

Chapter 3:

Creating Platt National Park, 1902-1933

BACKGROUND

Designation and Survey, 1902-1904

On July 1, 1902, Congress approved the Supplemental Agreement with the Chickasaw and Choctaw tribes. The agreement authorized a reservation that protected and controlled the springs and creeks and that caused “the least interference with the contemplated town site.” It also ordered that the town site be located outside the 640 acres of the reserved lands, and that prior improvements such as bathhouses and buildings be removed. In July of 1902, Secretary of the Interior Ethan Allen Hitchcock detailed Special Inspector Frank C. Churchill and Geologist Joseph Taff of the United States Geological Survey to Sulphur to examine the springs, streams and topography of the area and to select the land to be acquired by the United States.¹ Their reconnaissance included not only Rock Creek, Sulphur (Travertine) Creek, and the springs within Sulphur Springs, but also Buckhorn Creek and its springs, located four miles southeast of Sulphur.

The survey team found the area around Sulphur and Rock Creeks to be the preferred site for the reservation, primarily because “the Buckhorn springs and valley possess [sic] no beauty surpassing that of Sulphur springs and creek, and the latter is capable of being beautified to a much greater extent.”² The team characterized the area surrounding the springs as “high prairie land,” and the spring areas were described as “forested valleys.” They identified more than twenty species of trees within the forest areas, and described the stream valleys, densely vegetated with a tangle of understory shrubs and vines, as “jungles.” Perhaps foreshadowing the revegetation plans of the 1930s, the team also observed the expansion of trees on the upland prairies, noting that “extending into the recent prairie, since its protection from fires, the forest is rapidly spreading, and without a doubt can be

made to extend over any part of the prairie land by care and protection.” Yet at the same time, they observed that farming had also eliminated forest, since a “considerable part of the forest on Sulphur and Rock Creeks has been cleared away, and the places are now occupied by narrow, cultivated fields.”

In their report the team also characterized the area’s springs and water resources, based in part upon Taff’s previous survey of the springs in 1901. The springs, they noted, included the seven springs at the site of present-day Pavilion Springs; a single large spring known then, as now, as Hillside Spring; three large springs located at the junction of Rock and Sulphur (Travertine Creek) near today’s Flower Park; two springs in the present-day Bromide area, one at the base of the cliff and one issuing from the bed of Rock Creek; two “Bromide Sulphur” springs located in the southern part of town on a branch of Rock Creek; and “Wilson Spring” located in the southeastern part of Sulphur. The report also described Antelope and Buffalo Springs as a potential water supply for the town of Sulphur. The scenic beauty of Sulphur Creek was also observed, though the team described the natural pools along its bed as “not sufficiently large nor deep for successful use as swimming pools.”³ Instead, the team proposed damming the creek near current-day Little Niagara Falls and constructing an artificial lake thirty feet deep, one half mile long and five hundred to one thousand feet wide along the stream course.

The survey resulted in a boundary line for the proposed new reservation. Churchill and Taff rationalized their boundary based on the following principles, ordered from most to least importance:

- First, the preservation and protection of the springs against contamination.
- Second, the preservation and protection of Sulphur and Rock Creeks.
- Third, the reservation of reasonable space for public passage and comfort in connection with the waters thus reserved.
- Fourth, the matter of utilizing the waters and preserving the beauty of the grounds thus reserved.⁴

In addition, they emphasized the need to protect the area around the springs, noting that “the protection only of the immediate banks of the streams, leaving the bordering wooded slopes of the valley near at hand to be marred

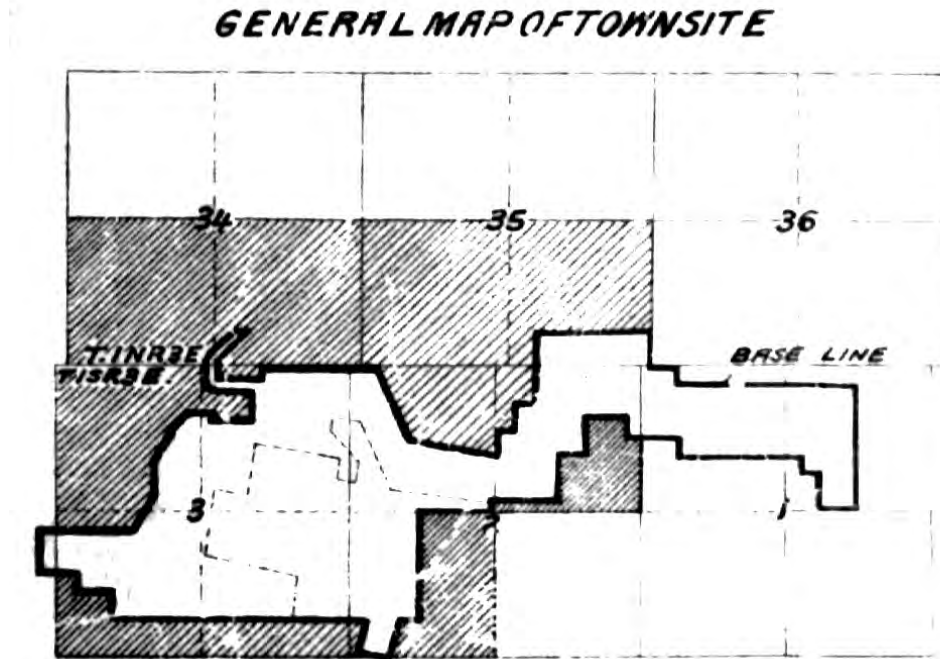


Figure 3-1. "Sulphur, Chickasaw Nation, Indian Territory," circa 1903. Detail of map showing the original boundary of 1902 (dashed line) and the final boundary of 1904. The additional 218.89 acres were those comprising today's Buffalo Pasture and Prairie Uplands. The hatched area is the town site.

and occupied by private nuisances would destroy the value of the reservation."

The team worked hard to limit the size of the reservation while protecting the springs. This was important because the town, where "little care is had for the disposition of sewerage" was concentrated around the springs on the steepest slopes in the area. To prevent "certain and serious contamination" from adjacent development, the reservation boundary encompassed most of Sulphur's constructed core around Pavilion Springs. A small area three-quarters of a mile away from the town around Wilson Springs was also included in the reservation; this ten-acre parcel was not, however, contiguous with the lands encompassing Sulphur and Rock Creeks. Churchill noted that "[t]o preserve these springs within the main reservation would include ground useless for the purpose intended." As much as possible, the boundaries were also constructed to conform to existing land surveys, to reduce subdivisions of existing properties. Located east of the town site, the reservation narrowly encompassed both sides of Sulphur (Travertine) Creek. Churchill's survey proposed that a total of 629.33 acres be included in the reservation; the original boundary of the reservation is shown in Figure 3-1.

Based on the survey, the two tribes ratified the Supplemental Agreement in September, and were paid a total of \$12,586.60 for the reservation lands.⁵ In addition, the government also agreed to pay residents for improvements (such as buildings) that they had made to the lands. This insured that settlers who had leased properties from the tribes would be remunerated for their investment in the properties. Improvements were to be reimbursed at their appraised values at the time of the agreement's ratification. On November 19, 1902, Sulphur Springs Reservation was officially proclaimed.

Appraisements began in January of 1903, under the direction of Frank Churchill. A total of \$86,981 was paid out for improvements. Some owners rejected the government's offer and chose to move their improvements instead; houses and even churches were hitched to wagon teams and moved to new locations. In August 1903, all inhabitants were asked to officially leave the reservation; those who chose to remain temporarily could do so, but were required to pay rent on the government property they inhabited.⁶

These situations disgruntled the townspeople. A new plat for the town site was now needed, and disputes arose over both the appropriate size and the new location

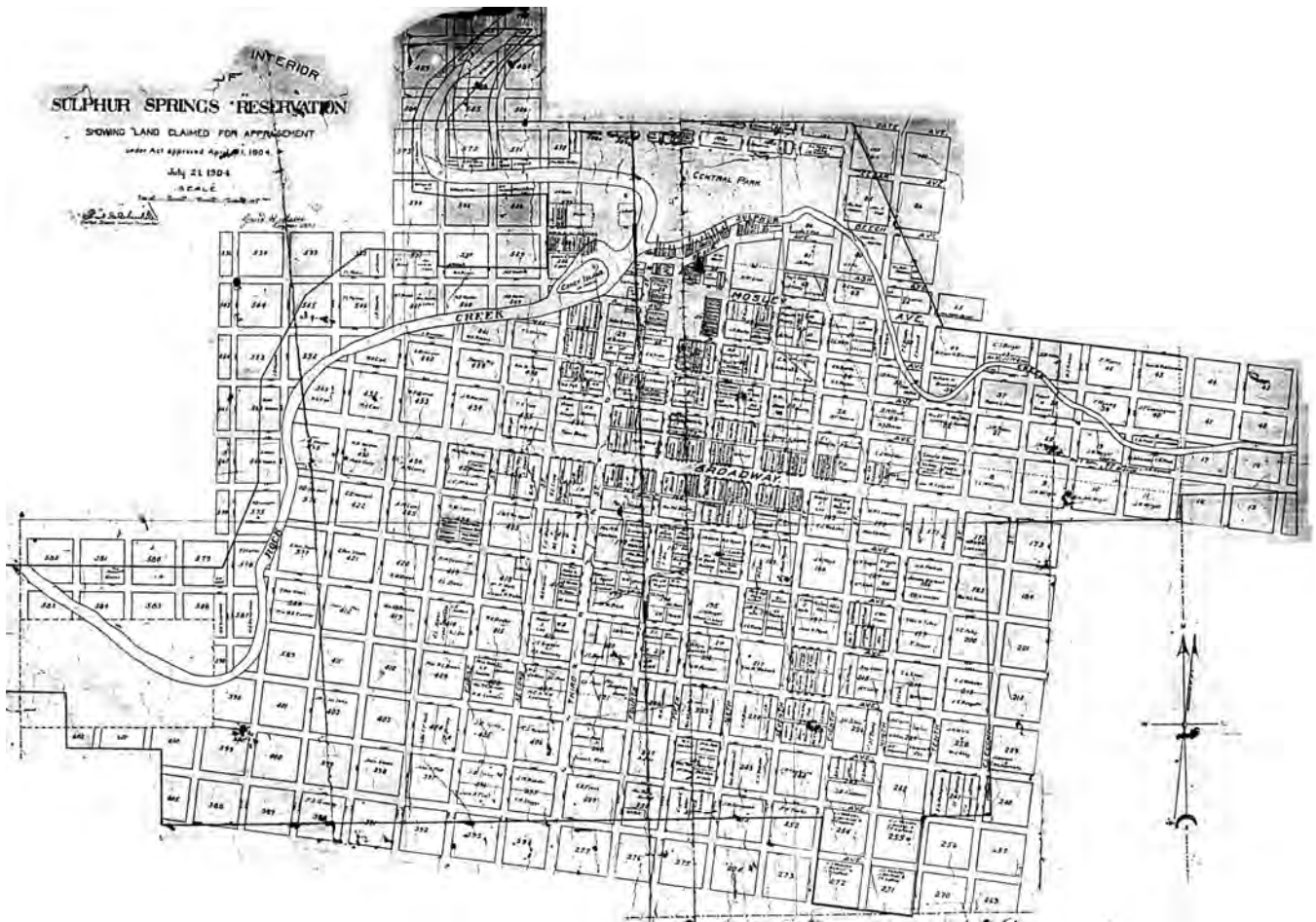


Figure 3-2. “Map of Sulphur Springs Reservation,” United States Department of the Interior, 1904. The park’s original 1902 boundary is faintly outlined. The names on the plats correspond with property owners listed on the 1904 building survey.

of the town. One group thought more land should be allocated to the town to the south and east, while another group wanted the town to expand to the north and west. Residents and speculators began to build new homes and businesses in both areas, and lobbied the government to side with their cause. Yet even as they built, the Department of Interior, concerned about encroachment and pollution of the springs, began to explore options for adding acreage to the reservation. The situation was finally resolved with the Indian Appropriation Act of April 21, 1904. In this agreement, the government bought an additional 218.89 acres for the reservation from the tribes at a price of \$60.00 per acre. The new land included a parcel around Rock Creek to the north, but most of it was located southeast of the first reservation boundary, joining the Wilson Springs group to the rest of the reservation. Townspeople who had built in this location were required to pick up and move—those who had rebuilt there, for the second time. Figure

3-1 shows the final boundaries of both the reservation and the town as determined in 1904.

A second round of appraisals for newly condemned properties ensued, and in July the “Map of Sulphur Springs Reservation” (Figure 3-2) was produced to show the total number of new properties to be appraised. Once purchased by the government, most of the appraised buildings sat vacant. In 1904, a building survey undertaken by Joseph Swords revealed that 101 vacant dwellings and 11 vacant stores remained in the reservation. These were mostly located on the recently acquired lands, since 42 structures had previously been removed from the original reservation in the prior year.⁷ Throughout 1905, a series of building sales were held to purge the reservation of unwanted structures; those too big to move were simply razed.⁸ However, removals took time. The large, brick Bland Hotel, built by speculators in the southern part of the park and never inhabited, was not fully torn down until 1908.⁹

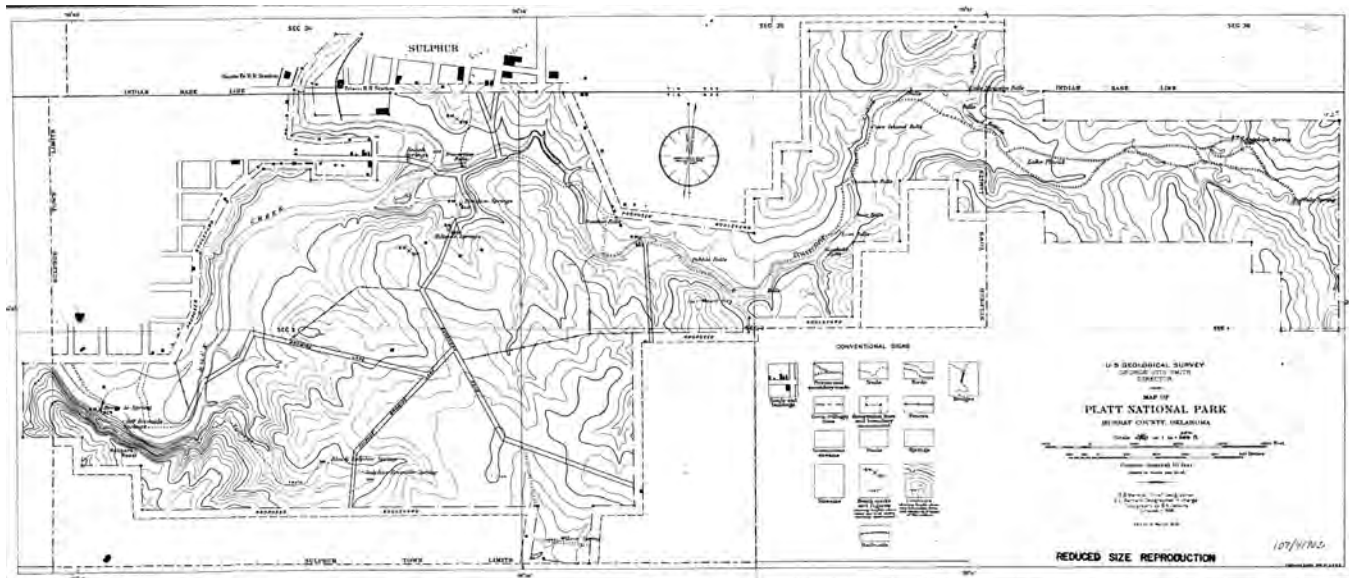


Figure 3-3. *Map of Platt National Park*, United States Department of the Interior, 1909. A larger version of this figure is also provided at the back of the report, as part of the drawing set.

Park-wide Development 1904-1933

The reservation officially opened to the public on April 29, 1904 and within two years, on June 29, 1906, was renamed Platt National Park. During these early years, overall park development was slow. Superintendent Swords supervised tree and grass plantings and routine maintenance such as mowing.¹⁰ Construction focused on high-use areas of the park; detailed aspects of changes are described below.

Overall, little changed immediately. Earlier land uses continued, though there is little information on the physical or spatial aspects of these. In 1909, the Interior Department directed that oat hay and alfalfa be grown in the park, and harvests of these and corn were recorded in 1913.¹¹ Leases of livestock pasture were also recorded as late as 1915. The park, unfenced, was also part of the open range, and cattlemen grazed and watered their herds in the reservation. In 1907, cattlemen drove at least 6,000 head through the park, and possibly more, since cattle driven through at night were not recorded.¹²

To prevent cattle damage, parts of the park were fenced off as early as 1904, when Superintendent Swords fenced off Antelope and Buffalo Springs.¹³ In 1908, Superintendent Greene proposed a fence around most of the park's boundary. Over 300 citizens signed a petition against the fence, since it eliminated the use of twenty roads crossing the park. Despite the protest,

the Department of the Interior sided with Greene, stating that the Department would “not consent to the maintenance of unnecessary roads . . . as will result in the practical dismemberment of the reservation and throwing it open to the indiscriminate use of cattle-owners.”¹⁴ A barbed wire fence was erected in the fall of 1908 at a price of \$2,500.¹⁵ The fence ran along the park boundaries for a total of about nine miles and along major lanes through the interior of the park, for about three miles.¹⁶ Flood gates were provided where the fence crossed streams and stiles were constructed to allow pedestrians to enter the park along former cross-park routes.¹⁷ Fencing continued to be an ongoing issue, since Superintendent Sneed reported the loss of 5,000 feet of new woven wire fencing in the flood of 1916.¹⁸

In 1906 Charles Gould, geologist with the Oklahoma Geological Society, examined the area and wrote a report on the park's hydrology, describing the creeks and categorizing a total of thirty-three springs in the reservation.¹⁹ In 1908, the U.S. Geological Society surveyed the park. Though written descriptions and later map annotations reveal that the survey did not record many structures or features, the resulting 1909 *Map of Platt National Park* (Figure 3-3) remains the best documentation of the park's early appearance, showing topography, major roads, the creek system, and trails.



Figure 3-4. Postcard view of Lake Placid, circa 1910. Courtesy of Tulsa University.



Figure 3-5. Postcard view of Grand Rapids, circa 1919. Locations of falls are shown on Drawing 1.

DRAWING 1: PLATT NATIONAL PARK, 1933

Drawing 1 (located at the back of the report) is a 1933 period plan of Platt National Park, showing the extant conditions in the park at the end of the 1902-1933 period, prior to changes made by the CCC. The drawing depicts all features implemented between the years 1902 and 1933 and still extant in 1933. The drawing is based on photographic and written evidence and the 1933 Plan of Platt National Park (NP-PLA-4948), though topography is based on the 1984 survey. This plan provides the most comprehensive overview of the larger park landscape in the 1930s. Labels on Drawing 1 reflect the 1930s naming and numbering conventions; some of these names later changed. Subsequent period and existing conditions plans will label elements according to their period or contemporary names.

The following narrative describes the park's individual landscapes in much greater detail than can be discerned at the scale of Drawing 1. The narrative addresses individual landscapes as they developed over time, from 1902 to 1933, building on information from the previous chapter. Overall park landscapes, such as the water, road, and trail systems are addressed first, followed by individual designed landscapes. Documentation for different areas within the park varies greatly, so the development of some landscapes is described more completely than others.

Hydrology: Rock and Travertine Creeks

The 1909 *Map of Platt National Park* (Figure 3-3) is perhaps the first detailed map of the area's hydrologic



Figure 3-6. Postcard view of Little Niagara, circa 1910. Courtesy of Tulsa University.

system. All the springs and creeks noted by Taff and Churchill in 1902 are present on the map, as are Rock and Travertine Creeks, as well as Limestone Creek (labeled Nigger Run). The map also reflects information gleaned by geologist Charles Gould in his 1906 study of the springs and creeks. His description of Sulphur Creek is perhaps what led Superintendent Greene to rename it "Travertine Creek" in 1908:

Sulphur Creek...is a perennial stream 1-3/4 miles long. The water of the creek contains calcium carbonate in sufficient quantities that, when exposed to the air, it is deposited in the form of travertine, forming numerous small cascades and waterfalls, so that from its source to its mouth Sulphur Creek consists of a series of pools or still reaches, and small water falls, of which latter there are said to be over 60 along the creek.²⁰



Figure 3-7. Postcard view of Panther Falls, circa 1910. Courtesy of Tulsa University

Many of these falls were local scenic landmarks, with names reflecting their physical or scenic quality. Many were also recorded in postcard views of the early 1900s. Lake Placid (Figure 3-4) was a large, peaceful area of smooth water, while Grand Rapids (Figure 3-5) was a large bank of white water. Little Niagara (Figure 3-6) was a more vertical falls, and was named after its counterpart in New York. The names and locations for the major falls along Travertine Creek are shown on the 1909 *Map* (Figure 3-3). Superintendent Greene named Garfield Falls after James Garfield, then Secretary of the Interior.²¹ Some of the lesser falls were arbitrarily named by the survey team.²² Two areas simply labeled “Falls” on the 1909 Map were presumably smaller and less important rapids or riffles.

Mapping the falls may have been difficult in the early days, since the stream channels sometimes changed. Park management, however, was interested in preserving these favored features of the park. In June 1907, Superintendent Greene described Sycamore Falls and problems with stream diversion:

‘Sycamore Falls’ consists of two falls each of about five feet in perpendicular height over irregular and picturesque ledges of travertine rock, and are justly considered among the great attractions of the beautiful Sulphur Creek, being near and just above one of the principal fords of the stream. The water has found an easier way, and by cutting into an alluvial bank, has diverted the entire flow at normal stage around these falls.²³

He described similar conditions at Lost Falls, just downstream from Bear Falls. The diversions eroded bank soil and uprooted large trees, and Greene proposed damming the new channels around both falls with bags of Portland cement grout, laid in walls two feet high and no longer than fifteen feet. The entire proposed cost of this work to “make an indestructible barrier to the detours of the stream, and restore the falls to their former condition of beauty, as well as protect the banks from further erosion” did not exceed \$20.00.

In the early part of the century, the creeks became an important part of the Sulphur’s water supply.²⁴ Gould’s 1906 report provided scientific data about the area’s springs, and he determined that Buffalo & Antelope Springs had an approximate flow of 2,000 and 1,500 gallons per minute, respectively. Because of this prodigious flow, in the spring of 1907 the town approached the park and Superintendent Swords about using Travertine Creek as a temporary town water supply. Consent was granted and sometime in 1908, a reservoir was constructed near Little Niagara²⁵ and approximately 100,000 gallons were removed per day.²⁶ The usefulness of the supply was short-lived, because Antelope and Buffalo Springs went dry in March and April of 1910 or 1911.²⁷ They began flowing again in April 1912, with Buffalo Spring at a reduced rate and Antelope Spring located eighty feet away from its previous location. But the springs dried up again in September and did not start up until November 1913. Another dry period occurred from February 1918 to March 1919. During such dry spells, the city got its water from city wells. By 1921 there were five of these.

The town’s use of the creek proved to be a bit more than temporary. Boeger says that the city stopped taking water in 1913,²⁸ but according to Wray and Roberts, Sulphur continued to take water out of Travertine Creek until about 1924. During the early 1920s, the public health offices were concerned about contamination from cattle in the watershed and the Department of the Interior was unhappy about the appearance of the city reservoir dam, which “flood[ed] out the rapids.” The city still preferred to use the creek, however, since its gravity feed system was cheaper than running the pumps on the city wells. Yet by 1924 the city converted over completely to its own system, and tried to charge the park for its water consumption. Interior Director Cammerer politely rebuffed the request.²⁹

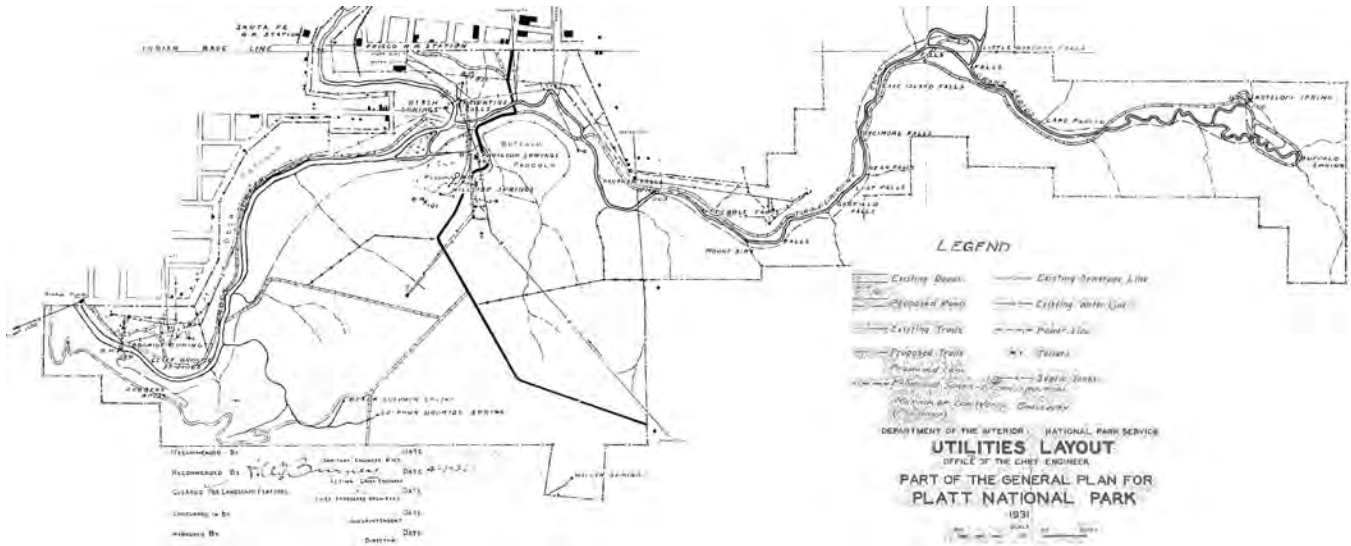


Figure 3-8. “Utilities Layout, Part of the General Plan for Platt National Park,” 1931. In addition to roads, sewers, and power lines, this plan depicts early 1930s conditions including the Buffalo, Elk and Deer Paddock locations.

Yet Travertine and Rock Creeks were even more important to both the town and the reservation for their recreational aspects. Fishing, swimming and wading are well documented in photographs since the park’s earliest times. As Churchill and Taff noted in their early report, however, none of the extant pools were particularly deep or inviting for swimming. Superintendent Sneed remedied this situation in 1917, when he had a five-foot-tall concrete dam built across Travertine Creek at Sylvan Cove below Panther Falls to create a swimming pool.³⁰ Though known early on as a scenic locale, as demonstrated by a typical postcard view (Figure 3-7), Panther Falls soon became a popular bathing destination. Dressing rooms for bathers were built near the Creek by stretching canvas around poles in the ground. The pool was built with funds from concessionaires’ fees.³¹ Today the concrete dam, still extant, is known as Panther Falls.

No records of other swimming pool construction between 1902 and 1933 have been located. However, there were other designated swimming areas even though these do not appear on maps. There is a 1916 description of swimming at Cave Island Falls and a 1930s Chamber of Commerce brochure reported “many free swimming pools in the park.”³²

By the early 1930s, the two creeks no longer served as a water supply and had become a recreational landscape running through the park. The creeks were also part of a segregated landscape. By 1933, on an overall plan

of the park, the Panther Falls pool and its surrounds had been designated as a segregated “Colored Camp.”³³ This designation implies that white swimming occurred elsewhere in the park. It is possible the “colored camp” area was located near Panther Falls because of its proximity to Sulphur’s African-American residential community.³⁴ It is not clear exactly when the area became segregated, but the practice seems to have been entrenched by the mid-1930s. The designation appears on another map dating to 1935 and the book *Oklahoma: A Guide to the Sooner State*, published in 1941 by the Depression-era Federal Writers’ Project, describes a “Negro Area” as being located at “the bend in the creek.”³⁵ It also seems African-Americans were not permitted to camp overnight at Panther Falls (or presumably anywhere else in the park) since the “Negro area” was described in later park reports as “available only for picnicking and swimming.”³⁶

Sewer Systems

During the early period of the park, sewer and stormwater systems were problematic for the park. In fact, both Rock Creek and Travertine Creeks served for some time as the repository for Sulphur’s stormwater and sewage. This use of surface drainage for sewage disposal was typical for early towns, and likely dated to before the reservation, as evidenced by the early surveyors’ concern for contamination of springs by sewage. After the

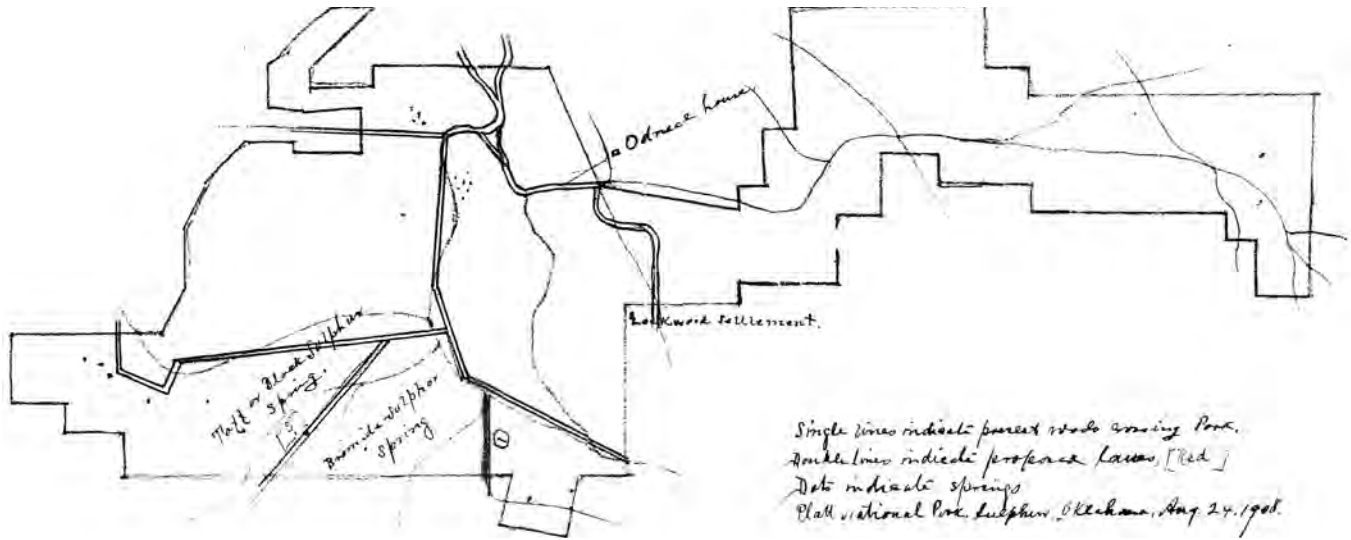


Figure 3-9. Map drawn by Superintendent Greene, showing existing roads in the park (single lines) and proposed roads (double lines), 1908. The park boundary fence erected in 1908 closed off all existing park thoroughfares. Greene's proposed roads correlated with the roads in Figure 3-3. Courtesy of the National Archives, Fort Worth, Box 53, File Fencing.

formation of the park, sewage disposal continued to be a problem, in part because the town could not afford to build a sewage system and the federal government refused to finance it alone. In April 1906, the city asked to build a "water drain" across the park along Rock Creek. This request was denied, but the city was allowed to dig open ditches carrying runoff from the town.³⁷ By 1909, Superintendent Greene began to lobby the Department of the Interior for federal funds to finance a joint town-park sewer, "as a matter of self-interest and protection of its own valuable property." His justification was the park's "unsanitary conditions," which he enumerated in detail. As one of about ten examples, he noted:

At the corner of Davis Avenue and First Street West, ... is an unsightly septic tank, which is, however, but little better than a cess pool, and which discharges a large volume of sewage continually down the ravine which is the natural boundary between East Central Park and West Central Park, into the Travertine Creek, a few rods above the Lincoln Bridge just completed. The odor from this discharge is so offensive as to be an occasion of unfavorable criticism by visitors and the public generally. It discolors and contaminates the water to such a degree that thirsty animals refuse to drink it.³⁸

Although Greene consulted an engineer and had plans drawn up in 1909, the sewer was not immediately

constructed.³⁹ It was finally constructed in October 1912, jointly funded by the park and the city. The initial line ran from the old Artesian Hotel to Flower Park, where it crossed Rock Creek. It then ran along the north side of the creek until it emptied into the creek 1,000 feet downstream of Bromide Springs.⁴⁰

In 1931, a joint city-park sewage treatment plant was constructed and eliminated the practice of dumping untreated sewage into the Creek.⁴¹ This plant was located on the west bank of Rock Creek, just west of today's Chigger Hill. To get the sewage to the treatment plant, a pumping station was also constructed just northwest of the Bromide Area, at the end of today's Lindsay Avenue. By 1931, the park's main sewer line had been extended as far east as Cold Springs Campground and as far south as the Veteran's Hospital outside the park (Figure 3-8).

Road System

The roadway infrastructure in the park also developed slowly. The 1909 *Map of Platt National Park* (Figure 3-3) shows a rudimentary system of major roads, though there were likely multiple small lanes and roads left over from the town (Figure 3-9). As described above, local citizens used these roads to cross the park, and in some cases, move cattle across the park, prior to the park's fencing in 1908. After 1908, pedestrian traffic across the park continued, and stiles built over fences facilitated this. Thus the 1909 map might be considered as a map



Figure 3-10. Postcard view of Brookside Trail, circa 1912. Note title “Drive up Travantine [sic] Creek to Lover’s Lane.” The location of Lover’s Lane is not known.

of major routes, without showing common pedestrian routes. The 1909 map shows Buckhorn Road and Sulphur-Bromide Lane as the major north-south routes running through the park and connecting to points beyond. The routes are interesting, since they align themselves more with local topography than with the roads shown on the plat of Sulphur (Figure 3-2). Other roads on the map dead end in the park or are indicated as “secondary” roadways. A third type of road indicated is the “boulevard” around the park. This was constructed early on after the reservation was created, as a wide road at the park’s boundary. However, the boulevard did not live up to its grand name. Instead, during the park’s early years, it appears to have been a rather unsavory region, appropriated by adjacent property owners and functioning in some areas as a sewer. Superintendent Greene noted that “the conditions prevailing on the boulevard, by reason of its being made a general dumping ground by the city, are most unsanitary and tending to produce an epidemic.”⁴²

One of the secondary roadways was the road to Buffalo and Antelope Springs. This road was constructed in 1907 under the supervision of Superintendent Greene. It seems

a trail to the springs had existed for some time previously, but had never been a passable wagon road. Greene’s new road, sometimes called “Brookside Trail,” had nine fords across the creek.⁴³ Greene described it proudly:

What was to many old residents of this community an unexplored jungle, has been cleaned out and a smooth thoroughfare made, whereby the marvelous beauties of Sulphur Creek may all be seen to the best advantage, even by invalids....Heretofore the route to Antelope and Buffalo Springs has been over a succession of bald, rocky knobs, or through the weeds of abandoned squaw patches. Now the tourist who reaches the head of the Park by the old trail may return by the new one, crossing a rustic bridge at the junction of Antelope and Buffalo Spring Runs....⁴⁴

Based on a post card view circa 1912, Brookside Trail was a narrow, single-lane affair with a dusty surface (Figure 3-10). Yet it proved very popular, and Superintendent Greene’s subsequent reports are filled with descriptions of its frequent repairs. The road was not only enjoyed by visitors, but also by local residents, who used it for general east-west travel. This annoyed Greene, who felt the road along the creek was the park’s “show place.” Furthermore, he thought that tourists being “met by droves of cattle, horses, and swine, wagon loads of hay, and other farm produce on the way to market” was not “desirable,” besides which the heavy traffic further injured the road. The issue was ultimately resolved by the completion of the park’s boundary fences, which restricted animal and vehicle traffic.

Other road work undertaken by Greene included the construction of a ford across Rock Creek on Bromide Lane in 1907 or 1908⁴⁵ and improvement of the ford at Coney Island (where Black Sulphur Causeway now stands). Greene stabilized the area’s banks with large brush mattresses.⁴⁶

Road improvements were regularly undertaken between 1909 and 1920. In 1913, Superintendent French began to upgrade Brookside Trail. Work began with the installation of a dirt road along the north side of the Creek as far as Cold Springs.⁴⁷ In the summer of 1914, this was extended to Buffalo and Antelope Springs, and gravel and culverts were installed as far as Cold Springs.⁴⁸ In 1915 Superintendent Sneed annotated the 1909 *Map of Platt National Park* to show road improvements

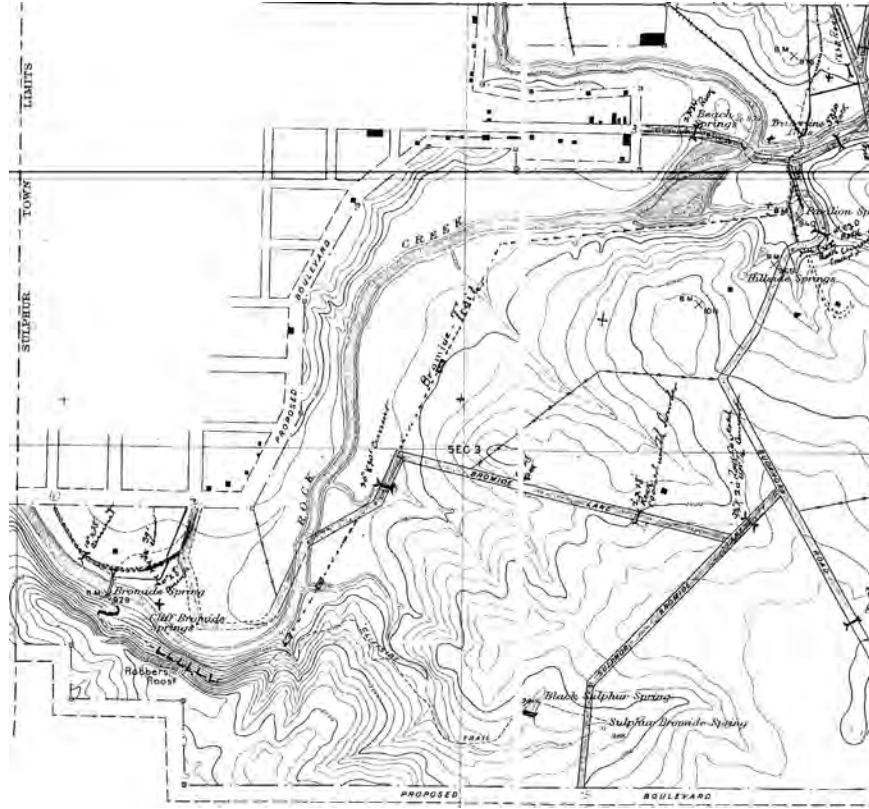


Figure 3-11. Portion of the 1909 *Map of Platt National Park*, annotated by Superintendent Sneed in 1915 to show improvements to the road and trail systems. Courtesy National Archives, Fort Worth, File 621.

completed by the end of 1914. His annotations depict a total of twenty culverts installed across the entire system; these included elements labeled on the map as rock culverts, concrete pipe culverts and “box drains.”⁴⁹ A major ford is shown at Bromide Springs and fords across Travertine Creek are shown in at least five locations, including: at Central Park east of Lincoln Bridge; downstream of Panther Falls; at Sycamore Falls; east of Lake Placid; and near Buffalo and Antelope Springs. The map shows another couple of minor crossings, where old and new road and trail alignments intermixed. Interestingly, on this plan, Lincoln Bridge is connected to trails in Central Park, likely indicating that the bridge was not used on a regular basis for vehicular traffic. A portion of Sneed’s annotated plan is seen in Figure 3-11.

In 1915, better access to the western half of the park was provided with the construction of Rock Creek Drive between Central Park and Bromide Springs. The work cost \$792.⁵⁰ In June a causeway near Black Sulphur Springs (in approximately the same location where it is now) was constructed. The bridge was concrete and was 16 feet wide and 146 feet long (Figure 3-12).⁵¹ With

the new road and causeway, a continuous drive between Buffalo Springs to Bromide Springs had been created.

Unfortunately, the January 1916 flood damaged 4,400 feet of the new Rock Creek Drive and destroyed another 600 feet of it.⁵² Repairs were made in the following summer. Nineteen seventeen saw the construction of low-water crossings at the fords along Travertine Creek at Sycamore Falls, Panther Falls, and Lake Placid, and a causeway was built carrying Buckhorn Road across Travertine Creek.⁵³ By the 1930s, this crossing was known as a “nuisance,” since during and after rainstorms, the causeway “would be submerged from one to four feet, blocking all vehicular traffic from the park to Sulphur and all intended traffic through the park on State Highway no. 18.”⁵⁴

Little graphic documentation has been located for the road system in the 1920s and 1930s, and major changes to the road system were not documented. However, the 1931 “Utilities Layout” (Figure 3-8) shows changed access to Little Niagara Falls and Buffalo and Antelope Springs. This plan shows a short spur crossing Travertine Creek (near present-day Lost Cave Falls) and accessing



Figure 3-12. Postcard view of Black Sulphur Springs Causeway, entitled “Low Water Bridge,” circa 1920.

Travertine Island with a small turnaround loop. This turnaround likely functioned as a small parking area. A similar turnaround was constructed at Antelope Spring, and a short road leading from the turnaround was constructed to loop around Buffalo Spring.⁵⁵ The known extent of the overall road system in 1933, including these changes, is shown in Drawing 1.

Trail System

A rudimentary trail system developed in the early years of the park. The 1909 map (Figure 3-3) shows only one major trail, running east along the face of Bromide Hill from Bromide Springs to Sulphur Bromide Spring in the southern part of the park. Superintendent Greene established the trail, which he named “Cliffside Trail” in the latter part of 1908.⁵⁶ He described it as a “safe and comfortable footpath....ditched for drainage purposes in all practicable places and wherever necessary graveled to insure a dry passage.” The path included an iron railing placed at “all dangerous points on the face of the mountain.” Eventually, the path included a series of small footbridges.⁵⁷ In the early part of 1912 concrete steps were built up the switchback just above Rock Creek.⁵⁸ The steps had two stone masonry banister posts through which an iron chain was strung as a railing on the outer edge.⁵⁹ A woven wire fence was installed as protection along the steepest part of the trail just below Robber’s Roost.

A road and trail plan of 1915 (Figure 3-11) shows a second trail, branching off Cliffside Trail and more or less paralleling Rock Creek enroute to Pavilion Springs.⁶⁰ Superintendent Greene proposed this trail in 1909, and



Figure 3-13. Typical lumber bridge within Sulphur Springs Reservation, no date, circa 1910.

described it “as one of the most romantic in the park.”⁶¹ It was also one of the best-used, being the shortest distance from North Sulphur to Bromide Springs. Although Greene named it Riverside Trail, it is labeled “Bromide Trail” on the plan and three footbridges are located along it. This trail links to another gravel trail shown running north from Pavilion Springs to Lincoln Bridge, where it connects with small trails in Central Park.

The rest of the 1915 plan (not shown) indicates no other trails in the eastern part of the park. However, it does show three more footbridges at Lake Placid, Cave Island, and Sycamore Falls, indicating that pedestrians did venture into that part of the park. These footbridges may have been those constructed by Superintendent Greene in 1909 to allow schoolchildren living on the south side of Travertine Creek to cross the creek. The bridges were described as being “safe and sightly” and constructed “[out of old materials—lumber and nails—and at a trifling expense for carpenter’s services (Figure 3-13).”⁶²

In 1916, portions of Cliffside Trail were washed away in the January flood. Superintendent Sneed commented particularly on the loss of all its small footbridges and the undermining of the concrete steps at the Bromide end of the trail. It is not clear how much of the trail was repaired.

It is difficult to tell how great a role trails played in the visitor experience; photographs of visitors on trails (Figure 3-14) are not as common as creek or spring photographs. The 1931 Utilities Layout and 1933 park map do not show that major new trail construction occurred between 1915 and 1930. In fact, on both of these maps, the original Cliffside Trail to Sulphur Bromide Springs



Figure 3-14. Visitors on Bromide Hill (Cliffside) Trail, no date, but likely taken sometime between 1925 and 1935.



Figure 3-16. Concrete cistern at Bromide Springs, circa 1901.

has been eliminated, replaced instead by a looping switchback up to the top of Robber's Roost. It is not clear precisely when this spur to the top of Bromide Hill was constructed. No new trails were constructed in the eastern part of the park, either, though the 1931 Utilities Plan (Figure 3-8) shows a trail along Travertine Creek to Buffalo and Antelope Springs as "proposed." Trail building would increase in the 1930s, with the coming of the CCC.

Bromide Springs Area

By the early 1900s, one of the major areas of focus for mineral water consumption was the area around Bromide Spring, which by 1902 had been named for its spring and noted for its scenic qualities. Of the site, Frank Churchill wrote: "Immediately north of the Bromide spring there is a park of forest trees, and on the south are high bluffs of much natural beauty."⁶³ These "high bluffs" of Bromide Hill were also known at this time as Council Rock, a

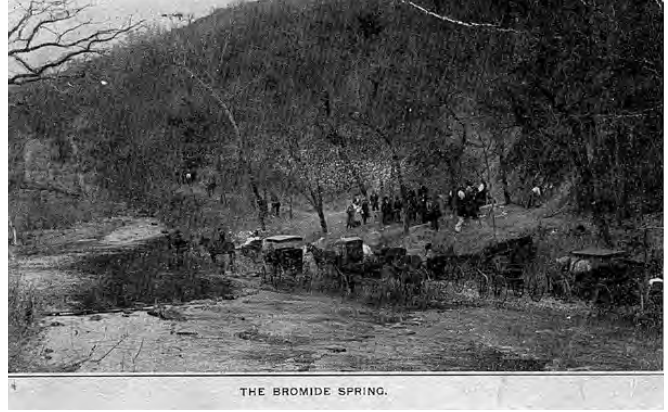


Figure 3-15. Early postcard view of Bromide Springs, circa 1900.

Native American name for the area and Robber's Roost, a name bestowed because of the hill's rumored use as a hideout for outlaws.⁶⁴

The description of the area at the base of the hill as "a park" implies that the area below the bluffs was a patch of savannah-like landscape of prairie grass with large trees. Unfortunately, there is little graphic documentation of the appearance of this area in the early 1900s. The earliest plan of the area is the 1904 "Map of Sulphur Springs Reservation" (Figure 3-2). The Bromide area is unplatted, perhaps indicating that it was excluded from private or commercial ownership because of the special nature of the springs.

In contrast, the immediate area around the springs is better documented. A postcard view dating to circa 1900, prior to the existence of a spring house, shows carriages lining the south bank of Rock Creek, and people clustered on the well-trodden banks of the creek (Figure 3-15). A faint set of steps leads to Bromide Spring higher up the bank. A string of flat stepping stones also appears to lead across the stream in the foreground.

In 1901, the town built a small, open, concrete cistern (Figure 3-16), approximately three feet in diameter and three feet deep, to store water from the "small volume" spring.⁶⁵ A semi-circular lip on the square basin provided a place where patrons could dip tin cups into the open cistern to collect the mineral water. Patrons could sit on a low, stone seatwall set into the steep bluff slope behind the spring, and a billboard-like sign was located just east of the cistern, advertising bathhouses and other commercial ventures in Sulphur.



Figure 3-17. First Bromide Pavilion, circa 1907.

In 1906, Charles Gould inventoried three springs at Bromide. He described the main Bromide Spring as growing weaker, with smaller springs breaking out nearby it. Cliff Bromide Spring was located one hundred yards east of the Bromide Spring, and consisted of three small seepages emanating from the conglomerate rock along the cliff. He also inventoried an unnamed spring (which he labeled No. 19) in the middle of the creek bed. Gould noted that the water from these springs was “eagerly sought after” by residents and visitors and that the demand for the medicinal waters far exceeded supply.⁶⁶

By 1906, the Bromide area proved more popular among water takers than any other spring in the park, and in November, work began on improvements for the spring.⁶⁷ Despite little financial support from the Department of the Interior, Superintendent Swords built a “barn-like” pavilion next to a short, cylindrical concrete cistern that housed the spring (Figure 3-17). The concrete “silo” was prominently labeled with the spring’s name and date, and a set of clearly defined stepping stones crossed Rock Creek to the spring house.



Figure 3-18. Postcard view, showing swinging bridge and lean-to on first Bromide Pavilion, circa 1910.

Located near the original cistern, on the south side of Rock Creek, the wood-framed pavilion was a two-story, open-air structure, built around an elm tree.⁶⁸ To reduce costs, the building was constructed from salvaged materials; the corrugated iron roof, for instance, was taken from the Bland Hotel formerly located in the park.⁶⁹ Attached to the eastern end of the building was a lean-to, which housed a watchman and contained a wood stove (Figure 3-18). In July 1908, a pay phone was installed in the pavilion, presumably for the convenience of spring visitors. One can imagine patrons perhaps calling their hotels to summon carriages after an afternoon of sipping bromide water.

The pavilion and cottage were followed by the construction of a suspension bridge across Rock Creek, just east of the pavilion. Plans for the bridge were completed by engineer H. V. Hinckley of Sulphur in late summer 1907. The design of the bridge was “disliked” by the Department of the Interior and in September, the Department rejected the bids on the project because they were too high.⁷⁰ After revisions and rebidding, construction began in January 1908 and was completed in June. The bridge (Figure 3-19), had a deck three feet wide, a span of one hundred and twelve feet, and its deck was located twenty-four feet above low water.⁷¹ The deck was suspended on heavy wire cables from two twenty-seven-foot-tall towers each constructed of four seventy-pound railroad rails set in a concrete base. Photographs show the bridge abutments’ conglomerate stone masonry and white wooden railings along the side of the bridge. A flagpole was located at the landing on the south side of the creek near the approach to the pavilion. The bridge, sometimes called the “Swinging Bridge,” was something of a small engineering wonder for its time and location



Figure 3-19. View north down the swinging bridge, 1908.

and was featured in the August 29, 1908 issue of *Scientific American*.

Around this time, a cottage to house “the laborer at the Bromide Springs” was either repaired or rebuilt from an existing structure. Described as “an old one put together,” the little building had a foundation and featured a porch and a small kitchen.⁷² The 1909 *Map of Platt National Park* shows this structure located on the flat terrace of Rock Creek, slightly north of the suspension bridge. A 1915 memo from Superintendent Sneed describes this structure as a frame cottage with “3 rooms, 1 pantry, and 1 porch. Located 10 rods north of Bromide Springs.”⁷³ Just west of the cottage was a henhouse and to the northwest was a small frame barn, both “crudely constructed.”

The 1909 *Map of Platt National Park* (Figure 3-3) shows a few other features in the Bromide area. Most prominent are the roads and trails. These include a continuation of Bromide Lane, which forms a U-shaped loop to 12th Street through the level “park-like” area just north of the creek. Two other small roads are seen leading from 12th and 14th Streets to the Bromide Bridge. Pedestrians likely used these trails when accessing the springs from the town to the north. The other major circulation feature

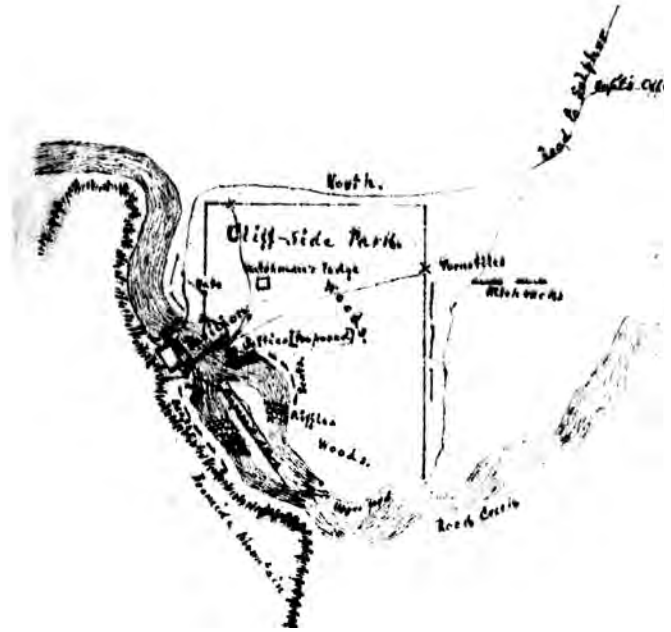


Figure 3-20. Sketch map of “Cliffside Park” by Superintendent Greene, 1908. Note fence, gate, benches, and hitching racks.

shown is Cliffside Trail. One final feature on the map is a fence line; this may have divided the camping area from nearby farm fields, since it is recorded that there were cornfields near Bromide Spring.⁷⁴ A slightly more detailed sketch map of the area (Figure 3-20) dates to 1908. In addition to the features shown on the 1909 Map, seats, gates, more fences, and hitching racks are also indicated. Most interesting, however, is the name of the area, which is shown as “Cliffside Park.” The map was drawn to demonstrate means for preventing erosion on the banks below the new swinging bridge, by removing a sandbar in the middle of Rock Creek.⁷⁵

Other improvements for increasing numbers of visitors soon followed. Appropriations of \$5,000 in 1911 and \$18,000 in 1912 from the federal treasury aided in construction and maintenance. In the early part of 1912 concrete steps were built up the Rock Creek side of Bromide Hill on the Cliffside Trail.⁷⁶ Also around 1912 Medicine Spring, discovered 200 feet west of Bromide Spring in 1909, was developed with a concrete cistern. Within two years, this water was piped into Bromide Pavilion.⁷⁷ Another spring, Cliff Bromide Spring, was located just east and up slope from Bromide Spring along Cliffside Trail.⁷⁸ A set of concrete steps were constructed to reach this spring, which was developed with a concrete, brick and stone masonry structure (Figure 3-21). In 1917, a fourth spring, named “Ellen Wilson



Figure 3-21. Iron Spring, likely also known as Cliff Bromide Spring, circa 1913.

Sodium Chloride Spring” by Superintendent Sneed, was discovered in the bed of Rock Creek, 90 feet northwest of Bromide Spring.⁷⁹ This was eventually, in the 1920s, piped into a second Bromide Springs pavilion that was built in 1917 to replace the first pavilion. The first pavilion was badly damaged in a flood on January 21, 1916, when the park received three inches of snow followed by sleet and eight hours of heavy rain (about six and one-half inches). In the Bromide area, Rock Creek rose about nine feet above previously recorded levels. The pavilion’s lean-to was torn off, it lost all its doors, and its roof and floor were badly damaged. The suspension bridge was a “total wreck;” its “heavy railroad steel towers . . . were bent like baling wires, and two of them snapped, and the whole bridge broken in sections and laid up against the north bank of the creek.”⁸⁰ The laborer’s cottage was ripped off its foundation and wedged between two trees. As noted above, portions of Cliffside Trail and the new Rock Creek Drive were also washed away.

Within two days, Superintendent Sneed had requested funds for repairs from the Department of the Interior, but these were not immediately forthcoming. Regardless, by May of 1916, H. V. Hinckley, now working out



Figure 3-22. Sketch of proposed truss bridge for Bromide Springs by H.V. Hinckley, 1916. Courtesy National Archives, Fort Worth, File 650-004.



Figure 3-23. Concrete abutment for the “Rainbow Bridge,” no date.



Figure 3-24. Rainbow Bridge at Bromide Springs, circa 1920. Note electric lights on span.

of Oklahoma City, had prepared a plan for a new suspension bridge that was 6.8 feet higher than the old bridge, presumably to protect it from high water.⁸¹ It appears, however, that the Department of the Interior had expressed a preference for a truss bridge, so Hinckley also submitted a crude sketch of a truss bridge (Figure 3-22). The new bridge, a single arch truss, was built about 200 feet upstream from the site of the old suspension

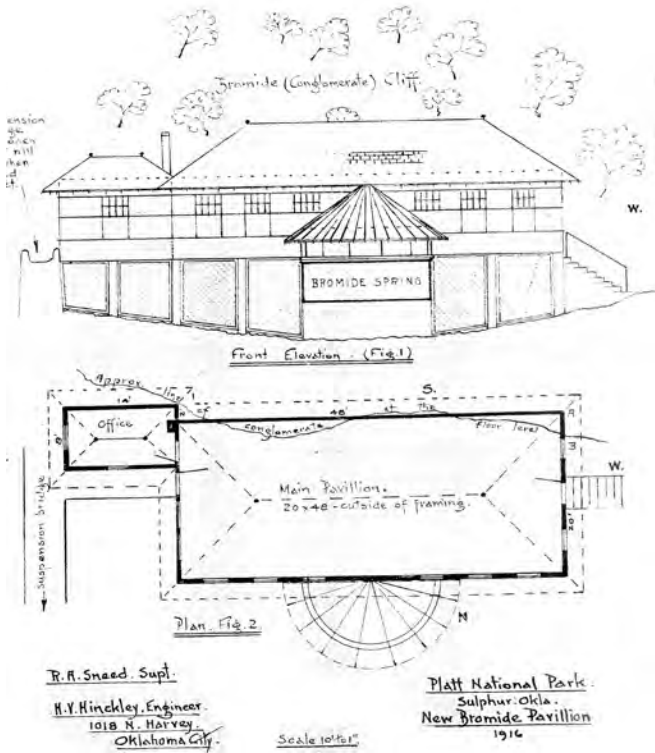


Figure 3-25. Drawing for second Bromide Pavilion, by H.V. Hinckley, 1916. Note “line of conglomerate,” indicating structure was built directly against the cliff. Courtesy National Archives, file 620-50.

bridge. It was built by the Illinois Steel Bridge Company of Jacksonville, Illinois, and had a one-hundred-twenty-foot span with a six-foot camber.⁸² The bridge had a massive concrete abutment on the south side of the creek (Figure 3-23). The bridge deck was ten feet wide and was equipped with electric lights mounted on posts above the railings. The bridge (Figure 3-24) was completed in April 1917, for a total cost of \$4,353.⁸³ It was sometimes called the “Iron Bridge” or the “Rainbow Bridge,” the latter name presumably because of its bowed shape.

Hinckley also submitted a plan for a new Bromide Pavilion, located more or less on the site of the old pavilion. The new plan (Figure 3-25) featured a somewhat more sophisticated building with windows, siding, and latticework. The building had two levels and was built into the side of Bromide Hill. Construction began as soon as possible to get the spring up and running for the summer season, and the building was ready for public use by June 1916. However, it was by no means finished—funds ran out and plastering, painting, latticework, and finished floors were deferred until later.



Figure 3-26. Postcard view of the second Bromide Pavilion, circa 1920.

The pavilion was finally finished in 1919 (Figure 3-26). A primitive sketch by Superintendent Branch (Figure 3-27), gives an idea of the interior’s appearance and function. Along the south wall, conglomerate rock of Bromide Hill formed the base of the wall. A concrete bench was also located here, but did not extend the length of the building. Along the north wall was a concrete platform on which three earthenware containers of spring water were mounted. Hand pumps were connected via pipes running through the basement to Bromide, Sodium Chloride, and Medicine Springs; these pumps were operated by the “Keeper” of the spring house and supplied the earthenware containers. Visitors retrieved cups of water from spigots in the containers, and a small basin below the spigots caught any overflow. An analysis of the spring waters was painted on the wall of the pavilion.⁸⁴

In 1926, plans to further improve the interior of the pavilion were drawn up by Superintendent Branch and approved by Daniel Hull, Chief Landscape Engineer of the National Park Service. Branch proposed constructing three new spring water containers with automatic electric pumps. The new containers were to be located along the south wall of the pavilion and constructed of a more appealing, rustic style conglomerate stone masonry. The plans were approved by Hull, who wrote Branch:

Personally, I feel that you need the full side of the building for the spring outlets and I would certainly try to get rid of that old concrete seat which is poorly proportioned and uninviting. Besides, I think it is not well to have people sit in such close proximity to the spring, but rather on the terrace which we proposed to furnish them

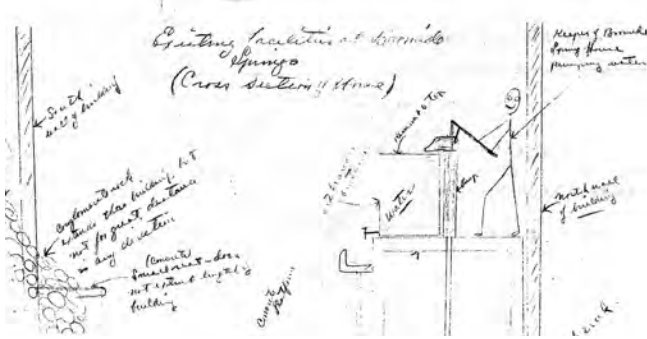


Figure 3-27. Sketch by Superintendent Branch, showing interior plumbing system of 1917 Bromide Pavilion, 1926. Courtesy National Archives, Fort Worth, File 620-50.



Figure 3-28. Reconstructed pavilion interior, circa 1926.

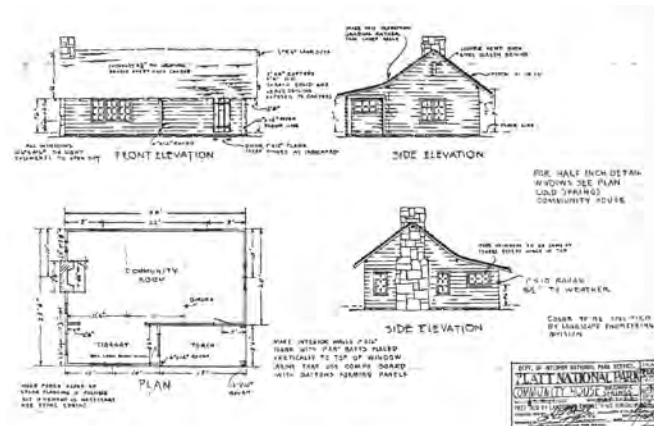


Figure 3-29. “Community House: Bromide Springs,” 1922, Drawing NP-PLA-5. The second page of this drawing shows an almost identical structure for Cold Springs.

adjoining the building. I do not see any construction difficulties with building over the conglomerate where the seat now exists. I will send along a rough sketch indicating the type of layout as I see it. This you will note eliminates the window as it would be a jarring [sic] note in the otherwise wall of rock.⁸⁵

The completed interior (Figure 3-28) was a great improvement.

Based on the correspondence between the two men, Hull visited Platt at least once, and was an active participant in the design of park features in the 1920s. In 1922, he designed two community houses, one each for the Bromide and Cold Springs Campgrounds.⁸⁶ These small houses, to be used for gatherings in case of bad weather, were paid for by the Sulphur Chamber of Commerce, and the estimated expenditure for both

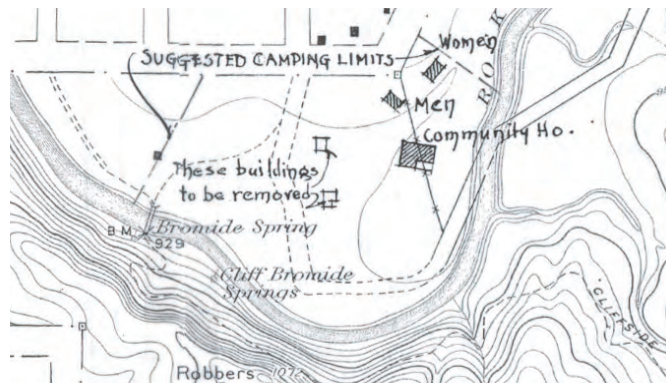


Figure 3-30. Portion of 1909 Map of Platt National Park annotated by Daniel Hull, 1922. Note locations of the community house and men’s and women’s comfort stations. Courtesy National Archives, Fort Worth, File 620-50.

houses was \$14,000.⁸⁷ The buildings were of wood frame construction and were essentially one large room with a stone fireplace and small porch (Figure 3-29). They were sided with one- by ten-inch wood siding (eight and one-half inches to weather) and roofs were wood-shingled. The shingles were designed to be (four and one-half inches to weather), with every sixth course of shingles doubled; however historic photos show a more random pattern with four and one-half to five and one-half inches exposed and every ninth course doubled.

The community house was located in the northwest portion of the Bromide area, as shown in Hull’s plan for siting the buildings (Figure 3-30). The plan shows proposed limits for camping as well as two new comfort stations to be constructed in the Bromide area. Hull also suggested that the comfort stations be screened from the road, while the community stations were to be more prominently sited.



Figure 3-31. Camping at Bromide Springs, circa 1920.

It is not clear whether these two comfort stations were constructed. Supplying rest room facilities for campers in the Bromide area had been an issue since the early days of the park, and numerous comfort stations were constructed in the years between 1900 and 1933. A 1915 map accompanying an inventory of buildings by Superintendent Sneed indicates three comfort stations in the area: a “new” frame comfort station with two “compartments” located approximately 250 feet east of Bromide Springs and two “old” comfort stations with “four or five compartments” located 500 feet north and 600 feet northeast of Bromide Springs.⁸⁸ One or two

more comfort stations were constructed in 1917.⁸⁹ It appears that some of the earlier stations were torn down, but still, by 1931, a total of five comfort stations existed in the area, as shown on the 1931 “Utilities Layout” (Figure 3-8).

In the 1920s a new caretaker’s residence was constructed, perhaps as a replacement for the previous “laborer’s residence” with its hen house and barn. The new caretaker’s residence was slightly larger, and seems to have been built close by or on the site of the earlier building.

Throughout the 1920s, use of the Bromide area continued to increase, fueled by the expansion of the Sulphur to the north. Development along West 12th Street included hotels and bathhouses that catered to visitors arriving by both rail and automobile; the Bromide area offered these visitors an easy stroll into the park and convenient access to the health-giving mineral waters. In 1923, 18,617 people visited Bromide Springs on July 4th alone. Many visitors declined the hotel lifestyle, preferring to camp in the Bromide Campground, which by this time was concentrated on the east side of the large level terrace located in the creek bend. Camping was an informally structured activity, with carriages, automobiles, and tents deployed haphazardly throughout the area (Figure 3-31).

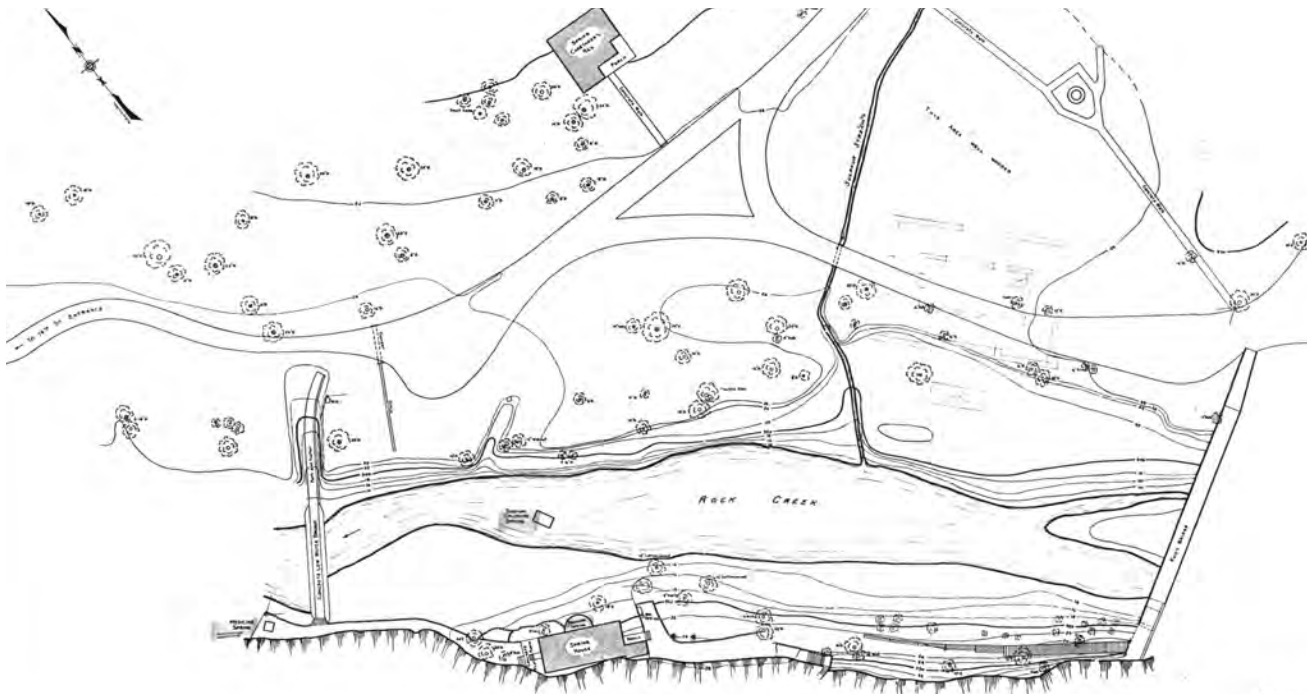


Figure 3-32. “Topographical Map of Bromide Spring Area,” 1930. Drawing NP-PLA-4783. Note the locations of the pavilion (spring house), iron bridge, springs, low water crossing, and caretaker’s residence. The crossing and residence are extant today.

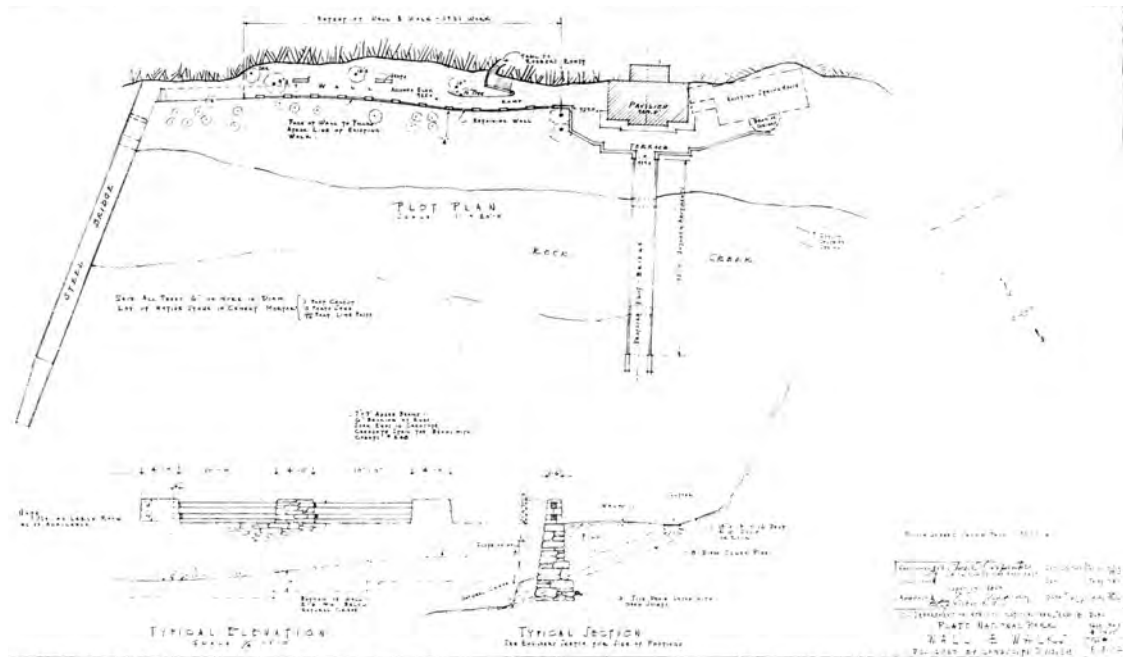


Figure 3-33. “Wall and Walks, Platt National Park,” 1931. Drawing NP-PLA-311. Plan for elements near Bromide Springs

The early 1930s provide some of the first detailed graphic documentation of the area. In 1930, a topographical survey was undertaken in the area just around the spring house. On the “Topographical Map of Bromide Spring Area” (Figure 3-32) are the three springs (Medicine, Bromide, and Sodium Chloride Springs) and the spring house, the latter shown with a porch and concrete terrace as described by Hull. Also shown are the iron bridge and a second bridge, a concrete low water crossing located west of Bromide Spring. Irregularly shaped masonry walls line much of the south bank, and steps are shown leading up toward Bromide Hill. The plan simply lists the northwestern part of the site, where the campground officially began, as “well-wooded,” and reveals a slightly more irregular road than is shown on the larger scale 1931 and 1933 plans. Finally, the caretaker’s residence is also shown, with a concrete walk. Two features removed at a later date, a “sulphur stream” and a concrete walk, are also shown on the plan. The source of the stream is not indicated, but may have been runoff from one of the wells known to exist to the north in the town (such as the Jack Diamond well).

This topographic plan may have been created in order to facilitate the construction of a retaining wall along the base of Bromide Hill to prevent erosion and clarify the trail between the spring house and the Iron Bridge. The drawings for this work (Figure 3-33) were approved in April 1931. Work was undertaken in the summer and

fall of 1931 (Figure 3-34). The wall was constructed of “native stone,” using “as large rock as . . . possible,” with a mortar composed of one part cement, three parts sand, and one-tenth part lime paste.⁹⁰ It had a batter of 1: 8 and varied in height depending on the natural grade. On the uphill side of the wall, a level grade for the trail was created on fill, with the top of the wall extending two feet six inches above grade to form a railing for the trail. This railing, however, was not solid stone. Rather, it was created by constructing four-foot-wide stone pillars located fourteen feet on center; between the pillars were two seven- by seven-inch square adzed beams eleven feet long, which were inserted six inches into the pillar walls. The beams were stained with Cabot Creosote Stain #248. The width of the walkway above the wall varied to accommodate both trees and the curvature of the cliff face behind it. It was also wide enough to contain two wooden seats (Figure 3-35). The walkway also had a twelve-inch-deep concrete gutter on its uphill side, built to carry drainage. Figures 3-36 and 3-37 show the completed walls and walkways. Figure 3-36 is particularly interesting, because it shows the contrast in masonry work between two eras of park construction. The steps to Robber’s Roost use a cobble-like masonry style of small, almost spherical stones, while the retaining wall is a much bolder, ashlar style of masonry.

Although the plan for the wall (Figure 3-33) also shows a new pavilion, it was not constructed. Plans throughout



Figure 3-34. Bromide trail and wall under construction, 1931. “Before” view of Figure 3-35.



Figure 3-35. Completed Bromide trail and wall, 1932. “After” view of Figure 3-34.



Figure 3-36. Completed Bromide trail and wall, 1932. Note difference between new masonry (left) and pre-1930 masonry (right).

the early 1930s continued to show a proposed structure in this location, but the idea was later abandoned in favor of the extant pavilion constructed in 1936. However, while the wall at the base of Bromide Hill was being constructed, a similar project added eighty feet of retaining wall under Robber’s Roost.⁹¹

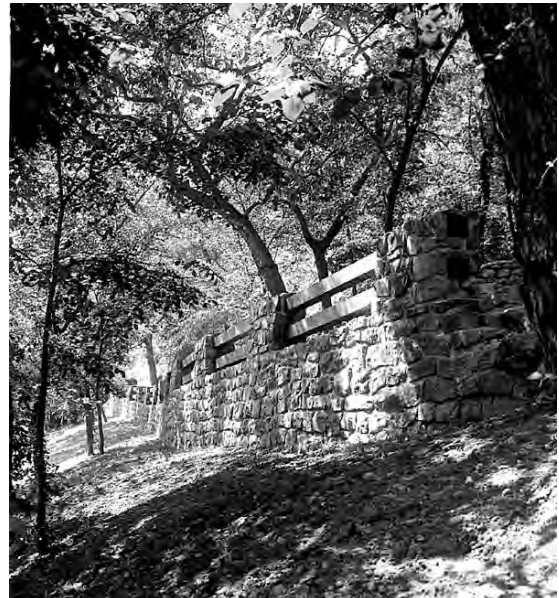


Figure 3-37. Completed Bromide wall, 1932. Note square timber railings, no longer extant.

Drawing NP-PLA-4948 (Figure 3-38) shows the locations of the comfort stations, residence, community house and the roads within the area. By the early 1930s the roads were significantly more formalized than shown on the 1909 *Map of Platt National Park*. The Bromide-Lincoln Bridge road shows a smooth, curvilinear

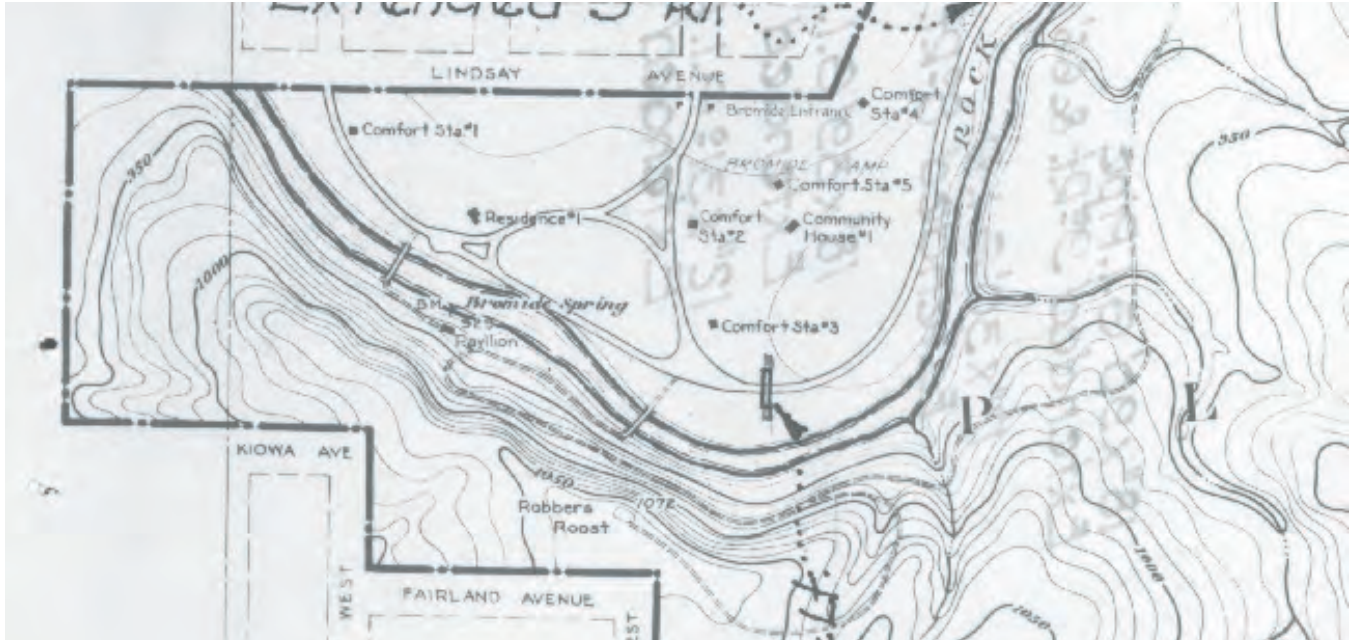


Figure 3-38. Portion of “Plan of Platt National Park,” showing the Bromide area, 1933. Drawing NP-PLA-4948.



Figure 3-39. Oblique aerial photograph of Bromide Springs, 1933.

alignment along Rock Creek until it exits the park at 14th Street. Also shown on the plan is a symmetrical Y-shaped entrance from 12th Street.

This road layout is confirmed in a circa 1933 oblique aerial photograph of Bromide Springs (Figure 3-39),

which also shows the general character of the park and the town prior to major changes which would occur during the CCC era. In the photograph the campground and Bromide Hill are strikingly shady, vegetated areas that contrast with the predominantly open and unvegetated surrounds. Tents are scattered across the entire flat plain

north of the Creek, extending east into a former farm field located near present-day Walnut Grove. Smaller roads or paths crisscross the campground, showing its chaotic organization. The steep slope of Bromide Hill encloses the south side of the campground, making it the clear termination of sprawling residential Sulphur to the North. In contrast to the vegetated and randomly organized park, Sulphur appears as an open, gridded settlement of small frame houses, many surrounded by fenced yards. The large Frye Sanatorium and bathhouse are situated in the center of the photo.⁹² The close relationship between this private concession and the park was similar to the contemporary relationship that existed between the Vendome Plunge Pool and adjacent private property and Flower Park. A concrete path connects to the sidewalk on West 12th Street and leads diagonally from the bathhouse to the Bromide Springs Pavilion; it is easy to imagine visitors taking this direct route to the springs.

Walnut Grove

Little is known about the specific appearance of the Walnut Grove area in the early years of the park. There are no early photographs, drawings, or designs for this area dating to this time period. The 1904 “Map of Sulphur Springs Reservation” (Figure 3-2), merely shows the area platted. Names associated with the plats in this area include M. D. Walker and W. J. Brown. The 1909 *Map of Platt National Park* (Figure 3-3) provides a little more information, showing the area as level and separated from platted part of West Sulphur by a slight ridge running southwest-northeast. Tishomingo Avenue, unlabeled but lined by a few buildings, appears to the north.

Given the level nature of the area, it is possible that it was agricultural fields during the early 1900s. Superintendent Sneed grew hay and oats within the park’s boundary, and there was an alfalfa field near Walnut Grove.⁹³ How close this alfalfa field was to the actual area of Walnut Grove is not clear.

In 1915, Rock Creek Drive was constructed, changing access to the area. Prior to this time, visitors approached Bromide from the northwest via 12th or 14th Street or from the southeast via Buckhorn Road and Bromide Lane. The drive between Flower Park and Bromide first appears on maps dating from the 1930s. The 1931



Figure 3-40. Postcard view of deer in the park, circa 1920. Note building in background.

“Utilities Layout” (Figure 3-8) shows this road, as well as the park’s main sewer line, running through the area.

The 1931 “Utilities Layout” also shows the western end of the Walnut Grove area delineated as deer paddock. A town map dating to the 1920s confirms this use. The park obtained three deer from the Oklahoma City Zoo in April 1917, and their numbers increased to five by 1918.⁹⁴ It is not known if the deer were immediately pastured in the Walnut Grove area, but they were removed by 1933, since maps of this date and later no longer show a deer paddock as part of the park. A postcard view of deer in the park (Figure 3-40) was likely taken at Walnut Grove.

The only known feature in the area by 1933 was the double tennis court shown on a 1933 plan of the park.⁹⁵ The Chamber of Commerce first proposed the courts to the park in 1917, along with a proposal for a golf course. The proposal guaranteed the features would be built “without expense to the government” and without cutting any trees or disturbing the “rustic beauty” of the park.⁹⁶ Superintendent Sneed forwarded the request to Washington, since he felt that the golf course and tennis court “could not interfere in any way with the administration of the park and would be healthful aids to the curative properties of the waters of the park.”⁹⁷ If, as might be assumed, the tennis courts went into the park at the same time as the golf course, they were constructed in 1923.⁹⁸

Black Sulphur Springs

In 1902, the area known today as Black Sulphur Springs was composed of three springs described as

issue[ing] from the west bank of Rock Creek, immediately above the mouth of Sulphur [Travertine] Creek. . . All of these springs are extensively used by the public resorting here; besides the three. . . are utilized by a private company, and the water shipped in bottles.⁹⁹

Two years later, the 1904 *Map of Sulphur Springs* (Figure 3-2) shows the area around the springs as partially platted. A dotted rectangle circumscribing the name C. G. Frost appears in the approximate location of the springs. Frost seems to have been the bottler of the springs, since a building inventory identifies Frost as owning a frame building, “known as the bottling works on [the] west side of Rock Creek.”¹⁰⁰

Something of the physical nature of the area may be revealed by the place names provided in early maps. The 1904 map shows “Beach Avenue” leading directly to the spring area from the east. A similar name is provided for the whole area on the 1909 *Map of Platt National Park* (Figure 3-3), which shows three small circles labeled “Beach Springs.” On both maps, a marsh-like area is shown just to the southwest of the spring location. On the 1904 map, this area is labeled “Coney Island.” No documentation has been located that describes why this area was called Coney Island, but by 1900, Coney Island, New York was a famous resort with a national reputation for beaches and amusements. This possible reference to the well-known bathing resort, along with the names Beach Springs and Beach Avenue, may indicate that as early as 1904, this area had a sandy, beach-like quality much as it does today.

Gould’s 1906 report on the springs in the park noted that there were a total of four springs in the area. One, which he called “Sand Spring” simply bubbled up through the water and sand at the edge of Rock Creek. The other three, which he called Beach Springs, were located “in a row, approximately 10 feet apart, on a sand bar 30 yards west of the creek.” The three springs, with an estimated combined flow of 70 gallons per minute, were contained in “a joint of tiling standing 2 feet above a platform of sand, surrounded by a semi-circular stone retaining wall 3 feet high and 30 feet long.”¹⁰¹ According

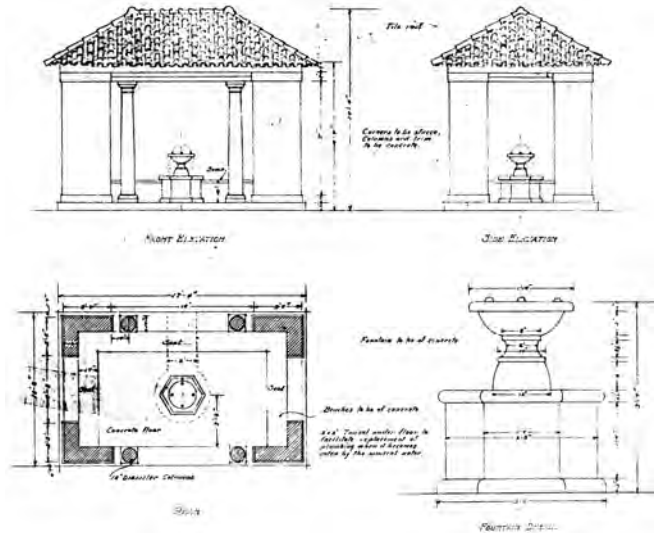


Figure 3-41. “Black Sulphur Spring Pavilion,” 1929. Drawing NP-PLA-92.

to Boeger, this wall was built in 1906.¹⁰² Although Gould mentions that the water was bottled and shipped, he unfortunately provides no details on that process. By 1908, Superintendent Greene described the area as only improved with tiles and enclosed by curbs.¹⁰³

The first significant documented structure in the area was a “small, squarish wooden pavilion . . . just above the sandy beach”¹⁰⁴ constructed along with a cistern for mineral water. Both of these features were built in 1915 or 1916 under the direction of Superintendent Sneed. As far as is known, no documentation of the exact location, appearance, and size of this pavilion has been located. Given the type of construction elsewhere in the park at the time, it was likely a simple wood frame structure located near or over an open concrete cistern.

A ford existed at Coney Island by 1908, and in June of 1915, a low-water causeway was built across Rock Creek at Black Sulphur Springs (Figure 3-11).¹⁰⁵ Built of concrete, the new structure did not have a waterway underneath it, so water simply flowed over the top of the concrete surface.¹⁰⁶ With the new road to Bromide, the causeway created a direct, continuous drive between Buffalo Springs to Bromide Springs.

In 1929, the first pavilion was replaced by a new, neoclassically-styled pavilion. It was sited on the hill above the confluence of Travertine and Rock Creeks.¹⁰⁷ The plan for the new structure (Figure 3-41) depicts a rectangular, open-sided building approximately eleven



Figure 3-42. Black Sulphur Springs Pavilion under construction, 1929. Note tile outlet in foreground.

feet by seventeen feet. Built atop a concrete slab, the corners of the open building were constructed of concrete with a stucco finish.¹⁰⁸ The corners and four columns framing the openings on the long side of the building supported a metal tile roof, painted red. A concrete bench lined three sides of the interior, surrounding a central fountain. The fountain's proposed five small jets filled a circular basin that overflowed into a larger hexagonal pedestal basin. Water was piped into the fountain from a spring located just to the north of the pavilion.¹⁰⁹ A photograph taken during the pavilion's construction (Figure 3-42), may show this spring in the foreground. The pavilion is interesting because of its use of the formal, neoclassical style. In contrast, other buildings in the park were simple wood frame structures, designed with utilitarian goals in mind. These included the simple wood and stucco comfort stations and the community houses, which looked like settler's houses. Even the two earlier Bromide pavilions, which had been designed by park personnel or local engineers such as H. V. Hinckley, similarly emphasized functional rather than aesthetic or decorative concerns. But if the design of neoclassical structure at Black Sulphur Springs was something of a departure from earlier design ideas, neither did it fit into the rustic style of design evolving within the NPS at this time and soon to be utilized at Platt National Park.¹¹⁰ Thus was the fate of the little pavilion as something of a design non-sequitor in the park sealed. By the 1930s, the pavilion had been neglected and was in poor condition, as shown in Figure 3-43.



Figure 3-43. Black Sulphur Springs area in neglected condition, circa 1933.

Flower Park

As shown on early Sanborn fire insurance maps (Figure 3-44), the built area of the town seems to have been well-bounded by the steep banks of Sulphur (Travertine) Creek to the north. As a result, though there is reasonably good photographic documentation of the Sulphur town site, there is little detailed documentation of the Flower Park area, located directly to the north. On the 1904 *Map of Sulphur Springs* (Figure 3-2), for example, the area, which also encompasses today's Central Campground, is shown as unplatted open space labeled "Central Park."

In the early 1900s, townspeople accessed Central Park by a bridge and walkways over the creek. These appear in slightly different configurations on the various Sanborn insurance maps from 1900-1903. It is difficult to know which is the wooden wagon bridge described by Palmer Boeger in his book *Oklahoma Oasis*. According to Boeger, the twelve-foot-wide wooden bridge, which carried up to one-hundred wagons a day, was located at the approximate site of today's Lincoln Bridge.¹¹¹ It was first built on pilings, and was moved slightly and reconstructed on stone piers in 1903. These stone foundations with a symbol labeled "walk" appear on the December 1903 Sanborn map (Figure 3-44) in the approximated location of the Lincoln Bridge. However, a wider symbol labeled "bridge" appears over the creek slightly to the west. On the 1900 Sanborn map this wider symbol is more clearly annotated as "wagon bridge," and its location is confirmed in the 1904 plat map (Figure 3-2). A photograph (Figure 3-45) shows either the bridge, or perhaps more likely, one of the walkways. The image shows the primitive nature of these structure as well as the

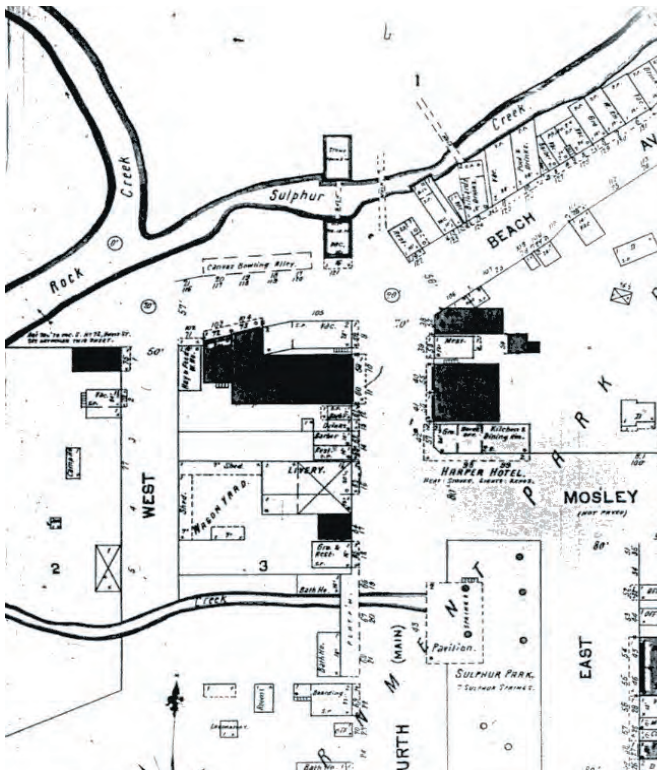


Figure 3-44. Portion of the Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of Sulphur, 1903. The area north of Sulphur (Travertine) Creek and Rock Creeks would become Flower Park.

buildings constructed overhanging the southern bank of Sulphur (Travertine) Creek.

The appearance of the “Central Park” area beyond the bridges and walkways to the north at this time is not well understood due to little documentation. An area known as “Travertine Falls” was located along the creek, and was a popular photo spot (Figure 3-46). The flat level area of Central Park became a campground. By 1908, the area was used for “public gatherings, conventions, ex-Confederate Soldier meetings, and summer Chatauquas.”¹¹²

The first major park development was likely the construction of Lincoln Bridge, which was built after repairs on the wooden wagon bridge were undertaken in both 1907 and 1908.¹¹³ According to Boeger, Forrest Townsley, the park’s first full-time ranger, was the designer.¹¹⁴ The construction contract for the Lincoln Bridge was signed in 1908 and construction began in February with Lieberantz and Robinson of Oklahoma City as the contractor.¹¹⁵ The bridge, sometimes described as “Gothic Revival,” was a single-arch masonry bridge with four cylindrical, crenelated towers forming its



Figure 3-45. View of Travertine Creek, South of Flower Park, circa 1900. L. L. Shirley Collection, courtesy of the Oklahoma Historical Society, negative 10537.



Figure 3-46. Postcard view of Travertine Creek, South of Flower Park, no date. The dense vegetation and lack of buildings to the south (right) side indicates this photo was taken some time after the town’s removal from the park. Courtesy Tulsa University.

abutment. The masonry, of grey limestone, used both horizontal coursing on the bridge and, uniquely, vertical coursing on the towers. Small spiral steps led up the towers, which were each crowned with a flagpole. Overall, the bridge was approximately one hundred feet long and twenty feet wide, which was said to be wide enough for four horses to cross abreast. Eight electric globe lights were installed on the bridge, completing one of the grandest structures in the park. The bridge was opened on February 20, 1909.¹¹⁶ The bridge rapidly became a favorite scenic spot within the park, confirmed by the multiple postcard views taken of it in the early 19th century (Figures 3-47 and 3-48). An interesting aspect of these views is how open the area around the bridge is and how little vegetation screens it from view, particularly in comparison with today’s conditions.



Figure 3-47. Postcard view of Lincoln Bridge, circa 1920. Note vertical and horizontal coursing in the masonry.



Figure 3-49. Postcard view of paths in Flower Park, circa 1900. In this view, looking north, it appears that the pathways have not yet been made in concrete. Note also height of grass.

The 1909 *Map of Platt National Park* shows Lincoln Bridge in its proper location; yet no road is connected to it on this plan. Rather, a trail leads from it north through the park to Sulphur. In 1908, Superintendent Green constructed this trail, and described it as

the greatest thoroughfare for persons on foot in the park. The entire population of North Sulphur and visitors at the principal hotels use this trail in reaching West Central Park and Pavilion Springs. I have named it Roberts Trail in honor of Miss Una Roberts, the clerk in this office, who projected it.¹¹⁷

The name of this trail appears to have been short-lived. However, the description Greene provides contradicts the idea that Lincoln Bridge was regularly used for major horse and wagon traffic. Instead, also shown on this plan is a road heading north and dividing “Central Park” into



Figure 3-48. Postcard view of Lincoln Bridge, circa 1920. Note flags and lights.



Figure 3-50. Postcard view of Superintendent French's concrete path in Flower Park, circa 1909. Note the two types of benches and circular flower beds near Lincoln Bridge.

east and west halves. Although there was no bridge over Travertine Creek on this road, an apparent extension of Buckhorn Road, the road was still the major route into Sulphur. In 1909, Superintendent French recommended a wagon bridge be constructed over the river at this location, since the ford here would flood after heavy storms. French believed constructing this bridge would eliminate the numerous post-rainstorm requests to use Lincoln Bridge for vehicle traffic.¹¹⁸

In 1909, Superintendent French constructed a concrete walkway in the western half of Central Park;¹¹⁹ this was perhaps an improvement of Greene's Roberts Trail between 2nd Street and Lincoln Bridge. The walkway is seen on a circa 1915 annotation of the 1909 map, as are two gravel trails.¹²⁰ The paths in the park soon became favored scenic postcard views (Figures 3-49 and 3-50).



Figure 3-51. Flower bed with cannas in Flower Park, no date.

Other improvements to the area followed. In 1913, 108 shade trees were planted in East and West Central Park.¹²¹ The species, numbers, and locations of these plantings are not known. By 1915, two “new” comfort stations were located in West Central Park, one “just west of Lincoln Bridge” and one 600 feet north of the bridge.¹²² The sewer line for the stations was connected into the main sewer line for the town and park, which already ran through the middle of the West Central Park. A “small frame pavilion,” perhaps for another, minor spring, located 600 feet northwest of Beach Springs, was also documented in West Central Park in 1915.¹²³ In June that same year, the low water causeway across Rock Creek at Black Sulphur Springs was completed.

Flowers were also added to the area. As early as 1909, Superintendent Greene reported planting twelve-foot diameter flower beds in Flower Park (one can be seen in Figure 3-50).¹²⁴

At each end of this [Lincoln] bridge I have caused circular flower beds to be prepared and inclosed by rustic walls of conglomerate stone. By permission of the Superintendent, the ladies of the Civic League of Sulphur provided and planted a large variety of highly ornamental shrubs and flowers in these inclosures. Similar flower beds planted in like manner have been provided in Cliffside Park [now Bromide] near the north approach to the wire suspension bridge.¹²⁵

Although much of Flower Park over time became “covered with sweet clover and weeds,” flowers continued to be planted under Superintendent Sneed.¹²⁶ According to Boeger, the flower planting became a community endeavor:



Figure 3-52. Flower bed with sponsor sign in Flower Park, no date.

The Department of Agriculture and the Botanical Gardens furnished some stock, but people in the community actually donated most of the bulbs and plants and gave their time to care for the flower beds.¹²⁷

Boeger also indicates that in the 1920s the flower project expanded as the townspeople built forty flower beds of various shapes and sizes (Figures 3-51 and 3-52); tradition which seems to have lasted through the 1930s. The townspeople also devised some sort of irrigation system for watering them and the grass in the rest of the park. Sneed also continued the construction of wooden benches for the park.¹²⁸ Greene had also constructed wooden benches for the entire reservation; some were both moveable and some were permanent, placed around the bases of trees, and all were painted moss green (Figure 3-50).¹²⁹

The flood of January 21, 1916 was a minor set back for the development of the area. The flood damaged the northeast abutment of Lincoln Bridge.¹³⁰ Worse,

One of the new comfort stations in West Central Park washed down the creek so that no trace of it has been found, and at least 20 of the new park benches went down the stream so that it will be impossible to recover them.¹³¹

The comfort station appears to have been the one to the north of Lincoln Bridge; it was replaced with a new one, located to the west, in the summer of 1917.¹³²

In March 1922, probably as a part of Superintendent Ferris’ campaign to expand the park’s collection of animals, the park acquired a bald eagle, whose cage “hung in a tree in Central Park.”¹³³ Where this was located and how long the eagle lived there are both unclear.

Also in 1922, the Vendome well, located adjacent to the northwest corner of Flower Park, was drilled. The well's prodigious outflow of 2,500 gallons per minute was directed in a stream (sometimes described as a ditch) running through the park and dumping into Rock Creek across from Black Sulphur Springs. The stream first appears on a 1933 plan.¹³⁴ This plan also shows the two comfort stations in Flower Park and an entry feature of some sort at the intersection of Davis and First Street and Highway 18. These were probably stone piers with a turnstile similar to ones elsewhere in the park (see Figure 3-63 below).

Buffalo Pasture

After 1902, when the town of Sulphur Springs had moved south from the location of the first town site, the area now known as the Buffalo Pasture and Prairie Uplands was fast becoming a new town. Documentation of this area at this time is relatively sparse, but the 1904 "Map of Sulphur Springs Reservation" (Figure 3-2) provides an idea of the extent of the settlement at the time. An inventory of 1902 and 1904 claims for government restitution for buildings and structures reveals that a majority of the properties in the southern part of the town were improved.¹³⁵ Improvements ranged from simple, "box houses" to more extensive layouts where property owners invested greater capital. For example, Josephine Jones' property in the southern part of the park reservation was listed as containing a "Three-room house, one-room house, buggy house, stable, fruit trees, etc., in Block 22."¹³⁶ Other types of improvements listed on properties in this inventory included barns, log houses, frame houses, picket and plank fences, stone foundations without structures, outhouses (which probably referred to out buildings, not privies), and grapevines. From the inventory, and from photographs of typical Sulphur residences (Figure 3-53), a picture emerges of the upland area as an open landscape dotted with trees and primitive houses.

Figure 3-54 is another example of the type of construction and the appearance of the landscape in the prairie upland area. This building was constructed near Wilson Spring, which appears as the southernmost spring in the park on the 1909 *Map of Platt National Park*. The spring was named for Virgil Wilson, who was an early Sulphur resident.¹³⁷ In part, it appears that the addition



Figure 3-53. Cyanotype photograph of the Sulphur townsite, showing open landscape. Joseph Swords Collection, courtesy of the Oklahoma Historical Society, negative 2153.15.

of the extra 218-odd acres of the park in 1904 was done to protect this, and other, springs in the area.

The springs in the upland part of the park were numerous, but were not extensively developed by 1906, according to Gould's "Report on Springs." Gould organized the springs in the upland area into two main groups. Seven springs were located in the "notch" along the park's southern boundary, an area known at the time as "Churchill Park." These springs included Wilson Spring, Churchill Spring, Rucker's Spring, Iron Spring, Jericho Spring and two unnamed springs (Nos. 32 & 33). Only two of these were primitively developed for water collection, Wilson Spring with a tile and Rucker's Spring with a small basin carved into the surrounding rock formation. A second group of seven springs were located west of Churchill Park in a ravine near the southern park boundary. Shown accessed by Sulphur Bromide Lane and the Cliffside Trail on the 1909 *Map of Platt National Park* (Figure 3-3), these springs included Black Sulphur Spring, Sulphur Spring, Taff's Spring, Iron Spring, Soda Spring and two more springs also named Sulphur Spring. All of these springs were listed as flowing at rates of two to three gallons per minute. In 1906, only Black Sulphur Spring and Taff Spring were listed as developed, their waters flowing into a hollow log and a wooden box respectively.¹³⁸

Once the additional lands were added to the park and the new boundary finalized, the upland landscape was stripped of its previous signs of habitation. Though citizens moved many structures, many were purchased by the government and demolished. This was not a rapid process, and as late as 1933, features of the old town were still being cleared from the park.¹³⁹ Some buildings were retained to house park staff. Others were torn down and their materials used elsewhere; as noted above, the first Bromide Pavilion was constructed from portions of the former Bland Hotel. Although the 1909 *Map of Platt National Park* (Figure 3-3) does not show many of these



Figure 3-54. Residence at Wilson Spring, circa 1903. Note the wooded nature of the ravines in the southern part of the reservation. Joseph Swords Collection, courtesy of the Oklahoma Historical Society, negative 2153.13.

buildings, a 1915 building inventory of “each building or structure of any kind within the park limits” completed by Superintendent Sneed shows six structures within the area.¹⁴⁰ These included a six-room frame cottage housing two park laborers (W. C. and A. K. Milligan) and a barn and grain crib in a cluster approximately one-third mile south of Pavilion Springs. The other three buildings were pavilions at springs. Two at Black Sulphur Springs and Sulphur-Bromide Springs were described as being small, recently repainted, and in good condition. Figure 3-55 is one of the early Black Sulphur Springs pavilions.

Though it does not show all of the extant buildings, the 1909 map does show some other features of the landscape. The most significant feature shown are the roads running through the area. The most important of these is Buckhorn Road. Buckhorn Road was the major thoroughfare between the communities of Scullin and Sulphur and also accessed a large farming community along Buckhorn and Oil Creeks. On the 1909 map Buckhorn Road bisects the upland area and runs from the southeast corner of the park up to Pavilion Spring. Bromide Lane and Sulphur Bromide are shown forking off Buckhorn and respectively heading west to Bromide Springs and southwest to Black Sulphur and Sulphur Bromide Springs.

To the west, a road running north-south, just east of Mount Airy, bounded the edge of the upland prairie area. This road was known as Lockwood Lane.¹⁴¹ In addition to these main routes, two other short private roads are



Figure 3-55. Construction of an early pavilion at Black Sulphur Springs in the southern part of the Platt National Park, circa 1915. Note the open prairie landscape behind the workers and the pavilion.

shown in the southeastern part of the park. It is likely that the roads shown do not adequately represent the true number of private or informal roads that existed in the area; given the number of settler’s houses which existed here prior to 1904, the area was probably crisscrossed with primitive lanes and driveways.

Three fence lines are also shown running through the area on the 1909 Map. These probably indicate locations of pastures or fields, because hay, oats, corn and alfalfa were grown in the park,¹⁴² though exact locations of these fields are unclear. The park’s mules were also pastured in the Buffalo Pasture area beginning in 1914.¹⁴³ In 1915, two large pasture areas were leased out to local ranchers.¹⁴⁴ One hundred and fifty acres on the approximate site of the future golf course were leased to “Moss & Jennings” for “pasturage purposes.” This area was bounded on the south and west by Buckhorn Lane; on the east by the park boundary and Lockwood Lane; and on the north by Travertine Creek and “inside line fences.” One hundred and seventy acres were leased to B. A. Williams, and was comprised by the area bounded by Bromide Lane, Sulphur Bromide Lane, the steep slope of Bromide Hill and the park boundary. Unfortunately the terms of these leases are not known. Grazing continued in the park, perhaps in these locations, until 1921, when Stephen Mather visited the park and instructed Superintendent Ferris to “stop all grazing of cattle in the park after present contracts expire.”¹⁴⁵

The next major land use change in the area occurred in 1923, when a nine-hole golf course was constructed in the area east of Buckhorn Road. The golf course had first been proposed in 1917 by the Sulphur Chamber of Commerce, who noted that there were several “ideal” sites where a nine-hole golf course could be located without having to “cut any trees or in anyway disturb the rustic beauty of the place.”¹⁴⁶ Though Sneed forwarded the request to the Department of the Interior, stating that “people who visit a resort must be provided with amusements of some sort,” little action on the proposal was taken.¹⁴⁷ Then, in 1923, under Superintendent Ferris, Sulphur businessmen raised approximately \$1,100 and hired Guy Crooks, a golf course engineer from Oklahoma City, to begin construction of a course.¹⁴⁸ It appears the course was at some time authorized by the Department of the Interior, though later administrators disclaimed any knowledge of it.¹⁴⁹ The course was located east of Buckhorn Road, with its first hole located just south of Pavilion Springs and the cluster of employee residences located there.¹⁵⁰ The local businessmen formed the “Platt National Park Golf Club” to financially support the construction and upkeep of the course. Membership averaged about 40, and dues cost ten dollars annually. By 1934 the club had spent about \$12,000 on the course, averaging \$1,100 annually.¹⁵¹ Course play was free to out-of-town visitors, but local golfers from Davis and Sulphur had to pay a fee, which was fifty cents a day in 1926.¹⁵² In 1925, the club constructed a “corrugated club house” somewhere on the golf course site.

Little other development occurred in the Buffalo Pasture and Prairie Uplands throughout the 1920s and into the 1930s. Drawing 1 shows the area’s appearance prior to major changes by the CCC. In general, Drawing 1 contains most of the roads and features seen on the 1909 *Map of Platt National Park* (Figure 3-3), indicating they were retained throughout the period. These features include Buckhorn Road, Sulphur Bromide Lane, and the Milligan house, now labeled “Residence #2,” and with an access road shown leading to it. Features missing from the 1909 map are the fence lines and narrow lanes in the southernmost part of the park, as well as indication of any structures at Wilson Spring, Black Sulphide (Sulphur) Spring, and Sulphur Bromide Spring. Features shown on this map but not shown on previous maps include Gilsonite Lane (connecting Buckhorn Road to Division Street outside the park), as well as areas for the golf course, the mule pasture, and an area called the “wagon camp.” Of the latter three features, only the “wagon

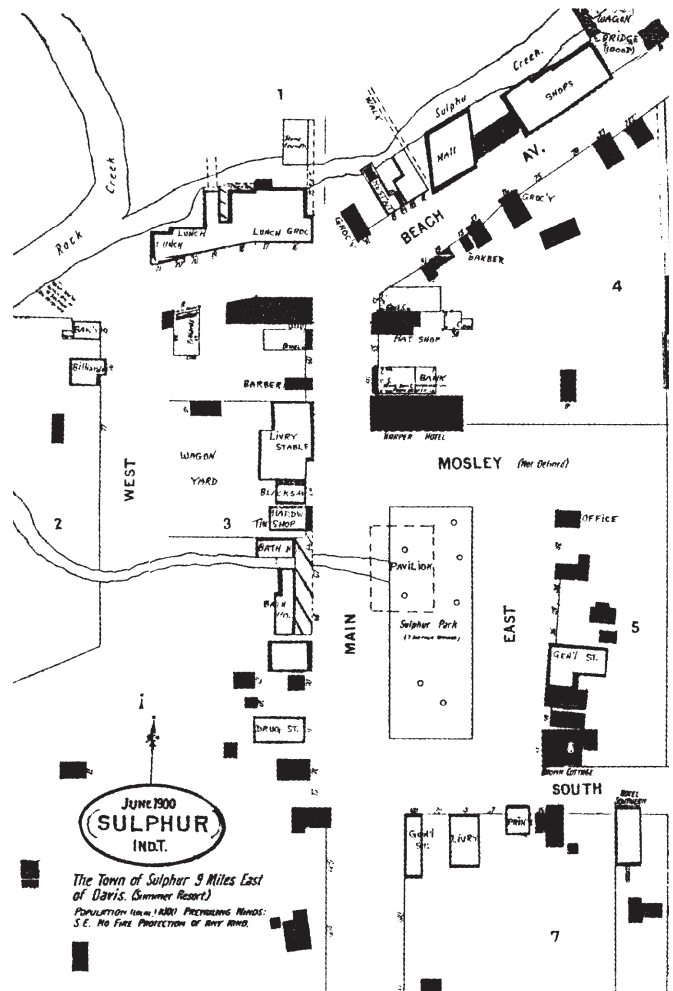


Figure 3-56. Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, June 1900.

camp” has not been discussed. There is little record of this area, but it appears to have been an early campground, perhaps started as early as 1905 or 1906.¹⁵³ Like other camping areas, the wagon camp was not shown on the 1909 map (Figure 3-3). However a 1915 building inventory records two new, two-compartment comfort stations in the “public campground.” Located 500 feet northwest and 1500 feet due west of the Superintendent’s office, these would have been situated in or near the “wagon camp.” A 1933 plan shows a small access road leading to this area but no comfort stations.¹⁵⁴

Two new built features on the plan are the Superintendent’s Residence (labeled Residence #7) and an entry feature of some sort located at the south entrance of the park on Buckhorn Road, just west of Fair Ave and the Veteran’s Hospital. The Veteran’s Hospital had been built in 1922 and may have precipitated the construction of a set of entry piers. Superintendent Branch chose the site for the Superintendent’s Residence, near the top



Figure 3-57. Springhouse at Pavilion Springs, 1901. Heye Foundation Collection, courtesy of the Oklahoma Historical Society, negative 14833 C.

of the highest point in the prairie uplands, in 1932.¹⁵⁵ As a result, it had excellent views of most of the park. Work began on the house on September 2, 1932 and was finished just prior to the establishment of the CCC camp.¹⁵⁶

Pavilion Springs

By 1902, Pavilion Springs was the heart of the burgeoning town of Sulphur, Oklahoma. As a result, documentation of the central core area of the future Platt National Park dating to the early 1900s is quite good. Early historic photographs show it to be a typical frontier town. Mercantile stores, lodging accommodations and private residences sprang up around a central open square where the town's namesake springs bubbled out of the ground.

The springs were seven in number, and in 1906 were indicated as being Big Tom Spring, Arsenic Spring, Little Tom Spring, Sword's Spring, Townsley's Spring, and Dog Spring by Charles Gould. These six were listed as being "developed," with either cement basins or tiles to contain the water for use. The seventh spring was listed as "undeveloped" and simply indicated as No. 11.¹⁵⁷ Gould analyzed the mineral content of these sulphur springs and noted that the "odor from these springs is strong, and may be detected sometimes for the distance of a half a mile." Big Tom was the strongest spring, flowing at forty gallons per minute, while the others flowed at anywhere from two to eight gallons per minute.¹⁵⁸



Figure 3-58. Postcard view of the interior of Pavilion Springs, 1911. Note lower grade and simple tiles containing springs. C. R. Cowen Collection, courtesy of the Oklahoma Historical Society, negative 19687.TO.S177.50.4.3.

The springs were located in an open square sometimes labeled "Sulphur Park" centered in the little town; their locations are indicated as small circles in a circa 1900 Sanborn Insurance map (Figure 3-56). The open town square is also depicted on the 1904 "Map of Sulphur Springs Reservation" (Figure 3-2).

The Sanborn map details a large number of buildings situated around "Sulphur Park," as well as a stream carrying the overflow from the springs toward Rock Creek. A dashed line indicates the pavilion constructed over two of the springs. As noted in the previous chapter, a double-storied pavilion had been built in this location in 1895 or 1896.

When the Sulphur Springs Reservation was established in 1902, the town of Sulphur was forced to move south and west, away from the springs around which it had been founded. Because of the dispute over the boundary of the reservation, as described in the introduction to this chapter, the buildings took some time to remove. Though the reservation officially opened to the public in August 1904, the process of selling, moving, and tearing down the buildings surrounding the Seven Springs did not get fully underway until 1905.¹⁵⁹ As shown on the 1909 *Map of Platt National Park*, the town streets around the area were also obliterated, with Buckhorn Road, the primary route leading north south through the park, skirting the east side of the pavilion on the former alignment of East Street (see Figure 3-56 for the location of East Street). However, some access on the west was still maintained, as the 1909 Map (Figure 3-3) also shows a foot trail running on the west side of Pavilion Springs.

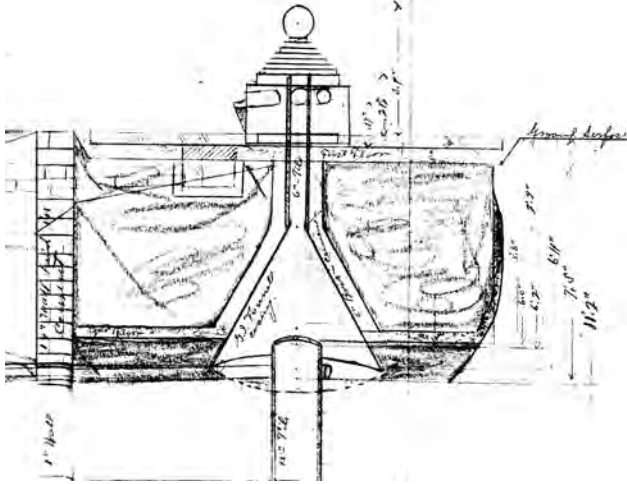


Figure 3-59. “Big Tom as Repaired,” drawn by Superintendent French, 1911. This portion of the much larger section shows the spring’s new funnel casing. Courtesy National Archives, Fort Worth. A plan that accompanies this detail, entitled “Floor View, Pavilion Springs, Platt National Park, June 1st 1911, After Rebuilding Big Tom Springs,” is located in the CNRA archives.

In 1903, the government replaced the original two-story pavilion with the somewhat more elegant single-story structure (Figure 3-57).¹⁶⁰ The new pavilion had a hip roof supported by fourteen square wooden columns, with wooden arches over the openings between each pair of columns. Early photos show the pavilion and the whole of “Sulphur Park” surrounded by a white picket fence, though others, taken later, do not. An interesting aspect of these early photographs is that they show the pavilion located in a distinct depression compared to the surrounding grade, and a wooden bridge with stairs leading down seems to provide access from the street to the floor of the pavilion. The interior of the pavilion was rather primitive, with the springs encased in cylindrical tiles (Figure 3-58)

The structure saw heavy wear and was fixed a number of times. In 1906 the roof of the pavilion was replaced.¹⁶¹ In 1911, the awkward grade around the pavilion was fixed when Big Tom was repaired. The impetus behind the repair of Big Tom is unclear, but the work resulted in a new concrete spring head constructed over the spring, which previously had emanated from a cylindrical tile. A funnel casing and pipe was constructed over the existing tile to direct the water up to the new concrete spring head, whose base was located almost six feet higher than the original grade (Figure 3-59). The six feet of low grade around the spring was filled in with red clay. Water flowed out of the side of the concrete spring head, which was almost four feet tall and topped with a circular globe



Figure 3-60. Interior of Pavilion showing Big Tom, June 17, 1911, shortly after its reconstruction.

(Figure 3-60). Excess spring water flowed into curbed depression in the concrete floor underneath and thence via a drain into a pipe, another improvement over the earlier open stream.

By 1915, the pavilion at the springs was the major building left from the original town center. A building inventory dated to this year describes the pavilion as “recently repaired and repainted” and as “[l]ocated over ‘Big Tom’ and ‘Beauty’ Springs of the Pavilion Group.”¹⁶² However, the building inventory also describes a second, “smaller frame pavilion....[l]ocated just northeast of the larger pavilion.” It’s not known exactly when this second pavilion was constructed, but Figure 3-61 shows both pavilions. They are situated in a rural setting that bears little resemblance to the commercial area that formerly surrounded the springs. This photograph exists in stark contrast to earlier photographs of the previously bustling town site (Figure 3-59).

The years between 1915 and 1933 are not as well-documented as the spring’s early years. Based on this documentation, there does not seem to have been major change at the pavilion until it was reconstructed by the CCC in the late 1930s.

The Leeper House and Hillside Springs

Just uphill and to the southwest of Pavilion Springs, two other structures from the early town site were retained: the Leeper House and a pavilion over Hillside Springs. The origins of the Leeper House were described in the previous chapter. In 1904 the lease on the building



Figure 3-61. View of Pavilion Springs area, 1915. Note back of old town buildings and view of second pavilion to the right.

expired, and it became the superintendent's office. The building appears as a simple square on the 1909 *Map of Platt National Park* (Figure 3-3). No access road is shown to the building, but presumably it had an access driveway from Buckhorn Road.

As far as can be told, little was done to the building to convert it to the superintendent's office. In 1909, a park sign and flagpole were added in front of the building (Figure 3-62).¹⁶³ In July of 1913, Superintendent French requested that a new administrative building be constructed in the park to replace a vermin-infested wood-frame structure that had previously done the job. However, the request was denied by the Department of the Interior, and as a result, it appears that administrative offices joined the superintendent's offices in the Leeper House.¹⁶⁴ Around 1914, some repairs and additions, including a porch, were made to the building, and by 1915, the park's building inventory succinctly described the office as a "Stone building, 2 rooms, 1 porch and coalshed attached, with inside toilet and 2 clothes presses."¹⁶⁵ The same inventory noted that a small frame tool house and comfort station was located just southwest of the office. It is not known when this little outbuilding was built or removed.

The early history of the pavilion at Hillside Springs is not as clear as that of the park office building. A published photo in the park archives reveals that this spring was also sometimes known as Beauty Springs,¹⁶⁶ though another spring at Pavilion Springs was also called this. It is not known when the first pavilion was built at Hillside Springs. Churchill and Taff described the spring as a sulfur water spring emanating from beds of limestone conglomerate. Sanborn maps from 1900 and 1903 simply



Figure 3-62. Superintendent's Office, formerly the Leeper House, circa 1918. Note weather station in foreground.



Figure 3-63. View over townscape from a point near the Leeper House, circa 1900. The pyramidal roof in the lefthand corner is likely Hillside Springs.

label the spring as a well. An early town photo (Figure 3-63) taken sometime between 1896 and 1903, shows an open-sided pavilion with a pyramidal hip roof at a rocky hillside location. This is likely Hillside Springs, but details about the construction of this pavilion have not yet been found.

In 1906, Charles Gould confirmed that the spring was located under a pavilion of some sort, with water collecting "in a stone reservoir 5 feet deep and 3 feet in diameter" from whence it flowed into a "cement basin where it is taken for use." He provided the following early history of the spring, which was

Located at the head of a small ravine approximately 150 yards southwest of the Pavilion group. Formerly there were two springs at this place, a Sulphur spring and a fresh water spring, but the latter has ceased to flow while the water in the former has

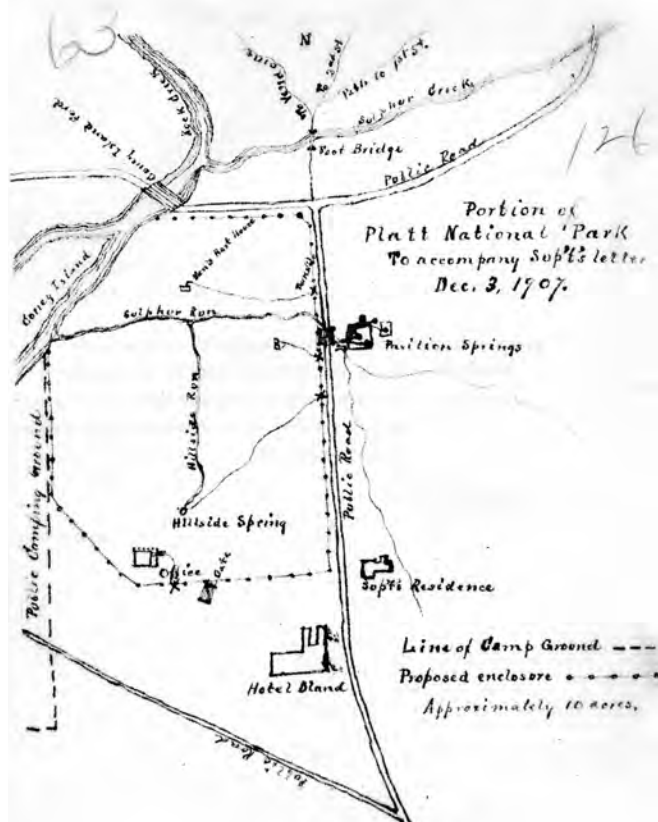


Figure 3-64. Sketch of Hillside Springs area by Superintendent Greene, 1907. Attached to a letter to the Secretary of the Interior, 4 December 1907.

increased in amount, but is said to not contain so great a percent of Sulphur as formerly. These facts lead to the inference that the flow from the two springs has been united.¹⁶⁷

By 1907, the spring was one of the most popular in the park, with hundreds of daily visitors. Some of these visitors bathed their feet or watered their stock at the spring, polluting the area.¹⁶⁸ Superintendent Greene fenced ten acres around the spring, producing a small sketch map of the area (Figure 3-64) in the process. By 1908, he described the spring's wooden pavilion as "rude and dilapidated."¹⁶⁹

By 1909, a small pond was located just below the spring, as seen on the 1909 *Map of Platt National Park* (Figure 3-3).¹⁷⁰ The early use of this pond is not clear, but by 1930, the pond was used to water the park's elk (see below). In 1911 a bathhouse was proposed near Hillside Spring by Superintendent Greene and in 1913, Superintendent French proposed that a swimming pool be built "through which the water from Hillside Spring could flow naturally



Figure 3-65. Postcard view of Hillside Springs, circa 1918.



Figure 3-66. Postcard view of Hillside Springs from above, circa 1917. Note the entry gate and turnstile on the right side of the image. (This gate is mapped on Figure 3-64). When compared to Figure 3-63, the photograph here shows the the rapid revegetation of the town site.

in a constant stream."¹⁷¹ While it is presumed neither of these features was ever built, their descriptions raise questions about a small pond located below the spring, which appears on maps from 1909 through 1933.

In 1915, a pavilion with conglomerate rock columns, a concrete floor and a "pagoda roof" was constructed on the site.¹⁷² A postcard dating to circa 1918 (Figure 3-65) shows the pavilion set into the hillside with the park offices (former Leeper House) located just above it. Between the two is a stone retaining wall, which may indicate that the water was piped from the hillside behind the wall into the pavilion. The roof of the building, with a flag pole, is also seen in Figure 3-66. This view also shows an interesting conglomerate stone turnstile that was located somewhere between the park office and the pavilion. This style of conglomerate rock construction matches that of the Hillside Pavilion's columns,



Figure 3-67. Hillside Springs, circa 1933. This photograph was taken prior to the changes made by the CCC.

stonework in the Bromide Pavilion, and entry piers elsewhere in the park. This conglomerate stonework may have been typical for the years prior to the CCC era.

Small changes continued to be proposed and implemented in the area. In August 1918, J. P. Slaughter, meteorologist from the Oklahoma Weather Bureau Office, established a small weather observation station (rain gauge and thermometers for minimum and maximum temperature) housed in a little white box in front of the park office.¹⁷³ In 1917, Superintendent Sneed proposed building a bathhouse near Hillside Spring, but the request was denied by Washington.¹⁷⁴ Other changes between 1917 and 1933 are not well-documented. A photograph taken prior to the pavilion's demolition by the CCC shows the structure intact, but looking a little forlorn in wooded surroundings (Figure 3-67).

Wagon Camp, Elk Paddock, Buffalo Paddock

As the park developed, tourism increased, and the former central town site was one of the hubs of tourist activities between 1902 and 1933. Three new features geared to visitors soon encircled the two springs and the park office. Probably the first of these built was a public campground located to the west of the Leeper House, in what is now the westernmost part of the Maintenance Area and northernmost part of the Buffalo Pasture. What little is known about this area is described above as part of the description of the Buffalo Pasture. The other two features were two paddocks, one for elk and one for buffalo, constructed in late 1919 with the help of local businessmen. The elk paddock was located immediately adjacent to and just west of Hillside Springs and the park



Figure 3-68. Elk in Platt National Park, circa 1932.



Figure 3-69. First Superintendent's Residence, no date, prior to 1933.

office. As noted above, a pool formed from the run-off of Hillside Springs appears to have been the elk's water supply. The buffalo paddock was located just east of Pavilion Springs, on the other side of Buckhorn Road. Bounded on the north by Travertine Drive, the buffalo paddock had a "feeding grounds" located next to the drive. This probably allowed visitors an easy view of the bison. Drawing 1 indicates the locations of the elk and bison pastures and the public campground.

The elk (Figure 3-68) and bison were brought to the park by Superintendent Ferris, who felt that having animals made the park "a pleasant place to come and visit when [a visitor felt] run down and tired."¹⁷⁵ Ferris begged three elk from Yellowstone National Park and two buffalo from Wichita Mountains Forest Reserve and they arrived in December 1919 and February 1920, respectively.¹⁷⁶ By 1921, two of the three elk had died.¹⁷⁷ By 1925, despite replacements, only one buffalo remained and so two more buffalo were added to the "herd" in 1931.¹⁷⁸ Ferris also secured ostriches and other animals for the park, though it is not clear exactly where these were housed.

Employee Residence Area

Housing for park staff was also addressed in the central area of the park. This likely occurred because it was easier to convert a few of the former town site's abandoned buildings into park housing rather than build new ones. Thus, the 1915 building inventory recorded two residences and associated outbuildings in the area east of Hillside Springs where Building 2 is today.¹⁷⁹ One of these was the first Superintendent's residence, a seven-room frame house with an attached servant's room, located 700 feet south of Pavilion Springs (Figure 3-69). Around the Superintendent's residence were a new barn, a hen house and a storage building. In 1931, when the new Superintendent's residence was built, this building became ranger housing, and was renamed "Residence #3."

The other residence located in the area was a five room ranger's house with an associated frame stable and storage building. By 1933, this building had become known as "Residence #4." (This building was modified by the CCC and remains extant today as Building 2). In addition to these two houses were two "new" comfort stations located just southeast and southwest of the ranger's house in 1915. These may have been the toilet facilities for the residences. How much change occurred in the employee residence area between 1915 and 1933 is difficult to tell. However, given that the buildings were completely overhauled by the CCC, it appears that the area was minimally maintained.

A number of other staff residences were extant in the park in 1933. One residence (Residence #5) was located near the buffalo paddock, just northwest of Panther Falls. Another residence (Residence #6) was located across the creek, near the boundary of the park at the intersection of First Street East and Wapanucka Ave. And of course there was the ranger's house in Bromide (Residence #1) and ranger's house near Sulphur-Bromide Lane (Residence #2), both of which have already been described. All of these residences appear on Drawing 1.

1933 Overview of the Pavilion Springs Area

Little major change appears to have occurred in the former town site area following the early 1920s. In November 1930, the portion of Buckhorn Road running through the area was repaved with cold asphalt paving by

the park and the state.¹⁸⁰ Work included new base and shoulder, but the road was not significantly realigned.

The 1933 period plan, Drawing 1, provides a good overview of the entire central core area of the park and shows all of the elements described above. Based on the 1933 "Plan of Platt National Park" (NP-PLA-4948), the plan is labeled with contemporary names. On the plan, the former Leeper House is labeled "Superintendent's Office." Access roads are shown to both this office and to the residences east of Buckhorn Road. With the relocation of the Superintendent's Residence south in the prairie uplands, the residences to the south of Pavilion Springs were simply renamed Residences #3 and #4, indicating their use as ranger housing. Drawing 1 does not show outbuildings that may have been associated with these residences, since these do not appear on the 1933 "Plan of Platt National Park."

Drawing 1 also shows Pavilion Springs and the pavilion at Hillside Spring, as well as the small pond below it. The drawing also depicts a dashed trail line running from Hillside Spring along the south side of Rock Creek to Lincoln Bridge. This footpath likely existed along old town road traces documented in the 1900 Sanborn Map (Figure 3-57). The map also shows the extents of the buffalo and elk pastures located on either side of Buckhorn road. In general, the central core area was a compact arrangement of features important to both the visitor experience and the day-to-day functioning of the park. This compact arrangement and the close relationship between these two different aspects of the park would be significantly altered after the arrival of the CCC-era designers.

Central Campground

When Sulphur Springs Reservation was created in 1902, the area now known as Central Campground was part of the area known as Central Park. The campground's name was presumably derived from the name of the original park and its location in the center of the plat of Sulphur Springs. As shown in Figure 3-3, the original Central Park was divided into two halves by a road running north-south between the town site to the north and the rest of the park to the south (Figure 3-70). Around this time, Central Campground was known as "East Central Park." In 1908, Superintendent Greene designated six acres in this area as a campground for "organizations



Figure 3-70. Road running north-south between East and West Central Parks, no date. The large building in the background is the Artesian Hotel.

and reputable persons.”¹⁸¹ That summer the first groups stayed in the park. Two reunions of confederate soldiers were held in the area, with both groups having “sham battles,” one at night and one during daylight hours. A circa 1920 map of the park produced by the Sulphur Chamber of Commerce described East Central Park as “Free Campground No. 2.”¹⁸²

Little additional written or graphic documentation of the design, layout, or features of the campground are available for the years between 1908 and 1933. A memo written by Superintendent Sneed in 1915 indicates that two comfort stations were built in East Central Park around 1915.¹⁸³ One of these comfort stations appears in an early view of camping in the park (Figure 3-71). These two comfort stations are also presumably those labeled “#8” and “#9” on Drawing 1, as per the 1933 “Plan of Platt National Park” (NP-PLA-4948). Missing from the original 1933 plan are any other campground features



Figure 3-71. Camping in Central Campground, circa 1920. Note comfort station in right-hand edge of photo.



Figure 3-72. “Cunningham Place,” cyanotype taken by Superintendent Swords, circa 1903. Joseph Swords Collection, courtesy of the Oklahoma Historical Society, negative 2153.34.

such as roads or campsites; the only things shown are two drainage ways running through the campground into Travertine Creek. Drawing 1 thus summarizes the meager body of information known about the appearance and features of Central Campground in 1933.

Cold Springs Campground

The Cold Springs area is named after two springs located in or near Travertine Creek at the base of Mount Airy, between Pebble Falls and Garfield Falls, as shown on the 1909 *Map of Platt National Park* (Figure 3-3). The exact date of the springs’ discovery is not known. Churchill and Taff did not inventory them during their 1902 survey, nor do they appear on any maps prior to 1915.¹⁸⁴ In 1906, however, Charles Gould noted two weak, iron-containing springs, “located on the bank of Sulphur Creek about half way between the Pavilion Springs and



Figure 3-73. Camping in Cold Springs Campground, circa 1920. Portion of panorama photograph from the Ardmore Museum.

the Buffalo and Antelope Springs.” Gould indicates that these springs (which he named “No. 3 Cunningham Spring” and “No. 4 Buse Spring” or the “Chalybeate Group”) were located near the “old Cunningham Place.” A plat labeled Cunningham is seen near the Cold Springs area on the 1904 “Map of Sulphur Springs Reservation” (Figure 3-2) and would thus appear to confirm that these springs are the namesake for the area. Figure 3-72 is an early photograph of the “Cunningham Place” taken by Superintendent Swords and thus may be the earliest photograph of the Cold Springs area.

The area around Cold Springs, though shown platted on the 1904 “Map of Sulphur Springs Reservation,” was likely sparsely settled, being on the edge of the original town. The land was also probably agricultural, since “cultivated fields” were described near Cold Springs during Superintendent Sneed’s administration, from 1914-1919 and likely before.¹⁸⁵ In the winter of 1912, Superintendent French had fifty acres around Cold Springs thinned of timber and cleared of underbrush, presumably beginning the campground.¹⁸⁶ Under his supervision, a 36-foot long table with benches, additional benches and two comfort stations were constructed.¹⁸⁷ These comfort stations were listed on the 1915 building inventory. By 1914, a road was built along Travertine Creek all the way to Buffalo and Antelope Springs, and a gravel surface and culverts were installed as far as Cold Springs, improving access.¹⁸⁸

By the 1920s, the area was firmly established as a campground. A town brochure from circa 1920 shows the Cold Springs area labeled as “Free Campground #3,” and vehicles and tents were spread out under the trees

(Figure 3-73). In 1922 a community house was added to the campground. This building, designed by Daniel Hull, was almost identical to the one constructed in the Bromide Campground and is described above. Along with the community house, two additional comfort stations were built in the area.¹⁸⁹ Hull also recommended eliminating the cornfields near the campground and extending the camping area upstream.¹⁹⁰

Campground use was heavy throughout the 1920s and 1930s, and in 1931, one-half of Cold Springs was closed to let the ground and vegetation recover from the heavy use.¹⁹¹ Cold Springs’ community house and three comfort stations are shown on Drawing 1. It is presumed that the easternmost comfort station was constructed in 1913, while the other two date from 1922. Unfortunately no documentation has been found about circulation patterns or locations of campsites within the campground. A barn and staff housing (Residence #6) are shown located directly west of the campground area on Drawing 1. The barn across the river from Residence #6 appears to have been built sometime between 1915 and 1933, since it is not described in the 1915 building inventory of the park.

Travertine Island and Little Niagara Falls

In 1902, the eastern part of the newly minted reservation was less developed than the town site centered around Pavilion Springs. Thus, early documentation of the eastern areas of the park is much less extensive than the central core area. The 1904 “Map of Sulphur Springs Reservation” (Figure 3-2), for example, extends only as far as about Cold Springs. As a result, less is known about the park’s eastern areas. This is particularly true for Travertine Island and Little Niagara Falls.

In fact, the earliest drawing of these two areas is probably the 1909 *Map of Platt National Park* (Figure 3-3) produced by the United States Geological Society (USGS). This plan shows Travertine Island as an almost triangularly shaped area created by the ox-bow-like confluence of a stream labeled “Nigger Run” with Travertine Creek. Located at the three “corners” of the “triangle” are three falls, two of which are simply labeled “Falls” and the third of which is labeled “Little Niagara Falls.” The falls were so-named because of their resemblance, in miniature, to Niagara Falls in New York, and by 1909 they were a well-visited sylvan scenic locale.



Figure 3-74. Early photo of Little Niagara Falls, no date. Albertype Collection, courtesy of the Oklahoma Historical Society, negative 18827.658.

A 1908 description of the falls noted that “according to photographs and statements” the falls were fifteen feet tall and “separated at the brink by a jutting rock into two divisions.”¹⁹² Numerous postcards from the early 1900s (Figures 3-6 and 3-74) show such a view of water pouring over mossy rocks.

Oddly, on the 1909 map the label of Little Niagara Falls is located near the northern “corner” of the island, and not near the falls that is today associated with the name of Little Niagara. This is somewhat perplexing, but the location of the label remains consistently on the northern falls on all maps of the park produced prior to 1933. Thus, it seems possible that the falls were relocated or renamed sometime after 1909. It’s possible that such a relocation was connected with the construction of the reservoir for the town water supply.

Little Niagara Falls were just one feature of the Travertine Island area, which became more popular for picnicking and day trips once Travertine Drive was improved in 1914.¹⁹³ Road improvements were important, since

visitors of the time felt that Travertine Island’s distance from the center of the park made it accessible primarily to visitors who came by automobile.¹⁹⁴ Another attraction was a natural swimming area located at Cave Island Falls, just downstream from the island.¹⁹⁵

It is unknown how much development occurred in the area during the 1920s. The 1931 “Utilities Layout” (Figure 3-8) shows about the same information as the 1909 Map, except that it shows a spur leading off Travertine Drive, across Travertine Creek and ending in a loop on Travertine Island. This spur provided vehicular access to the area and might have existed earlier than 1931. No documentation recording the general appearance or specific features of the area in the 1920s has been located. However, by the time the CCC arrived in the park, Travertine Island was one of the “most attractive and popular” areas of the park.¹⁹⁶

Antelope and Buffalo Springs

Antelope and Buffalo Springs, the sources of Travertine Creek, have been important since the park’s beginnings. The Indians reportedly named the springs after the buffalo and antelope that once roamed the area, and the names were then translated into English with the coming of European settlers.¹⁹⁷ Frank Miles, an Indian born in the area, told how historically Antelope Spring was known as Buffalo Spring because of the “striking likeness from a certain point of view of a buffalo with a calf running at its side, formed by a rock in the center of the spring.”¹⁹⁸

Documentation of the area’s early days has proven so far to be sparse. Perhaps the earliest information of the area is a verbal description of the two springs written by Churchill and Taff following their 1902 survey of the area:

The larger of the two springs as the source of Sulphur [Travertine] Creek issues from the bed of the valley in a dense jungle of young forest trees; the other issues from beneath a projecting bluff of limestone conglomerate on the south slope of the valley about midway in the slope above the main channel.¹⁹⁹

Churchill and Taff, who describe the larger park in scenic terms, do not, oddly enough, describe what would later



Figure 3-75. “Swords just above Antelope Springs,” circa 1910. Note open quality of landscape. Joseph Swords Collection, courtesy of the Oklahoma Historical Society, negative 2153.12.

become a favored scenic spot. Rather, they discussed the area in resource value terms, noting that the springs, elevated 100 feet above the town, could be a source of municipal water, “simply by leading the water to the city by piping.”²⁰⁰ This idea would be raised a few more times in the early years of the park.

The earliest photographic documentation of the area is equally uninformative about the details of the two springs’ appearance. A cyanotype taken by Superintendent Swords in the early 1900s (Figure 3-75) shows the area above Antelope Springs as level, open, rocky, and sparsely vegetated. The dominant elements in the photo are a log and a frame house, two structures that were presumably removed once the government established the Sulphur Springs Reservation. Other elements in the photos are deciduous trees and shrubs.

It is not until a decade later that the scenic qualities of the area are documented. A postcard view (Figure 3-76) shows Antelope Springs bubbling out of the rocky slope sometime around the 1910s. By this time, both Antelope and Buffalo Springs were popular day-trip destinations within the park, and were together known as the “Head of the Springs.”²⁰¹ However, during the early years of Sulphur Springs Reservation, the eastern section of the park was the least developed and the poor roads, likely located along road traces used by early settlers, encouraged only the hardest visitors to explore the furthest reaches of the park. In 1914, a more permanent road was constructed to the two springs, though it still lacked a gravel surface.²⁰² This 1914 alignment seems



Figure 3-76. Postcard view of Antelope Springs, circa 1910. Albertype Collection, courtesy of the Oklahoma Historical Society, negative 18827.629.

to be shown on a circa 1915 sketch by Superintendent Sneed. Drawn in pencil and ink on the 1909 map of the park, the plan shows a new loop around Buffalo Springs, two box culverts near Antelope Springs, as well as a “rustic wagon bridge” along the route.²⁰³

Throughout the 1910s, the springs’ drying up was a relatively common occurrence, and a problematic one. Without the springs, Travertine Creek and its scenic waterfalls were nonexistent. The two springs went dry from the spring of 1911 to April 1912; from September 1912 to November 1913; and from January 1918 to December 1919.²⁰⁴ The springs apparently also slightly shifted location sometimes. For Antelope Springs, this shifting is confirmed on maps created in different years, which show the spring as having one, two or even three sources.²⁰⁵

In the early 1920s, the city approached the park about using water from Buffalo and Antelope Springs as a back-up supply. Clouding the issue of whether or not the park should allow the city to pipe water from the springs, was Superintendent Ferris' suggestion to improve the springs at about the same time. In late December, he wrote a letter to Washington (later forwarded to Daniel Hull in Yosemite, California for approval) proposing a new setting for Buffalo Springs. The letter provides a good description of the springs at the time:

I suppose you will remember that Buffalo Spring, in the east end of our park bubbles up in a hole in the ground, being lower than the surrounding ground, it is subject to the drainage of the surface water pouring into it, which spoils the beauty of the spring to some extent. The spring comes out of the ground with such force that of course it washes itself clean. I guess you remember the sand boiling in the bottom and the gas bubbles coming up through the water.

It is our plan, if you approve, to encircle this spring with a stone wall laid in cement, something after the manner of the enclosed diagram.

We believe that this will not be too great a cost as the cement is practically all we will have to buy.

The above circle mentioned will cut off the surface water and leave the spring water clear and pure. If this meets with your approval we will start operations immediately.²⁰⁶

The sketch attached to the letter (Figure 3-77) is dimensionless, yet it shows some striking similarities to the existing spring enclosure, including the circular form, exit location of the water, and the use of a walled structure around the spring. However, the design is also different, with its proposed central island (planted with caladiums!) and bridge.

Not surprisingly, the scheme was not approved by Hull. He initially objected to the plan because it did not fulfill either goal of preserving natural beauty or supplying hygienic water to the city:

If the town should find it unnecessary to utilize water from this spring I can see no reason why it should be improved. We

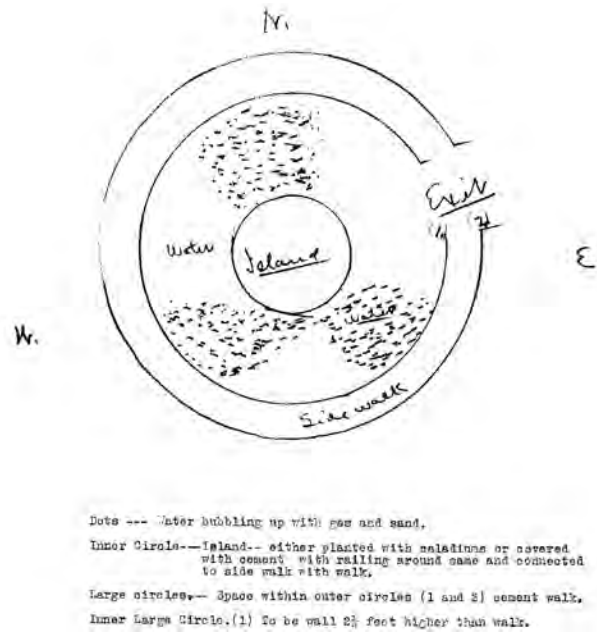


Figure 3-77. Sketch of proposed spring enclosure by Superintendent Ferris, 1921. Attached to a letter to the Director dated 29 December 1921. Courtesy National Archives, Forth Worth.

certainly could not make the place more beautiful as a natural landscape and, after all, the natural landscape is the thing we are trying to preserve. On the other hand, if water from this spring is to be utilized for city supply the scheme outlined would not pass the watchful eye of a health officer for with the walk, bridge, etc. we at once encourage traffic about the spring and this increases the danger of contamination.²⁰⁷

Two weeks later, however, he literally underscores the main issue at hand:

Evidently I had not made myself perfectly clear in my letter of the 13th . . . I am glad the city has decided to look elsewhere. . . for its water supply and this being the case I still feel, . . . that we cannot add to the charm or beauty of Buffalo Spring by any man made structure [emphasis Hull's].²⁰⁸

This letter seems to have been the last word on the subject.

Although Buffalo Springs itself was not improved, there was at least one “man-made” structure near the site—a pergola or gazebo-like structure (Figure 3-78). The pergola was a four columned-structure, with an



Figure 3-78. Early cobblestone masonry structure near Buffalo Springs, circa 1925.

arch from each column meeting to create an overhead enclosure. Square seating areas were provided at the base of each column. The structure's exact date of construction and location are not known. However, its materials—conglomerate stone and concrete—and style of construction matches those used in the early Hillside Pavilion, the water spigots in the second Bromide Pavilion, and the piers established at park gateways in the 1910s and 20s.

Little other pre-CCC-era documentation of the two springs has been found. There is no record, for example, of features such as comfort stations. The two park maps from the 1930s primarily show the area's circulation patterns. On the 1931 "Utilities Layout" (Figure 3-8) Travertine Drive is shown crossing Travertine Creek in new and different locations than seen in the 1909 *Map of Platt National Park* (Figure 3-3), though a dashed line seems to indicate trails located on the old alignments shown. In addition, a turnaround loop is shown at Antelope Springs. The 1933 map of the park shows a similar configuration.

CONCLUSION

Between 1902 and 1933 Sulphur Springs Reservation evolved from a settlement and town site into a national park. As outlined above, this evolution required almost equivalent amounts of obliteration and construction of buildings, roads, and landscape features. Because of this, as shown in Drawing 1, by 1933, the 848 acres of park had relatively few developed areas, concentrated in tiny areas around the springs.

The quality of this development is also perhaps not what we think of today when we think of NPS Rustic design of the era 1916-1942. Both Platt National Park itself—an intimate landscape of small streams and low rock outcroppings—and its new construction—flower beds, animal pens and a golf course—were somewhat atypical of NPS parks, when compared with the great landscape parks with their sublime landscapes and monumental hotels and lodges. Yet visitors certainly didn't seem to care; in 1914, Platt's visitation outstripped that of both Yellowstone and Yosemite and was second only to Hot Springs Reservation in Arkansas.²⁰⁹

The nature of park development, however, would change in the late 1930s, with the coming of the public works

programs following the Depression. Whereas the 1910s and the 1920s were characterized by superintendents requesting federal monies to implement their visions, the free-flow of federal dollars in the 1930s would place designers from centralized NPS offices in charge of park design. As will be seen in the next chapter, this would, in effect, bring the design of Platt National Park more closely in line with NPS standards.

Notes to Chapter 3

- ¹ E. A. Hitchcock, Secretary of the Interior to Frank C. Churchill, Special Inspector 8 July 1902. Chickasaw National Recreation Area Archives (hereafter cited as CNRA Archives)
- ² Frank C. Churchill, Special Inspector, and Joseph A. Taff, geologist of the USGS, "Report" (typed document, 10 October 1902). CNRA Archives.
- ³ Ibid.
- ⁴ Ibid.
- ⁵ Wray and Roberts, "Ethnohistory of Associated Park Use," chapter entitled "Free to All-Comers in Perpetuity," n.p.
- ⁶ Boeger, *Oklahoma Oasis*, 55.
- ⁷ Joseph Swords, Special Inspector to F. C. Churchill, US Indian Inspector, 12 July 1904. CNRA Archives.
- ⁸ Boeger, *Oklahoma Oasis*, 56, 57, 59, 61.
- ⁹ Ibid., 72.
- ¹⁰ Ibid., 64.
- ¹¹ Wray and Roberts, "Ethnohistory of Associated Park Use," chapter entitled "Early Landscape Design," n.p.
- ¹² Brown, "A History of Platt National Park," 31-32.
- ¹³ Thomas Ryan, Acting Secretary of the Interior to Joseph Swords, February 16, 1904. CNRA Archives.
- ¹⁴ Acting Secretary of the Interior (signature illegible) to A. R. Greene 19 August 1908, CNRA Archives.
- ¹⁵ Brown, "A History of Platt National Park," 32.
- ¹⁶ A. R. Greene, Report to The Secretary of the Interior, 5 July 1908, Superintendents' Reports, Book VII, 435-436. CNRA Archives.
- ¹⁷ A. R. Greene to the Secretary of the Interior, 2 October 1908, Superintendents' Reports, Book VI, 291; See also Superintendents' Reports, Book VI, 457. CNRA Archives.
- ¹⁸ R. A. Sneed to the Secretary of the Interior, 23 January 1916, File 801-02, Platt National Park Files, Record Group 79, National Archives and Records Administration, Fort Worth (hereafter cited as National Archives, Fort Worth).
- ¹⁹ Charles Gould, "Report on Springs," Letter to E. A. Hitchcock, 13 August 1906. CNRA Archives.
- ²⁰ Gould, "Report on Springs," n.p. See also A. R. Greene to the Secretary of the Interior, 7 November 1908. Superintendents' Reports, CNRA Archives. Copy received from park staff.
- ²¹ A. R. Greene to the Secretary of the Interior, 24 August 1908. CNRA Archives.
- ²² Anonymous, "Platt National Park: Place Names Recommended for Approval or Abandonment," (typed table, presumably for submission to the Division of Geographical Names, Department of the Interior, 16 November 1935). Copy in file "Place Names." CNRA Archives.
- ²³ A. R. Greene to James Rudolph Garfield 3 June 1907. CNRA Archives.
- ²⁴ Boeger, *Oklahoma Oasis*, 64.
- ²⁵ Boeger, *Oklahoma Oasis*, 79; Wray and Roberts, "Ethnohistory of Associated Park Use," chapter entitled "It's the Water," n.p.; Jesse Wilson to A. R. Greene, 19 August 1908, CNRA Archives. Copy received from park staff. Boeger says the reservoir was located 60 feet below Little Niagara Falls; Wray and Roberts say the reservoir was located "above Limestone Creek; and the Wilson letter indicates the reservoir was to be located 80 feet downstream from Little Niagara—but notes that it hasn't been built yet.
- ²⁶ Boeger, *Oklahoma Oasis*, 79.
- ²⁷ W. J. French to the Secretary of the Interior, 15 April 1912, Superintendents' Press Book #11, 5 February to 12 October 1912. CNRA Archives.
- ²⁸ Boeger, *Oklahoma Oasis*, 79.
- ²⁹ Wray and Roberts, "Ethnohistory of Associated Park Use," chapter entitled "It's the Water," n.p.
- ³⁰ Boeger, *Oklahoma Oasis*, 99.
- ³¹ Ibid.
- ³² Quoted in Wray and Roberts, "Ethnohistory of Associated Park Use," chapter entitled "City of Springs," n.p.
- ³³ "Plan of Platt National Park," Drawing NP-PLA-4948 (Office of the Chief Engineer, San Francisco, 1933). The only copies of this drawing the authors have been able to locate are attached to W. E. Branch, "Construction Report on 'Widen Culverts and rebuild bridge abutments, Existing Roads,' Account F. P. 125 8N1R, 1933-35," (typed report with photographs, no date). CNRA Archives.
- ³⁴ Wray and Roberts, "Ethnohistory of Associated Park Use," chapter entitled "Colorado People Only," n.p.
- ³⁵ Writers' Program of the Work Projects Administration in the State of Oklahoma, *Oklahoma: A Guide to the Sooner State* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1941), 261.
- ³⁶ Jerome C. Miller, "Monthly Narrative Report to the Chief Architect, July 21 to August 20, 1937," (unpublished report, 1937). CNRA Archives.
- ³⁷ Boeger, *Oklahoma Oasis*, 78.
- ³⁸ A. R. Greene to the Secretary of the Interior, 18 March 1909, Superintendents' Reports, Volume VII, 189. CNRA Archives.
- ³⁹ (William French) Superintendent to the Secretary of the Interior, 15 December 1909, Superintendents' Reports, Volume VI, 218-219. CNRA Archives.
- ⁴⁰ Boeger, *Oklahoma Oasis*, 89.
- ⁴¹ Boeger, *Oklahoma Oasis*, 121.
- ⁴² A. R. Greene to Frank Lee, Assistant U.S. Attorney, 27 August 1908. Superintendents' Reports, Volume VI, 178. CNRA Archives.
- ⁴³ A. R. Greene to the Secretary of the Interior, 3 August 1908. Superintendents' Reports, Volume VI, 97. CNRA Archives.
- ⁴⁴ A. R. Greene to the Secretary of the Interior, 3 February 1908, Superintendents' Reports, Volume IV, 191. CNRA Archives.
- ⁴⁵ Eugene White, and H. V. Hinckley (signatories), "A Resolution," 15 February 1908, Superintendents' Reports, Volume IV, 243-244. CNRA Archives.
- ⁴⁶ A. R. Greene to the Secretary of the Interior, 7 September 1908, Superintendents' Reports, Volume VI, 217. CNRA Archives.
- ⁴⁷ Boeger, *Oklahoma Oasis*, 90.

- ⁴⁸ Boeger, *Oklahoma Oasis*, 91.
- ⁴⁹ R. A. Sneed, Copy of the 1909 *Map of Platt National Park*, annotated with roads and trails. File 621–Construction Projects, Box 50 National Archives, Fort Worth.
- ⁵⁰ Boeger, *Oklahoma Oasis*, 93.
- ⁵¹ Ibid.
- ⁵² R. A. Sneed to the Secretary of the Interior, 23 January 1916. File 801-02, National Archives, Fort Worth. All description of flood damage comes from this letter.
- ⁵³ Boeger, *Oklahoma Oasis*, 99.
- ⁵⁴ Anonymous, “Platt Park News,” (one of a series of park newsletters, undated, unpaginated). File 000-29, Box 52, National Archives, Fort Worth.
- ⁵⁵ These two loops are seen on the 1931 “Utilities Layout” (Figure 3-8) and Drawing NP-PLA-4948.
- ⁵⁶ A. R. Greene to the Secretary of the Interior, 4 January 1908, Superintendents’ Reports Volume VII, 3. CNRA Archives.
- ⁵⁷ R. A. Sneed to the Secretary of the Interior, 23 January 1916.
- ⁵⁸ Boeger, *Oklahoma Oasis*, 86; R. A. Sneed to the Secretary of the Interior, 23 January 1916. See also map cited in note 49.
- ⁵⁹ Wray and Roberts, “Ethnohistory of Associated Park Use,” chapter entitled “Early Landscape Design” n.p.
- ⁶⁰ R. A. Sneed, Copy of the 1909 *Map of Platt National Park*, annotated with roads and trails, File 621–Construction Projects, Box 50. National Archives, Fort Worth. A portion of this map is seen as Figure 3-11. See note 73.
- ⁶¹ A. R. Greene, Report to the Secretary of the Interior, 5 July 1909, Superintendents’ Reports, Volume VII, 437.
- ⁶² A. R. Greene to the Secretary of the Interior, 8 March 1909, Superintendents’ Reports, Volume VII, 160.
- ⁶³ Churchill and Taff, “Report,” 10 October 1902, n.p.
- ⁶⁴ Anonymous, “Platt National Park: Place Names Recommended for Approval or Abandonment,” (typed table, presumably for submission to the Division of Geographical Names, Department of the Interior, 16 November 1935). Copy in file “Place Names” received from park staff.
- ⁶⁵ Boeger, *Oklahoma Oasis*, 64, 67; Churchill and Taff, “Report,” n.p.
- ⁶⁶ Gould, “Report on Springs,” 13 August 1906, n.p.
- ⁶⁷ Boeger, *Oklahoma Oasis*, 68.
- ⁶⁸ R. A. Sneed to the Secretary of the Interior, 23 January 1916.
- ⁶⁹ Ibid.
- ⁷⁰ Boeger, *Oklahoma Oasis*, 70.
- ⁷¹ W. L. Salvage, “Wire Suspension Foot Bridge at Platt National Park,” *Scientific American*, XCIV, no. 9 (August 29, 1908): 136.
- ⁷² R. A. Sneed to the Secretary of the Interior, 23 January 1916, 3.
- ⁷³ Superintendent (presumably R. A. Sneed, but no signature on copy) to the Secretary of the Interior, 7 May 1915. File 621–Construction Projects, Box 50, National Archives, Fort Worth. An attachment to this letter is a key/inventory to the 1909 *Map of Platt National Park*, annotated (by Sneed) with the locations of all buildings located in the park in 1915. A portion of this map is seen in Figure 3-11. See note 60.
- ⁷⁴ Boeger, *Oklahoma Oasis*, 90.
- ⁷⁵ A. R. Greene to the Secretary of the Interior, 13 April 1908. Superintendents’ Reports, Volume IV, 355. CNRA Archives
- ⁷⁶ Boeger, *Oklahoma Oasis*, 86; R. A. Sneed to the Secretary of the Interior, 23 January 1916, 3.
- ⁷⁷ Boeger, *Oklahoma Oasis*, 86.
- ⁷⁸ Cliff Bromide Spring may have been known as Iron Spring for a short time, based on Figure 3-21. Two other Iron Springs were located in the southern part of the park for a while. See Gould’s “Report on Springs.”
- ⁷⁹ R. A. Sneed to the Secretary of the Interior, 30 March 1917 and D. L. Houston, Secretary of the Department of Agriculture to the Secretary of the Interior, 24 March 1917. Superintendents’ Reports, CNRA Archives. Copy provided by park staff.
- ⁸⁰ R. A. Sneed to the Secretary of the Interior, 23 January 1916, 2.
- ⁸¹ H. V. Hinckley to R.A. Sneed, 13 May 1916, File 650-04. National Archives, Fort Worth. Letter has attached sketches of truss and suspension bridges.
- ⁸² Boeger, *Oklahoma Oasis*, 95.
- ⁸³ Ibid.
- ⁸⁴ Ibid., 103.
- ⁸⁵ Dan R. Hull, Chief Landscape Engineer, to William Branch, Superintendent, 15 April 1926, File 620-50. National Archives, Fort Worth. Attached to the letter are three sketches by Branch done for a 30 March 1926 letter and one drawing dated 16 April 1926 by the Landscape Engineering Division that is obviously a re-drafting of Branch’s ideas.
- ⁸⁶ “Community House—Bromide Springs,” Drawing NP-PLA-5 (Landscape Engineering Division, 16 May 1922). CNRA Archives.
- ⁸⁷ Boeger, *Oklahoma Oasis*, 110.
- ⁸⁸ R. A. Sneed to the Secretary of the Interior, 7 May 1915, File 621: Construction Projects—General, Box 50. National Archives, Fort Worth. A building inventory and map of buildings is attached to this letter. See notes 60 and 73.
- ⁸⁹ Boeger, *Oklahoma Oasis*, 97.
- ⁹⁰ “Platt National Park—Wall & Walks,” Drawing P-311-2 (Landscape Division, approved 4 April 1931). CNRA Archives. See specifications on drawing.
- ⁹¹ Boeger, *Oklahoma Oasis*, 121.
- ⁹² Identification of building by Roland Earsom, Arbuckle Historical Society
- ⁹³ Boeger, *Oklahoma Oasis*, 93
- ⁹⁴ Ibid., 97.
- ⁹⁵ See “Platt National Park,” Drawing NP-PLA-4948.
- ⁹⁶ G. H. Harris, Secretary, Sulphur Chamber of Commerce, to Colonel R. A. Sneed, Superintendent, Platt National Park, 10 March 1917. Superintendents’ Reports, CNRA Archives.
- ⁹⁷ Superintendent, Platt National Park (presumably Sneed), to Superintendent of National Parks, Department of the Interior, 12 March 1917. Superintendents’ Reports, CNRA Archives.
- ⁹⁸ George M. Merrill, Report for September 1934 of George M. Merrill, Landscape Foreman to J. C. Miller, Resident Chief

Landscape Architect,” (CCC progress report, 1 October 1934), 4. CNRA Archives.

⁹⁹ Churchill and Taff, “Report,” 10 October 1902, n.p.

¹⁰⁰ Brown, Perry, “A History of Platt National Park,” 63. This information comes from Appendix D: Structures offered for Sale in 1902 and 1904 when Area Was Made a Reservation, which appears to be a typed version of the handwritten building surveys made in 1902 and 1904.

¹⁰¹ Gould, “Report on Springs,” 13 August 1906, n.p.

¹⁰² Boeger, *Oklahoma Oasis*, 68

¹⁰³ A. R. Greene to the Secretary of the Interior, Superintendent’s Reports, Volume VI, 428. CNRA Archives.

¹⁰⁴ Boeger, *Oklahoma Oasis*, 94.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 93.

¹⁰⁶ S. G. Whittelsey, “Report on Reconstruction of Black Sulphur Causeway, Public Works Project #124,” (CCC Construction Completion Report, 1934), 1.

¹⁰⁷ The first drawing to show a pavilion located at Black Sulphur Springs is drawing NP-PLA-4948, “Platt National Park,” dating to 1933.

¹⁰⁸ Materials confirmed by Ken Ruhnke with a nail and hammer test, 2002.

¹⁰⁹ “Topographical Map—Flower Park Area,” Drawing NP-PLA-5033 (Office of the Chief Engineer, San Francisco, 1936) for the location of the spring. (Presented here as Figure 4-55).

¹¹⁰ McClelland, Linda, *Presenting Nature* (Washington, D.C: US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Cultural Resources, 1993).

¹¹¹ Boeger, *Oklahoma Oasis*, 80.

¹¹² Brown, “A History of Platt National Park,” 32.

¹¹³ Boeger, *Oklahoma Oasis*, 80.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 82. Townsley came to the park in 1904.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 80.

¹¹⁶ A. R. Greene to the Secretary of the Interior, 8 March 1909, Superintendent’s Reports Volume VII, 160-62. CNRA Archives.

¹¹⁷ A. R. Greene, Report to the Secretary of the Interior, 5 July 1909, 6. Superintendent’s Reports, Volume VII, 437. CNRA Archives.

¹¹⁸ Superintendent (W. J. French) to the Secretary of the Interior, 15 December 1909, 11. Superintendent’s Reports. CNRA Archives.

¹¹⁹ Boeger, *Oklahoma Oasis*, 86.

¹²⁰ R. A. Sneed to the Secretary of the Interior,” 7 May 1915. See notes 60 and 73.

¹²¹ Brown, Perry, “A History of Platt National Park,” 40.

¹²² R. A. Sneed to the Secretary of the Interior,” 7 May 1915. See notes 60 and 73.

¹²³ *Ibid.*

¹²⁴ A. R. Greene to the Secretary of the Interior, 10 May 1909, Superintendent’s Reports, Volume VII, 322. CNRA Archives.

¹²⁵ A. R. Greene “Report to the Secretary of the Interior,” 5 July 1909, Superintendent’s Reports, Volume VII, 432. CNRA Archives.

¹²⁶ Anonymous, “Flower Park,” (article in “Platt Park News” a series of park newsletters, undated (circa 1934), unpaginated), File 000-29, Box 52. National Archives, Fort Worth.

¹²⁷ Boeger, *Oklahoma Oasis*, 93.

¹²⁸ Anonymous, “Flower Park,” (article in “Platt Park News”), n.p.

¹²⁹ A. R. Greene to the Secretary of the Interior, 7 November 1908, Superintendent’s Reports, Volume VI, 383. CNRA Archives.

¹³⁰ R. A. Sneed to the Secretary of the Interior, 23 January 1916, 5.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 4.

¹³² Boeger, *Oklahoma Oasis*, 97.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 111.

¹³⁴ “Platt National Park,” Drawing NP-PLA-4948.

¹³⁵ Brown, Perry, “A History of Platt National Park,” Appendix D, 63. This building inventory matches the property names and locations listed on the 1904 “Map of Sulphur Springs Reservation” (Figure 3-2) quite closely. Together, the two documents give an idea of how developed the town was prior to its moving. Excluding the ring of properties located immediately around the Pavilion Springs area and the properties north of Rock and Sulphur Creeks, a comparison of these two documents revealed that at least 156 properties on the map had a minimum of one building, and additional 63 properties had enough improvements, such as a house, barn and outbuildings, and fruit trees to be considered a well-established homestead. These numbers are probably low, however, since the inventory may not have included houses and improvements that were not sold for government reimbursement.

¹³⁶ Brown, Perry, “A History of Platt National Park,” Appendix D, 74.

¹³⁷ William Branch to The Director of the National Park Service, 19 September 1936. Copy in File “Place Names,” CNRA Archives.

¹³⁸ Gould. “Report on Springs,” 13 August 1906, n.p.

¹³⁹ Charles A. Richey and Jerome C. Miller, “Report to Thos. C. Vint, Chief Architect on Emergency Conservation Work in Platt National Park, 1934 Season—Third Enrollment Period,” (CCC progress report, December 1934), 4.

¹⁴⁰ R. A. Sneed to the Secretary of the Interior, 7 May 1915.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.* See also Figure 3-9. Lockwood Lane led to the Lockwood Settlement seen on this figure.

¹⁴² Wray and Roberts, “Ethnohistory of Associated Park Use,” chapter entitled “Early Landscape Design,” n.p. Wray’s citations on agriculture date to 1909 and 1913.

¹⁴³ Boeger, *Oklahoma Oasis*, 94. Drawing NP-PLA-4948 delineates the Mule Pasture in the middle of the present-day Buffalo Pasture, just south of wagon camp.

¹⁴⁴ Sneed to the Secretary of the Interior, 7 May 1915, 1-2. See notes 60 and 73.

¹⁴⁵ Wray and Roberts, “Ethnohistory of Associated Park Use,” chapter entitled “Early Park Management,” n.p. Wray cites

Stephen Mather to Superintendent Ferris, 2 November 1921, Superintendents' Reports, CNRA Archives.

¹⁴⁶ G. H. Harris to R. A. Sneed, 10 March 1917.

¹⁴⁷ Boeger, *Oklahoma Oasis*, 101. According to Boeger, volunteers picked up stones and began leveling rough spots for the course on Memorial Day of 1917.

¹⁴⁸ Merrill, "Report for September 1934," 4.

¹⁴⁹ R. G. Morris to The Director, National Park Service 17 January 1924; Arno Cammerer, Acting Director to Superintendent Morris, 8 January 1924. Both letters are located in File 601-15, National Archives, Fort Worth. In response to a query from Morris about closing the golf course on Sundays to "teach the rising generation to respect the Sabbath," Cammerer writes, "I ... am indeed surprised to learn of the existence of golf links on Platt National Park." But he goes on to say that "[a]s Platt Park is perhaps more of a city park than any of the other parks in the system, lying as it does in the heart of Sulphur, I am not going to issue instructions that golfing be stopped on Sunday. I can find no record that permits the installation of golf links but as long as they are there it is not my purpose for the present to remove them." In a respectful reply, Morris refers him to the "Superintendent's Monthly Report" of February 1923 as the park's notification of construction. It seems that definitive permission may have been given to Sneed in 1917 by mail but not acted upon until 1923 when Ferris gave the go ahead. This idea is based on pencil annotations on a later letter from Cammerer to Ferris in which Cammerer again disavows administrative knowledge of the golf course's construction. Pencil notes in margin underline the disavowal, and indicate disbelief, referring to other letters to and from the park dated 12 March 1917, 28 March 1917, and 4 April 1917 and noting that "It was authorized!" Arno Cammerer, Assistant Director to Dallas Rose, 25 March 1926. Same file in National Archives.

¹⁵⁰ Boeger, *Oklahoma Oasis*, 112.

¹⁵¹ Merrill, "Report for September 1934," 4.

¹⁵² Arno Cammerer, Assistant Director, to Dallas Rose, 25 March 1926, File 601-15, National Archives, Fort Worth.

¹⁵³ Boeger, *Oklahoma Oasis*, 61.

¹⁵⁴ "Plan of Platt National Park," Drawing NP-PLA-4948.

¹⁵⁵ Boeger, *Oklahoma Oasis*, 122.

¹⁵⁶ H. A. Kneinkamp, "Report to the Chief Landscape Architect through the Superintendent of Platt National Park, 17 October 1932" (short, typewritten memorandum), File 620—Buildings, Box 50, National Archives, Fort Worth.

¹⁵⁷ Gould, "Report on Springs," n.p.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁹ Boeger, *Oklahoma Oasis*, 56.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 40.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 69.

¹⁶² Sneed to Secretary of the Interior, 7 May 1915. See notes 60 and 73.

¹⁶³ Boeger, *Oklahoma Oasis*, 80.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 89; Brown, "A History of Platt National Park," 40-41.

¹⁶⁵ Sneed to Secretary of the Interior, 7 May 1915; Boeger, *Oklahoma Oasis*, 91. According to Boeger, the porch was added on in 1914 or 1915.

¹⁶⁶ Boeger, *Oklahoma Oasis*, 20; other sources as well.

¹⁶⁷ Gould, "Report on Springs," n.p.

¹⁶⁸ A. R. Greene to the Secretary of the Interior, 3 December 1907, Superintendent's Reports, Volume IV, 58. CNRA Archives.

¹⁶⁹ A. R. Greene, Superintendent's Reports of 1909, Volume VI, 427. CNRA Archives.

¹⁷⁰ Boeger, *Oklahoma Oasis*, 68.

¹⁷¹ Wray and Roberts, "Ethnohistory of Associated Park Use," chapter entitled "City of Springs," n.p.

¹⁷² Sneed to Secretary of the Interior, 7 May 1915.

¹⁷³ Boeger, *Oklahoma Oasis*, 103.

¹⁷⁴ Boeger, *Oklahoma Oasis*, 98.

¹⁷⁵ Superintendent (Thomas Ferris) to Joe Patterson, Superintendent of Parks, Oklahoma City, 16 June 1921, File 700, Box 58, National Archives, Fort Worth.

¹⁷⁶ Thomas Ferris to Superintendent, Yellowstone National Park, 20 December 1919, File 700, Box 58, National Archives, Fort Worth; Boeger, *Oklahoma Oasis*, 107.

¹⁷⁷ Ferris to Patterson, 16 June 1921. The first died due to bruises received during the trip from Yellowstone, see previous source for note 176. The second elk probably did not thrive in the southern climate zone.

¹⁷⁸ National Park Service, "Bison Management Plan," (Draft document, 23 May 1991), 1.

¹⁷⁹ Sneed to the Secretary of the Interior, 7 May 1915, 1-2. See note 73 regarding attachments.

¹⁸⁰ A. W. Burney, "Final Construction Report on Improvement and Surfacing a Portion of the Buckhorn Road Account No. 505," (mimeographed completion report, 3 March 1931), copy provided by park staff. CNRA Archives.

¹⁸¹ A. R. Greene to the Secretary of the Interior, 23 November 1908, Superintendent's Reports, Volume VI, 418.

¹⁸² Sulphur Chamber of Commerce, "Condensed Information of Sulphur and Platt National Park," (map and brochure, no date). CNRA Archives.

¹⁸³ Sneed to the Secretary of the Interior, 7 May 1915. See notes 60 and 73.

¹⁸⁴ The earliest graphic representation of Cold Spring identified so far is Sneed's circa 1915 annotated 1909 *Map of Platt National Park*. Although the annotations primarily show roads and trails, Cold Springs is also marked.

¹⁸⁵ Boeger, *Oklahoma Oasis*, 141.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 90.

¹⁸⁷ Wray and Roberts, "Ethnohistory of Associated Park Use," chapter entitled "Early Landscape Design," n.p. Wray cites the Superintendent's Report of 1913.

¹⁸⁸ Boeger, *Oklahoma Oasis*, 91.

¹⁸⁹ The early comfort stations and community houses are discussed in very great detail, more than required here, in Files 620-15 and 620-20, Box 50, National Archives, Fort Worth.

¹⁹⁰ Wray and Roberts, “Ethnohistory of Associated Park Use,” chapter entitled “Early Landscape Design,” n.p. Wray cites a report by Goodwin and Hull, 1922, presumably located in the CNRA archives. We were unable to view this document.

¹⁹¹ Boeger, *Oklahoma Oasis*, 140.

¹⁹² Wray and Roberts, “Ethnohistory of Associated Park Use,” Appendix A: Place Names of Water Resources, n.p. She cites A. R. Greene to Secretary of the Interior, 12 October 1908, Superintendents’ Reports, CNRA Archives.

¹⁹³ Boeger, *Oklahoma Oasis*, 91.

¹⁹⁴ Wray and Roberts, “Ethnohistory of Associated Park Use,” chapter entitled “Early Landscape Design,” n.p. Wray cites Albert Winter, Chief Architect to R. B. Marshal, September 1916, Superintendents’ Reports, CNRA Archives.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁹⁶ Charles A. Richey and Walter D. Popham, “Report to the Chief Architect through the Superintendent of Platt National Park: Construction Report: Conservation Work, CCC Camp No. 808, May 16, 1933 – April 1, 1934,” (typed CCC progress report, 12 June 1934), 13. CNRA Archives.

¹⁹⁷ Anonymous, “Platt National Park: Place Names Recommended for Approval or Abandonment,” (typed table, presumably for submission to the Division of Geographical Names, Department of the Interior, 16 November 1935). Copy in file “Place Names” received from park staff.

¹⁹⁸ Wray and Roberts, “Ethnohistory of Associated Park Use,” chapter entitled, “It’s the Water,” n.p.

¹⁹⁹ Churchill and Taff, “Report,” 10 October 1902.

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

²⁰¹ This area was also sometimes called the Head of the Creek; see Wray and Roberts, “Ethnohistory of Associated Park Use,” chapter entitled, “It’s the Water,” n.p.

²⁰² Boeger, *Oklahoma Oasis*, 91.

²⁰³ Sneed to the Secretary of the Interior, 7 May 1915, 1-2. See note 73 regarding attachments.

²⁰⁴ Boeger, *Oklahoma Oasis*, 87, 101, 104; Superintendent (W. J. French) to the Secretary of the Interior, 15 April 1912, Superintendent Press Book #11 (5 February to 25 October 1912), 227.

²⁰⁵ “Loop Road System,” Drawing NP-PLA-4969 (1934) shows three springs; “Topographical Map—Buffalo Springs Area,” NP-PLA-4999 (January 1939) shows 2 springs; most other maps show 1 spring.

²⁰⁶ Tom Ferris, Superintendent, Letter to the Director, National Park Service, 29 December 1921. National Archives, Fort Worth.

²⁰⁷ Daniel Hull, Landscape Engineer, Letter to Thomas Ferris, Superintendent, 13 January 1922. National Archives, Fort Worth.

²⁰⁸ Daniel Hull, Landscape Engineer, Letter to Thomas Ferris, Superintendent, 26 January 1922. National Archives, Fort Worth.

²⁰⁹ Wray, Jacilee and Alexa Roberts, “In Praise of Platt: Or, What is a ‘Real’ National Park?,” *George Wright Forum*, 15, no. 1(1998): 76.