Saratoga Springs Encyclopedia Article

Saratoga Springs

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Saratoga Springs

Throughout the twentieth century, this upstate New York summer resort—1990 population, 25,001—has jumbled together invalids, nouveaux-riche social climbers, fastidious old-money sportsmen, and both hard-core and petty gamblers. A nineteenth century health resort featuring carbonated waters, the village began promoting summer horse-racing in 1863, and the Saratoga race track is the oldest still existent in the United States. Saratoga's reputation as a distinctive American congeries was spread in such disparate works as Edith Wharton's unfinished *The Buccaneers,* Edna Ferber's *Saratoga Trunk* (movie version starring Gary Cooper and Ingrid Bergman), and E.L. Doctorow's *Billy Bathgate.* The Kefauver investigation (1951) ended a century of public gaming, but the horse-racing continues unabated and, unlike similar resorts, Saratoga underwent a popular renaissance in the 1970s. It continues to thrive in the 1990s as "the summer place to be," entertaining an appealingly raffish mix attracted to health, history, horses, and the Saratoga Performing Arts Center.

Further Reading:

Spiegel, Ted. *Saratoga: The Place and Its People.* New York, Harry Abrams, 1988.

Waller, George. *Saratoga: Saga of an Impious Era.* Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, Prentice Hall, 1966.