

HISTORY OF THE ALCAZAR HOTEL



Gentlemen swimming in front of the east gentlemen's locker room, 1889. William Henry Jackson, Photographer, 1843-1942.

The Lightner Museum is housed in the former Alcazar Hotel, which was built in 1888 by Henry Morrison Flagler to complement the luxurious Ponce de Leon Hotel as an entertainment center. The hotel was often called "The Castle of Happy Returns."

For the pleasure of the guests, there was the world's largest indoor swimming pool at the time, the Grand Ballroom, sulfur baths, a steam room, massage parlor, tennis courts and gymnasium.

The Casino swimming pool was 120 feet long by 50 feet wide and ranged in depth from 3 to more than 12 feet. A constant supply of sulfur water from an artesian well kept the pool brimming full. Convinced of the healthful properties of the mineral water, guests flocked to the pool and to the Turkish and Russian baths. A broad skylight three floors above the pool let the sun shine in during the day, and starlight could be seen on clear nights.



LIGHTNER
MUSEUM

SAINT AUGUSTINE, FLORIDA