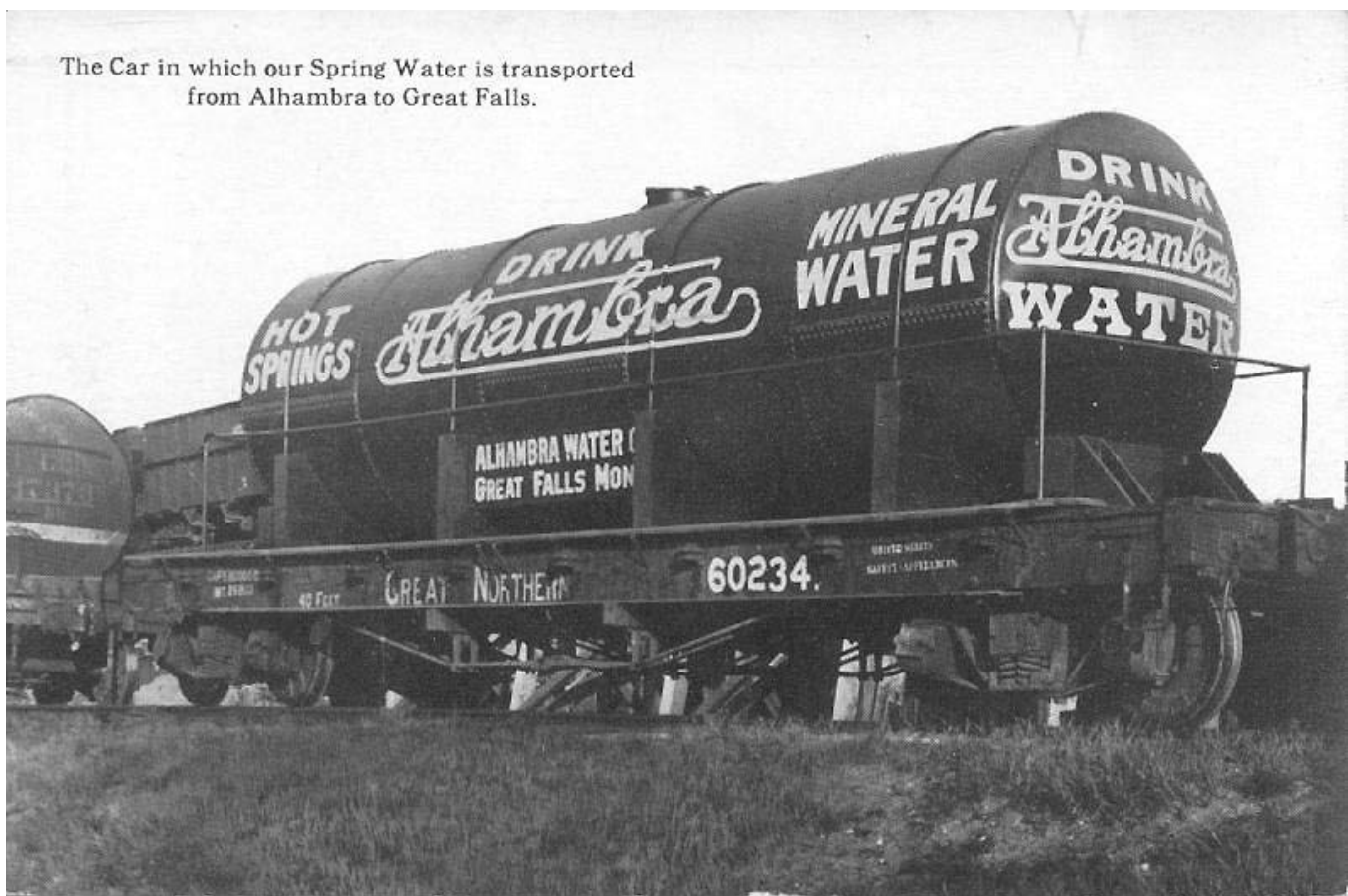


11. Industrial Uses

The heat from geothermal water is used worldwide for industrial purposes. Some of these uses include drying fish, fruits, vegetables, and timber products; washing wool, dyeing cloth, and pasteurizing milk. Geothermally heated water can be piped under sidewalks and roads to keep them from icing over in freezing weather. Thermal waters are also used to help extract gold and silver from ore and even for refrigeration and ice-making. Dehydration, or the drying of vegetable and fruit products, is the most common industrial use of geothermal energy.

In the 1980s an engineering firm developed plans to use geothermal water from a well at Wild Horse Hot Springs to preheat an ethanol production process. Thirty years later research was conducted on using low-temperature geothermal energy in the town of Hot Springs to grow algae that could then be processed into a biofuel.



At least two of Montana's early hot springs resorts (Alhambra and Hunter's) found markets for their hot springs mineral water in cities throughout the United States.

Photo — University of Montana Archives