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7.	DESCRIPTION		
		(Check O	ne)
	CONDITION	🔀 Excellent 🗌 Good 🔲 Fair 🗌 Deterio	rated 🔲 Ruins 🔲 Unexposed
	CONDITION	(Check One)	(Check One)
		Altered 🔀 Unaltered	Moved 🛛 Original Site

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

O'Fallons Bluff is a 20 mile section of hills located on the south bank of the south Platte River in Lincoln County, Nebraska. Near Sutherland the bluffs come very close to the river bank and the early travelers were forced to either travel very close to the bluffs or transverse the bluffs and travel overland (Mattes 1969:264 & Lass 1972:38-39).

Much of this rugged country has never been farmed and remains of the Oregon-California Trail are still quite visible.

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During construction of Interstate 80 through Nebraska, the highway passed the area of O'Fallons Bluff. A rest area one mile south and seven miles east of Sutherland was constructed. At this location are some of the most clearly defined and preserved segments of the Oregon-California Trail. As hundreds of thousands of people travel I-80 East they have an opportunity to view evidence of the great western migration of the American people in the 1840's-1860's.



PERIOD (Check One or More as	Appropriate)		
Pre-Columbian	16th Century	📋 18th Century	20th Century
15th Century	17th Century	X 19th Century	
SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicab	le and Known) 1846-67	1	· · · · · · · · ·
AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Ch	eck One or More as Approp	iate)	
Abor iginal	Education	Political	🔲 Urban Planning
Prehistoric	Engineering	Religion/Phi-	Other (Specify)
Historic	Industry	losophy	
Agriculture	Invention	Science	
Architecture	Landscape	Sculpture	
Art	Architecture	Social/Human-	
X Commerce	Literature	itarian	
X Communications	Military	Theater	
Conservation	Music	X Transportation	

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The early history of O'Fallons Bluff is not very clear even the origin of the name is different depending on who tells the story. Some travelers state that there was a trader who sold whisky to the Indians at this location. Others say Benjamin O'Fallon was murdered here by Indians. Frank Young stated that plainsmen dreaded the place as much as sailors dread Cape Hatteras because of the possibility of Indian attack (Mattes 1969:264).

The Overland Stage Station at O'Fallons Bluff was known as Half-way House, O'Fallons Bluff Station or Elk Horn Station. But whichever name is used the same place is meant.

The following are excerpts from travelers diaries during the 1850's and 1860's.

Wednesday, May 11 /camped east of Plum Creek7. . .A man was carried down in a wagon today - one John Snyder, of Massillon, Ohio - mortally wounded, he having been shot near O'Fallon's Bluffs. The circumstances under which he received his wound are differently related; one report is that he was shot for robbing, whilst another is that he was shot and robbed (Hafen 1942:127).

Wednesday May 18. . .Two miles further /west of Cottonwood Springs/ is Ash creek - a dry run fringed with ash and boxelder. . .where there is a trading house, a stage station, a dwelling and a car-pender shop. These buildings are all constructed of cedar logs, procured from the ravines. . . We noticed a number of fine hewed logs, the destination of which we learn is O'Fallon's Bluff (Hafen 1942:132-33).

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

Degrees Minutes Seconds MW     Degrees Minutes Seconds 41° 08' H     Degrees Minutes Seconds 0     Degrees Minutes Seconds 0       NW     41° 08' H     10° 05 · 52 · 10° 05 · 2     Degrees Minutes Seconds 0     Degrees Minutes Seconds 0       SE     41° 08' H     10° 05 · 52 · 10° 05 · 2     20       PPPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 20 ACRES SW     20 ACRES       IST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY EXPERIMENTS       FATE:     CODE       CODE     COUNTY:       FATE:     CODE       FORM PREPARED BY       AME AND TITLE:       RONAID L. Kivett, Archeologist       RGANIZATION       Nebraska State Historical Society       December 5, 1973       CODE       Isoo R Street       TY OR TOWN:       Lincoln	ga in po	son, Gayle F. Itions in Nebrasl Nebraska. <u>Nebr</u> Nogy No. 5, 1973	ka, 190 <u>raska S</u> 3. -	55 to State	1968. <u>Histo</u>	ori	In Arc <u>cal Soc</u>	heological iety Public	Salva ation	ge and S <u>s in An</u> t	Survey <u>thro</u> -
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Form 10-300a- (July 269)	UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE	STATE Nebraska	
	TIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES	Lincoln	
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fcance (cont.)

Friday, May 20. Left camp at six o'clock; one mile brought us to a point where O'Fallon's Bluffs strike the South Platte where there is considerable brushwood and timber (the latter being on Shanghai Island), and the scenery is rough, rugged but romantic. The road now runs over the bluffs for three miles, to the stage station, where there is a trading post and some Indian tents (Hafen 1942:137).

Road passes O'Fallon's Bluffs. "Half-way House", a store and ranch, distant 120 miles from Fort Kearny, 400 from St. Joseph, 40 from Lower Crossing, and 68 from the Upper Crossing of the South fork (Platte River). The station is called Alkali Lake (Hafen 1942:302).

No game of any consequence will be found until after leaving Fort Kearny. From that point to O'Fallon's bluffs is the buffalo range. From Cottonwood spring to O'Fallon's bluffs there are roads all over the bottoms. All these roads lead to the river. The main road is near the bluffs. . . At O'Fallon's bluffs is a mail station, and one other trading-house, with plenty of goods of all kinds. This is the last settlement or trading post which will be passed until you reach St. Vrain's Fort, in the vicinity of the mines. Five miles above this point you will pass the last timber to be seen until you reach Beaver creek (Hafen 1942:141-42).

In 1966 staff archeologists tested a portion of a rectangular ditch with rather disappointing results. This ditch was located at the base of O'Fallons

Bluff and may be attributed to the defense erected by the United States Army in the Indian war of 1864. To protect several overland stage stations in the area.

Only scattered animal bone was recovered in over fifty feet of excavated trenches (Carlson 1973:30). Descriptions of the army post state that an old ranch was occupied and stockade corrals were built to protect the enclosure from Indian raids.

Many departments in government are becoming aware of our historic

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#### UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

### **INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

#### (Continuation Sheet)

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Significance (cont.)

heritage. The Nebraska Department of Roads built a rest area at O'Fallons Bluff where the Oregon Trail ruts are still quite easily visible. The Department of Roads in cooperation with the Nebraska State Historical Society have placed historical markers at the rest area to briefly state the history of this area.

More and more of our visible historic Oregon Trail ruts are being destroyed by erosion and farming operations. It is a fitting memorial to those early pioneers who passed by O'Fallons Bluff that this unique site should be placed on the National Register.



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## LEGAL DESCRIPTION

NOTE: Legal Description for publication.

O'Fallons Bluff

One mile south and seven miles east of Sutherland

Vicinity of Sutherland

Nebraska (31) Lincoln (111)

S<sup>1</sup><sub>2</sub> SW<sup>1</sup><sub>4</sub> Sec. 34 T14N R33W



# O'Fallons Bluff One mile south and seven miles east of Sutherland Vicinity of Sutherland Nebraska (31) Lincoln (111)

## ACREAGE JUSTIFICATION

An area large enough to include all of the land owned by the State of Nebraska was chosen for this nomination.

