

# Photo of the Month

## The Amphitheater at Monte Ne



Amphitheater at Monte Ne, c. 1950  
(Neg. # N009547)

When water levels on Beaver Lake drop, the remains of William H. “Coin” Harvey’s early 20th century resort Monte Ne become exposed. These rare occurrences spark renewed interest in the famed retreat of this eccentric visionary who had made northwest Arkansas his home.

Monte Ne was founded in 1900, with construction continuing into the 1920s. The resort offered indoor swimming in the first such pool of its kind in Arkansas, tennis, boating (in a Venetian-style gondola, no less!), its own bank, and a golf course, as well as the usual indoor and outdoor games popular at the time. Most guests arrived at the resort via a specially constructed railroad spur from Lowell, Arkansas, funded by Harvey.

In the 1920s the resort began to fail as many more Americans took advantage of the increasingly popular automobile as a means of vacation travel. Harvey’s beloved Monte Ne suffered from this trend. This change of fortune may have been one of the factors convincing Harvey that the fall of civilization was near. As a means of warning future generations of the reasons for this collapse, Harvey set out to construct a 130-foot tall concrete obelisk he called the Pyramid. In this obelisk he planned to place a time capsule to inform those who would open it what life had been like in this lost civilization and what they could do to avoid a similar fate. The Pyramid was never completed, but the amphitheater that was to have served as its base and foyer was.

The photo above, taken in the 1950s, shows that the amphitheater was a popular Sunday outing long after the resort had fallen into ruins. With the completion of Beaver Dam in 1963 and the subsequent formation of Beaver Lake, these outings came to an end as the remnants of Monte Ne were covered by the lake