

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register Nomination  
Approved September 25, 2013

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

## 1. Name of Property

historic name Scott Spring (preferred)  
other names/site number KHRI # 149-0000-00311

## 2. Location

street & number Address Restricted  not for publication  
city or town Westmoreland  vicinity  
state Kansas code KS county Pottawatomie code 091 zip code 66549

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,  
I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

national  statewide  local

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official Date  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting official Date  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

## 4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register  determined eligible for the National Register  
 determined not eligible for the National Register  removed from the National Register  
 other (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

**Category of Property**  
(Check only **one** box)

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	private
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - State
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Federal

<input type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	district
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
0	0	buildings
0	0	district
2	0	site
0	0	structure
0	0	object
<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>Total</b>

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

N/A

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

LANDSCAPE/Natural Feature

TRANSPORTATION/Road-Related

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

LANDSCAPE/Natural Feature

AGRICULTURE/Agricultural Field

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

N/A

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation: N/A

walls: N/A

roof: N/A

other: N/A

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## Narrative Description

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### Summary Paragraph

Located south of Westmoreland, Pottawatomie County, Kansas, Scott Spring is associated with the Rock Creek Crossing, one of the early stream crossings encountered in the Oregon and California trails' eastern-most section (Figure 1). The site [REDACTED] contains two spatially separate areas (Scott Spring and a section of intact swales) [REDACTED] (Figures 2 & 3).<sup>1</sup> A campground was established on the east side of Rock Creek where emigrants often camped prior to crossing, sometimes for several days. Post-trail development has impacted the environs, leaving just the spring and one segment of trail intact. Because neither the historic campground nor the crossing retains sufficient integrity, neither is included in this nomination. Further, the land between the swales and the spring has been disturbed to such a degree that it is not included within the boundaries of this nomination. In total, this discontinuous site contains 2.2 acres.

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## Narrative Description

### *General Landscape<sup>2</sup>*

Scott Spring is located within the Kansas Drift Plain division of the Dissected Till Plains section of the Central Lowland province of the Interior Plains division of North America.<sup>3</sup> The Dissected Till Plains are essentially a formerly glaciated northerly extension of the Osage Plains which cover all of the rest of eastern Kansas. Due to the glaciation, glacial drift either conceals or mantles much of the cuesta topography prevalent throughout the Osage Plains. The glaciated section is roughly bounded by the Big Blue and Little Blue rivers on the west and the Kansas River on the south. Bedrock in the western part of the Dissected Till Plains consists of Permian sedimentary rocks, while bedrock formations throughout the rest of the area are of Pennsylvanian age. The formations are made up of interstratified beds of limestone, sandstone, and shale, covered over by glacial deposits of varying thickness. Loess is also present, occurring as a thin upland mantle over most of northeastern Kansas but in thicknesses of up to 100 feet in bluffs along the Missouri River, but narrowing rapidly away from the river to a thin upland mantle over most of northeastern Kansas.

Local topographies of the Dissected Till Plains relate directly to the degree of glaciation that particular area underwent. The heavily glaciated Kansas Drift Plain (except for the loess-covered bluffs along the Missouri river) has a gently undulating erosional drift-controlled surface. In contrast the less glaciated Attenuated Drift Border division, lying along the periphery of the Dissected Till Plains, is more rugged, with an erosional rock-controlled surface similar in most respects to that of the Osage Plains. Throughout most of the Kansas Drift Plain, inter-stream areas or divides remote from major drainages are smooth, broad, and well rounded; topographic distinctions are derived from the original uneroded ground moraine landscape left by the retreat of the glacial ice. Approaching the major stream courses, the country becomes more dissected, the surface is reduced to gentle slopes, and the valleys are wide and open. Adjacent to the larger streams the land is highly dissected, rough, and hilly. In many cases, the river bluffs are too rough for cultivation and the bedrock has been exposed by erosion.

Judging from early historical accounts and soil survey data, the pre-Euro-American settlement vegetation of northeast Kansas consisted almost entirely of prairie, cut through by narrow ribbons of riverine forest. The potential natural vegetation of most of the area consists of tall grass prairie, composed of dense stands of tall and medium tall graminoids, predominately big and little bluestem. This prairie vegetation covered the western uplands with little or no forest vegetation. Moving east, the prairie/forest transition was marked by mosaic situations, in which prairie with islands of woods changed gradually into woods with islands of prairie. The forest vegetation, which followed water courses, was made up of medium tall to tall broadleaf deciduous trees, often containing dense undergrowth and many lianas, and occasionally interrupted by

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<sup>1</sup> A swale is a linear depression in the ground surface, often deep enough to have sloping sides. A swale is not an individual wheel track; rather, it is a broad depression created by large numbers of animal-drawn conveyances.

<sup>2</sup> The following three paragraphs are adapted from standard language used in reports written by Kansas State Historical Society, Cultural Resources Division, Archeology Department.

<sup>3</sup> Walter E. Schoewe, "The Geography of Kansas, Part II: Physical Geography," *Transactions of the Kansas Academy of Science* 52, no. 3 (1949): 280, 291.

freshwater marshes with graminoid communities. Hackberry, cottonwood, willow, and elm were the dominant forest species;<sup>4</sup> although oak, black walnut, linden, sycamore, locust, hickory, pecan, and other hardwoods could also be found along with smaller forms such as Osage orange, persimmon, papaw, elderberry, serviceberry, chokecherry, and wild grape.<sup>5</sup> At the eastern margin of the Dissected Till Plains, and most pervasive on the Missouri River bluffs, the potential natural vegetation was medium tall multilayered broadleaf deciduous woodland, with various forms of hickory and oak being the dominant species.<sup>6</sup>

A large variety of animals were supported by these vegetation communities. The faunal assemblage of the Dissected Till Plains closely paralleled that of the Osage Plains to the south. Both areas contained such big game animals as bison, elk, deer, antelope, and black bear of forest<sup>7</sup>. Predators such as cougar, wildcat, timber wolf, coyote, and fox were present as well, along with raccoon, opossum, the gray, fox, and flying squirrels, beaver, otter, muskrat, badger, jackrabbit, cottontail rabbit, and various other smaller mammals. Wild turkey, prairie chicken, ruffed grouse, and quail were plentiful, while the larger streams yielded an abundance of edible fish and shellfish.

The modern landscape of the Scott Spring site has changed significantly from that evident during the trail period. [REDACTED] The campground is now a commemorative park, managed by Pottawatomie County. This park contains roadways, a parking lot, a replica wagon, walking trails, and a series of interpretive panels. According to the landowners (from whom the County leases the property), the campground area was cultivated for decades before the park was established, thus removing any traces of swales. As a result of that sustained cultivation and more recent interpretive development, the historic campground does not retain sufficient integrity and is not included in the nomination.

#### *Individual Resources*

1. **Resource:** Scott Spring  
**Lat., Long.:** [REDACTED]  
**Classification:** Contributing Site  
**Description:** Scott Spring itself is still present at the valley's edge, flows reliably in all but the driest periods, and is used by its owners for watering livestock. The 1.2-acre nominated spring area [REDACTED] retains considerable integrity. Scott Spring is situated at an approximate elevation of 1180 feet (360 meters) against the steep eastern wall of the Rock Creek valley and flows from a series of natural openings in the rock. The nominated site is roughly triangular [REDACTED]. Other than an underground pipe leading from the spring to a concrete stock tank, the setting is much as it would have been during the period when Scott Spring served as an important water source for emigrant wagon trains stopped at the nearby campground (Photo 1). The spring often fills a distinct channel leading west toward the highway and ultimately to Rock Creek (Photo 2).
2. **Resource:** Trail Segment<sup>8</sup>  
**Lat., Long.:** [REDACTED]  
**Classification:** Contributing Site  
**Description:** There are no intact swales in the immediate vicinity of either the park or the spring. The walls of the Rock Creek valley are quite steep on the east side and would have presented a formidable obstacle to heavily-loaded wagons approaching the crossing. The easiest approach would have been down a large [REDACTED] ravine, [REDACTED] (Figure 2). Construction [REDACTED] has removed all traces of intact swales approaching the crossing; thus the connecting land between the swales and the spring is not included within this nomination. Trail evidence is not visible until the upland ridge at the valley's eastern margin is reached. In that area, prominent swales are visible; thus, the site containing swales is the second area included in this nomination.

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<sup>4</sup> A.W. Kuchler, "A New Vegetation Map of Kansas," *Ecology* 55, no. 3 (1974): 600-601.

<sup>5</sup> Waldo R. Wedel, "An Introduction to Kansas Archeology," *Smithsonian Institution, Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin* (1959): 14.

<sup>6</sup> Kuchler, 599.

<sup>7</sup> Wedel, 16.

<sup>8</sup> A segment is a grouping of individual swales.

The 1-acre upland area of intact swales is situated along the ridge top [REDACTED] (Figures 6 & 7). Three distinct swales are present, oriented southeast to northwest [REDACTED]. The trail segment stays at an approximate elevation of 1260 feet (384 meters), heading northwest [REDACTED] for 273 feet (81 meters). The segment turns slightly more westerly, as it heads for the spring for an additional 222 feet (68 meters) before the visual evidence of the trail is lost. The 495-foot (149-meter) long corridor is approximately 80 feet (24 meters) wide.

[REDACTED] While not clearly visible on all aerial images, the swales can be clearly followed on the ground, especially after the pasture in which they are located has been burned (Photos 3 &4).

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Transportation

Exploration/Settlement

**Period of Significance**

1840 – 1860

**Significant Dates**

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

N/A

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply)

Property is:

- A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

**Period of Significance (justification)**

The period of significance selected for this property includes the years the Oregon and California trails were active in Kansas, beginning in 1840 with the first pioneers headed to Oregon Country and ending by 1860 when the majority of emigrants departed from Nebraska river towns.

**Criteria Considerations**

N/A

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## Narrative Statement of Significance

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### Summary

High water was a distinct possibility at Rock Creek, causing travelers a delay for several days. Luckily for these travelers, a reliable and convenient water source, Scott Spring, was located [REDACTED] of the Rock Creek crossing, making the area between the creek and the spring an attractive spot for camping. The spring is mentioned in a small number of diary entries, and the trail was surveyed by the General Land Office in 1857. Because of its significance to travelers along the Oregon and California trails, Scott Spring is nationally significant under Criterion A for its association with transportation and exploration/settlement and under Criterion D for its potential to yield information about both migration and wagon transportation in eastern Kansas. The discontinuous site retains a good degree of integrity in terms of location, setting, feeling, and association. This site's period of significance begins in 1840 with the first pioneers headed to Oregon Country and ends by 1860 when the majority of emigrants departed from Nebraska river towns.

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### Elaboration

#### *Trail Overview<sup>9</sup>*

The Oregon Trail began as a network of Indian trade and migration routes that crisscrossed the American West. British, French, and Americans fur trappers of the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries found and followed those paths as they scoured the country for beaver. By the 1820s, caravans of pack trains, carts, and wagons were beating a rough "fur trace" from the Missouri River to the annual trappers' rendezvous in the Rocky Mountains of today's Wyoming and northern Utah. Pack trails ran west from the Rockies, following the Snake and Columbia Rivers to Hudson's Bay Company headquarters at Fort Vancouver in the Oregon Country.<sup>10</sup>

When the first family of covered wagon pioneers joined a fur caravan heading to the Rockies from Missouri in 1840, the Oregon Country was jointly occupied by the fledgling United States and powerful Great Britain. Over the next several years, Britain watched uneasily as a low but steady tide of American emigrants surged along the developing, 2200-mile Oregon Trail and emptied into the Pacific Northwest. As the number of American settlers grew, so did the pressure for British withdrawal. In 1846 the two nations signed a treaty giving the U.S. control of lands between California and the 49<sup>th</sup> parallel, today's border between the United States and Canada.<sup>11</sup> The emigration swelled in the early 1850s as homesteaders flocked to Oregon to stake their claims under the Donation Lands Act. By 1860, some 53,000 covered wagon emigrants and hundreds of thousands of livestock had followed the Oregon Trail to the Pacific Northwest.<sup>12</sup>

The California Trail, too, began at the Missouri River and stretched more than 2000 miles across plains and mountains, then branched out to end at various towns and camps in and beyond the Sierra Nevada. Much of that distance was part of a shared corridor with the Oregon Trail through Kansas, Nebraska, Wyoming, and eastern Idaho. Near today's Soda Springs, Idaho, the 1841 Bidwell-Bartleson Party split away from the Oregon Trail and turned south to blaze a new emigrant route across the unmapped Great Basin and along the

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<sup>9</sup> Trail overview written by Lee Kreutzer, National Trails Intermountain Region, National Park Service.

<sup>10</sup> Will Bagley, *So Rugged and Mountainous: Blazing the Trails to Oregon and California, 1812-1848*, vol. 1, *Overland West* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2010), 77, 80; Hulbert, Archer Butler ed., *Where Rolls the Oregon: Prophet and Pessimist Look Northwest*, vol. 3, *Overland to the Pacific* (Colorado Springs: The Steward Commission of Colorado College & the Denver Public Library, 1933), 52, 91, 105, 136, 149-154, 156-159; Bernard De Voto, *Across the Wide Missouri* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1947), 47, 59, 69; Merrill J. Mattes, *The Great Platte River Road: The Covered Wagon Mainline via Fort Kearny to Fort Laramie*, (Lincoln: Nebraska State Historical Society, 1969), 4; Merrill J. Mattes, *Platte River Road Narratives: A Descriptive Bibliography of Travel over the Great Central Overland Route to Oregon, California, Utah, Colorado, Montana, and Other Western States and Territories, 1812-1866* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 1-5.

<sup>11</sup> Bagley, *So Rugged and Mountainous*, 290-291.

<sup>12</sup> John D. Unruh, *The Plains Across: The Overland Emigrants and the Trans-Mississippi West, 1840-60* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1982), 60, 84-85.

Humboldt River to California, part of Mexico at that time. Against all odds, the entire party survived the trip, and some of the successful pioneers set to work recruiting other emigrants to California. A trickle of over-landers followed over the next several years, developing a more direct trail across Idaho and Nevada to the Humboldt River and better routes through the Sierra Nevada.<sup>13</sup>

As a result of the 1846-1848 Mexican-American War and annexation of Texas, the United States gained a tremendous swath of territory that stretched from the Gulf of Mexico across the Southern Plains, Southwest, and Great Basin to the Pacific coast. Emigration to California continued at a dribble despite the change of government. Few Americans were tempted to make the arduous trip until news of the gold discovery at Sutter's Mill reached the East and opened the emigration floodgates. In the spring of 1850 some 44,000 Argonauts and entrepreneurs rushed along the California Trail to seek their fortunes in the gold camps. As a result of the influx, California gained statehood the following year, and by 1860 over 200,000 emigrants had followed the long trail west to the Golden State.<sup>14</sup>

Starting in 1847, Oregon- and California-bound travelers shared the trail corridor with some 60,000 members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, who followed the Mormon Trail across Nebraska and Wyoming to the Great Salt Lake Valley of Utah. Total emigration along the multi-trail corridor to Oregon, California, and Utah between 1841 and 1866 is commonly estimated at 350,000 to 500,000 persons.<sup>15</sup>

Across the three decades of the emigration, the trail experience evolved. As historian John Unruh observed, "The emigrant experience was ever changing; each travel year evidenced distinctive patterns, unique dramas of triumph and tragedy, new contributions to the mosaic of western development."<sup>16</sup> In the 1840s, emigrants were on their own once they left Missouri and entered "Indian Territory." During those years, many suffered extreme hardship and even death as they trudged across Nevada's Forty-mile Desert, struggled through the Sierra Nevada, dodged the fierce rapids of the Columbia River, or tried untested new routes across the western mountains and deserts. Military and trading posts were few along the way and usually had little food to spare; emigrants were unable to resupply if their provisions ran low. But as the emigration progressed, explorers, military expeditions, and other travelers gradually opened shorter, safer routes. Towns and road ranches sprang up along the way. Businessmen established ferries, bridges, and toll roads, hauled water into the desert to sell to thirsty travelers, and built trading posts where travelers could resupply or exchange worn out draft animals for fresh ones. Meanwhile, as the years passed, the vast buffalo herds that 1840s emigrants had encountered in eastern Nebraska retreated farther and farther west, dwindling to near-extinction; hungry campfires and livestock consumed the woodlands and grasslands along the trail; and once-friendly native peoples, alarmed by the never-ending march of emigrants and embittered by the usurping of their lands and resources, were driven to armed resistance. As a result of these changes, travelers of the 1860s experienced the overland trails much differently than those who had gone west in the 1840s.

Not just the experience but the trails themselves changed, as well. For example, Independence and Westport, Missouri, at the eastern edge of the frontier, were the original Oregon and California trailheads. There emigrants could purchase supplies, wagons, and livestock and make repairs before merging with the great freight caravans rolling west along the Santa Fe Trail into Kansas. Near the present-day town of Gardner, the Oregon-California trail corridor branched off to follow the "Independence Road" across northeastern Kansas toward Nebraska's Platte River. Through the 1840s and 1850s, new military roads were developed to connect Fort Leavenworth, Kan., to Fort Riley in central Kansas, Fort Gibson, Okla., and Fort Kearny, Neb.,

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<sup>13</sup> George Stewart, *The California Trail: An Epic with Many Heroes* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1962), 18, 27-28; Doyce B. Nunis, Jr., *The Bidwell-Bartleson Party: 1841 California Emigrant Adventure: The Documents and Memoirs of the Overland Pioneers* (Santa Cruz, CA: Western Tanager Press, 1991), 39, 125, 149; Dale L. Morgan, *The Humboldt: Highroad of the West*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1985), 67-78.

<sup>14</sup> Stewart, 217; Unruh, 84-85; Will Bagley, *With Golden Visions Bright Before Them: Trails to the Mining West, 1849-1852*, vol. 2, *Overland West* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2012), 15, 17-18, 388.

<sup>15</sup> Mattes, *Platte River Road Narratives*, 5. Matte's estimate includes all western emigration, including that to Colorado, Montana, Nevada, etc.

<sup>16</sup> Unruh, 321-322.

and emigrants quickly adopted these and other new trails in making their way to the Platte River. Also during those years, especially following outbreaks of cholera, emigrants began outfitting and “jumping off” onto the trails farther and farther north, gradually shifting the bulk of the emigration traffic upriver to Fort Leavenworth, St. Joseph, Nebraska City, and Omaha/Council Bluffs.

By the close of the 1850s, the Nebraska river towns had largely replaced Independence, Westport, Fort Leavenworth, and St. Joseph as outfitting and jumping-off places, and the flow of Oregon-California traffic across Kansas had nearly dried up.<sup>17</sup> Riding a steamboat up the Missouri River to Nebraska City and Council Bluffs saved emigrants several difficult stream crossings and many days of driving across northeastern Kansas. Starting farther north also enabled travelers to avoid the Kansas-Missouri border troubles of the mid-1850s and allowed them to take advantage of substantial trail improvements made by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to help its Mormon emigrants cross Nebraska.

Farther west, significant new alternates were developed, including Sublette’s, Hudspeth’s, and Goodale’s cutoffs across Wyoming and Idaho, the difficult Hastings Cutoff through Utah’s Wasatch Mountains and over the Great Salt Lake Desert, the Raft River route to the Humboldt, and several Oregon dry-land alternatives to the dangerous Columbia River passage. New wagon roads punched through the Sierra Nevada and commercial ferries, bridges, and other improvements increasingly aided the emigration as the years passed.

But the greatest improvement to western emigration by far was completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1869. The driving of the ceremonial golden spike that linked the Central Pacific and Union Pacific railroads at Promontory Summit, Utah, was a stake in the heart of the covered wagon era. The laborious, dangerous overland trip that once took five to six months, killed hundreds of thousands of draft animals, and tested the endurance of the most determined emigrants could now be made safely in a matter of weeks. Some emigrants who could not afford train passage continued to use the old Oregon and California trails, but long-distance wagon traffic gradually dried up. The last documented westbound covered wagon on the Oregon-California Trail crossed Wyoming in 1912.<sup>18</sup>

The mid-nineteenth century emigration of hundreds of thousands of people, rich and poor, free and slave, along the Oregon and California trails is unparalleled in world history. The trails they traveled opened the door for the Pony Express, the transcontinental telegraph, the transcontinental railroad, and parts of the modern interstate highway system, all of which followed the Oregon and California trails corridor. The overland emigration fulfilled the nation’s “manifest destiny” to stretch from Atlantic to Pacific, spurred economic development and security, and directed the course of American history. At the same time, however, it disrupted hundreds of indigenous cultures, destroyed traditional lifeways that had developed over millennia, and contributed to extinctions and significant shifts in native plant and animal populations. Today’s West is largely the product of the California and Oregon emigrations and the events that flowed from those movements. Extant trail remnants, including wagon swales and ruts, stream crossings, graves, campgrounds, and associated forts, are touchstones to that iconic place and period in the nation’s history.

The national and regional significance of the Oregon and California trails has been identified through the work of many lay and professional historians and defined in numerous scholarly publications.<sup>19</sup> Congress designated the Oregon and California National Historic Trails in 1978 and 1992, respectively, and the National Park Service in 1998 published a combined comprehensive management and use plan/environmental impact statement for the Oregon, California, Pony Express, and Mormon Pioneer National Historic Trails.

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<sup>17</sup> Merrill J. Mattes, *The Great Platte River Road: The Covered Wagon Mainline via Fort Kearny to Fort Laramie* (Lincoln: Nebraska State Historical Society, 1969) 104-105.

<sup>18</sup> Mary Hurlburt Scott, *The Oregon Trail Through Wyoming*, (Aurora, Colorado: Powder River Publishers, 1958), 87-100, 122, 135.

<sup>19</sup> See attached bibliography for a sample of these sources.

In Kansas, approximately 165 miles of wagon route are designated as part of the Oregon National Historic Trail and 290 miles are designated as California National Historic Trail. For a short distance from Missouri into eastern Kansas, the Oregon and California Trails followed the same corridor as the earlier Santa Fe Trail, also a designated National Historic Trail.<sup>20</sup> Many more miles of historic wagon route, once traveled by emigrants to the far west, exist across Kansas, and many of these routes are currently under study for possible addition to the Oregon and California National Historic Trails (Figure 1).

### *Scott Spring at the Rock Creek Crossing<sup>21</sup>*

Two important natural resources along the Oregon and California trails were grass on which the animals could feed and water for sustaining both the animals and travelers. For travelers along these trails, springs were convenient locations for camping or “nooning,” and because of this, were often noted in itineraries and journals.<sup>22</sup> Although the Oregon and California trails passed only a short distance through Kansas, there were three well-known springs frequented by emigrants: Big Springs in Douglas County, Alcove Spring in Marshall County, and Scott Spring in Pottawatomie County. Big Springs has been significantly impacted by the construction of Interstate 70; Alcove Spring and Scott Spring retain a higher degree of integrity.

The first federal survey of lands in the Scott Spring vicinity was conducted in November 1856. The original government surveyors’ field notes for [REDACTED] refer to the trail as the “California Road,” [REDACTED].<sup>23</sup> The “California Road” is noted as bearing “S.E. & N.W.” at this point. From Rock Creek, the road continues in a northwesterly direction, [REDACTED].<sup>24</sup> The prairie [REDACTED] is reported as level, having first class soil and timber that included burr oak and walnut.<sup>25</sup> The plat map produced as a result of these surveys shows the “California Road” approaching the “East Fork of Rock Cr.” on a southeast to northwest course [REDACTED]. On the west side of the crossing, the road turns northward and runs parallel to the section line a few yards to the west. No spring, structures, or improvements were shown in the vicinity of Scott Spring and the Rock Creek crossing on this 1857 General Land Office Survey map (Figure 8); however, current physical evidence indicates this section of the trail headed toward the spring and Rock Creek crossing.

The locations of stream crossings and freshwater springs were extremely important in determining the routes of travel across Kansas, especially during the prehistoric and early historic period. Springs were important as sources of water and often became camping, resting, or gathering places along trails, and they often became the locations of later settlements. In his history of Kansas, William Cutler indicates that there were numerous springs in Pottawatomie County. He also writes that mineral springs near Westmoreland have waters that “possess highly medicinal qualities.”<sup>26</sup> Walter Schoewe, a Kansas geologist, notes that although the state is not known “as a land of springs or marshes, nevertheless, both played an extremely important role in the early history and development of the State.”<sup>27</sup> He doubts that the historic overland routes that passed through the state, such “as the Santa Fe, the Oregon, and the California trails, as well as the routes to the gold fields of Colorado, would and could have been possible without the numerous springs scattered over the

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<sup>20</sup> Kansas State Historical Society, *Historic Resources of the Santa Fe Trail* revised National Register of Historic Places multiple property documentation form (Topeka, KS: Kansas Historical Society, 1994, revised 2012).

<sup>21</sup> The following paragraphs under this heading are adapted from Marsha K. King, *Activity III Report on the Scott Spring Vicinity on the Oregon-California Trail, Pottawatomie County, Kansas*, KDOT Project No. 99-75 K-6421-01 (Topeka: Kansas Department of Transportation, May 2003). Copies of the report are available from the Kansas SHPO.

<sup>22</sup> “Nooning” referred to the mid-day rest.

<sup>23</sup> George W. Foster, *General Land Office Survey Field Notes of Subdivision Lines [REDACTED] of the 6<sup>th</sup> Principal Meridian, Kansas Territory* (United States General Land Office Survey, November 14-21, 1856). Ms. On file, Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka.

<sup>24</sup> George A. Dunn, *General Land Office Survey Field Notes of Township Lines in [REDACTED] of the 6<sup>th</sup> Principal Meridian, Kansas Territory* (United States General Land Office Survey, surveyed November 1856, published 1857). Ms. On file, Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka.

<sup>25</sup> Foster field notes.

<sup>26</sup> William Cutler, *History of the State of Kansas*, vol. II (Chicago: A.T. Andreas, 1883), 974.

<sup>27</sup> Walter E. Schoewe, “The Geography of Kansas, Part III—concluded: Hydrogeography, Springs,” *Transactions of the Kansas Academy of Science* 56, no. 2 (1953): 131.

State.” Schoewe also notes that a “casual inspection of maps showing the famous old trails and routes of commerce is sufficient to establish the fact that springs were a deciding factor in determining the location of the camping sites along the overland trails.”<sup>28</sup>

Rock Creek and its associated spring are mentioned in journals as early as 1834. Nathaniel J. Wyeth’s second overland expedition to the Far West in 1834 followed “Sublette’s Trace,” an early variant of the Oregon Trail through Kansas.<sup>29</sup> The party consisted of approximately 58 men, including 40 employed by Wyeth, six independent trappers, a botanist, an ornithologist, two missionaries, and several attendants. The expedition left Independence, Missouri, on April 28, and crossed the Kansas River approximately seven miles above the later site of Lawrence. On May 8, Reverend Jason Lee, a Methodist missionary traveling in the party, reported that they were camped “on a stream about as large as the little Vermillion.” This camp has been interpreted as being Rock Creek in Pottawatomie County.<sup>30</sup> Another traveler in 1834 also recorded this site. William Marshall Anderson, a member of William L. Sublette’s 1834 pack train, kept a journal of his trip through Kansas that year. Anderson recorded that on May 11 the party of 37 men with 95 pack animals “Crossed a creek on Sublettes [sic] trace, which he made for ten wagons, 4 years past, called by some of his hands cannon ball creek.”<sup>31</sup> Pre-emigrant trail knowledge of this site most certainly directed the route of the Oregon and California Trail through Pottawatomie County.

Only three known accounts of this site date to the Oregon and California trails period. James Clyman, a member of an emigrant party bound for Oregon that consisted of 350 wagons led by Moses “Black” Harris under the command of “Colonel” Nathaniel Ford, kept a diary of his travels through Kansas. Amid many comments about the continuously rainy weather and wet conditions, Clyman noted that on June 23, 1844, the wagon train reached Rock Creek, writing “Struck the oregon [sic] trace on Cannon Ball Creek greate [sic] Joy at finding the trail and a good ford....”<sup>32</sup> Edwin Bryant’s California-bound party stopped in the Scott Spring vicinity on May 24, 1846. Bryant noted, “We found here, gushing from a ledge of limestone rock, a spring of excellent water, from which we refreshed ourselves in draughts that would be astonishing to the most fanatical cold water advocate.”<sup>33</sup> Finally, upon a return trip to the east in July 1846, James Clyman crossed Kansas with seven men, two women, and a boy. With reference to Rock Creek, his entry for July 17 mentioned only that they “nooned, that day, at cannon Ball Creek.”<sup>34</sup>

With tensions between Kansas Territory and the State of Missouri escalating in the mid- to late- 1850s, long-distance trail traffic through Kansas began to slow. Increasingly, emigrants chose to cross The Missouri River farther north and start their trans-West migration from present-day Nebraska. At this time, traffic along the emigrant trails in Kansas became more localized as settlers moved into the area. The 1886 Everts Atlas, the 1899 Rohrbeck Atlas, and the 1905 Ogle Atlas of Pottawatomie County each indicate a county road in approximately the same location as the trail, emphasizing the trail’s continued use for local traffic.<sup>35</sup>

By 1860, one year before Kansas statehood, 1539 people were reported living in Pottawatomie County. Federal Census data show that by 1870 the county population had grown to 7848 people. One of the earliest

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Sublette’s Trace is named for William Sublette, a fur trader, who pioneered this section of trail in January 1827. Prior its use by Oregon and California emigrants, Sublette’s Trace was used mainly for ventures to the Rocky Mountains and surrounding areas by trappers and fur traders. See: Louise Barry, *The Beginning of the West: Annals of the Kansas Gateway to the American West, 1540-1854* (Topeka: Kansas State Historical Society, 1972), 137.

<sup>30</sup> Barry, 262-263.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 265. Barry identifies this also as Rock Creek.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 509-510.

<sup>33</sup> Edwin Bryant, *What I Saw in California* (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1849), 55. Bryant, a former newspaper editor from Kentucky, traveled to California in the mid-1840s, served in the Mexican War, and briefly lived in San Francisco prior to the Gold Rush of 1849. He returned to Kentucky and published an account of his experiences in *What I Saw in California*, which became popular among gold seekers and emigrants heading west. Unruh, *The Plains Across*, 1979, 29.

<sup>34</sup> Barry, 627.

<sup>35</sup> It is not yet known when the first bridge was erected over Rock Creek.

settlers to the Westmoreland vicinity was Adam Scott, the namesake of the spring at the Rock Creek crossing.<sup>36</sup> Scott and his family moved from Scotland to Pottawatomie County in 1870, one year before the town of Westmoreland was established. They settled on the south side of Rock Creek and became the owner [REDACTED], among other parcels that at one time totaled 1400 acres. Scott's son, Robert recalled the large number of trail travelers in both directions and the camping place, confirming that the trail continued in use, primarily by local traffic, after the overland emigrant traffic had declined in this area of Kansas.<sup>37</sup>

### *Archeological Potential*

Archeological prospection, geophysical survey, and metal detector survey of similar trail properties have been shown to reveal associated artifact assemblages, sometimes buried and sometimes not, that can inform on the use of the trail during its period of significance. There is every reason to believe that the presence of such an assemblage is possible. This property and its immediate landscape have the potential to yield important information to understanding the use and nature of this section of the trail, including patterns of use and change over time, evolving emigrant patterns, and cultural interactions. Study of both remnant trail swales and adjacent archeological features can provide valuable insight into the evolving patterns of historic development in this region. This site likely contains data which may be vital to any wider study of 19th-century settlement, exploration, and transportation. Further investigation could address key questions regarding transportation variability and change. Excavation could also provide additional social data including better estimates of the frequency of use during various phases of history, the role played various ethnic and social groups, and the nature of trail users, material culture, and the production, distribution, and consumption of commodities.<sup>38</sup>

Scott Spring contains a well-known landmark (the spring itself) along with an upland area of intact ruts isolated from other trail segments. Despite recent disturbance, this property has the potential to yield additional information. Its location is well known and the associated campground (not included in the nomination) is marked by a commemorative roadside park, yet it has not been mapped or defined with precision. For example, the location and depth of the surviving upland swales relative to the surrounding landscape could yield significant information regarding the nature of preservation relative to variables such as slope and underlying geologic structure. While it is generally accepted that swales are deeper and more visible in areas where slopes are steep, careful mapping could provide supporting data. Despite its high visibility among Oregon and California trails sites, only small-scale archeological surveys have been undertaken in the spring vicinity.<sup>39</sup> More intensive archeological investigations at this property (including metal detector investigations and remote sensing) might produce period trail period artifacts and cultural features. Their distribution, if plotted precisely, could yield significant information regarding issues (in addition to those mentioned above) such as campground use, discard patterns, and wagon repair activities.

Scott Spring and its associated trail segment are eligible for the National Register for their association with the Kansas portion of the Oregon and California trails. The integrity of the Scott Spring vicinity has been impacted over the years by construction and development in the area. A succession of county roads, fords, and bridges were built through and in this area. Subsequently, [REDACTED] a bridge over Rock Creek was built in its current location. Despite these alterations, the nominated site retains sufficient integrity to represent its historic associations with the trails.

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<sup>36</sup> The Scott family farm is located [REDACTED] of the spring and crossing. Scott was an active member of his community and his church. It was noted in a biographical source that by 1890 he had been in his third term as Justice of the Peace in Westmorland in addition to tending the farm with his family. See: *Portrait and Biographical Album of Jackson, Jefferson, and Pottawatomie Counties, Kansas* (Chicago: Chapman Brothers, 1890), 185-186.

<sup>37</sup> William E. Smith, "The Oregon Trail Through Pottawatomie County," *Collections of the Kansas State Historical Society*, 17 (1928): 447.

<sup>38</sup> Adapted from *Historic Resources of the Santa Fe Trail*, F116. Citation covers paragraph.

<sup>39</sup> King, 1-2.

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Scott Spring  
Name of Property

Pottawatomie, Kansas  
County and State

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been Requested)  
 previously listed in the National Register  
 previously determined eligible by the National Register  
 designated a National Historic Landmark  
 recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_  
 recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

State Historic Preservation Office  
 Other State agency  
 Federal agency  
 Local government  
 University  
 Other  
Name of repository: **Kansas Historical Society**

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): N/A

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** 2.2  
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage)

**Provide latitude/longitude coordinates.**  
(Place additional coordinates on a continuation page.)

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates** [REDACTED]

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_  
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

**Verbal Boundary Description** (describe the boundaries of the property)  
[REDACTED]

**Boundary Justification** (explain why the boundaries were selected)

The modern landscape has changed significantly from that evident during the trail period. [REDACTED] The campground is now a commemorative park, managed by Pottawatomie County. It contains roadways and a parking lot, a replica wagon, walking trails, and a series of interpretive panels. According to the landowners (from whom the County leases the property), the campground area was cultivated for decades before the park was established, thus removing any traces of swales. As a result of that sustained cultivation and more recent interpretive development, the crossing and park/campground do not retain sufficient integrity and are not included in the nomination. The actual spring area retains considerable integrity. Other than an underground pipe leading from the spring to a concrete stock tank, the setting is much as it would have been during the period when Scott Spring served as an important water source for emigrant wagon trains stopped at the nearby campground. There are no intact swales in the immediate vicinity of either the campground/park or the spring. The walls of the Rock Creek valley are quite steep on the east side, and would have presented a formidable obstacle to heavily loaded wagons approaching the crossing. [REDACTED] Such evidence is therefore not visible until the upland ridge at the valley's eastern margin is reached. In that area, prominent swales are visible, and are the second area included in the nomination.

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Rick Anderson, Tim Weston, Sarah Martin, & Amanda Loughlin  
organization Kansas Historical Society date Spring 2013  
street & number 6425 SW 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue telephone (785) 272-8681  
city or town Topeka state Kansas zip code 66615-1099  
e-mail cultural\_resources@kshs.org

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.  
A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

**Photographs:**

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

**Name of Property:** Scott Spring  
**City or Vicinity:** Westmoreland vicinity  
**County/State:** Pottawatomie County, Kansas  
**Photographer:** Rick Anderson  
**Date:** April 11, 2012, unless otherwise noted

**Description of Photograph(s) and number:**

- 1 of 4.** View SE at Scott Spring, with the outlet visible on the hillside at left (December 2, 2010).
- 2 of 4.** View W from the Scott Spring outlet; K-99 and a portion of the campground location in background.
- 3 of 4.** View NW at intact swales in the uplands above Scott Spring; Westmoreland visible in the background.
- 4 of 4.** View SE at intact swales in the uplands above Scott Spring.

**Property Owner:**

(complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO)

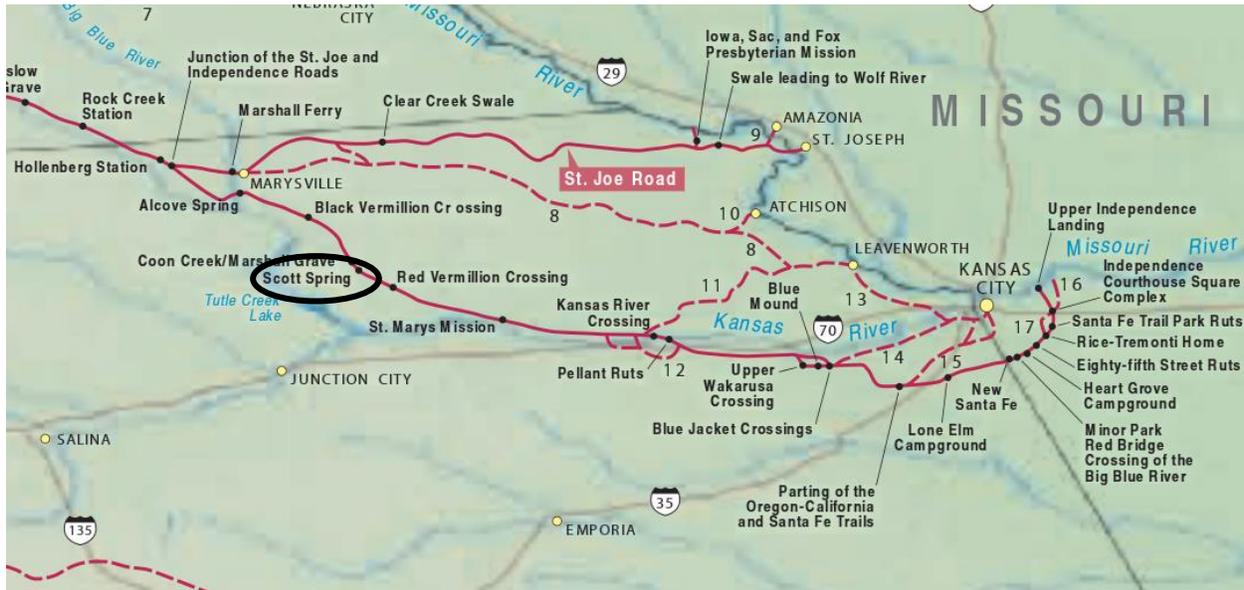
name On file with SHPO.  
street & number \_\_\_\_\_ telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
city or town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ zip code \_\_\_\_\_

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

**Figure 1: Oregon and California Trail Routes in Kansas.**

U.S. Department of the Interior National Park Service (NPS) California National Historic Trail Map. (<http://www.nps.gov/cal/planyourvisit/upload/CALmap1-web.pdf>).



**Figure 2:**  
[REDACTED]

**Figure 3:**  
[REDACTED]

**Figure 4:**  
[REDACTED]

**Figure 5:**  
[REDACTED]

**Figure 6:**  
[REDACTED]

**Figure 7:**  
[REDACTED]

**Figure 8.**  
[REDACTED]

**Boundary Map.**  
[REDACTED]

**Contextual Map.**  
[REDACTED]