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Club-A-Rama v2.0

WEEK 11

RIVERBOAT

RAINBOW SPRINGS

Dunnellon, FL

1966



Rainbow Springs is the headwater for the Rainbow River in Dunnellon, Florida, which is the anchor for Rainbow Springs State Park. Rainbow Springs State Park is a popular destination to swim, snorkel, canoe, picnic, and stroll on walking paths. Once named Wekiwa Creek, Blue Spring, and Blue Run, there is evidence that the Rainbow River (with a constant water temp of 73 degrees F) has attracted and sustained human inhabitants for over 10,000 years.

In the 1930s the spring was developed as a tourist attraction, and under new ownership in the 1960s marked its heyday. During that time activities included glass-bottomed boat rides, riverboat rides, log raft rides, a leaf-shaped gondola/monorail system, a horse rodeo, and submarine boat tours.

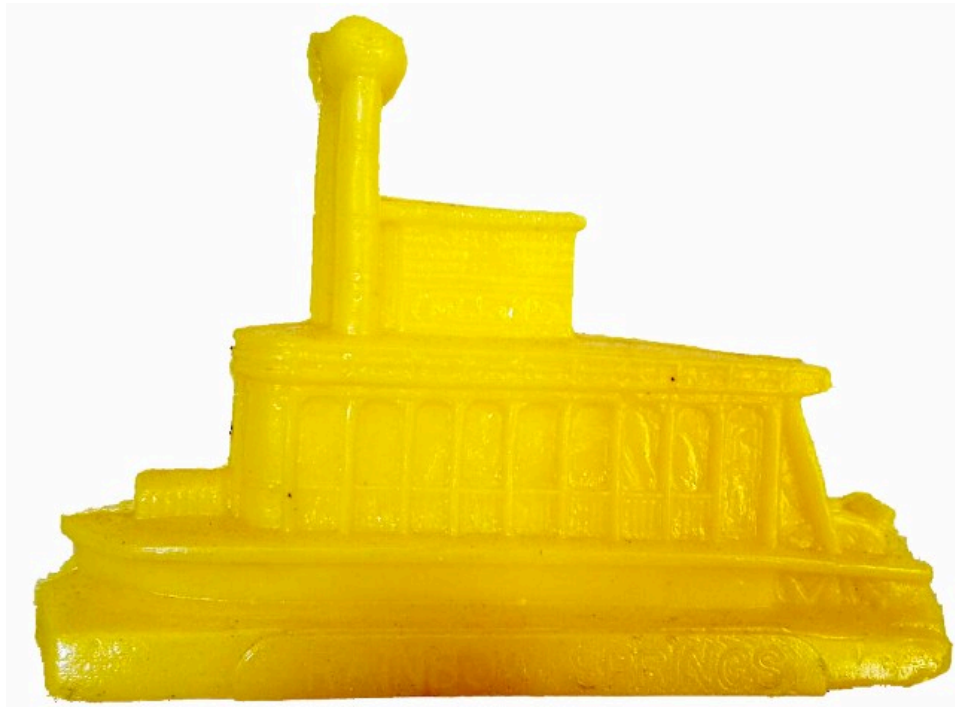


According to the notation on the back of this 1972 press photo, the "Rainbow Queen" was a double-deck riverboat, stirring memories of Florida's early 1800s as she cruised leisurely down the historic Rainbow River. The authentic stern-wheeler was one of the many attractions at Rainbow Springs, located 18 miles west of the Ocala exit of I-75, a main north-south route to Walt Disney World at Orlando. Other highlights at Rainbow Springs included daily western-style rodeos, aerial monorail rides and unique underwater boat trips.



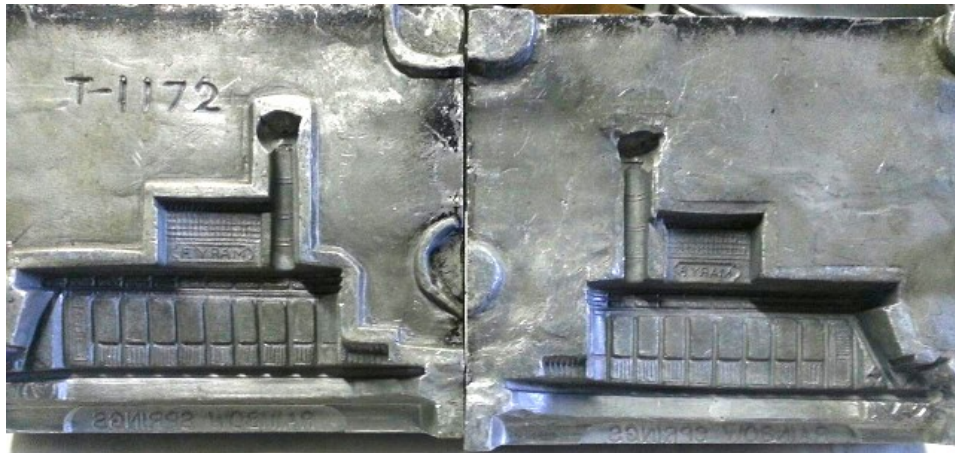


This is a press photo of the reigning Miss Rainbow Springs in 1969, posing with the mayor of Dunnellon, FL.



In 1974, the Rainbow Springs attraction closed as traffic began using I-75 instead of US Hwy 41, many tourists headed instead to the newer attraction "Walt Disney World."

In 1990 the state of Florida purchased the original area that was the Rainbow Springs attraction, and Rainbow Springs State Park was officially opened in 1995.



The **RIVERBOAT** is numbered 1172, which places it in 1966. The **RIVERBOAT** mold, dating back to 1966, is not believed to have been placed in operation since 1974 when the Rainbow Springs attraction closed.



Here's a bit of a mystery though that I was unable to uncover - maybe someone else can shed some light on this: The moldset that Mold-A-Rama had made indicates that the name of the ship is "MARY B." Was there a second paddle boat at Rainbow Springs circa 1966 named the MARY B.? Or does this name refer to the "RAINBOW QUEEN" **RIVERBOAT** pictured at the top of this webpage. There IS some difference in look between the "RAINBOW QUEEN" shown in the 1972 press photo and the 1966 Mold-A-Rama moldset. I dunno!

If you have any information about a "MARY B." paddle boat at Rainbow Springs in the mid-1960s, or if there ever was another paddle boat other than the "Rainbow Queen" at Rainbow Springs - please email me at MoldvilleMachine@gmail.com if you have any information about the MARY P.!

Disclaimers: The color and/or exact condition of the MOLD you get in the CLUB-A-RAMA may or may not be as shown. Not for children under 3.

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