<td>French Rolls</td>
<td>Rye Bread</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheat Muffins</td>
<td>German Coffee Cake</td>
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<tr>
<td>Toast</td>
<td>Comb Honey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Corn Cakes</td>
</tr>
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</table>
APPENDIX IV

OPPOSITION TO THE COLLEGE IN WEST BADEN

Reverend Samuel K. Wilson, S. J., adviser to the provincial, was the first to suggest that there might be some opposition on the part of the townspeople of West Baden to the conversion of the hotel into a scholasticate.¹ The Most Reverend Joseph E. Ritter, Administrator of the Diocese of Indianapolis, also hinted in his letter welcoming the Jesuits into the diocese that there might be some difficulty: "Their opinion [the consultors of the diocese] is divided, however, as to the advisability of selecting West Baden for the purpose on account of the strong non-Catholic spirit in that part of the diocese (of course this could be an argument for the establishment of such a place) and also because of taking this property off the tax list, which undoubtedly, if it is done, will arouse a great deal of opposition, particularly at this time when the tax question is so acute. . . ."²

This letter indicated accurately the two reasons for opposition to the Jesuit college: long-standing ignorance of the Catholic Church and the general

¹Letter of February 2, 1934. Cf. page 98 of this thesis.

dependence upon the hotel for the stability of the local economy. As regards the first item, Father Henry Spalding, S. J., states in his "Diary" that in 1934 Our Lady of the Springs Catholic Church, French Lick, was the only Catholic Church in all of Orange County, and had a congregation which totaled only eighty members, twenty of whom lived in West Baden. As regards the economic situation, it is obvious from what was said in the body of the thesis how utter was the dependence of the town of West Baden upon the hotel for its very existence and financial health. The town never had bothered to develop industry or agriculture beyond the pittance level, since its steady and substantial source of income was derived from the hotel. This is a circumstance which would dampen the enthusiasm of even a Catholic locality under similar conditions.

The very day after the Jesuits formally accepted the hotel Father Rohde, who had been appointed temporary religious superior of the West Baden College community, mentioned in a letter to Father Cloud: "... everybody is nice so far. A storekeeper asked Brother Scharf, 'Are you people going to help this

3 Father Henry Spalding, S. J., was one of the first Jesuits to come to West Baden in 1934. He kept an accurate diary and scrapbook for the first few months, a source of much help to the author. It is kept in the office of the sub-minister, West Baden College. Father Spalding gives these figures for the parish and a few other facts concerning it.

Our Lady of Lourdes, "the Catholic Cathedral," was torn down in the spring of 1934, just before the Jesuits arrived, because the pastor, Father Francis Schepers, felt that it was in too delapidated a condition to be safe. The vestments and equipment were later used by the Jesuits of the college for their first community chapel equipment. The pastor of Our Lady of Lourdes and Our Lady of the Springs lived in the West Baden Springs Hotel until it closed in 1932. He then lived for a few months in the French Lick Springs Hotel, at the expense of Mr. Ballard. Late in 1932 the rectory for Our Lady of the Springs was completed, again with generous help from Mr. Ballard. Mrs. O'Neill's recollections on these points supplement Father Spalding's material and the few items available in the West Baden College News.
town or hurt it?' That seems to be the general state of mind."4 Father Cloud answered Father Rohde on July 3, and took up the point of establishing a spirit of good will among the residents of West Baden: "I was especially interested in getting the reaction of the townspeople. Evidently we ought to do some of our business right there in the neighborhood provided they are reasonable about it."5

Father Rohde in his next letter, July 5, showed himself somewhat more apprehensive than at first:

This poor little town is still dissy. They simply cannot figure us out... This morning, by formal appointment, a delegation of "business" men called on me, headed by the town doctor and including two ministers, Baptist and Presbyterian. ... The attitude is friendly, but they do want to know how many townfolk we are going to employ and how much money we are going to bring here. ... There are no signs of bigotry. These people are as much a mystery to us as we are to them, but we will know them better as time goes on. ... I have a sort of feeling that if they thought we did not fit here, the whole town might walk in some day and tell us we are not wanted.6

Father Rohde's next letter, July 28, reported that a very serious situation had arisen: "This little town has worked itself into a real frenzy. They have had several meetings, climaxd by an open meeting last Monday night. They figure that the taxes formerly paid by Mr. B. supported the High School


at W. Baden and French Lick and that Mr. B. did them an injury by so disposing
of the property that they are deprived of the taxes. . . . Also, that Mr. B.
has deprived them of means of livelihood."

The mass meeting mentioned by Father Rohde was held in the gymnasium of
the West Baden High School and was attended by several hundred people. The
overt purpose of the meeting was to work out some kind of plan for alleviating
the financial distress occasioned by the closing of the hotel, but the sugges-
tion was too obvious to miss that unless some solution were reached "even acts
of violence are more than likely to occur." The meeting eventually drew up
a petition to Mr. Ballard asking him to establish a factory in West Baden to
provide employment for the people of the town, and also to transfer ownership
of the mineral springs to the town of West Baden. This petition was supposed
to represent a compromise "between the conservative and the radical minds"
among those who attended the meeting. The Springs Valley Herald commented on
the meeting: "To anyone who has mingled with the people of West Baden during
the past few weeks or attended the mass meeting it is evident that the conser-

7Ibid., July 28, 1934.

8The Springs Valley Herald, August 2, 1934, p. 1. The Herald would have
been an invaluable source for materials for this study had not all issues prior
to 1932 been destroyed in a fire in that year.

9Here we see an instance of the refusal of some of the people of the valley
to recognize that it was the hotel and gambling which drew visitors to West
Baden, not the mineral waters. Negotiations between the townspeople and the ad-
ministration of the college over the use of the spring water dragged on for
several months, until a solution was found whereby the college was insured pri-
vacy and the town was insured use of the waters. In September and October, 1934,
some hot-heads of the town distributed leaflets blaming gamblers and gambling for
the town's ills, an ill-disguised attack on Mr. Ballard. Cf. Snodding. "Diary."
vatives hold control of the situation by the merest thread of a margin. Mr. Kirkham's talk to the meeting was particularly illuminating to those who could recognize the implications behind his ironically worded speech. Only the dumbest listener could fail to recognize that steps of extremely radical nature had been proposed, considered and held in check until 'diplomatic' overtures could be tried. This same article, in the next paragraph, advocated a "sane, orderly solution" of the problem.

The petition was duly drawn up and had appended to it some 850 names. This attempt, however, met with premature and total failure as soon as it was discovered that neither the postoffice nor any member of the "Citizens' Committee" had Mr. Ballard's forwarding address. Such an humiliating anti-climax occasioned more threats from the committee that the "next move... would be more startling in nature than was the action of petitioning for help."

A second meeting was held on August 17, at which the "Citizens' Committee" decided to toss into the hands of the Town Board, or Council, of West Baden the problem of contacting Mr. Ballard and presenting their demands. Consequently, on August 29 a strongly worded petition was submitted to the regular meeting of the Board; it insisted that the "Town Board of West Baden... take any and all steps necessary to cause the West Baden Springs Hotel and Golf Courses, Mineral Springs and grounds used for various resort purposes, to pass to the former owners and further that these said owners put these resources to their origi-

10 The Springs Valley Herald, August 2, 1931, p. 1.

11 Ibid., August 16, 1931, p. 1.
nally intended uses as a resort. Or that Mr. Ballard resume ownership of the above said property and then dispose of it to a commercial enterprise that will restore its use as a resort."

In the meantime, on September 4, 1934, a third mass meeting was held, this time attended by only forty people, to which were invited the Reverend Thomas J. Donnelly, S. J., newly appointed president of West Baden College, and the Reverend Allan P. Farrell, S. J., dean of the philosophy department. Father Donnelly, without allowing any undue concessions to the requests of the townspeople such as making the road from the town to the college entrance a public drive, seems to have impressed everyone with the general friendly spirit of the Jesuits and their desire to contribute to a working out of the problem. Father Spalding in commenting upon this meeting in his "Diary" concludes by saying: "As the people have had occasion to know us, all unfriendliness disappears." The Minute Book of the Town Board reports for its September 4 meeting: "Father Donnelly and Father Farrell, officers of the West Baden College, discussed their standing in regard to their feeling toward the town which was very friendly and they wanted to help the town in every way possible."

The town, nonetheless, was still awaiting some kind of action on the petition submitted to the Town Board. Finally, on September 26, 1934, Perry McCart appeared at a Board meeting in answer to the urgent request. The Minute

12Minute Book, Town Council of West Baden, August 29, 1934, III, 60.
Book jejunely reported what took place: "Town Board met in regular session. Reply by Perry McCart that they could not do anything in regard to Springs Hotel and Grounds—as they had been given away and made them a deed and West Baden Springs Co. was dissolved." All hopes for a restoration of the hotel were dashed.

From this time forward the residents of West Baden began to resign themselves to the inevitable and decided to make the best of a bad situation. True, some of the old bitterness has lasted over a score of years, but time, post-war prosperity, and the friendly services conferred upon the residents by members of the Jesuit community have helped to heal the old wound.

15 Ibid., September 26, 1934, p. 6h.
CRITICAL BIBLIOGRAPHY

I. PRIMARY SOURCES

A. BOOKS


This book contains a fine collection of maps showing county boundaries and their changes through the years. It was of help in the earlier chapters of the thesis.


The "Province Catalogue" gives the official positions of each member of the province for any given year.


The report was of only minor service to the author.


These two volumes were of some aid in determining the disposition of the "Saline Lands."


This study also was of some help in determining the early history of the "Saline Lands" of southern Indiana.
General Laws of Indiana, 1825-1826, Indianapolis, Indiana, 1826.
General Laws of Indiana, 1827-1828, Indianapolis, Indiana, 1828.
General Laws of Indiana, 1831-1832, Indianapolis, Indiana, 1832.
General Laws of Indiana, 1901, Indianapolis, Indiana, 1901.

These volumes were useful in the study of the "Saline Lands" and also for a study of the changes in the incorporation laws in 1901, the year the new hotel was built.


The Journal gives us our only record of Sinclair's accomplishments as representative from Washington County. He seems to have introduced only two bills: Bill #79 authorizing appointment of real estate appraisers and Bill #223 legalizing construction of some water works in Washington County.


These two volumes constitute a valuable source for material on the changes and growth in Indiana government and contain fine critical notes. Volume I was useful in the question of the "Saline Lands." A third volume was published in 1930, covering the years 1916-1930.

Lindley, Harlow, ed., Indiana As Seen by Early Travelers, Indianapolis, Indiana, 1916.

A valuable collection of primary source material—diaries, letters, etc.—for one seeking information on early trails and roads.


The report was of some use in studying the mineral springs, their sources and mineral content.


This volume of the "Terrell Reports" gives Sinclair's company and rank during the Civil War, and destroys forever the myth that he was ever a colonel, a myth Sinclair loved deeply.
B. NEWSPAPERS


This old newspaper was of invaluable service to the author in his study of the early history of Orange County and the hotels. The paper is stored in the vault of the Paoli State Bank and was lent to the author through the kindness of the Board of Directors. This paper, as well as The True American, mentioned below, was under the editorship of a man named H. Comingore.


The Chicago newspapers are interesting in a study of the advertising and fame of the hotel. During the early part of the century both of these newspapers carried occasional advertisements for the hotel. On the day after the great fire, 1901, the papers carried the story as their front-page, headline article, with the Tribune reporting two hundred people killed.


The Daily Inter-Ocean. Chicago, 1901.

The Indianapolis Star. Indianapolis, 1934.

The Louisville Courier-Journal. Louisville, 1900-1934.

The Courier-Journal had stories from time to time on the hotel, but, surprisingly, seemed to be less concerned about it than the various Chicago papers.


This newspaper, stored in the office of The Paoli Republican, was of decided help to the author in several instances.


In the true tradition of records concerning the West Baden Springs Hotel, the files of the Herald were completely destroyed by fire in 1932, thus severely curtailing the usefulness for the thesis.

The True American. Paoli, Indiana, 1839-1846.

See the comments under The American Eagle.

A mimeographed news-sheet published by the college, it gives a step by step account of the transformation of the hotel into a Jesuit scholasticate. Bound copies are available in the West Baden College library.


The Journal, owned by the West Baden Springs Hotel Company, was by far the most valuable single source of information. It was issued regularly every Tuesday for the twenty-four years of its existence, except between June, 1901, and June, 1902. The circulation seems to have been about three thousand.

G. PAMPHLETS AND BROCHURES


This is a thirty-six page pamphlet describing the old hotel. The whole emphasis of description is put on the curative powers of the mineral waters. It is kept in the office of the sub-minister, West Baden College.

"The Carlsbad of America, West Baden Springs," West Baden, ca. 1900.

Similar to the previously mentioned pamphlet except that the baths are given special attention. Office of the sub-minister.

"A Few Facts About the West Baden Springs Hotel," West Baden, ca. 1905.

This is a one-page circular on the hotel, giving dimensions and facilities. Office of the sub-minister.

"Golf Among the Clouds, Fall Tournament Program," West Baden, 1920.

This pamphlet describes the upper course and outlines the tournament program. Office of sub-minister.

"Opening of the Grand Atrium," West Baden, October 27, 1917.

The program marked the formal opening of the Pompeian Court. There were addresses by Charles W. Fairbanks and Carter H. Harrison. Helen Keller also appeared on the program. Office of the sub-minister.

This is a brochure describing the new bells and chimes in the atrium.


This periodical was a publication for the hospital patients and staff during the months when the hotel was used by the army as a hospital. "This paper is published in the interests of our patients and is devoted to their welfare." The magazine had only three issues, copies of which can be found in the office of the sub-minister.


This is an advertising folder picturing the new gardens and the new Pompeian Court. Rexford is listed as president of the company and Persise as secretary-treasurer. Office of sub-minister.


This is a pamphlet of twenty pages describing the hotel and giving a detailed description of the various baths. Office of sub-minister.


This is a typical advertising brochure, with special emphasis on the new gardens and Pompeian Court. Office of sub-minister.

D. UNPUBLISHED MATERIAL

1. PUBLIC ARCHIVES


The records were obtained for the author by Mrs. Myrtle Mavity of French Lick and were of aid in determining certain dates.

Orange County Records, Orange County Court House, Paoli, Indiana.

The following were the records consulted by the author in the Recorder's Office, many of which provided the only certain information on dates and finances:

"Deed Record Books." Practically all volumes.
"Miscellaneous Record Books," Vol. I.
"Mortgage Record Books," Vols. V, VI, and XXVI.
"Probate Order Book," Vol. XIX.
"Tax Duplicate and Delinquent List," 1880.
"Tax Duplicate and Delinquent List," 1900.
"Tax Duplicate and Delinquent List," 1905.

In the office of the County Auditor:

In the office of the Clerk of the Orange County Circuit:
"Cause Number 3779," Orange County Circuit Court, September 17, 1907.

Justices of the Peace: Records, West Baden, 1884-1934, Vols. I-IV.

These records were of very little help, but were consulted because, along with some records of the Town Board, they were about all that survived a fire in 1932.


The "Minute Book" was of some help in ascertaining the attitude of the townsfolk towards the Jesuits in 1934.

2. PRIVATE COLLECTIONS

Chicago Province of the Society of Jesus, Archives, 509 North Oak Park Avenue, Oak Park, Illinois.

The records at Oak Park concerning the transfer of the hotel to the Society of Jesus are well ordered and complete, and provided the author with most of the material used in the final chapter of the thesis. The author was much aided by the Reverend Raymond J. Fussner, S. J., custodian of the archives. The following files were consulted:

"West Baden, Documents-Letters re Acquisition, 1934."
"Letters of Very Reverend Father General, 1934."
"West Baden, Petitions for Theologate, 1932-1937."
"Annual Letters, West Baden College, 1934."


One manuscript describing pioneer days in the Orange County area was lent through the kindness of Mrs. Sturm, and several documents, notably the "Hickman Testimony", were lent through the kindness of Mr. Wells.
Our Lady of the Springs, "Registra Baptismorum, Matrimoniorum, et Defunctorum in Ecclesia Our Lady of the Springs, French Lick, Indiana, and Our Lady of Lourdes, West Baden, Indiana, ab A. D. 1905."

The Reverend Charles Sullivan, S. J., pastor of Our Lady of the Springs, kindly allowed the author to consult this document and gave him several valuable suggestions. The register is kept in the rectory office, Our Lady of the Springs.

West Baden College, Reverend Father Rector's Files.

These files contain several of the early letters from the superior of the West Baden community to the Father Provincial. Consulted through the kindness of the Reverend John A. McGrail, S. J.

West Baden College, Office of the Sub-Minister.

The records, scrapbooks and documents in this collection were most valuable. The few surviving documents pertaining to the old hotel and the Sinclair era are to be found here. Father Francis Walter, S. J., sub-minister of the West Baden College community showed great patience and kindness to the author in allowing him to consult these records.


The map was very useful in determining the precise location of the various lots and precisely where the original hotel was built. Pinnick was a professional engineer, Registered #1974, State of Indiana. The Procurator's office has no financial records of the hotel; they were all removed at the time of the transfer.

West Baden College, "Diary," Beadle of the Philosophers, 1934.

The "Diary" gives a day by day account of the first days in the new West Baden College.


The "Minute Books" were helpful in discovering some dates and in measuring the growth of Mr. Ballard's influence. It was through the kindness of Mr. Willis H. Pinnick, chairman of the board of directors that the author was permitted to consult these books.
II. SECONDARY SOURCES

A. BOOKS

Amory, Cleveland, The Last Resorts, New York, 1952.

This is a rather humorous book, on the popular level. It contains a few references to the French Lick Springs Hotel.


Since 1900 is a fine survey of the period and gives valuable details on working conditions and social customs.


This booklet is a re-print of an address given at the French Lick Springs Hotel, August 7, 1947. It gives a brief history of the Monon.


Blatchley's book gives a good description of the chemical content of the spring water and a good description of the appearance of the old hotel, but it is notoriously inaccurate in its account of the growth of the hotel.

Bodley, Temple, George Rogers Clark, New York, 1926.

This book is a standard biography of Clark and describes his expedition to Vincennes.


The General Armory discusses the coat of arms of the Sinclairs and was useful in questions relating to the seal on the hotel porch.

Cottman, George S., Centennial History and Handbook of Indiana, 1816-1916, Indianapolis, Indiana, 1916.

Cottman's book was of little value in preparing this study. It is significant that Taggart had a very prominent mention in the section entitled "Who's Who in Indiana," whereas Sinclair was not even mentioned. The West Baden Springs Hotel is described in the section dealing with Orange County, but all six pictures in the section are of the French Lick Springs Hotel.

Dedmon's book gives interesting details concerning such hotel guests as "Scarface Al" Capone and "Big Bill" Thompson.


This is a fine reference book, but has merely a few insignificant references to West Baden in Vol. II.

Dunne, Peter Finley (Mr. Dooley), *In Peace and in War*, Boston, 1899.

"Mr. Dooley" refers to West Baden as a place to spend one's money.


Logan Esarey's History is considered standard.


This is a short, posthumous work which gives some insight into early family living conditions in Indiana, especially around the 1850's.


The 1926 edition of *Show Boat* contains the famous reference to Tom Taggart's gambling tables which almost cost Miss Ferber a lawsuit.

*History of Lawrence, Orange and Washington Counties*, Chicago, 1884.

This volume is typical county history and extremely unreliable.


This book contains a one page story on the West Baden Springs Hotel. It is here stated that Dresser composed "On the Banks of the Wabash" at West Baden.


Professor Martin's book, though not strictly speaking a history, does give a good "feel" for the story of the state. On page 102 he has this to say of Thomas Taggart: "It has fallen to the lot of very few, if any, men, to exercise as much influence in Indianapolis as Thomas Taggart... He made the French Lick Springs Hotel in southern Indiana a retreat for weary Democrats, millionaires, and moneyed sports of all kinds."
Pitman, Benn, *The Trial for Treason at Indianapolis*, Cincinnati, 1865.

Here we have one of the first accounts of the original trial of Bowles and Milligan for treason.


Riegals book is a standard study of the frontier territories.


Scott's book was helpful in determining the growth and relative sizes of the Indiana communities in the early days. The original was reprinted by the Indiana Historical Society in 1954.


This book gives a good account of the 1920's.


Stampp's book gives an interesting, if brief, account of Dr. Bowles' troubles during the Civil War.


Typical county history, but significant for the omission of Sinclair's name.


This is a scholarly account of the trail and its history.


An earlier work, and more general than the one just mentioned.


This book was of no value directly in the writing of the thesis, but it does contain a fine bibliography on Indiana literature.


This book contains biographical and historical sketches, but not of much pertinence to the thesis topic.
B. ARTICLES

"America Takes the Water Cure," Readers' Digest, XXIX (October 1936), 95-96.


Contained in this short notice is some information on mining for salt at French Lick and West Baden.


Some information is given in the article about the method of electing officers.


This article is a popular, but relatively accurate, account of the hotel's history.

"Comment," America, LVI (November 21, 1936), 146.

America comments upon Mr. Ballard's generosity to the Church at the time of his death.

"Decree of Division," The Province News-Letter, Missouri Province of the Society of Jesus, I (October 1928), 12.

Here is found the complete Latin text and the English translation of the decree dividing the old Missouri Province into the Missouri and Chicago Provinces.


Father Filas tells an interesting and accurate story of the history of the seal of the Sinclair family.

"Gambler's Progress," Time, XXVIII (November 16, 1936), 27.

This full-page article contains a brief and relatively accurate account of Ballard's life, as well as a description of his murder.


The fullest and most recent study of this expedition.
Father Karol's articles are among the few truly scholarly studies of the hotel's and Orange County history.


These two accounts give some small description of the West Baden area.


Here is given a discussion of the date of the founding of Vincennes.


This is a two-column description of the hotel and the acquisition of it by the Chicago Province of the Society of Jesus.


Trese, Thomas, S. J., "West Baden College, Eighth Wonder of the World," Our Sunday Visitor, (September 16 1951), 6A.

The two above-mentioned accounts are accurate and interesting summaries of the hotel's story.

C. UNPUBLISHED MATERIAL


Mr. Haupt's thesis, a thorough and careful piece of work, was of great assistance to the author in the initial stages of research, for it indicated several sources for material which saved the author many hours of searching. The author spoke with Mr. Haupt personally and received from him the most gracious cooperation.
III. PERSONAL INTERVIEWS


Marlette, Glenn, manager of hotel taxi stand from 1926 until 1932, by John W. O'Malley, June 29, 1955.


Prow, Laff, son of the editor of the West Baden Journal, night clerk at the West Baden Springs Hotel from 1905 until 1913, room clerk from 1913 until 1917, and again from 1919 until 1932; at present, reservations' clerk at the French Lick-Sheraton, by John W. O'Malley, S. J., June 29, 1955.


Thacker, Elmer E., Golf Pro at West Baden Springs Hotel's lower course, 1911-1913; manager of club rooms in Homestead Hotel, West Baden, 1913; manager of club rooms for Mr. Ballard in the Brown's Hotel, 1913-1932, by Joseph T. Tobin, S. J., and John W. O'Malley, S. J., June 28, 1934.
The thesis submitted by John William O'Malley, S. J., has been read and approved by three members of the Department of History.

The final copies have been examined by the director of the thesis and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated, and that the thesis is now given final approval with reference to content, form, and mechanical accuracy.

The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

November 30, 1956  
Date  
Charles R. Metzger, S. J.  
Signature of Adviser