

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED JUN 10 1975  
DATE ENTERED AUG 6 1975

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

### 1 NAME

HISTORIC

Ash Hollow Historic District

AND/OR COMMON

### 2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Three miles southwest of Lewellen along US 26

CITY, TOWN

Lewellen

NOT FOR PUBLICATION  
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

Nebraska

VICINITY OF

CODE

031

COUNTY

Garden

CODE

069

### 3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC ACQUISITION	<input type="checkbox"/> ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

### 4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Multiple ownership

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

VICINITY OF

STATE

### 5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

County Clerk

STREET & NUMBER

Garden County Courthouse

CITY, TOWN

Oshkosh

STATE

Nebraska

### 6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Historic Preservation in Nebraska

DATE

1971

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Nebraska State Historical Society

CITY, TOWN

1500 R Street

Lincoln

STATE

Nebraska

# 7 DESCRIPTION

## CONDITION

EXCELLENT

GOOD

FAIR

DETERIORATED

RUINS

UNEXPOSED

## CHECK ONE

UNALTERED

ALTERED

## CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE

MOVED DATE \_\_\_\_\_

### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Ash Hollow Historic District is located three miles southeast of Lewellen, Garden County, Nebraska. Ash Hollow District measures roughly four miles in length, 1,000 feet wide between its gateway cliffs at the North Platte River up to 2,000 feet rim to rim with an average depth of about 250 feet (Mattes 1969: 281).

Ash Hollow was one of the more notable landmarks along the Oregon-California Overland Trail. Here was located fresh water flowing from springs, a fairly constant source of firewood (it must be remembered that this is quite remarkable for the treeless plains), and grasses for grazing for pioneer livestock.

The spectacular entrance to Ash Hollow was a steep perpendicular hill referred to as "Windlass Hill", although there are no contemporary accounts to verify the Windlass system. Along the face of the rough terrain of Windlass Hill are the deep trough-like remains of the transcontinental migration. These ruts are some of the most spectacular evidence of heavy wagon traffic along the trail's 2,000 mile length. (Mattes 1969: 283).

Little alterations have been attempted at Ash Hollow except the district is now transversed by U.S. Highway 26, which follows very closely the route used by the Oregon Trail.

The terrain is extremely rough due to the depth of the draws and canyons converging on the Platte. In an area without notable landmarks, Ash Hollow with its high white cliffs, wild flowers, fresh water springs, trees, and shrubs was surely an oasis on the long trek across the plains.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		Western settlement trails

SPECIFIC DATES	1847-1860	BUILDER/ARCHITECT
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**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

Ash Hollow Historic District includes some very noteworthy sites of history. One can safely state that man has occupied the area of Ash Hollow for many thousands of years. Perhaps the most notable is Ash Hollow Cave, a registered National Historic Landmark investigated by the Nebraska State Historical Society in 1939.

In 1855 General Harney's troops attacked Little Thunder's Ogallala's and Brules near here. This conflict has been referred to as the Battle of Ash Hollow or Blue Water. After the Indians were defeated, a small sod fortification was constructed at the mouth of Ash Hollow. This fortification was roughly 20 x 40 feet enclosed by a sod wall of undetermined dimensions. It was designated "Fort Grattan". This fortification was used primarily as a supply depot and a place for the wounded. Fort Grattan also served as a government mail station to replace the one which had been destroyed the year before. It was apparently abandoned by the spring of 1856, and a new mail station was built near the mouth of the canyon.

During the period of 1850-53 the area of Ash Hollow was the site of a fur trading post. The site of this fur trading post has been excavated by an archeologist for the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission. This structure was apparently of log construction containing a stone chimney and artifacts which can be attributed to the period 1840-1860, which generally confirm the historic dates of 1850-53. The archeological investigation did not reveal the size or the exact placement of structural remains, and the written history is very vague and sketchy. This site, like so many others, was partly destroyed by relic collectors and vandals, making interpretation difficult.

Near the mouth of Ash Hollow is located the graves of numerous unknown pioneers, a few of which are marked. Perhaps the most notable is that of Rachel Pattison, who died June 19, 1845. Rachel's grave was the beginning of the Ash Hollow Cemetery.

Ash Hollow Historic District is located on the south side of the North Platte River three miles southeast of Lewellen, Garden County, Nebraska.

Included within the limits of this Historic District are: (1) Ash Hollow Cave (25 GD 2), National Historic Landmark; (2) "Windlass Hill"; (3) the location of Fort Grattan; (4) the location of an 1850's fur trading post; (5) Ash Hollow Cemetery; plus numerous extant trail ruts directly or indirectly associated with the Oregon-California Trail.



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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER

PAGE

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LIST OF LANDOWNERS

Mr. Fred Grapes  
Big Springs, NE 69122

Mr. Roland Orr  
Lewellen, NE 69147

Mr. Melvin Keckley  
Chappell, NE 69129

Mr. Vern Callsen  
Mr. Irvin Callsen  
RR #1  
Big Springs, NE 69122

Mr. Oren Clary  
Lewellen, NE 69147

Nebraska Game and Parks Commission  
Lincoln, Nebraska

Ash Hollow State Park



NORTH PLATE RIVER

⑤

X③

X①

MODERN BLACKTOP ROAD

PROBABLE TRAIN REMAINS

X④

EXTANT TRAIL REMAINS

EXTANT TRAIL REMAINS

### ASH HOLLOW Historic District

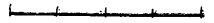
- 1. ASH HOLLOW CAVE (25GDZ)  
HISTORIC LANDMARK
- 2. "WINDLASS HILL"
- 3. FORT GRATTAN
- 4. 1850-53 FUR TRADE POST
- 5. ASH HOLLOW CEMETERY

U.S. HIGHWAY 26

EXTANT TRAIL REMAINS

--- OREGON TRAIL REMAINS

SCALE ABOUT 2000 FT.



HISTORIC DISTRICT LIMITS

② X

EXTANT TRAIL REMAINS

EXTANT TRAIL REMAINS