

Photo of the Month

Callahan's Station Historic Site



**The Electric Springs Hotel, near Callahan's Station
Rogers, Arkansas, c. 1890
Neg. #N009800**

Back in the old days stagecoach inns were as common as filling stations are today. These places were sometimes called stagecoach stops or stagecoach stations or taverns. The stagecoach inn located near Rogers was called Callahan's Station.

Callahan's Station was torn down many years ago but the history surrounding the place should not be forgotten. The old stagecoach inn

was a busy commercial center many years before the town of Rogers was created. It was an important place to local citizens as well as travelers passing through Benton County many years ago.

In those old days, stagecoach stops included blacksmith shops, livery stables and post offices. The stops were located along the main roads at regular intervals to provide feed and water for the horses as well as stagecoach repair and maintenance. The stagecoach inns offered meals and refreshments for the travelers much like modern gas stations and restaurants do today.

The stagecoaches that stopped at Callahan's followed regular routes and time schedules between larger towns such as Van Buren and Springfield Missouri. When the stage was about a mile away from the next stop, the driver would nod to the conductor who would then use a brass bugle to send a message. The sound of the bugle served to signal not only the arrival of the stagecoach but other important information such as how many meals to prepare or what kind of mechanical repairs might be needed. The sound of the bugle also announced the coming of the stage to the neighborhood children who sometimes were reprimanded for running along beside the coaches as they arrived in a cloud of dust.

Dennis Callahan began to build Callahan's Station in 1844 on his land located east of what today is known as downtown Rogers. Mr. Callahan chose that site because of the easy access to the clear water gushing from the mountain springs. Callahan's Station was an important stop for many stagecoach passengers many years before the first Butterfield Stagecoach made its historical stop on September 18, 1858.

When the Civil War broke out in northwest Arkansas, Callahan's Station was the place where the first regiment of local men signed up to join the Confederate Army in the summer of 1861. The regiment was the 16th Arkansas Infantry CSA organized under General Benjamin McCulloch.

As time went by, the history of Callahan's stagecoach inn faded away and the old building and the land around it became part of a development known as Electric Springs. During the 1880's, the old stagecoach inn building became a hotel and was renamed to fit the

Electric Springs health resort theme. Any connection to the Callahan family or the stagecoach history was quickly forgotten as the Electric Springs investors had their own story to tell.

It wasn't until 1941, when the old stagecoach inn building was scheduled for demolition that part of its history was recovered by Mr. Jay Reeves who had been hired to salvage lumber from what was left of the grand old place. When Mr. Reeves saw the beautiful grand stairway with its walnut newel post, banister and oak spindles he wanted to know more about the history of the building before it was gone forever. Mr. Reeves found out enough about the structure to provide the missing pieces in the long history of the lost landmark even though it took several more years before the full story came back together.

It was only recently the photos of the old hotel at Electric Springs matched up with land records to reveal the true identity and location of one of Benton County's most historic places. The photographic images of the old stagecoach stop known first as Callahan's Station and later as Electric Springs Hotel had been hidden away in files under different names for many years. The correct location of Callahan's Station was further complicated when another building was mistakenly identified as the Callahan's Station site. Now, Callahan's Station can again take its proper place in history and be remembered as the grand place it once was.

**Research by Monte K. Harris
Rogers Historical Museum
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