

Swimming Lessons

by Marilyn Reeves

Most people are familiar with the hot springs swimming pool at Glenwood Springs, and some may have enjoyed the outdoor warm-water pool at Mt. Princeton, a small resort nestled at the base of its namesake between Buena Vista and Salida. But many are unaware that Salida also boasts a large indoor hot springs swimming pool, which is where I learned to swim.

Although the pool construction has undergone a few revisions, back in the 40's and 50's there was the shallow end, perhaps 3-feet deep, and the deep end, which was over 6-feet deep.

I started taking swimming lessons around the age of five, and by the time I was in Junior High, I was swimming in the deep end. I wasn't a particularly strong swimmer, but was able to get around and have a good time, except for those occasions when some boy thought it would be cute to pull my feet down and leave me struggling to get back to the surface without drowning!

I even learned to dive off the diving board – nothing fancy – just a couple of bounces and then a hands-over-the-head dive that allowed me to slice into the water without mishap. I learned the hard way, however, that once you commit to a dive, you don't change your mind in mid-air, or the result can be a body slamming belly flop!

When I was about 13, I came to Denver to visit my older sister Janet, who was 19 at the

time and living in a boarding house off of 8th and Pearl Street. There was a nice pool in the back yard for the use of the residents and their guests, and I couldn't wait to jump in. Which I did. And immediately jumped right back out again – gasping with the shock from the cold water. Cold water? All my life I had had the privilege of swimming in the balmy 85° or so hot springs pool at Salida. I didn't know people swam in cold water! I was so shaken by the experience I went back to the room, got into bed and under the covers, and stayed there for the remainder of the week, with a nasty cold ... or was it hypothermia?

But back home in Salida, I continued to enjoy swimming until my Senior year of high school, when I started suffering from frequent head colds. And I also became self-conscious about appearing in a bathing suit. Unfortunately I had put on a few extra pounds over the previous couple of years, which I wasn't particularly happy to have on display. Later I lost the weight, then regained it, re-lost it, regained it ... but that's another story.

It's been years since I've been swimming. I know that Windsor Gardens has a nice pool, but is it warm water? Warm, cold - regardless, today I wouldn't be caught dead in a bathing suit! Again I reference that other story about gaining and losing and gaining ... and gaining. I believe that it's self-explanatory. I think I'll just leave the swimming to braver, hardier souls who dare to take the plunge.