

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
National Park Service
Region One
Richmond, Virginia

Regional Office Letter No. 637

National Park Superintendents
National Monument Custodians
Regional Office Personnel
Inspectors
State Supervisors
Recreational Demonstration Area Managers
(and all Supervisory Personnel)
Auditors
Procurement Officers
Traveling Mechanics
Project Superintendents and Foremen
Technicians
Central Design Personnel

Subject: Know Your Service Series.

Reference is made to Regional Office Letter No. 631 of December 18, 1940, under the subject: "The Responsibilities of All Personnel in the Service's program and in Its Public Relations." It announced a plan of this office to distribute to all field personnel a series of Know Your Service bulletins designed to provide in brief form certain essential background information concerning the Service's history, objectives, responsibilities, and activities.

The first number of the series is attached. It is recommended that all units be bound together as they are issued because it is intended that the materials constitute a convenient reference for use in preparation of any talks or papers which circumstances may require.

We wish to reemphasize the desirability of each employee's acquiring a reasonable fund of knowledge concerning the Service's contributions to the national conservation-recreation program. Such a knowledge is necessary for the good of the Service and of the individual; and it is essential if employees are to supply intelligent answers to inquiries made by the public.

In the future there will be no cover letters with the several units of the series, but each pack of bulletins will be accompanied by a routing sheet to indicate the distribution. The responsible official concerned is requested to make certain that a copy reach each employee under his supervision. If the quantities forwarded by this office are insufficient, please inform us of the total required.



Fred T. Johnston,
Acting Regional Director.

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
REGION ONE
RICHMOND, VIRGINIA

KNOW YOUR SERVICE (NO. 16)

Platt National Park--The Healing Waters

When the Sulphur Springs Reservation in south-central Oklahoma became Platt National Park on June 29, 1906, through Congressional action, the national park movement reached further toward the East than at any time in the 34 years since the establishment of Yellowstone. The eastern terminus heretofore had been Wind Cave in South Dakota, established on January 9, 1903. A good idea was headed in the right direction.

Sulphur Springs Reservation was established on July 1, 1902 to preserve a number of cold water springs with exceptional healing properties. There are 32 large springs and several smaller ones, running through a wooded, rolling countryside. Eighteen of the larger springs are classed as sulphur; six as fresh water, four as iron, and three as bromide. Because it comes out of the ground in a national park, all of this water is free, but folks who intend to drink prodigious amounts had better take it up with the doctor.

The water in Platt National Parks has these virtues because Nature thought that was a good place to have them bubble up, but the inevitable Indian legend has it another way. In his *The Book of the National Parks*, Robert Sterling Yard tells it the way Colonel R. A. Sneed, for years the Superintendent of Platt, passed it on to him. It has to do with a small determined band of Delaware Indians, who wandered all the way from Alabama and finally found a resting place with the Chickasaws in southern Oklahoma.

Big Chief of the Delawares was the late great Wahpanucka, among whose most treasured possessions was a lovely daughter named Deerface. Many young braves sought her hand, but two handsome Delawares stood out among them. The old chief decided that these two should leap down 200 feet from what is now Bromide Cliff into the stream below, and that the survivor would wed Deerface and succeed him as Chief of the Delawares. They jumped, but neither survived; then Deerface jumped; and an image of her face, they say, can be seen to this day on one of the rocks of the cliff. Old Wahpanucka just stood there and cried and his tears filtered down through the cliff rocks and so purified the water of Bromide and Medicine Springs below that forever after they will be "possessed with remedial qualities which make it a cure for all human ailments."

Platt National Park is so named in honor of the late Orville Hitchcock Platt, U. S. Senator from Connecticut for 26 years, who was active in the passage of the establishing legislation. Congress acted favorably on the matter largely as a result of the efforts of the people of southern Oklahoma who thought their Sulphur Springs Reservation should have national recognition. Senator Platt was a lover of the outdoors and a keen student of Indian affairs. He had a superb physique which enabled him to establish an enviable record in school athletics. The Platt Amendment, which governed Cuban-American relations between 1901 and 1934, also bears his name. He was frequently considered as a vice presidential possibility, but his personal political ambitions went no further than the "Gentleman from Connecticut."

Bibliography:

The Book of the National Parks by Robert Sterling Yard; Charles Scribner's Sons, New York.
Dictionary of American Biography, Vol. XV; edited by Dumas Malone; Charles Scribner's Sons, New York.