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209-2820-023

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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

SELGEM

1 NAME

HISTORIC Whitefeather Spring

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER 3818 Ruby Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Kansas City

___ VICINITY OF

___ NOT FOR PUBLICATION
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
No. 3, Larry Winn

STATE

Kansas 66106

CODE

20

COUNTY

Wyandotte

CODE

209

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" 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	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<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 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Jack Beemont

STREET & NUMBER

3818 Ruby Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Kansas City

___ VICINITY OF

STATE

Kansas 66106

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Register of Deeds

STREET & NUMBER

Wyandotte County Courthouse

CITY, TOWN

Kansas City

STATE

Kansas

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

None

DATE

___ FEDERAL ___ STATE ___ COUNTY ___ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

EXCELLENT DETERIORATED
 GOOD RUINS
 FAIR UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

UNALTERED
 ALTERED

CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE
 MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Whitefeather Spring is located at the bottom of a wide grassy ravine in a residential neighborhood which is now part of Kansas City, Kan., and it is approximately 90 feet west of the house at 3818 Ruby avenue. The spring is legally described as in Tract G, Gibbs and Payne's Second Addition to Argentine, which became part of Kansas City after the turn of the century.

The banks of the south-to-north ravine are steep and irregular. The spring comes from under a thick ledge of rock in the east bank, flows on a ledge of soapstone and then drains into the small creek which runs through the ravine. At the site of the spring the ravine is about 100 feet wide at the top, 60 feet at the bottom and about 25 to 30 feet deep. Ruby avenue dead ends at the ravine, and the spring is about 40 to 45 feet north of the street. The floor of the ravine is grass, which the owner keeps mowed, and a few wild flowers. The steep banks have a natural growth, buckbrush, elderberry bushes, and trees. North of the spring on the ravine floor are some picnic and "cook-out" facilities. A wire fence has been placed around the property.

The spring has never been known to stop flowing in spite of modern day vandalism, including dynamite attempts. Until 1967 or so the spring was about six feet above the flood plain on the west side of the creek. Because of "buildup" on the ravine floor, the spring is now below the flood plain and is threatened with "drowning" in case of a flood. The problem has been caused by some of the neighbors and certain building contractors illegally dumping dirt, construction debris and other trash into the ravine above the spring. From time to time dirt and solid wastes have partially filled the creek and the owner of the spring has had to clean that portion running through his property. (Reportedly the owner of the adjoining property to the south has no interest in preserving the spring and will do nothing to alleviate any of the problems.) Also, the flood plain has been raised some five feet or so by the silting; the owner is considering trying to blade it down to afford some protection to the spring.

The owner wishes to preserve the spring and the park-like setting in which it is located but has so far received little cooperation from city officials in trying to stop the unauthorized dumping.

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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 checked="" 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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) Western settlement
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Whitefeather Spring takes its name from the first owner of record, Susan Whitefeather, a Shawnee Indian to whom the 200-acre tract which included the spring was patented in 1859. The spring has never been known to stop flowing; it has served both the Indians and the 19th century white settlers; when other water sources failed during times of drought even in the 20th century, Whitefeather Spring supplied residents of a wide area with water. In more modern times, when the flood of 1951 prevented use of the public water system, the spring provided the water for people of the area.

Whitefeather Spring is believed to mark the last home and the final resting place of Ten-Squa-Ta-Wa, brother of the great warrior chief Tecumseh, and known to history as the Shawnee Prophet. One of the most influential Indian leaders in the early 19th century (and one of the strangest), the Prophet had helped his brother put together a confederacy of tribes to fight the whites. Prior to 1805 he had been a person of no particular repute, but then he announced that he had been chosen by the "Master of Life" to show the Indians, all Indians, a new way of life which would lead to the defeat and removal of the whites and their influences. He also claimed power to foretell and to heal. The Prophet had widespread acceptance and his emissaries went from tribe to tribe, spreading his teachings. Both the Prophet and his new doctrines were discredited after Indian forces under his leadership were defeated by Gen. William H. Harrison's men at the Battle of Tippecanoe in 1811.

The Prophet then lived in Canada until 1826; after brief stays in Ohio and Missouri he came to what is now Wyandotte county, Kan., in 1828. Location of the last "Prophet's Town" is generally placed about one mile southeast of the spring, but apparently soon after arriving the Prophet, his immediate family and some close associates withdrew to the area of the spring. He died in a log cabin close to the spring in 1837 and was buried nearby.

Chief Charles Bluejacket, who had been present at the burial, returned to Kansas City in 1897 to locate the grave. At first he was apparently disoriented because of the many changes made to the land, but after being taken to the spring he reportedly pointed out the spot of the Prophet's cabin and the area of the gravesite. The grave was said to be on top of the bluff about 100 feet north and east of the spring. Periodic attempts have been made by the local historical society and others to find the exact spot of the Prophet's grave but without success.

The material on the Prophet and his grave is included in this nomination to provide background. The area being nominated is the spring and the portion of the ravine around it. The spring and its area are well-known to older local residents, having at times in the past served as a private park and picnic area. It has been in the family of the present owner for almost 80 years.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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8.

The spring has significance to the Shawnee Indians for its historic associations with their people's brief 19th century stay in Kansas and for its association by oral tradition with the Shawnee Prophet. It is regarded as one of the few surviving historic places linked to the Shawnee Indians in Kansas. Also, the spring provided a plentiful supply of good water to red man and white. It is hoped that listing the property on the Register will assist the owner in his efforts to preserve the spring and its surroundings.

9.

Harrington, Grant W., Historic Spots or Milestones in the Progress of Wyandotte County, Kansas (Merriam, Kan., Mission Press, 1935).

"Indian Prophet's Grave Here Sought Many Times," Kansas City Kansan, Aug. 22, 1954.

"Indians Seek History of Shawnees in Olathe," Olathe Daily News, Mar. 6, 1975

"Indians Were Rallied by Shawnee Prophet," Kansas City Star and Times, June 2, 1971.

"The Moccasin Telegraph," Miami (Okla.) News-Record, Jan. 26, 1975.

Mooney, James, "The Ghost-Dance Religion and the Sioux Outbreak of 1890," Fourteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology, Part 2 (Washington, D. C., Government Printing Office, 1896), pp. 672-680.

"Only a Few Landmarks Remain . . .," Kansas City Star, Mar. 29, 1958.

"Pioneers and Prominent Citizens of Wyandotte County, Kas.," Kansas City Sun, Mar. 5, 1909.

"A Rare Historical Background," The Quiviran (Kansas City, Mo.), vol. 1, no. 10 (May, 1930), pp. 4-6.

"Shawnee Indians Return to Honor Tribal Prophet," Kansas City Kansan, Feb. 19, 1975.

"The Shawnee Prophet," Kansas City Sun, Aug. 30, 1912.

Tucker, Glenn, Tecumseh--Vision of Glory (New York, Bobbs-Merrill Co., Inc., 1956).

"Wyandot and Shawnee Indian Lands in Wyandotte County," Kansas Historical Collections, vol. 15 (1919-1922), pp. 103-180.

