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 Scott's 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 microfilming.

Some chronological re-arrangement within files was done prior to microfilming 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

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

7  Nov.-Dec. 1934
8  Jan.-Feb. 1935
9  March-April 1935
10  May-June 1935
11  July-Nov. 18, 1935

Reel 3


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
film
RG532

film
SERIES TWO, cont.

Reel 4, cont.

19 Pony Express Centennial, 1958-1963

film
SERIES THREE
REPORTS AND RESEARCH DATA, 1933-1967 (Originals returned to SBNM except as noted)

Reel 4, cont.

Folder 1 Custodian's monthly report, 1935-1939
2 Custodian's monthly report, 1940-1942
3 Custodian's monthly report, 1943-1952
4 Superintendent's monthly report, 1953-May 6, 1957

Reel 5

5 Superintendent's monthly report, 1962-1967
6 Bureau of Public Roads, District 5, SBNM, Monthly Report April, 1933
7 Bureau of Public Roads, District 5, SBNM, CWA Project F68, Final Report, April 1934
8 CCC Inspector's Reports, SBNM, 1935-1938
9 Historical and Archeological Survey, SBNM and Contiguous Territory, CWA Project F68, April 1934
10 Historian's Reports, 1935-1938
11 "Historian's Observations on Approved and Proposed Improvement Projects, SBNM, Jan. 30, 1937", by Merrill J. Mattes (Retained by the State Archives)
12 1st Annual Report, Museum Activities, SBNM, June, 1937
13 2nd Annual Report, Museum Activities, SBNM, July, 1938
14 Report, Dedication tour and convention, Oregon Trail Memorial Association, August 15-20, 1940
15 Report, William H. Jackson and Oregon Trail Centennial Activities, August, 1943
16 Report to Regional Landscape Architect, Region Two, Re: SBNM, Nov., 1949
17 "Ash Hollow, History and Significance", by Paul Henderson, 1938 (original retained by the State Archives)
18 Radio Scenario - "Rendezvous in Jackson Hole", by Merrill J. Mattes, July, 1944 (original retained by the State Archives)
19 "Guide to Historical Trails, Sites, and Recreation Areas in the North Platte Valley, Ash Hollow to Ft. Laramie", January, 1962 (original retained by the State Archives)
20 Manuscript, "Hiram Scott, Fur Trader", by Merrill J. Mattes (Original retained by the State Archives)
film
RG532

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

Reel 6
News clippings, 1933-1976

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


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 Scenario - "Rendezvous in Jackson Hole" by Merrill J. Mattes, July, 1944


20 Manuscript, "Hiram Scott, Fur Trader", by Merrill J. Mattes