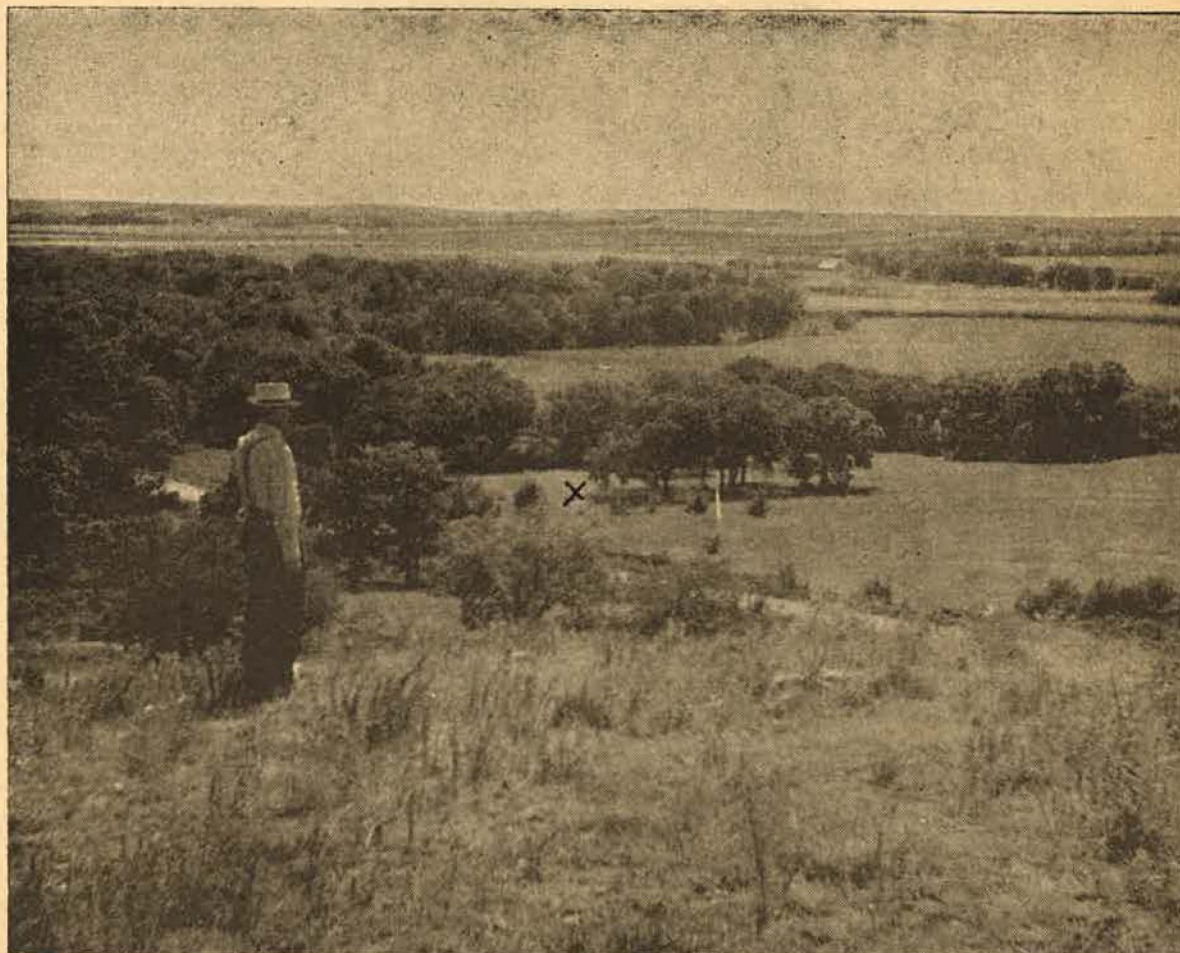


ALCOVE SPRINGS AREA

Reasons Why It Should Be Erected Into A National Monument



The above view of the Alcove spring area south of Marysville, now under option for purchase as a national park, was taken by Raymond Ellenbecker from Kit Carson's lookout. The camera was pointed to the south. The scene overlooks the Big Blue river in the background. From the point where John G. Ellenbecker is standing there is a drop of about 100 feet to the lower level where the old camp ground was and where Grandma Sarah Keyes is buried:

The citizens of Marshall County, Kansas, have secured an option on 230 acres (approximately) situated seven miles south of Marysville, Kansas. This area is known as the Alcove Spring Area and is located in Section 31 and 32, Township 3, south, and Range 7, east, in Marshall County, Kansas. It is proposed that the deed to this area be secured soon through full payment therefore by said citizens and that this area be

then presented to the National Park Service Board with the hope that it be erected into a national monument. These are some reasons why the people of Marshall County and in fact the people of all of Kansas wish to see this area set apart as a National Monument; to wit:

1. The area comprizes outstanding historical values and interests and was traversed by the great Oregon Trail.

2. It has natural scenic beauty; its sculptured hills, wooded valleys, crystal streams, the famous Alcove Spring and its proximity to the Big Blue River, the Rhine of Kansas.

3. Kansas has for 80 years contributed its share uncomplainingly in the restoration and supervision of the many National Parks, but has never had a like area within its boundaries.

of 40 acres or more below the hills and higher than the flood grounds, was the famous camping ground of Alcove Spring Area. On the edge of this is Mrs. Keyes' grave, a soldier's grave, and several other graves of emigrants and also a little Mormon burial ground.

First White Habitations

Upon this area in 1849 were built by F. J. Marshall and A. G. Woodword the first habitations by white people in Marshall County, Kansas.

We may erect monuments to Sutter, to Burnett, to Fremont, but how can we fittingly honor the people of the western emigration over the Oregon Trail who won for us the great West? Those 350,000 men and women were our army of conquest. They won the west without cost to their country but at a tremendous cost to themselves in money, labor, suffering, and death. Yes, this army of peace had a heavy casualty. It is conservatively estimated that these emigrants made 17,000 graves along that trail in which they laid some of their loved ones. This is part of the price they paid for winning an empire for the United States. Should not that government erect some sort of memorial to those people? One good and appropriate way is to create those National Monuments along the Oregon Trail like the Alcove Spring area.

A More Serious Consideration

Really to see the need and fitness of setting apart as a National Monument the Alcove Spring and Independence Crossing Area we must do three things, viz:

1. Consider the part that the Oregon Trail played in sending people to the Western Coast before 1846 to help acquire the Oregon Territory of about 350,000 square miles in the northwest, and the Mexican Territory of about 400,000 square miles in the southwest.
2. We must take into consideration the part the ten or more strategic points along the Oregon Trail played in the great western emigration from 1836 to 1876, of which points the Alcove Spring Area is one.
3. We must take into consideration the part the settled and gold-producing West played during the Civil War in helping to win that war and to save the Union with men and treasures.

If we do this then we will see the worth, the value and the advantage that the Oregon Trail was to the United States. And the true historic significance of the Alcove Spring Area and other like areas.

And we will also see why such strategic points as Alcove Spring and Independence Crossing Area on the

Big Blue in Kansas and the other strategic points should be preserved for the sake of history and the edification of all our citizens.

Seven Are Marked

But seven of those points from the Pacific Coast eastward along the old Trail have already been honored by being erected into either Na-

the Oregon Trail.

The second consideration—the ten strategic points along the Oregon Trail were: West Port and Independence, Mo.; Topeka and the Kaw Crossing; Alcove Spring and Independence Crossing Area; Fort Kearny; Scotts Bluff; Fort Laramie; Fort Bridger; Fort Hall; the Whitman



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tional Monuments or State Parks and this meritorious and patriotic program has been halted at the east end at the very door of Alcove spring area.

Let us take up the first consideration—the acquisition of the Oregon Territory in 1846.

On February 18, 1841 the people of that territory met at the Lee Mission to organize a Provincial Government. It was soon discovered that the subjects of Great Britain far out numbered those from the United States, hence our people saw to it that action was indefinitely postponed. During 1842 over the Oregon Trail came Dr. Elijah White, with 120 emigrants from the East. Then a meeting was held again at the Lee Mission (at Champoege) on the Willamette on May 2 1843. When the vote was taken, 50 voted to join Great Britain, and 52 voted to join the United States. So critical was the situation then, but Great Britain wanted the dividing line to be at the Columbia or farther south. The joint occupying arrangement was continued. During the next three years thousands of citizens of the United States, over the Oregon Trail, were poured into the Oregon Territory with this result: Early in 1846 Great Britain was anxious to have the boundary located. When the two commissioners met, one from each nation, the boundary was easily moved north to the Forty-ninth Parallel. That is what the people accomplished who went out over

Mission; and Champoege on the Willamette.

Places of Rest

All these points were places for organization, repairs and rest. Most of these were outfitting points or places where supplies could be obtained. All the forts gave protection to the emigrants, advice and guidance, as well as supplies.

At these points the emigrant trains were often reorganized, increased or divided into smaller trains. Fagged horses, mules and oxen were exchanged for fresh animals; wagons were overhauled or abandoned, and pack trains formed. They were all places which were famous camping grounds, where rest, help and encouragement were given to all wayfarers.

At Alcove Spring was an ideal large camping ground with the best of grass, fuel and water. Here also was obtained in unlimited quantities timber for the repair of wagons and carried across the Rockies to serve when needed. This camp ground is spoken of in every diary and made famous by Fremont; by the Russell Donner Party of 190 people; by the Great Emigration of 1,000 people. Dr. Marcus Whitman and John Gantt were their guides, and these people were the first to take their wagons all the way through to Oregon.

The Third Consideration—the financial aid to the Union during the Civil War.

At the outbreak of the Rebellion, and years before, the South tried

An elucidation on each of these three reasons will here be in order; and though necessarily brief, will to some extent help to set forth a little more clearly the merits of our prayer and request.

The third reason, though important, our modesty restrains us from a further emphasis, and of course, its weight is self-evident.

The second reason, scenic beauty, deserves further explanation. The area has a very rugged and scenic contour. For plains scenery, it is very pretty. Its surface level varies around 150 feet. There are two streams flowing through the area, and these have cut deep canyons through the Permian limestone which is here well developed. The valleys are, for the most part, wooded by such trees as oak, elm, hackberry, walnut, ash, coffee bean, sycamore, lynden, and the cliffs and slopes are adorned by hundreds of large and small red cedars or juniper trees, a sylvan vista that is enchanting.

There is a fine site for an artificial lake; also roads to lofty view points from which may be beheld, not only the entire monument area, but also the wide and picturesque Big Blue bottoms for many miles to the north and south. In Sehon Creek is Alcove Spring, seen and used by the thousands of emigrants to the west. This spring issues from the walls of a limestone cliff through an orifice six inches in diameter, of cool, clear, sweet water just as it has done for centuries.

Just above and sheltering Alcove Spring is the ledge of rock making the pretty, playful Naomi Pike Falls. Here the waters of Sehon Creek leap over an escarpment 16 feet high into a cress-lined and tree-shaded pool below. This area though already richly adorned by nature, still would lend itself nicely to further beautification by the art and hand of man.

The area lies as "a gem in the hills" in a big bend of, and on, the east side of the Big Blue River, between the new and old US highway No. 77. It is therefore conveniently situated to the National Highway US No. 77 and only five miles north of Kansas highway No. 9 and only six miles south of the other transcontinental highway, US No. 36.

Among the smaller plants might be mentioned the vast beds of maiden hair ferns and beautiful columbines in a high limestone cliff in which is "Limestone Cave." The entire area except the forests is covered with a dense growth of the majestic blue stem wild grass whose growth makes a veritable carpet of green in summer and a cloak of silver gray in winter.

This area contains possibilities for fine rest and recreational facilities for all visitors and especially the tourists on the three transcontinental highways contiguous to this area.



Shown above is Naomi Pike falls, named in honor of one of the younger members of the Donner party. The falls are in the Alcove spring area.

The third reason, the historic significance of the Alcove Spring area arises mostly through its relation to, and association with, the California and Oregon Trail. As early as the autumn of 1827, James Clyman with a large pack-train came from the Wind River Mountains to convey a cargo of furs for General William H. Ashley and the Rocky Mountain Fur Company to St. Louis.

This is proof that the Oregon Trail followed this all-land route from an early date; and it was increasingly used by adventurers, the fur companies, missionaries, and the westward emigration up to 1876 for a period of 50 years. And during this half century at least 350,000 people crossed Alcove Spring Area, camped there a day or more, and crossed the Big Blue here at the famous ford known as the Mormon or Independence Crossing nearby. Here passed John A. Sutter and associates in 1839 on their way to the West. The Bidwell-Bortleson party of 69 people and Father J. P. deSmet and party in 1841; the Dr. Elijah White party of 120 people in 1842; also Col. J. C. Fremont and his men the same

year on his first expedition to the Rockies. Once the names of Fremont's men were visible on the rocks near the Spring.

In 1843, passed here the Great Emigration of 1,000 people. They tarried here two days and divided the train into two sections, the "fast" and the "slow" section. Here Captain Peter H. Burnett, their first captain, resigned, and Wm. Martin was elected leader of the "fast" section and Jesse Applegate was elected leader of the "slow" section known as the famous "Cow Column."

In 1844 James Clayman and a large number of emigrants again went through here. In 1845 Gen. Joel Palmer with a large emigration train went through here, and again in 1847 with a train including his family.

Famous Donner Party

In 1846, the Donner and Wm. H. Russell group passed here, but not until camping here four days, May 26 to 31. Here one of their members died, Grandma Sarah Keyes; and her grave is here yet in the Alcove Spring area. Dozens of the people of the Donner group and associates during their delay here, inscribed their names on the rocks and many of those names are still visible; also these people gave the name to the Spring and above it inscribed the name "Alcove Spring" on the ledge of the falls. Naomi Pike, after whom "Naomi Pike Falls" was named, was only two years old, a member of the Donner party. But she was next to the last survivor of those people—dying at The Dalles, Oregon, in 1933. And so year after year the tide of emigration grew until in the Gold Rush years from 1849 to 1855 annually around 30,000 people camped in and passed through the Alcove Spring area. It is indeed hard to evaluate properly the true historic significance of this historic spot.

The old Trail and the thousands of men, women, and children who tramped and trudged westward over this transcontinental path made every foot of ground in this area sacred. This indeed was a famous stepping stone or rest-station in the winning, settlement, and development of our marvelous west. The patriotism of every citizen of these United States should be enriched by a knowledge of this pioneer history pertaining to the settling of the west; of the courage, of the labor and perseverance, of those courageous men and women who gave us that great west. And it is by erecting into monuments such areas as herein referred to, that we will, better than by any other activity, teach and acquaint the people of today with the honor and glory of those pioneers. Upon a lap of land

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This view of the Alcove spring area, now under option for purchase and erection as a national park, is eastward from Kit Carson's lookout and overlooks the proposed lake site which now is in wheat stubble. The valley is about 100 feet below the point where the picture was snapped.

to gain control over the Governments of the Pacific Coast States and Territories. But in every election-test the Northern people outvoted those of Southern leaning. Hence all the officials, wealth and ports along the Pacific Coast remained for the Union and of inestimable help and advantage to the North. But had it not been for the Northern people who went west over the Oregon Trail, the great West would have been for the South and all the Pacific ports closed against the Union's interests.

Gold to the North

Then when gold was discovered in California and those fabulously rich mines poured out their millions in treasures annually, this money was available for use to the Union—the North. It is said on the best of authority that had not the gold from the West come to the United States treasury when most needed during the Civil War, the U. S. Government would have been bankrupt and the South would have won the war. The people going over the Oregon Trail won and held the West

and their gold helped to carry on the defense of the Union to a successful end. But what if all that gold had gone to the South? What if there had been no Oregon Trail and the Northern people had all remained in the East? How different the outcome! The Oregon Trail was the life line to this nation.

So when we honor, mark and memorialize the Oregon Trail by erecting a few National Monuments, we are doing honor to those agencies that once helped to save the Union and this country of the Stars and Stripes—for liberty and the American ideals of life, freedom and justice. We honor those hardy pioneers and we edify their millions of descendants in both the West and East.

The program of thus fittingly memorializing the Oregon Trail has been begun. Seven out of the ten strategic points are reposing as National Monuments or State Parks for the sake of history and civic edification. Let this good work go on. Alcove Spring and Independence Crossing Area in northeastern Kan-

sas and on that historic Oregon Trail deserves also to be thus recognized and honored to the advantage of our future generations through the generosity and mindfulness of a grateful government.

While we believe that the afore stated facts are the main arguments in favor of the action prayed for and for which we respectfully implore the honorable Board on National Parks, and the honorable Congress and President of the United States, the scenic features, topography, location and proximity to US Highways No. 36 and No. 77 are only secondary to the historical consideration, but nevertheless worthy of being taken into account for they will lend themselves handsomely in the development of this proposed area.



FEB 12 1963

158-R

Memorandum

To: Legislative Counsel, Office of the Solicitor
Through: Assistant Secretary, Public Land Management

From: Director, National Park Service

Subject: S. 117—To provide for the establishment of Fort Larned as a national historic site, and for other purposes.

Your memorandum of January 22 requested our views and supporting data on this bill.

We recommend that the Department submit a favorable report on S. 117, and we recommend the adoption of certain amendments to the bill.

S. 117 is identical to S. 3220, 87th Congress, which was the subject of a favorable Departmental report of August 30, 1962. The Department's report provided historical and cost data to support the legislation and recommended an amendment which would assure that establishment of the area as a unit of the National Park System would take place only after the fort and adjoining historical lands had been acquired. We believe authorizing legislation for Fort Larned should provide this assurance. Accordingly, we recommend that S. 117 be amended as suggested in the Department's report on S. 3220, 87th Congress.

In view of recent field studies we recommend a further amendment that would permit the acquisition of land associated with the Santa Fe Trail. As pointed out in the report to the 87th Congress, Fort Larned is intimately associated with the old Santa Fe Trail. If authorized it would commemorate the eastern portion of the trail, complementing the fort sites (Fort Union, New Mexico and Bent's Old Fort, Colorado), historically associated with the southwestern and mountain segments and providing a more complete portrayal of the era of frontier expansion. It would be appropriate, therefore, that the Fort Larned National Historic Site include, if possible, a representative segment of the Santa Fe Trail.

1-2 KAN3AS
Fort Larned

F

Recent field studies have confirmed the existence of original and authentic Santa Fe Trail wagon ruts on a 60-acre parcel of land a short distance from the proposed Fort Larned National Historic Site on what has been retained as unplowed grazing land. Historians have identified 10 parallel sets of ruts here in a track 300 to 400 feet wide as part of the Santa Fe Trail. This section of trail is one of the very few remaining in Kansas, where repeated plowing and cultivation of the prairie land has destroyed evidence of the Santa Fe Trail. Because interpretation of the Fort Larned site will emphasize its role as outpost and protector of the Santa Fe Trail, amendment of the bill to authorize acquisition of this representative portion of the trail as a detached unit of the site is recommended.

We believe this could be accomplished by changing the words "seven hundred" on page 1, line 6 of S. 117 to "seven hundred and fifty" and by eliminating the period after "Act" on page 1, line 10, and substituting therefor a comma and the words "including nearby remains of the Santa Fe Trail." Addition of this parcel would increase the estimated cost of acquiring lands for the site from \$436,000 to \$454,000. No increase in other costs is anticipated.

(SGD) CONRAD L. WIRTH

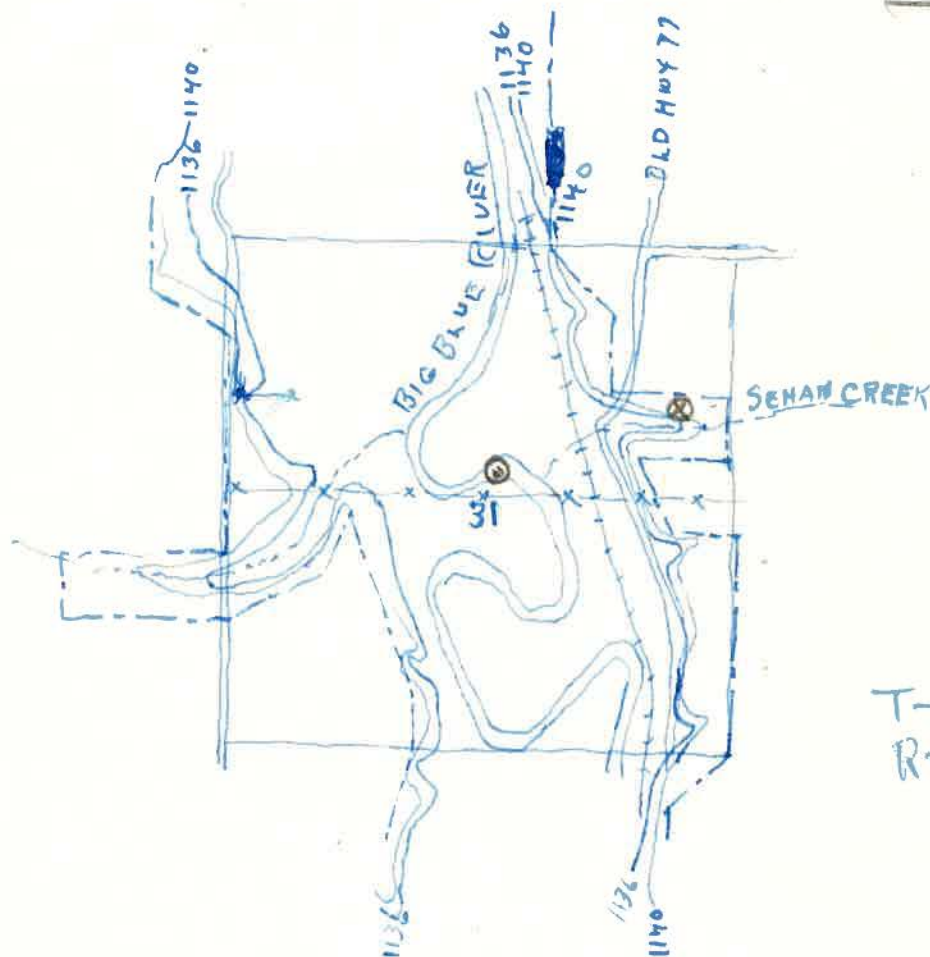
Director

Copy to: LM, w/c bill

Regional Director, Midwest Region (2)

Art Johnson^{CE} suggests contacting
Mr. Van Orman in Engineering, Kansas
City C.E. Office (BA-7000) for more
complete detailed information

ALCOVE SPRINGS IN RELATION TO TUTTLE CREEK RES.



T-3-S
R-7-E

Top of Flood Control
7/1/55 - (Max. Water Surface) of
Tuttle Creek Res. = 1136.0

Traced from
Tuttle Creek Dam
& Reservoir
Land Acquisition
2000' = 1"

From sketchy information available here it
looks as though Independence Crossing ① will
be flooded occasionally by the reservoir.
Alcove Springs ② will be within the Corps of
Engineers Take line but above the Flood Control
contour.

7/1/55 M.W. George

(Sketch 5) File N.A-2-7-279
Jan. 1952

Appendix VIII - Plate 7

Alcove Springs, Marshall county

At one time, people of Marshall county set forth the three following reasons upon which they based their request for national recognition of the Alcove Springs area. They said:

"The area comprises outstanding historical values and interests and was traversed by the great Oregon Trail.

"It has natural scenic beauty; its sculptured hills, wooded valleys, crystal streams, the famous Alcove Spring and its proximity to the Big Blue river, the Rhine of Kansas.

"Kansas has for 80 years contributed its share uncomplainingly in the restoration and supervision of the many National Parks, but has never had a like area within its boundaries."

The historical significance of Alcove Springs comes through its association with the history of the California and Oregon trail. It has been estimated that at least 350,000 people camped in the Alcove Springs area and crossed the Blue river at nearby Independence crossing.

Many famous travelers of the old West camped at the Springs, among them John Sutter in 1839, Father DeSmet in 1841, the Dr. Elijah White party in 1842, and Col. John C. Fremont in 1842. In 1843, the first great year of emigration for the Oregon trail, hundreds of home-seekers stopped at the Springs, as they did in the later years of the 1840's. In 1846 the famous, ill-fated Donner party camped there for four days and Sarah Keyes of that party is buried in the area. The California gold rush increased the number of people who used the Springs of course, and the early 1850's were big emigration years.

Alcove Springs and Independence crossing were two of the most important points on the Oregon trail. Good water, grass, fuel and timber made the area one looked forward to and remembered by travelers on the trail for nearly fifty years.

The Kansas house of representatives, 1941 session, adopted a resolution memorializing the National Parks board to create an Alcove Spring National Monument. Citizens of Marshall county had secured an option on 230 acres for the area which they intended to present to the United States for the purpose of establishing the national monument. But the Federal government did not accept the proposal.

Andrew McKerr

10 mi oo. Maryville
Alcon. Springs

Joe Swaboda
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Byron Guy
X Bill Edwards

Alcove Springs & the Oregon Trail

IN MARSHALL COUNTY, KANSAS

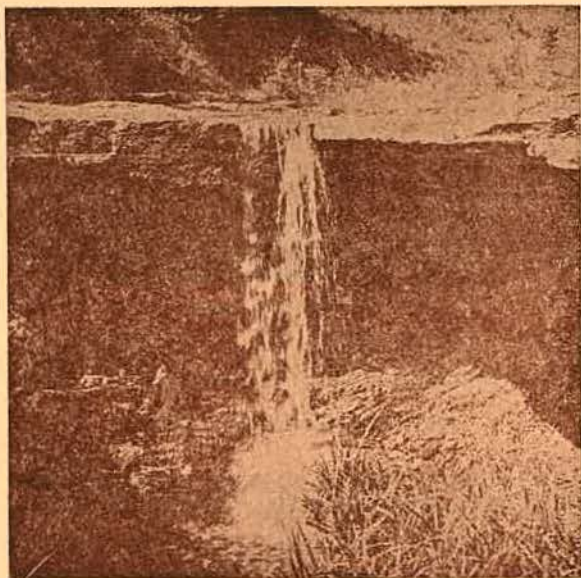


Photo courtesy of Byron Guise

"Naomi Pike Falls" at Alcove Springs. The waterfall was named for a little girl who was with the Dcnner party in 1846.

"The Oregon Trail was the path of the homemaker—the trail that built our empire to the west. It followed the course of least resistance, for it was originally the track of wild animals on their seasonal migration for grasses. It was the tepee road of the Indians, the road of the fur traders and trappers. It was a path made by nature and utilized by man"—quoted from "Sketchbook of Modern Landmarks" by Margaret Whitmore.

The Trail extended from Independence, Mo., to Fort Vancouver, across the Columbia River from the present site of Portland, Ore., a distance of 2,020 miles. Alcove Springs, at "Independence Crossing" of the Big Blue River, was a favorite camping spot, as it provided abundant spring water, grass for livestock, timber for wagon repairs, and game and fish to replenish larders. For most of the emigrants who camped there it must have been the happiest time of the trip before they struck off across the bleak plains of Nebraska and the rugged mountains of Wyoming, Idaho, California or Oregon. Many who camped there never lived to reach their destinations.



—Photo Courtesy of H. V. Lyle

D. A. R. Monument to Sarah Keyes, a member of the Donner Party who died at Alcove Springs.

The first written record of Alcove Springs describes the emigration in 1841 of a mixed party of 69 persons, including adventurers, an English Lord, heads of families seeking a spot to which to bring their families, others seeking health, a half-breed buffalo hunter, three priests and at least one woman and one child. This was known as the Bidwell-Bartleson party. They traveled with some 20 wagons. Some rode horses and others, including the priests, walked and pushed carts. The party divided at Fort Hall in Idaho, part going to California, part to Oregon, and the priests going north as missionaries among the Indians.

In 1842 a party of 112 persons led by Dr. Elijah White and also a small exploring party led by Lt. John C. Fremont came through Alcove Springs. It was in 1843 that the so-called "Great Emigration" took place. This large party of 1,000 persons with over 100 wagons and 5,000 cattle was the first party to take wagons the entire distance to Oregon. Peter H. Burnett, who was to become first governor of California in 1850, was the original leader of this train. This was the first important emigration to Oregon Territory from the United States and it resulted in swinging the balance of population toward the group which favored union with the States rather than with Great Britain.

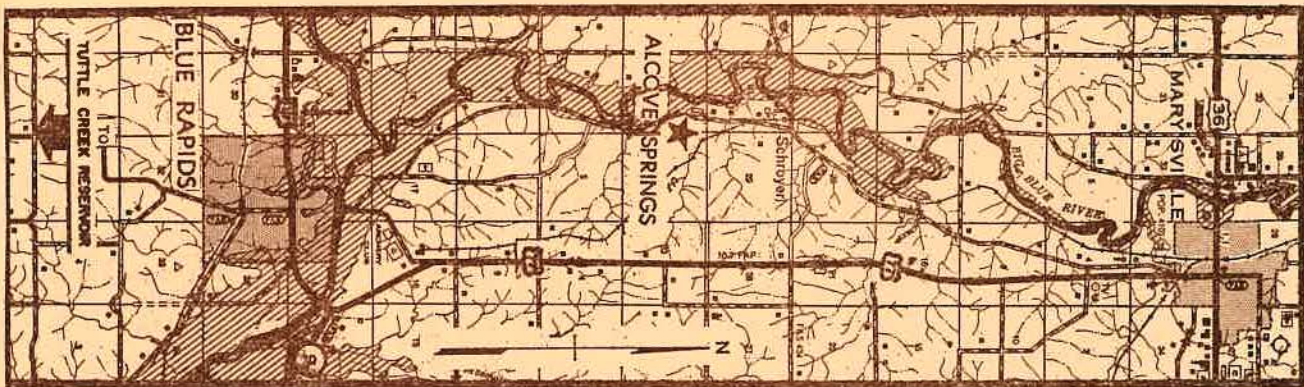


—Photo Courtesy of H. V. Lyle

James F. Reed of the Donner party carved his name and the date on a rock below the alcove.

The ill-fated Donner party spent five days, from May 26th to May 31st, 1846, at Alcove Springs while waiting for the flood-swollen river to subside. Sarah Keyes, 70 year old mother-in-law of James Reed, succumbed to the hardships of the trip on May 29th and was buried there (probably just west of the parking area, but the exact location of her grave is not known). The Donner party was headed for California but, due to delays in the mountains northeast of the present site of Salt Lake City and in the Utah desert, they were marooned by an October snowfall at Donner Pass in the California mountains. Before rescue parties were able to cross the Sierra barrier early in 1847, 42 members of the party had died. Most of the 48 survivors had resorted to eating the flesh of the dead.

The California gold rush in 1849 and later years brought many thousands of gold-seekers through Alcove Springs and left many graves on the hillsides around the Springs. Cholera was the greatest killer, but inexperience, carelessness, and exhaustion also took a heavy toll. Use of the Trail came to an end when the railroads joined the country from east to west in 1869. A great saga had been written and the park at Alcove Springs commemorates those hardy pioneers who wrote it.



Alcove Springs is located about midway between Blue Rapids and Marysville and one mile west of U. S. Highway 77 in northeastern Kansas. Access roads both north and south of the area lead from U. S. 77 and only 10 minutes extra driving time permits a visit to the area. These access roads are signed at points 4 miles north of Blue Rapids and 4 miles south of Marysville.



The area is leased from Mrs. Dewey Hammett by the Blue Valley Sportsmen's Association and a park and picnic area have been developed as a community project by the people of Blue Rapids and vicinity. It is free to the public. Since it is a game and bird sanctuary, no firearms are permitted. Please help us keep the area clean.

This brochure furnished by the
Blue Rapids Chamber of Commerce