



PLATT NATIONAL PARK

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This beauty spot of Oklahoma, Platt National Park, was first owned by the Chickasaws and Choctaws. This was their summer camping and hunting grounds long before the white man set foot there.

The Indians journeyed long distances over dusty roads to the medicine springs. These springs were their "cure all" for many different diseases. Sulphur water was the most abundant. It gushed forth from the hillside and ran down the creek for miles, coating everything white which it touched. The Indians drank freely of it and soon regained their health.

At that time the woods abounded in game. Deer was plentiful. The streams were full of fish. Then, as now, it was an ideal camping ground. During July and August, some of the most prominent families of the Chickasaw and Choctaw Tribes might be found there for a week or more at a time.

The springs were situated at the foothills of the Arbuckle Mountains. The breeze cooled the atmosphere and made it a delightful place in summer.

Fort Arbuckle was established in 1851. Soon afterward a mail and stage route was put into operation. Stage stands were located at Caddo, Tishomingo, Emitt, Mill Creek, Pauls Valley, Erin Springs (at that time called Elm Springs), Maysville (old Beef Creek), Fort Arbuckle and, then Fort Sill, the farthest outstanding military post in the southwest.

The Mill Creek stage stand was near Sulphur at the home of Cyrus Harris, Governor of the Chickasaws. During the year 1872, among the people who came to Mill Creek, was a young man, Noah Lael, who carried the mail from Gainesville, Texas, to Fort Arbuckle. That same year he secured the contract for shoeing horses from the El Paso Overland Stage Company. His territory embraced the states of Texas, Arkansas, Louisiana and Indian Territory. It was not many years until he accumulated what was considered at that time a nice little fortune.

Mr. Lael thought Miss Lucy Harris the most attractive of the daughters of the Governor. It was his good fortune to woo and win her as his wife. So they were married in 1878, when she was just past sixteen. At that time, when a white man married a girl of the Chickasaw or Choctaw Tribe, he became one of them, and was accorded the same privileges. In those early days any Indian could take up a claim which was not used and have every right to it except the right of giving deeds.

There, on a prominent hill, he built a four room house, his first home. Then he went to Texas and bought three hundred head of cattle. When the cattle were located on the ranch he took his young wife to the new home. This was the beginning of the settlement of the place now known as Sulphur Springs.

Perry Froman, another intermarried citizen, who had married a Chickasaw widow, Mrs. Lovina Colbert Pitchlynn, bought this ranch from Noah Lael in 1882. The bill of sale is as follows: "Know all men, by these presents that we Noah Lael and Lucy Lael of Tishomingo County Chickasaw Nation, do this day bargain sell and convey to Perry Froman a certain place lying on Rock Creek Tishomingo County; known as the Noah Lael "Sulphur Springs Place" and all the improvements belonging to said place, for the consideration of Three Hundred and fifty dollars in hand paid, the receipt hereby acknowledged. We do hereby warrant and defend the title to said place to Perry Froman his heirs and legal representatives forever.

"Given under our hand and seal this 26th day of September, A. D. 1882.

Noah Lael
Lucy Lael

The scope of country the ranch embraces is not specified in the conveyance but it was said to be four miles square.

It is an interesting fact to know that the only daughter of the Fromans, Celeste, married the son of Noah Lael.

Perry Froman went into the cattle raising business on a very extensive scale. At times he handled as many as fifteen thousand head a season. He continued to hold the ranch place until the allotment of the Chickasaw and Choctaw lands

in 1903. The Indians wishing to preserve the medicine springs for all time for the use of their tribes ceded, by treaty, to the United States this tract of land which included some thirty different wells of medicinal properties. The land was selected and turned over to the Government through Indian Commissioners, who exacted as their consideration, that the United States improve and beautify the park and maintain the healing waters through all time for the free use of all people.

Congress appropriated half a million dollars to be used in improving the 848 acre park and re-imbursing those people who had been forced by the Commission to leave the park.

Senator Orville H. Platt, of Connecticut, the author of the bill creating a National park at Sulphur, died soon after the passage of his bill, so Congress changed the name of the reservation from Sulphur National Park to Platt National Park, in his honor. It may be interesting to note, that a relative of Senator Platt, Col. Joseph W. Swords was appointed the first superintendent of the park.

This is a park of great natural beauty, but its chief value is in restoring people to health, yet as a pleasure resort it is increasing rapidly. The number of visitors to the Park last year ranked second to any National Park in the United States. As it is located in a mild climate, it is open all year.

No park furnishes wells and springs of water with such wonderful properties. One of these wells flows 25,000 gallons of pure, clear, sulphur water per minute, and Buffalo Springs flows 5,000,000 per day. The Government report shows they have the largest Bromide Springs in the world here.

The city of Sulphur, adjacent to this park, is a beautiful little city of 6,000 inhabitants, with splendid churches of almost all denominations, private hospitals, bath houses, a fine new court house, and a splendid, well equipped auditorium.

The Oklahoma legislature located the sanitorium and hospital for the soldiers of the World War near Sulphur. The value of the property and equipment is \$400,000.

The club women of the state of Oklahoma expect to foster a movement which is on foot to locate an art colony at Sulphur. There is no more ideal place in all the Southwest for such an institution if the plan is carried out.

CZARINA C. CONLAN.