

INDISPENSABLE SPRINGS

Today, Big Spring and Little Spring are as indispensable for the region's quality of life as they were historically.

Water emanating from these springs directly contributes to the Upper Sugar River Watershed, which supplies water for drinking, recreation and agriculture for many thousands of people.

As you watch Big Spring, enjoy it as an attractive feature—and also remember its value as a continuing source of fresh, abundant water for animals and people.

Big spring

an integral part of area life

What brings you here today? Close your eyes and listen... what do you hear? Wind in the trees... birds... the sound of water? Many who pause now at Big Spring while hiking or fishing appreciate its scenic qualities, solitude and quiet.

Historically, however, people focused on Big Spring's role as the source of life-giving water.

- ❖ Native Americans utilized this resource for thousands of years. Members of the Ho-Chunk nation set up temporary camps in the valley well into the 1930s.
- ❖ Nineteenth century settlers, likewise attracted to these waters, established permanent residences nearby.

Big Spring also served as a community gathering place for the village of Mt. Vernon in the late 1800s.

▲ In the late 19th century, the bustling community of Mt. Vernon frequently turned out to enjoy picnics, speeches and music on the banks above Big Spring. This photo shows a July Fourth gathering around 1890.

What sounds would you have heard here then? Imagine... the melodic sounds of the Mt. Vernon Cornet Band; the clip-clop of horses' hooves as buggy-loads of villagers arrived at the festivities; the rustle of the women's full skirts; the excited murmur of the crowd as neighbors greeted each other and settled in under the overarching trees.

SPRINGS OF SPRINGDALE TOWNSHIP

Big Spring and nearby Little Spring are part of a large system of springs that dot the nearby countryside. These beautiful springs, along with the area's rich, fertile valleys, inspired the name "Springdale" for the township that encompasses this site. Those who settled here in the 19th century readily recognized these springs as vitally important for their way of life.



- Big Spring and Little Spring feed into Mt. Vernon Creek, one of several cold-water creeks in Donald County Park that are home to naturally reproducing trout. These creeks attract fly fishers from around southern Wisconsin.
- ▼ Interested citizens can help monitor water quality in the watershed through Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources programs.

IMAGE CREDITS Big Spring: Mount Horeb Area Historical Society. Fishing: Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. Water quality: Upper Sugar River Watershed Association.