

DOROTHY RICHTER

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I grew up swimming at Sutherland Springs near San Antonio. It was a resort like they had all over the country in those days. There was a bathhouse, a spring-fed swimming pool, and big oak trees. Now it's dried up.

One day about ten or so years ago I heard the blasting. It wasn't until I got up in a tall building that I could see what happened. They had cut over a hundred acres off the top of a huge hill to build a mall. It was just four miles upstream of Barton Springs, and it was going to be the biggest mall in Texas. It wasn't long before the silt from the construction washed down into the creek and came out at the Springs. I began to notice a slimy, yellow algae growing in the pool. I hadn't seen it before. It smelled terrible. I put it in a jar and took it to the city council.



We couldn't stop the mall, but we got them to filter their runoff. We've lost some battles since then and won some too. But I'm not giving up. I just can't think that it's not possible to save one of the last great springs for future generations. I think I have Indian blood. I have a strong sense of nature and the future.

I was down at the Springs one day, kind of by myself, not in any particular hurry, just sitting there looking out. And I thought to myself, "Gee aren't I lucky that I've gotten to experience this." You know there are so many people who don't get to come to places like this. It does me a whole lot more spiritual good than going to church. And the way I feel after I swim, carrying that good feeling with me into each day --there's something very special here.

-Oral history reprinted from Barton Springs Eternal by Marshall Frech and Turk Pipken, 1993

