

National parks. Platt

Platt

NATIONAL PARK

FLEET BRANCH

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Oklahoma

Platt

NATIONAL PARK

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The National Park System, of which this park is a unit, is dedicated to conserving the scenic, scientific, and historic heritage of the United States for the benefit and enjoyment of its people.

WELCOME

The National Park Service, which administers the many areas of the National Park System, welcomes you to Platt National Park. We hope that your visit will be a memorable and satisfying experience. Employees of the National Park Service here are eager to do what they can to add to your enjoyment.

You and all Americans share ownership of this National Park. Please help us protect it so that it will remain unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations. While using the park, you will, we feel sure, take pride in preserving it.

THE PARK IN BRIEF

Platt National Park lies nestled in the foothills of the Arbuckle Mountains of southern Oklahoma at an elevation that ranges from 910 to 1,150 feet. It is adjacent to the town of Sulphur and is 90 miles south of Oklahoma City. The park contains a little less than 1.5 square miles; nevertheless, in this small area are fresh-water springs, cold, mineral-water springs, sparkling streams, wooded valleys, and gently rolling, grass-covered hills—all of which combine to give the place a unique beauty.

The Park is within the former holdings of the Chickasaw Nation of the old Indian Territory. The greater part of the present area was purchased from the Indians in 1902 and set aside as Sulphur Springs Reservation for the protection and preservation of the mineral springs. In 1906, the name was changed to Platt National Park in honor of Senator Orville Hitchcock Platt of Connecticut, who, as a member of the Committee on Indian Affairs, had performed distinguished service for the Indians.

ABOUT YOUR VISIT

If you are just passing through and have little time to spend in the park, you may take the 8-mile Perimeter Drive, which provides a comprehensive and scenic view of the primary features. We suggest that you spend at least an hour of your time making this drive, being sure to stop at the various points of interest marked by roadside signs.

If you have more time, the park's personnel will gladly help you to plan your visit so that it will be most rewarding.

You should make your first stop at the visitor center. It contains exhibits, photographs, and interpretive data that will give you a better understanding and appreciation of the area and will help you to recognize the various park features. Free informational material concerning the park can be obtained at the visitor center or at either of the ranger stations located at the entrance to the campgrounds.

Remember, the park's personnel are here to help you enjoy your visit. Talk to them at any time you are in need of help or information.

WHAT TO SEE

The wooded valleys and rolling hills of Platt National Park, together with the nearby Arbuckle Mountains, offer a pleasant relief from the comparatively level and barren surrounding country. Travertine Creek, which flows through the eastern end of the park, is a picturesque stream of clear, sparkling water, fed by many springs. Rock Creek enters from the north and winds its way through the western half of the park. To the south of Rock Creek is Bromide Hill, a steep, wooded bluff rising 140 feet above Bromide Pavilion. From the hill's summit, easily reached by road or trail, there is a fine panoramic view of the countryside. Along the horizon to the southwest lie the highlands of the Arbuckle Mountains and the lowland of the Washita River valley; to the east, for a distance of 3 miles, most of the park can be seen stretching along the courses of Rock and Travertine Creeks.

MINERAL SPRINGS. Of the many cold, mineral-water springs in the park, most can be classed broadly as sulphur springs; three, as bromide springs. Pavilion Springs, Hillside Spring, and Black Sulphur Spring are in the central part of the park near the main entrance. Nearby, in Flower Park, are sulphur-water pools, the mud of which is reputed to be beneficial in

the treatment of certain skin diseases. Bromide Spring and Medicine Spring are in the western part of the park, issuing from the base of Bromide Hill. Waters of these springs are dispensed at Bromide Pavilion.

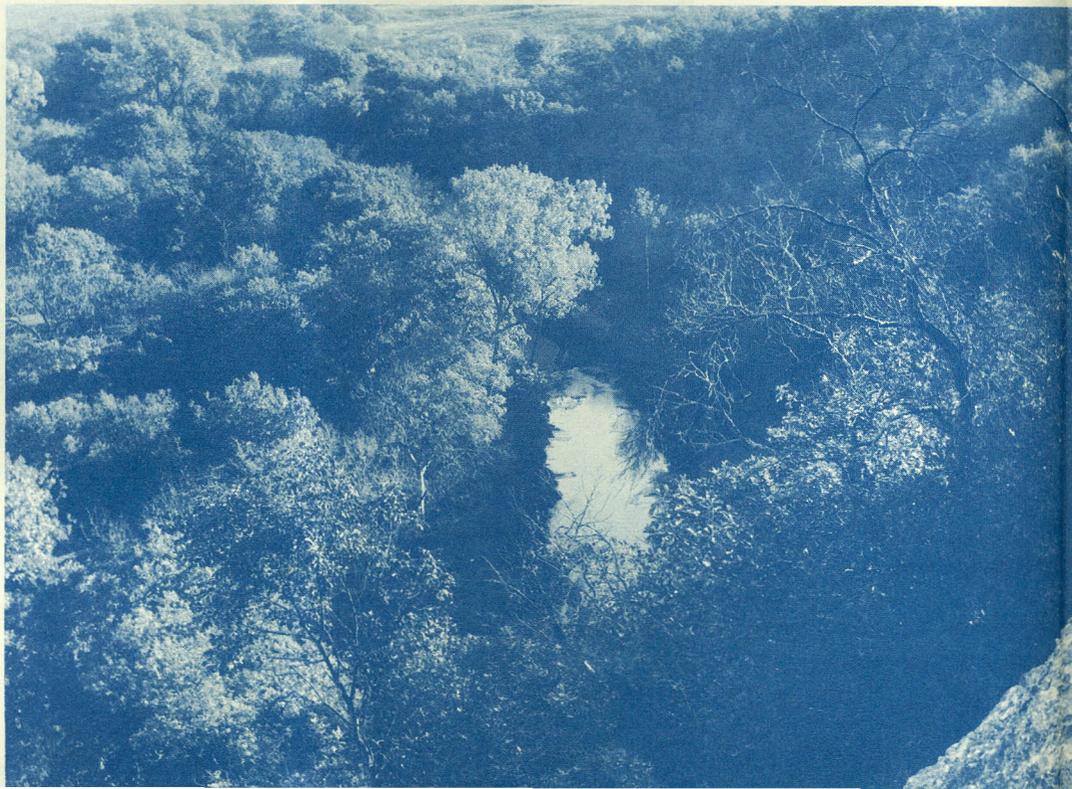
While the spring waters are for the use of all visitors, they should not be taken in quantity except on the advice of a competent physician. The National Park Service facilitates the use of the springs only by protecting and maintaining them according to the best possible standards; it makes no claim as to the medicinal value of the mineral waters. There are no provisions in the park, or in the town of Sulphur, for free consultation of physicians or free treatment of the sick. Two commercial bathhouses are in the town of Sulphur.

FRESH-WATER SPRINGS. In the eastern end of the park, two large fresh-water springs combine their flows to form the sources of Travertine Creek. These springs, called Buffalo and Antelope, were so named because herds of these animals came from the surrounding prairies to drink. Normally these springs have a combined flow of more than 5 million gallons of water per day.

THINGS TO DO

PICNICKING. Many tables and fireplaces are provided for those who wish to picnic. Areas that accommodate large groups are at Travertine Island and Buffalo Springs.

CAMPING. Two large campgrounds provide more than 100 well-prepared campsites for those who wish to enjoy the out-



View from Bromide Hill.

of-doors in this manner. Rock Creek Campground is located in the extreme western end of the park, and Cold Springs Campground is in the east-central section. There is also a small campground, Central Campground, near the main entrance.

Camping is limited to 30 days, and reservations cannot be made in advance.

SWIMMING. Many of the natural pools along Travertine Creek are suitable for swimming. The usual safety precautions should be observed. Water temperature at the springs is about 66° F.

HIKING. More than 8 miles of trails provide access to all points of interest within the park. It is along the trails that you will have the best opportunity to observe the wildlife, to become most closely acquainted with all the natural attractions.

The park and its facilities are for your use and enjoyment, without charge. All that is expected of you in return is that you do nothing that would cause other visitors to regret that you are, or were, here.

INTERPRETIVE SERVICES

Platt National Park provides certain interpretive services designed to help you understand this area and its special features. In addition to the museum exhibits in the visitor center, these include evening programs and guided and self-guiding nature walks. They are free, of course, and you are encouraged to take part in them.

EVENING PROGRAMS. Park naturalists present movies and illustrated talks on the park, as well as programs about other units of the National Park System. The programs are held at the amphitheater near the main entrance during the summer. The weekly schedule, showing times and subjects, is posted at the visitor center, at Bromide Pavilion, and at ranger stations.

NATURE WALKS. From the visitor center, where you may obtain information and guide leaflets, a trail leads to the top of Bromide Hill. Every fair morning during the summer, a park naturalist guides a party along the trail, identifying the plants and birds and explaining the points of interest. At other seasons, the trail is self guiding; that is, the more important features to be found along it are indicated by numbers that correspond to numbered explanatory paragraphs in a guide leaflet.

THE GEOLOGIC STORY OF THE SPRINGS

Geologists say that some 230 million years ago, during a geologic epoch called Early Pennsylvanian, this area was covered by the sea. Bordering this part of the sea on the south and southwest were highlands that were ancient even then. For millions of years, the rains that beat on the highlands and the waves that lashed at the shores loosened and carried earth

material down into the sea, where it settled to the bottom. As much as 12,000 feet of sediments was deposited at the bottom of the sea, and the sediments hardened into rock.

Later, a series of earth movements pushed the deposits upward and out of the water and elevated them to form a mountain mass, remnants of which are known as the Arbuckle Mountains. As the mountains were raised above the sea, they were exposed to the wearing-away processes of erosion—processes that involved rain, wind, heat, frost, and chemical agencies.

The mighty earth movements, which took place slowly and over a long period of time, fractured and folded the layers of sedimentary rock, so that in many places the original sequence of the layers was altered. Rocks were thrust along fault planes for as much as a mile, and in many places the layers were upended and even overturned.

These layers of rock are permeable, which means that fluids will pass through them. Some of the layers that underlie the park incline upward and are exposed at the surface a few miles east and north of the park. Therefore, rainwater that falls on the exposed parts of the layers passes downward through and along the layers. Some of this water finds its way back to the surface through fissures and faults and appears as seeps and springs within the park.

MINERAL SPRINGS. One of the permeable layers of rock, called the Bromide formation, is impregnated with minerals. Water passing through this formation dissolves a little of the mineral material and holds it in solution. This is the mineral water; here, it is called bromide or sulphur water, depending on the percentage and type of minerals it is holding in solution.

NONMINERAL SPRINGS. The fresh water that flows from Buffalo and Antelope Springs has its source north and east of the park. This water passes through formations of the Pontotoc series. It is free of bromide and sulphur.

PLANTS AND ANIMALS

Platt National Park is a wildlife preserve, where all native species of plants and animals are protected so that visitors can see and enjoy them in their natural surroundings.

This park is somewhat unusual in its wildlife, for here there is an overlapping of eastern and western species.

PLANTS. The many species of plants in the park furnish a display of ever-changing color from early spring until late autumn. This parade of color generally begins the first 2 weeks in April with the spectacle of showy blossoms of the many redbud trees, and it ends with a brilliance of autumn leaves—an intermingling of the red and scarlet hues of the oaks with the gold and yellow of the cottonwoods.

ANIMALS. The park has a small herd of bison (buffalo) in a pasture near its center. This natural setting is reminiscent of the earlier days before the coming of the white man, when thousands of these animals roamed this section of the United



Buffalo Springs.

States unmolested except for small hunting parties of Indians.

Many species of smaller animals live in the park and may occasionally be seen. These include the raccoon, fox, skunk, opossum, armadillo, rabbit, and fox squirrel.

The park is a bird sanctuary, and more than 100 species have been recorded here. A few of the most common are the eastern cardinal, eastern bluebird, northern blue jay, and various species of sparrows and woodpeckers. The roadrunner frequents the park, though it is commonly associated with desert country.

A BIT OF HISTORY

Tradition has it that the waters of the springs were used by the Indians for curative purposes many decades before the coming of the white man. Certainly small bands of Indians roamed this countryside many years before Coronado trekked across the western plains of Oklahoma seeking the fabled golden land of Quivira. These Indians undoubtedly knew of the spring waters and made use of them.

In 1820 the Choctaw and Chickasaw Indians were given an extensive tract of land in Oklahoma in exchange for their lands in Mississippi. Later, in 1855, the land which now includes Platt National Park came under the exclusive ownership of the Chickasaw Tribe.

Many military expeditions entered the territory in the 19th century. In 1851 Fort Arbuckle was established a few miles west of the park. It was an important frontier post in these early days, serving the Indian country.

Following the Civil War, a few hardy settlers began to lease land from the Chickasaws for grazing. In 1878 the land now included in the park became part of the ranch of Noah Lael, who built his ranchhouse near the present headquarters building.

This was also the beginning of the present town of Sulphur. By 1900 it was a thriving little settlement surrounding the present Pavilion Springs.

This area had been the Indians' summer camping and hunting ground before the coming of the white man, and they, too, thought that the springs were beneficial in the treatment of diseases. With the development of the town of Sulphur around the principal springs, the Indians became concerned that they would not be able to use them. Therefore, wishing to preserve these springs for all time for the use of all people, they conveyed lands to the United States that included some 30 springs. On July 1, 1902, Sulphur Springs Reservation was established by act of Congress.

Overnight, Sulphur became a town on wheels—the entire population moving from the area around Pavilion Springs. Unfortunately, most of the town was relocated on land which was later added to the reservation. When this occurred in 1904, Sulphur once again had to be moved, this time to its present location.

On June 29, 1906, a joint resolution was passed by Congress authorizing the Secretary of the Interior to change Sulphur Springs Reservation to Platt National Park—the seventh National Park.

SEASONS

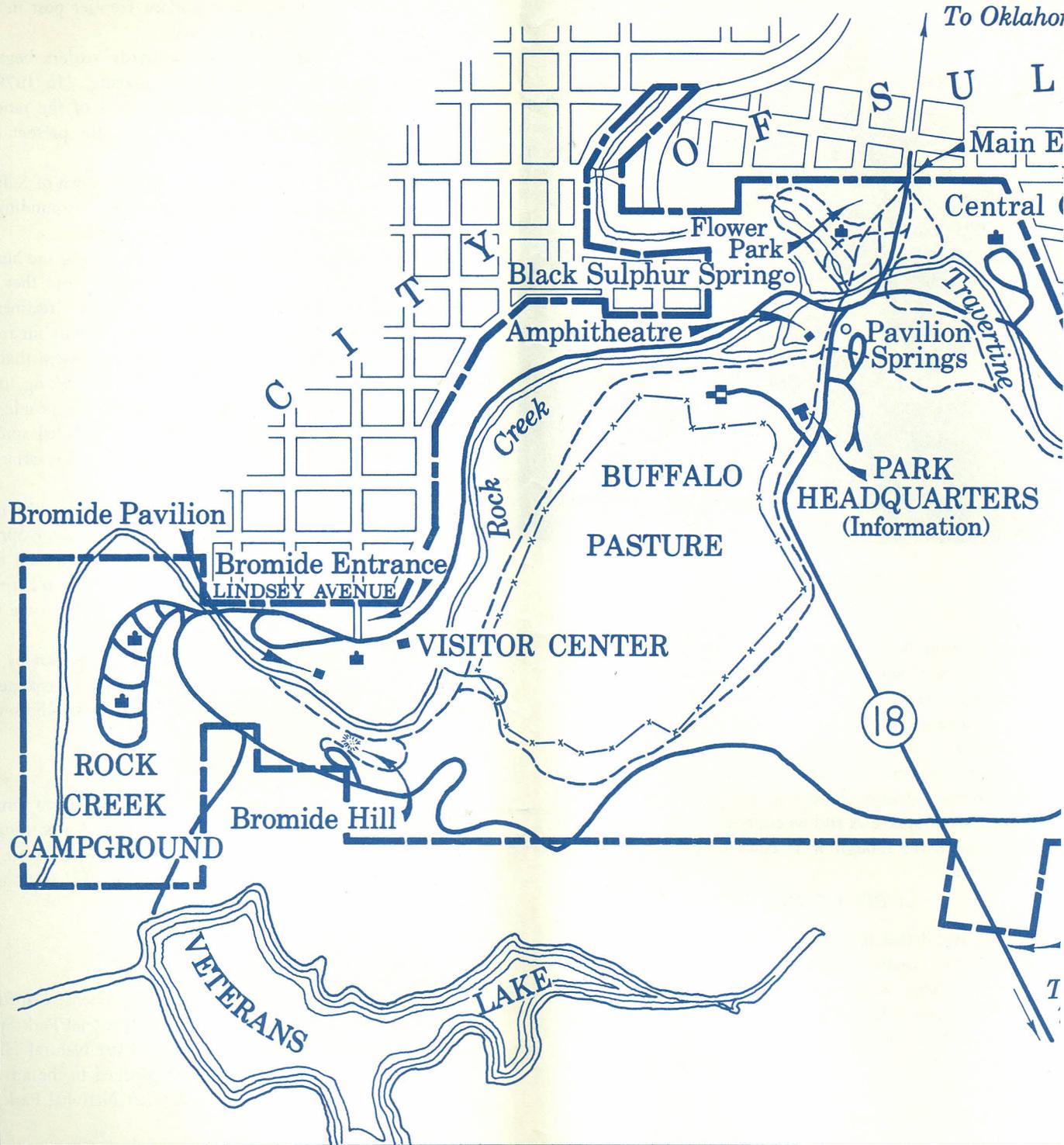
Summer is the busiest season, but the park is open throughout the year. Especially interesting periods for visiting are the first 2 weeks in April, when the redbud is in bloom, and the late autumn, when the park's heavily wooded sections display their colors.

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

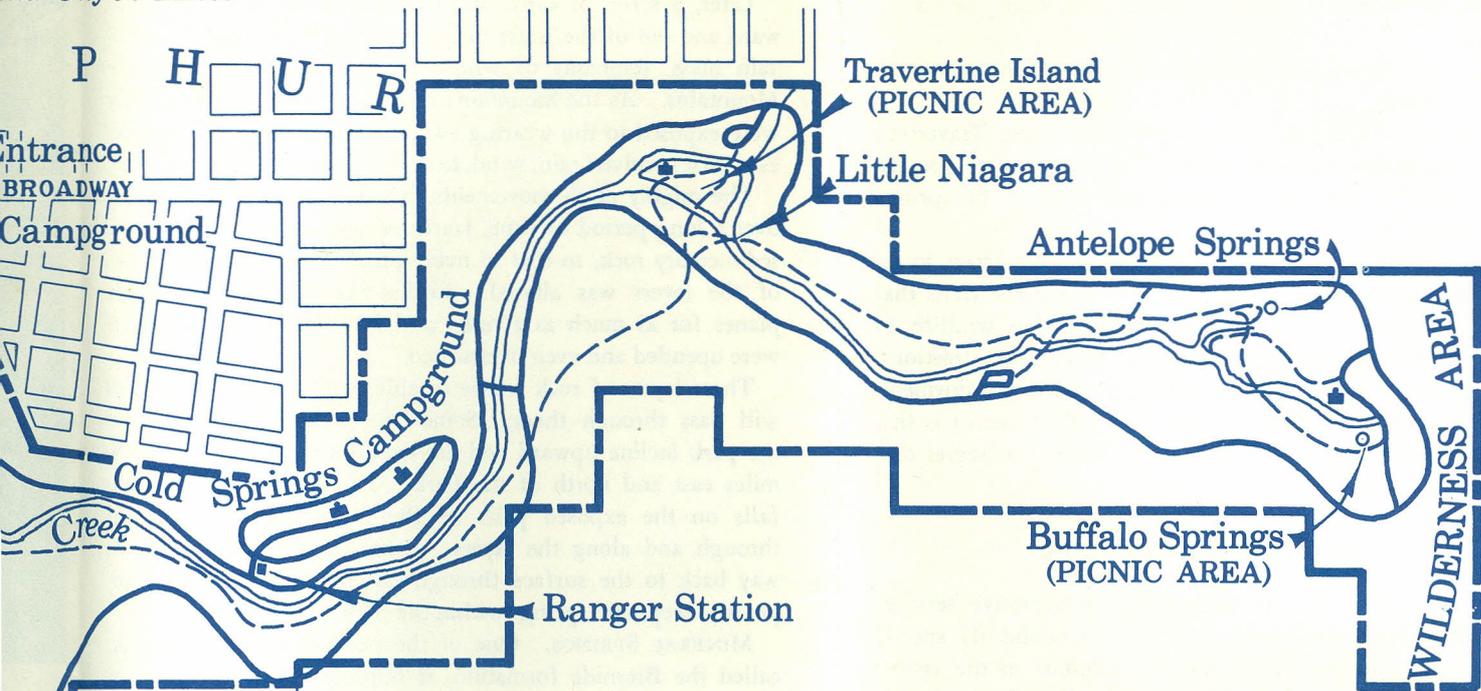
Publications which provide more comprehensive information on the park and other units of the National Park System are for sale in the visitor center by the Platt Natural History Association, a nonprofit organization pledged to the advancement of the interpretive program of Platt National Park.

HOW TO REACH THE PARK

BY AUTOMOBILE. The park may be easily reached by U.S. 77 from the north and south through Davis, 9 miles to



ma City 90 Miles



STATE
VETERANS
HOSPITAL

South Entrance

to Durant
73 Miles

PLATT NATIONAL PARK OKLAHOMA

LEGEND

-  Park Boundry
-  Paved Road
-  Trail
-  Comfort Station

0 500 1000 2000

SCALE IN FEET

the west, and by U.S. 70 from the east and west through Ardmore, 23 miles to the south. State Route 18 crosses the park from south to north, connecting with U.S. 70 at the south and U.S. 66 at the north.

BY TRAIN. Railroad service is maintained by the Atcheson, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway to Davis.

BY BUS. Local bus service makes connections with major bus lines at Ada, Ardmore, and Davis.

BY PLANE. Air service is maintained by Central Airlines to Ada, with connections at Oklahoma City and Dallas.

ACCOMMODATIONS AND FACILITIES

There are no hotels or cabins in the park; however, they are available in the town of Sulphur, where you will also find medical facilities, groceries, garages, and service stations. Camping equipment can be bought or rented from several Sulphur merchants.

TO HAVE A TROUBLE-FREE VISIT

While here, please remember that you are in a National Park, which must be preserved in a natural condition. We are sure you will wish to obey the park regulations; you will find them posted in conspicuous places. Meanwhile, here are a few points for you to remember:

YOUR CAR. Wherever you drive, observe posted speed

limits. Dense undergrowth along the road and sharp curves make it difficult to see persons or automobiles along the roadside. Be prepared for sudden stops.

CAMPING AND PICNICKING. These activities are permitted in designated areas. Build your fires in the fireplaces provided. Leave your area and table clean when you depart. Use refuse receptacles for all trash.

FIRES are the park's greatest danger. Never leave campfires unattended even for a few minutes. Always extinguish them with water. Be sure that matches and cigarettes are entirely out before disposing of them.

FIREARMS are prohibited within the park, unless adequately sealed, cased, broken down, or otherwise packed to prevent their use.

PETS. You may take your dog or other pets into the park. However, for the protection of the wildlife, they must be on leash or under other physical control at all times. For sanitation reasons, it is desirable that they not be taken into pavilions or near swimming pools or springs.

PARK FEATURES. All things in the park—flowers, trees, animals, rocks, and minerals—are to be left in place and undisturbed, so that others, too, may enjoy them. This protection is a matter of law; it is also a matter of consideration for others and of good citizenship.

ORDERLY CONDUCT. The park is yours, but it also belongs to your neighbor. All are entitled to the fullest enjoyment



Travertine Falls.

of this area. Thoughtfulness and courtesy are always appreciated and are expected of visitors.

ADMINISTRATION

Platt National Park is administered by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. A superintendent, whose address is Platt National Park, Sulphur, Okla., is in immediate charge. Send your questions or comments on services within the park to him. Park rangers and naturalists are uniformed men on duty to help and advise you and to enforce park regulations. Consult them if you are in any difficulty.

MISSION 66

Mission 66 is a program designed to be completed in 1966 which will assure the maximum protection of the scenic, scientific, wilderness, and historic resources of the National Park System in such ways and by such means as will make them available for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fred A. Seaton, *Secretary*

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Conrad L. Wirth, *Director*



Cover: *Sulphur Falls.*