



Blue Sulphur Springs in Greenbrier County, West Virginia

## What happened to Blue Sulphur Springs, West Virginia's forgotten mineral springs resort

by: Sam Kirk Feb 9, 2024

**CLARKSBURG, W.Va. (WBOY)** — West Virginia has a number of natural hot springs that have drawn some very famous guests over the years. Some of them have evolved into modern tourist attractions, like the mineral bath at what is now The Greenbrier or the natural hot springs at Berkeley Springs State Park, but others have turned into ruins.

Blue Sulphur Springs in Greenbrier County was once a bustling resort much like The Greenbrier is today. However, a few bad twists of fate knocked all but one building, the Pavilion on top of the spring, off the map, according to the Greenbrier Historical Society.

Built in 1834, Blue Sulphur Springs Resort had a three-story brick hotel with 200 rooms, a springhouse and cottages. Historical figures like Andrew Jackson, Martin Van Buren, Henry Clay, and Robert E. Lee all visited the spring in its heyday, according to the West Virginia Encyclopedia (E-WV). In fact, the farm where Robert E. Lee's famous horse Traveller was born—which is for sale as of publication—is just down the road.

The resort was sold in 1858 and Allegheny College was established there, but a few years later, the Civil War moved into the area. Both Union and Confederate soldiers occupied the land during the war, according to E-WV. And in 1863, near 100 Confederate soldiers died there due to exposure and disease. Furniture from the resort that had once been a sign of luxury was used to make coffins for dead soldiers.

The remaining resort buildings were burned down by Union soldiers in 1864, according to E-WV.

The Greek Revival Pavilion is the only part of the resort that remains and is one of the only Greek Revival-style structures left in West Virginia.

Since the West Virginia Preservation Alliance named the Pavilion among the state's most endangered structures in 2013, the Greenbrier Historical Society and other local groups have worked to restore it. Foundation stabilization, drainage projects and general maintenance have all been put into place since 2020, and the Pavilion was re-dedicated by the Friends of the Blue Committee in July 2023.

The Pavilion is open for visits and available to rent for private events and photography sessions through the Greenbrier Historical Society.