

*already on Reg*

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

FOR FEDERAL PROPERTIES

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	JUN 10 1976
DATE ENTERED	<i>approved 1/3/78</i>

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

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC  
Scotts Bluff National Monument  
AND/OR COMMON

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER  
Three miles west of Gering on Nebraska 92  NOT FOR PUBLICATION  
CITY, TOWN  
Gering  VICINITY OF Third  
STATE CODE COUNTY CODE  
Nebraska 31 Scotts Bluff 157

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

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

**4 AGENCY**

REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS: *(if applicable)*  
Midwest Regional Office, National Park Service  
STREET & NUMBER  
1709 Jackson Street  
CITY, TOWN STATE  
Omaha Nebraska

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Midwest Regional Office, National Park Service  
STREET & NUMBER  
1709 Jackson Street  
CITY, TOWN STATE  
Omaha Nebraska

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE  
National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings  
DATE  
1957-61  FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL  
DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation, National Park  
CITY, TOWN STATE  
Washington D.C. Service

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED      DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

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

Scotts Bluff National Monument is located in Scotts Bluff County, Nebraska, about 20 miles east of the Wyoming state line, in what is commonly called the "Panhandle of Nebraska." The three nearest towns are: Gering, three miles east of the headquarters area; the city of Scottsbluff, five miles northeast from the Monument; and Mitchell, Nebraska, some 10 miles to the northwest. State Highway 92 intersects the Monument and connects with U.S. 26, 20 miles to the east; with State Highway 29 in Gering; and again at an intersection some three miles north of headquarters.

The North Platte River flows in a southeasterly direction through western Nebraska to a junction with the South Platte at North Platte, Nebraska, (175 miles east of the Monument). The Monument borders this river on the south bank and encompasses the famous bluff, which bears the name of one of the more unfortunate "mountain men," Hiram Scott.

Along the south bank of the North Platte River for 100 miles in western Nebraska, is a long ridge of bluffs. These bluffs, with some lesser hills to the north, form the North Platte Valley. Scotts Bluff, a massive promontory rising 800 feet above the valley floor, stands apart from these bluffs to form one of the dominant features of this valley. To the north of Scotts Bluff, extending to the North Platte River is a rugged area of badlands. South of Scotts Bluff, at the southern edge of the Monument is South Bluff. Between Scotts Bluff and South Bluff is Mitchell Pass through which the famous Oregon Trail ran, three-and-a-half miles of which can be seen in the form of wagon ruts. Flanking Mitchell Pass to the north is Eagle Rock and to the south is Sentinel Rock. Numerous rock inscriptions remain from the pioneer emigrants. To the south of Sentinel Rock is Coyote Pass. Other prominent geologic features of South Bluff include Crown Rock and Dome Rock to its east. Water resources within the Monument include several intermittent streams, Scotts Spring, and the Mitchell and Gering Canal.

Prehistoric structures, all of which are unexposed, include four campsites of various Indian tribes, located near the bluff-top parking lot, at the base of the north side of Scotts Bluff, on the east side of Scotts Bluff, and on the south side of South Bluff.

Non-historic structures within the Monument include the following:

- Scottsbluff Country Club and road (1920's)
- Visitor Center and Museum (1935, 1938, 1948)
- Residence #1 (1938, 1949)
- Residence #2 (1958)
- Utility Building (1936, 1958)
- Comfort Station (1938)
- Pump Vault (1936)
- Pump House (1938)
- Campfire Circle (1958)
- Flagpole
- State Highway 92 (1934-1938)
- Summit Road, Three Tunnels, and parking area (1934-1939)

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input 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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Named for Hiram Scott, a fur trapper who died in the vicinity about 1828, Scotts Bluff is an ancient landmark and was noted by the earliest tribes whose records have been preserved. To the Indians of the Plains, Scotts Bluff was Me-a-pa-te, or "the-hill-that-is-hard-to-go-around." It became a principal landmark of the great overland migrations of the nineteenth century.

The bluff was once part of the ancient High Plains. Erosion over long periods has cut down the surrounding valleys to their present level, leaving Scotts Bluff and the adjoining hills as remnants of the unbroken plains which now lie farther to the west.

The North Platte Valley, of which Scotts Bluff is the dominant natural feature, has been a human migration corridor for centuries. Some stone artifacts found here indicate that man has been here for more than 10,000 years. When white men first arrived, they found that this area was a favorite hunting ground of Sioux, Cheyenne, and Arapaho Indians, for here vast herds of buffalo came to water.

The first white men to see Scotts Bluff were Robert Stuart and his companions, who in 1812-13 passed by carrying dispatches to John Jacob Astor from his new fur post in Oregon. In the years that followed, trappers and traders saw it when they brought their beaver pelts down the Platte River to settlements farther east; and explorers and missionaries passed the bluff on their way from advance posts of civilization into the western wilderness.

In 1843 the vanguard of a great pioneer army passed Scotts Bluff in the first large migration to Oregon. Four years later Brigham Young led the first group of his followers past the bluff on the north side of the Platte, a route later famous as the Mormon Trail. The two years following the discovery of gold in California in 1848 saw more than 150,000 men, women, and children traveling through the area.

In 1860-61 Pony Express riders galloped through Mitchell Pass, which skirts the southern base of the bluff. They were followed shortly by the first transcontinental telegraph. The Overland Mail, Pony Express, Pacific Telegraph, and Overland Stage built stations near Scotts Bluff. In 1864 Fort Mitchell was established two-and-a-half miles to the northwest to protect stagecoaches and wagon trains on the Oregon Trail. The following year the North Platte Valley was considered as a possible route for the Union Pacific, then building westward to link up with the Central Pacific to form the first transcontinental railroad, but a line through Cheyenne was chosen instead. The completion of the railroad in 1869 marked the decline of the Oregon Trail, although it continued in use locally for many years.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Brand, Donald D., The History of Scotts Bluff, Nebraska, United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Berkeley, California, 1934
- Green, Thomas L., "Scottsbluff and the North Platte Valley," 1949
- Harris, Earl R., "History of Scotts Bluff National Monument," Oregon Trail Museum Association, Gering, Nebraska, 1962
- Mattes, Merrill J., "Scotts Bluff National Monument," Washington, D.C., 1958

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 2987.97

UTM REFERENCES

<u>606-970</u>					
A	1,3	6071000	4,6134	15,0,0	
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		
B	1,3	6092000	4,633	930	
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		
C	1,3	6092000	4,633	400	
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		
D	1,3	6089000	4,629	400	
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

E	1,3	6051600	4,630	1,0,0	
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		
F	1,3	6055000	4,631	169	
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		
G	1,3	6056000	4,633	440	
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

David Arbogast, Historical Architect

ORGANIZATION

National Park Service

DATE

March 29, 1976

STREET & NUMBER

1709 Jackson Street

TELEPHONE

402-221-3423

CITY OR TOWN

Omaha

STATE

Nebraska

# 12 CERTIFICATION OF NOMINATION

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

YES \_\_\_ NO \_\_\_ NONE \_\_\_

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

In compliance with Executive Order 11593, I hereby nominate this property to the National Register, certifying that the State Historic Preservation Officer has been allowed 90 days in which to present the nomination to the State Review Board and to evaluate its significance. The evaluated level of significance is  National \_\_\_ State \_\_\_ Local.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE Deputy Assistant Secretary

DATE JUN 10 1976

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DIRECTOR OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST:

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DATE

10/3/78

Sept 28, 1978

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 6

PAGE 1

TITLE: List of Classified Structures

DATE: August 1, 1975

FEDERAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: Midwest Regional Office, National Park Service

CITY: Omaha

STATE: Nebraska

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7

PAGE 2

Numerous trails, including "Scout Trail" and "Scotts Spring Trail" which features a tunnel cut through Saddle Rock

Union Pacific Railroad tracks to the south of the North Platte River

Power transmission lines across the southeast corner of the Monument

Numerous markers and signs including those commemorating the following:

Hiram Scott

Mitchell Pass

Oregon Trail

Observation Point

Jackson Camp

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8

PAGE 2

In the late 1870's and early 1880's, Scotts Bluff was the geographical center of the open-range cattle industry, the last great romantic episode of the frontier. With the arrival of the first homesteaders in the North Platte Valley in 1885, the local frontier disappeared and Scotts Bluff became a symbol of the Nation's past.

It was the development of Scotts Bluff as a symbol of the Nation's past that local and state interests devoted themselves following the turn of the century. Following a period of strong activity, Scotts Bluff was proclaimed a National Monument on December 12, 1919. The following decade saw little development, save for foot trails and picnic areas, despite widespread interest. With the advent of the depression the Monument underwent a period of active development under the aegis of such employment programs as the C.W.A., W.P.A., and C.C.C. Constructed during this period were the Summit Road with its three tunnels and parking lot, State Highway 92, the Museum (later called the Visitors Center) in which is housed a notable collection of paintings and memorabilia of the famed Western artist, William Henry Jackson, landscape preservation work, a temporary camp (Civilian Conservation Corps Camp 762) near the Scottsbluff Country Club which was later removed and had housed up to 200 men, picnic grounds west and south of Mitchell Pass, a water supply system, a residence, and a utility building. By 1939 the extreme popularity of the picnic grounds led to a degenerate state and to their permanent closing, despite strong local protest.

During the decade encompassing the World War II and decade following it, some minor changes were made to the Monument, including additions to the Museum and the residence in 1948. Numerous major rock slides occurred along the Summit Road which required lengthy clearance work. In 1949 use of the Gering Golf Course and a rifle range, both within the boundaries, was discontinued.

During the early 1960's a number of construction projects were undertaken as part of the "Mission 66" program of the National Park Service. Besides considerable upgrading of facilities, roads, and trails, a new residence, an addition to the utility building, and an amphitheater were constructed. At this time 47.63 acres were added to the Monument.

Thus, a consistent and thorough program has been undertaken for the preservation of this unique historic and geologic area.

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ITEM NUMBER 10

PAGE 1

Beginning at a point on Nebraska State Highway 92 about 1100 feet southeast of its intersection with a county road in Section 32 of Township 22 of Scotts Bluff County, Nebraska, the boundary of Scotts Bluff National Monument meanders northward about 1200 feet to its intersection with the north border of Section 32 where it then proceeds due north about 1300 feet to a point (G) where it turns due east about 1500 feet to a point slightly west of an intermittent stream which it follows northward about 1500 feet to the stream's intersection with the Mitchell and Gering Canal. The boundary then follows the Canal eastward about 2700 feet to a point ~~(H)~~ where it turns due north-northeast about 1700 feet to its intersection with the North Platte River <sup>(A)</sup> which it follows eastward about 7700 feet to a point (B) where it turns due south about 1800 feet to a point (C) where it turns westward following the Gering Canal about 1500 feet to a point where it turns southward following an intermittent stream about 5700 feet to the point where the southern of two power transmission lines running west from Gering turns south-southwest. At this point the boundary proceeds due south about 1400 feet where it crosses an intermittent stream and follows along its south side about 1800 feet southwestward to a point where it turns and proceeds due south about 2800 feet to a point where it turns due east about 1300 feet to a point where it turns due south about 1600 feet to its intersection (point D) ~~of~~ with Gering lateral stream which it then follows west-northwestward about 2300 feet to a point where the boundary turns due north about 600 feet to a point where it turns due west about 3100 feet to a point where it turns due north about 700 feet to a point where it turns northwest about 1000 feet to a point where it turns due west about 4700 feet to a point (E) where it turns north-northwest about 3400 feet to its intersection ~~of~~ Scotts Bluff Lateral Stream (point F) which it follows about 1800 feet to the intersection of the stream and the south border of Township 22. At this point the boundary turns due east about 900 feet to a point where it turns due north about 200 feet to a dirt road which it follows north-northwestward about 3300 feet to its intersection with State Highway 92, which it then follows about 1800 feet northwest to the point of beginning.



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Scotts Bluff National Monument  
3 miles west of Gering on Nebraska 92  
Gering, Scotts Bluff County, Nebraska

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RECEIVED JUL 28 1980

DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER

PAGE

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Archeological materials excavated within the boundaries of Scotts Bluff National Monument and historic objects from within the park are historically associated with its primary theme, the Oregon Trail. The Jackson Collection includes water colors, sketches, photographs, and personal memorabilia of Civilian William Henry Jackson, famous frontier photographer and artist.