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RIMANOCZY SPA HOUSE RULES – A MODEL FOR THE NOVI SAD ARTESIAN SPA HOUSE RULES

*KUĆNI RED BANJE RIMANOCZY KAO PRIMER KUĆNOG REDA U
 NOVOSADSKOM ARTEŠKOM KUPATILU*

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Summary

Introduction. Artesian well drilling, water testing, obtaining all the necessary permits, as well as designing, equipping, and final organization of work, including hiring the necessary staff, is often time-consuming and complex, and so it was for the leaders of the Free Royal City of Novi Sad in establishing the future Novi Sad "Jodna banja" (Iodine Spa). **Spa House Rules.** The paper gives an overview of the Rimanoczy Spa House Rules, which served as a model for creating similar house rules and shaping the work in the future spa. The success of the Novi Sad City Artesian Spa in the late 19th and early 20th century was attributed to visionaries, architects, city leaders, doctors, as well as numerous employees, who invested their knowledge and abilities to the people's needs in order to improve the wellbeing and health of the Spa guests.

Key words: Water Wells; Baths; Guideline; History of Medicine; Serbia; History, 19th Century; History, 20th Century

Introduction

At the turn of the twentieth century, a number of European countries started extensive use of mineral waters for healing purposes, and thus building of famous future spas. A similar trend was noted in the Vojvodina region, including drilling artesian wells in Novi Sad (1898), Bečej (1904), Kanjiža (1908), Senta, Beždan (1911 – 1912), Prigrevica, Apatin (1913) and Temerin (1919) [1–3]. Artesian well drilling, water testing, obtaining all the necessary permits, as well as designing, equipping, and final organization of work, including hiring the necessary staff, is often time-consuming and complex, and so it was for the leaders of the Free Royal City

Sažetak

Uvod. Put od kopanja arteškog bunara, analize vode, pribavljanja potrebnih dozvola, projektovanja, opremanja pa do finalne organizacije rada i angažovanja potrebnog osoblja, često je dugotrajan i složen, iskusili su i čelni ljudi slobodnog kraljevskog grada Novog Sada pri organizaciji rada buduće novosadske *Jodne banje*. **Kućni red Banje.** U radu je naveden osvrt na kućni red banje *Rimanoczy*, koji je poslužio kao uzor za formiranje sličnog kućnog reda i oblikovanje strukture rada u budućoj banji. Popularnosti novosadskog varoškog kupatila s kraja 19. i početka 20. veka doprineli su vizionari, arhitekta, čelni ljudi grada, lekari, ali i brojni zaposleni, koji su znanje, fokusiranost na korisnike i osluškivanje potreba usmerili na dobrobit i poboljšanje zdravlja svojih korisnika.

Glavne reči: arterski bunari; kupatila; preporuke; istorija medicine; Srbija; istorija, 19. vek; istorija, 20. vek

of Novi Sad in establishing the future Novi Sad "Jodna banja" (Iodine Spa).

On June 7, 1909, the Novi Sad City Council received a letter from the then Mayor of Nagyvarad, today the city of Oradea in Romania, that was a response to their request from the same year, concerning the house rules for the Novi Sad City Artesian Spa that was in the process of being established. In the correspondence between the Mayor of Nagyvarad and the City Council of Novi Sad, there was an attached price list and rules of conduct, that is, the house rules for the employees of the Rimanoczy Spa Hotel, owned by the city of Nagyvarad, offering 12 baths to their guests [4]. Several generations of architects from the famed Rimanoczy family have

participated in the design of numerous monumental buildings in several European cities, some of which were for the purpose of continental and coastal health tourism, as the famous Miramare Hotel in Crikvenica (Republic of Croatia) [5, 6]. The architect Rimanóczy Kálmán Senior built the Rimanóczy Spa and Hotel buildings on the bank of the Körös river at his own expense, and then he bequeathed it to the city of Nagyvárad (Oradea) [5].

The structure of the employees, manner of conduct among the employees in the institution, as well as towards the guests at the Rimanóczy Spa Hotel, are defined in the very first sentences of this old copy of the House Rules: "All employees are obligated to respect these rules and to follow them in full. All employees are obligated to protect the interests of the owners by keeping in order and care for the hygiene of the premises they are entrusted with; they will be polite to the guests, provide all possible help and thus contribute to increase the popularity of the spa-hotel" [4]. There are rules that regulate the rights and responsibilities of the manager. The aforementioned text emphasizes that "the first person in the institution is the **manager** who is responsible for all employees and runs the entire institution" [4]. The above-mentioned House Rules do not define the rights and obligations of physicians, the terms of their employment and work. The later Statute of the Joint Company "Novi Sad Iodine Spa" states that "the Board of Directors meets once a month for the purpose of making decisions and for advisory purposes; makes decisions on who will be employed, the annual salary and bonuses for employees. The Administrative Board appoints the spa manager as well as the spa doctor, determines the period for which they were appointed, and the amount of their earnings. The members of the Administrative Board may appoint a Small Administrative Board of ex officio high-ranking employees of the spa, a spa doctor and two elected members of the Administrative Board" [7].

The duties of the **cashier** of the Rimanóczy Spa are defined very precisely. It is recommended that "in the event of any unclear situation during the work, the manager should be informed first. Under no circumstances should he have visits at the cash desk or at the counter. He should politely, but briefly, answer the guests' questions, check those who come in, and explain where they should go" (Figures 1 and 2) [4].

The importance of the **doorman's** position is particularly emphasized in the extensive segment of the House Rules regarding the day-to-day work responsibilities of the employees. According to the document, "the doorman is the guardian of the institution whose duty is to monitor the movements of all those who move in the institution. He keeps track of guests, coming and going. He registers guests in the guestbook based on the check-in list, greets the arriving guests and notifies the arrival by ringing the bell. He kindly and politely answers the guests' questions. Peddlers and beggars should not be allowed inside the spa. Under no circumstances should women of suspicious appearance, like those from a

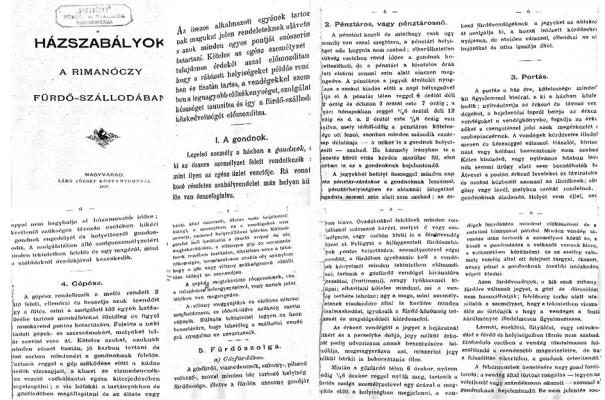


Figure 1. "House Rules of the Rimanóczy Spa-Hotel" Nagyvarad; Jozsef Lang printing shop, 1897 [4]
Slika 1. „Kućni red Rimanoczy banje-hotela“ Nagyvarad; štamparija Jožefa Langa; 1897. godine [4]

brothel, be allowed in. He receives postal letters and telegrams and sends them immediately to those to whom they are intended. The telegrams or letters in which the rooms are booked are to be handed over to the manager. The doorman must not leave his post for long periods, day or night. In case he needs to go somewhere, he must seek the permission of the manager and must find a replacement. He is responsible in all respects for all employees as well as for himself and he must assure it" [4]. Great attention was also paid to the proper maintenance of the equipment and the entire spa inventory. The **head of the boiler room** was responsible for a large number of tasks related to the maintenance of the heating system. Thus, the document states that the head of the boiler room "is required to check the bath faucets in the morning before starting the machine, to check the full length of pipes leading to the toilets and to the pools, to establish the water temperature in the tanks and in the steam bath, and if he notices a defect, or someone reports a defect, to fix it immediately without bothering the guests. He should be economical, but only to the extent that it does not jeopardize the production of sufficient quantities of steam or electricity" [4]. The House Rules also pointed out that "the boiler room may be shown to a foreigner only with the permission or presence of the owner or manager of the spa" [4]. The House Rules of the Rimanóczy Spa Hotel also regulated the duties of the **spa attendants**. According to the rules "the steam baths, pools, shower rooms, restrooms and changing rooms are the responsibility of the spa attendants, male or female. They supervise that the House Rules are properly followed, do their work with other employees, and should endeavor to make the guests feel as comfortable as possible. They will give a scrub or a pedicure to the guests in the steam room if they ask for it. They should do everything to keep their guests satisfied. Both they and their employees should avoid unnecessary intimacy, but must strive to please the guests of the spa and to earn their satisfaction" [4]. The House Rules also emphasized that "at work, employees of the bath are forbid-

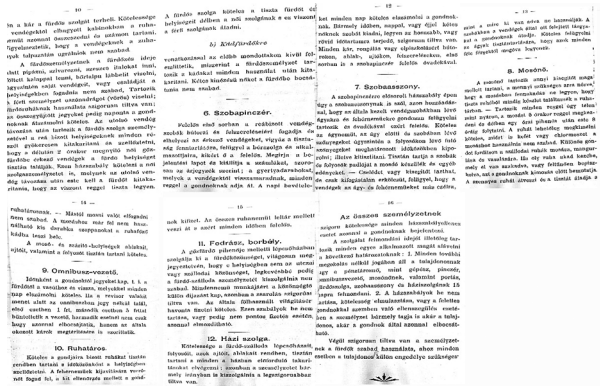


Figure 2. “House Rules of the Rimanoczy Spa-Hotel” Nagyvarad: Jozsef Lang printing shop, 1897 (continuing) [4]
Slika 2. *Kućni red Rimanoczy banje-hotela*“ Nagyvarad; štamparija Jožefa Langa; 1897. godine (nastavak) [4]

den to smoke pipes and cigarettes, have alcoholic drinks, wear a hat or shoes with leather soles, and must not receive visits from their guests or family members on the spa premises” [4].

The Hose Rules also included interesting regulations on the spa dress code: “the male employees must wear red trousers and swimsuits are strictly forbidden” [4]. In the bathrooms with bathtubs, “the spa attendant is obliged to wash the bathtub after each use. Women of the streets are not allowed in the spa” [4]. A number of tasks were given to valets and maids. Thus, the maid “is obliged to take care of bedding, carpets in front of the bed and in the room, as well as of those in the corridors. They must dust or wash them at certain time intervals”, as well as “keep the beds clean, without parasites” [4].

The workers’ rights, working hours and responsibilities toward the employer may be analyzed from several aspects. According to the House Rules, the **laundress** was working “every morning from 5 AM until noon, when there was an one-hour pause, and continued working until 8 PM” [4]. The connection of the spa with the means of transportation of passengers is visible from the timetable of the omnibus (tram) driver, who “regularly receives the tickets for the line between the spa and the train station and back from the manager, and he must settle the bills with the manager daily. If the controller finds someone without a ticket, the driver will receive a fine of 1 forint for the first transgression, and 2 forints for the next one. For the third case, not only is the driver immediately fired, but he must also compensate the damages incurred” [4]. Hairdressers, barbers as well as cloakroom attendants, were also available to the spa guests [4]. The housekeeper (janitor) was “obliged to keep the stairs, corridors, doors and windows of the spa-hotel, as well as to clean everything at the establishment, but he was also strictly forbidden to serve the employees in any way“ [4]. At the Rimanoczy Spa Hotel, the emphasis was placed on keeping staff fully accessible to guests, while the guest’s responsibilities were not so precise-

ly stated, that is, all services were subordinated to the satisfaction of the spa guests. In the same period of time, the Lipik Iodine Spa Resort (Republic of Croatia), offered numerous additional facilities besides spa baths [8], also had Spa Regulations [9]. The Spa Regulations, as published in the book “The Lipik Iodine Bath and its Spa” in 1877, specified the responsibilities of the spa guests in eight paragraphs. For instance, regarding the time, “baths are to be used between 5 and 12 in the morning and 2 – 8 in the afternoon”; a precise separate record was kept of the order of persons who were referred to use the baths, and they were not to be used longer than exactly one hour, including undressing and dressing [10].

In the letter to the City Council of the Free Royal City of Novi Sad, ticket prices for the Rimanoczy Spa were also provided. The Pricelist of the Rimanoczy Spa Hotel shows which services were provided to guests and at what price (in crores of that time). Thus, this spa offered the following facilities: steam bath for men (price 1.30 crores), regular bath for women (1 crone), shower for men (0.90), lounge (luxury) bath (1.60), double lounge bath (3.00), use of first-class bath (0.80), and second-class bath (0.60), as well as double tubs of second class (1.20 crores). The price for baths at the hotel was 0.90 crores, while a cold bath for men was 1.40 crores. The additional offer included the use of sheets (0.20 crores), towels (0.10), soaps (0.10), while tickets for children were more affordable (0.40 crores). Civil Servants had a discount for showers (100 tickets for 64 crores), as well as for steam baths (100 tickets for 94 crores). There was also an offer for baths in cold medicinal water: 10 baths for 10.00 crores, 20 baths for 18.00 crores, and 30 baths for 26 crores. Also, showers were available (0.70 crores) and a steam baths at discount price (1 crone) [4]. Tickets at preferential, lower prices for certain categories of the population were later offered to the citizens of Novi Sad in the city bath. Thus, on December 21, 1925, the Novi Sad Iodine Medicinal Spa and Mineral Water Factory (Limited Liability Company) sent 300 half-price bath tickets for the following year (1926) to the City Council to be used by city pensioners [11].

The dedication of the City Iodine Spa employees to their guests, the variety of offerings, luxurious spa exterior and interior, all contributed to its great popularity, as stated in the contemporary press: “Last year, 15 800 people visited this Spa, most of them foreigners who had been guests for 8 – 14 days, which is a great success” [2, 12].

Conclusion

The success of Novi Sad City Artesian Spa in the late 19th and early 20th century was attributed to visionaries, architects, city authorities, doctors, as well as numerous employees, who invested their knowledge and abilities to the people’s needs in order to improve the wellbeing and health of the Spa guests.

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