



Tuscan Springs (Images of America)

Bryon Burruss

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Tuscan Springs, originally "Lick Springs," was a collection of mineral waters near Red Bluff, California, which Native Americans considered such sacred ground that even warring tribes would lay down their weapons and bathe there together in peace. It was here that Dr. John A. Veatch became the first person in America to discover "white gold" (borax) in 1856, and he renamed the site after the fumaroles of Italy. While plans to extract the mineral proved impractical, word quickly spread of the healing properties of these alleged miraculous springs, and hundreds soon "were taking the waters." But, it was not until the property fell into the hands of an ambitious local merchant, Edgerton Walbridge--equal parts Teddy Roosevelt, William Randolph Hearst, and P.T. Barnum--that the springs gained worldwide fame, drawing visitors to Tehama County from throughout the country by carriage, railroad, and steamboat.



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