

1905 – Oasis Palms Hot Spring Resort is Established

Observing the burgeoning tourism industry in nearby Palm Springs and the Coachella Valley, Jackson Smith, the youngest son of the family (1846-1928), embarked on a mission to remake Oasis Palms into a mountain resort destination. Although the natural springs didn't boast scalding temperatures, it was common knowledge that the water on the west side of the spring held a bit more warmth. Jackson conceived an ingenious plan—if he could segregate the warm water, he could channel it into separate pools, fashioning hot spring mineral baths akin to the ones that had gained immense popularity at [Hot Springs National Park](#) in Arkansas, established by his namesake, [President Andrew Jackson](#), back East in 1832.

Jackson initiated the construction of a new well on the west side of the oasis and laid down pipes designed to direct the hot water into a meticulously crafted “Natural Hot Spring Pool” grotto. These pools, while appearing rudimentary with their concrete and stone rings sunken into the ground and encircled by natural rocks, held the promise of rejuvenation and relaxation. The hot water flowed generously into these tubs, and afterward, it was channeled back into the Oasis pond. With determination, the hot springs infrastructure was completed, and a new magnificent hotel, perched on the hill, overlooking the plateau, came into being. Thus, the Oasis Palms Hotel & Hot Spring Resort welcomed its first guests in 1905.



Regrettably, the one oversight in Jackson's grand vision was his choice of construction material for the hotel. Unlike his father's sturdy brick buildings, the hotel was stick-built and constructed using wood. This cost-cutting decision would prove to be a tragic misstep when, in 1948, the hotel was destroyed by a devastating fire that started in the caves below the hotel.

During this period water remained indispensable for powering steam engines and Santa Fe Railroad began construction of a pipeline from Bonanza Springs south to Danby. But during the construction of the hotel and hot-spring pools, Emmett Smith wielded his powers of persuasion to convince Santa Fe to maintain its daily stops at Oasis Palms. After the resort opened, Oasis Palms rapidly gained recognition as a tourism destination and passenger traffic on the daily Santa Fe service solidified its place on the map as a haven for relaxation and recreation.