

ARCHIVES RECORD

film
RG532

U.S. National Park Service. Scott's Bluff National Monument

Records, Etc.: 1932-1976
Approx. No. of Items: 10,000 items on 7 reels of microfilm
Cu. Ft.: 3.5 + film

HISTORICAL NOTE

Scott's Bluff National Monument was officially designated on December 12, 1919 by Proclamation of President Woodrow Wilson. Will Maupin of Gering, Nebraska was appointed the first Custodian. During his service and that of Custodian Albert N. Mathers, only limited development occurred at the Monument. It was not until 1933 that the availability of public works funds and Civil Works Administration labor made possible the beginning of construction on a summit road, parking areas, and research on historical and archeological sites. During the tenure of Custodian Harold Cook, 1934-35, additional construction and improvements were undertaken and historical research continued. Under Acting Custodian Charles Randels, the first portion of the Oregon Trail Museum was completed and work continued on the summit road which was open to traffic in 1937.

Merrill J. Mattes arrived in October, 1935 to assume the position of Junior Historian, and he later served as Custodian, 1938-1946. Extensive historical research and interpretation relating to Scott's Bluff and Ft. Laramie National Monuments was carried out by Mattes during these years. By 1940, the initial phase of development of Scott's Bluff National Monument had been completed.

A more detailed sketch of the history of Scott's Bluff National Monument may be found in History of Scotts' Bluff National Monument, by Earl Harris, Gering, Nebraska (1962).

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This record group consists of records of the National Park Service, Scott's Bluff National Monument, Gering, Nebraska, arranged in four series on 7 reels of microfilm: (1) Custodian's Correspondence, 1932-1936; (2) Special Subjects Correspondence, 1934-1967; (3) Reports and Research Data, 1933-1967; and (4) News Clippings and printed matter, 1932-1976.

These records relate to the development and administration of the Scott's Bluff National Monument, Gering, Nebraska, 1932-1976, under the jurisdiction of the National Park Service, U.S. Dept. of the Interior.

Series one, Custodian's Correspondence, documents the development of the National Monument from 1932-1936. Included is material relating to construction projects, such as the Summit road and the Oregon Trail Museum; historical research on Scott's Bluff and the Oregon Trail; and general administrative activities. The bulk of the correspondence is that of Harold Cook who served as Custodian, 1934-1935. Other correspondents within this series include James H. Cook, Paul Henderson, Albert N. Mathers, Merrill J. Mattes, Luther H. North, and Charles Randels. The original correspondence, with the exception of a few letters, has been retained by the State Archives. Selected items were returned to Scott's Bluff National Monument.

Series Two, Special Subjects Correspondence, 1934-1967, deals with specific projects, events, or research, relating to the development and administration of the National Monument. Much of the material within this series reflects the work of Merrill J. Mattes, Historian, and later Custodian, at Scott's Bluff, 1935-1946. In this capacity, Mattes carried out research and produced publications dealing with Hiram Scott, fur traders, military posts, and Oregon Trail sites in Nebraska and Wyoming. With the exception of the Summit Road Construction file, 1934-39, all of the original records in series two have been retained by the State Archives. The Summit Road file has been returned to Scott's Bluff National Monument.

Series Three, Reports and Research Data, 1933-1967, includes the Custodian's (later Superintendent's) monthly reports from 1935-1957. The bulk of these reports were written by Merrill J. Mattes and Robert R. Budlong. These reports provide a detailed record of events and activities at the Monument, including weather data, construction and maintenance activities, visitation, public relations, Museum administration, and special projects or programs. Several of the reports or manuscripts resulting from Merrill Mattes' research also can be found within this series. A significant portion of the original records in Series Three, including the Custodian's monthly reports, were returned to Scott's Bluff National Monument after microfilming, and are so noted on the description. The remainder of the materials were retained by the State Archives.

Series Four, Newspaper Clippings and Printed Matter, consists of clippings and magazine articles having some relationship to the Monument, the Oregon Trail, Western Nebraska History, or the National Park Service. Most of these clippings were arranged in chronological order and are cited as to source. Some loose clippings and/or articles may be found within this series which are not clearly identified. All the clippings and printed matter were returned to Scott's Bluff National Monument after micro-filming.

Some chronological re-arrangement within files was done prior to micro-filming and certain files were placed within series according to their relationship to other items. However, the arrangement generally reflects the provenance of the records as they were maintained and used at Scott's Bluff National Monument. In many instances, related material on a particular subject may be found within each of the four series.

These records were transferred from Scott's Bluff National Monument to the Nebraska State Historical Society in April, 1980, having been declared surplus to the needs of the National Park Service. All of the files transferred have been microfilmed and microfilm copies are available at Scott's Bluff National Monument and at the Society. Researchers are requested to use the microfilm copy unless permission to use the originals has been granted by the State Archivist. Original records retained by the Nebraska State Historical Society are contained in 6 manuscript boxes and shelved in the stacks.

DESCRIPTION

film
SERIES ONE CUSTODIAN'S CORRESPONDENCE, 1932-1936 (originals retained
by the State Archives, except for selected letters)

Reel 1

Folder 1 Oct. 1932-Dec. 1933
2 Jan. 1934
3 Feb. 1934
4 March-April 1934
5 May-Aug. 1934
6 Sept.-Oct. 23, 1934

Reel 2

F. 6, cont. Oct. 23, 1934-Oct. 31, 1934
7 Nov.-Dec. 1934
8 Jan.-Feb. 1935
9 March-April 1935
10 May-June 1935
11 July-Nov. 18, 1935

Reel 3

F. 11, cont. Nov. 19, 1935-Jan. 1936

film
SERIES TWO SPECIAL SUBJECTS CORRESPONDENCE, 1934-1967 (Originals
retained by the State Archives except as noted)

Reel 3, cont.

Folder 1 Summit Road Construction, 1934-1939 (Originals returned
to SBNM)
2 Historian's correspondence, Jan.-March 1936
3 Acting Regional Historian's Correspondence, 1938-1949
4 CWA Research, 1934-1942
5 "History" Correspondence, 1938-1950
6 Museum reports correspondence, 1936-1951
7 Hiram Scott Research, 1941-1945
8 "Fur Traders and Trappers of the Old West", research
correspondence, Merrill J. Mattes, 1944
9 Downey's Midwest Studio, 1937-1948
10 State Parks, Wildcat Hills, 1937-1953
11 Geology at SBNM, 1935-1954
12 CCC guides, SBNM, 1936
13 Oregon Trail Sites, 1935-1950
14 Oregon Trail Days, Gering, NE, 1937-1941
15 "On to Oregon Cavalcade", 1949
16 Nebraska State Historical Society, 1935-1956

Reel 4

17 History and Public Relations, 1935-1953

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sheet 5

film
SERIES FOUR NEWS CLIPPINGS AND PRINTED MATTER, 1932-1976 (Originals
returned to SBNM)

Reel 6 News clippings, 1933-1976
D1920

Reel 7 News clippings; misc. articles, 1932-1972
D1920

DESCRIPTION OF SCOTT'S BLUFF NATIONAL MONUMENT
RECORDS RETAINED BY THE STATE ARCHIVES (All of
this material has been microfilmed)

SERIES ONE CUSTODIAN'S CORRESPONDENCE, 1932-1936 (originals
retained by the State Archives, except for selected
letters)

Box 1

Folder 1 Oct. 1932-Dec. 1933
2 Jan. 1934
3 Feb. 1934
4 Mar.-April 1934
5 May-Aug. 1934

Box 2

6 Sept.-Oct. 1934
7 Nov.-Dec. 1934
8 Jan.-Feb. 1935
9 Mar.-April 1935

Box 3

10 May-June 1935
11 July, 1935-Jan., 1936

SERIES TWO SPECIAL SUBJECTS CORRESPONDENCE, 1934-1967

Box 3, cont.

Folder 2 Historian's correspondence, Jan.-Mar., 1936
3 Acting Regional Historian's Correspondence, 1938-1949

Box 4

4 CWA Research, 1934-1942
5 "History" Correspondence, 1938-1950
6 Museum reports correspondence, 1936-1951
7 Hiram Scott Research, 1941-1945
8 "Fur Traders and Trappers of the Old West", research
correspondence, Merrill J. Mattes, 1944
9 Downey's Midwest Studio, 1937-1954
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11 Geology at SBNM, 1935-1954
12 CCC guides, SBNM, 1936
13 Oregon Trail Sites, 1935-1950
14 Oregon Trail Days, Gering, NE, 1937-1941

SERIES TWO, cont.

Box 5

- Folder 15 "On to Oregon Cavalcade", 1949
- 16 Nebraska State Historical Society, 1935-1956
- 17 History and Public relations, 1935-1953
- 18 Books and Publications, 1955-1967
- 19 Pony Express Centennial, 1958-1963

SERIES THREE REPORTS AND RESEARCH DATA, 1933-1967

Box 6

- Folder 11 "Historian's Observations on Approved and Proposed Improvement Projects, SBNM, Jan. 30, 1937" by Merrill J. Mattes
- 17 "Ash Hollow, History and Significance", by Paul Henderson, 1938
- 18 Radio Senario - "Rendezvous in Jackson Hole" by Merrill J. Mattes, July, 1944
- 19 "Guide to Historical Trails, Sites, and Recreation Areas in the North Platte Valley, Ash Hollow to Ft. Laramie" January, 1962
- 20 Manuscript, "Hiram Scott, Fur Trader", by Merrill J. Mattes