UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM  
FOR FEDERAL PROPERTIES  

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

1 NAME  
HISTORIC  
Scotts Bluff National Monument  
AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION  
STREET & NUMBER  
Three miles west of Gering on Nebraska 92  
CITY, TOWN  
Gering  
STATE  
Nebraska  
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT  
Third  
COUNTY CODE  
Scotts Bluff 157

3 CLASSIFICATION  
CATEGORY  
 huyện  
OWNERSHIP  
PUBLIC  
BUILDING(S)  
PRIVATE  
STRUCTURE  
BOTH  
SITE  
PUBLIC ACQUISITION  
IN PROCESS  
OBJECT  
BEING CONSIDERED  

STATUS  
X-occupied  
UNOCCUPIED  
WORK IN PROGRESS  
ACCESSIBLE  
YES: RESTRICTED  
YES: UNRESTRICTED  
NO

PRESENT USE  
AGRICULTURE  
COMMERCIAL  
EDUCATIONAL  
ENTERTAINMENT  
GOVERNMENT  
INDUSTRIAL  
MILITARY  
PRIVATE  
RELIGIOUS  
SCIENTIFIC  
TRANSPORTATION  
OTHER:

4 AGENCY  
REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS (If applicable)  
Midwest Regional Office, National Park Service  
STREET & NUMBER  
1709 Jackson Street  
CITY, TOWN  
Omaha  
STATE

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION  
COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.  
Midwest Regional Office, National Park Service  
STREET & NUMBER  
1709 Jackson Street  
CITY, TOWN  
Omaha  
STATE  
Nebraska

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS  
TITLE  
National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings  
DATE  
1957-61  
FEDERAL  
STATE  
COUNTY  
LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS  
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation, National Park Service  
CITY, TOWN  
Washington  
STATE  
D.C.
### NAME

**HISTORIC**
Scotts Bluff National Monument

**AND/OR COMMON**

### LOCATION

**CITY, TOWN**  Gering  

**_X_ VICINITY OF**

**COUNTY** Scotts Bluff  **STATE** Nebraska

### PHOTO REFERENCE

**PHOTO CREDIT**

**DATE OF PHOTO**

NEGATIVE FILED AT  Midwest Regional Office, National Park Service

### IDENTIFICATION

**DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC. IF DISTRICT, GIVE BUILDING NAME & STREET**

Dome Rock from the Summit of North Bluff.

**PHOTO NO**
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES ENCLOSE WITH PHOTOGRAPH

1 NAME
HISTORIC
Scotts Bluff National Monument
AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION
CITY, TOWN Gering X VICINITY OF COUNTY Scotts Bluff STATE Nebraska

3 PHOTO REFERENCE
PHOTO CREDIT
DATE OF PHOTO
NEGATIVE FILED AT Midwest Regional Office, National Park Service

4 IDENTIFICATION
DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC. IF DISTRICT, GIVE BUILDING NAME & STREET
PHOTO NO
View of Scotts Bluff from the Summit
Scotts Bluff National Monument is located in Scotts Bluff County, Nebraska, about 20 miles east of the Wyoming state line, in what is commonly called the "Panhandle of Nebraska." The three nearest towns are: Gering, three miles east of the headquarters area; the city of Scottsbluff, five miles northeast from the Monument; and Mitchell, Nebraska, some 10 miles to the northwest. State Highway 92 intersects the Monument and connects with U.S. 26, 20 miles to the east; with State Highway 29 in Gering; and again at an intersection some three miles north of headquarters.

The North Platte River flows in a southeasterly direction through western Nebraska to a junction with the South Platte at North Platte, Nebraska, (175 miles east of the Monument). The Monument borders this river on the south bank and encompasses the famous bluff, which bears the name of one of the more unfortunate "mountain men," Hiram Scott.

Along the south bank of the North Platte River for 100 miles in western Nebraska, is a long ridge of bluffs. These bluffs, with some lesser hills to the north, form the North Platte Valley. Scotts Bluff, a massive promontory rising 800 feet above the valley floor, stands apart from these bluffs to form one of the dominant features of this valley. To the north of Scotts Bluff, extending to the North Platte River is a rugged area of badlands. South of Scotts Bluff, at the southern edge of the Monument is South Bluff. Between Scotts Bluff and South Bluff is Mitchell Pass through which the famous Oregon Trail ran, three-and-a-half miles of which can be seen in the form of wagon ruts. Flanking Mitchell Pass to the north is Eagle Rock and to the south is Sentinel Rock. Numerous rock inscriptions remain from the pioneer emigrants. To the south of Sentinel Rock is Coyote Pass. Other prominent geologic features of South Bluff include Crown Rock and Dome Rock to its east. Water resources within the Monument include several intermittent streams, Scotts Spring, and the Mitchell and Gering Canal.

Prehistoric structures, all of which are unexposed, include four campsites of various Indian tribes, located near the bluff-top parking lot, at the base of the north side of Scotts Bluff, on the east side of Scotts Bluff, and on the south side of South Bluff.

Non-historic structures within the Monument include the following:

Scottsbluff Country Club and road (1920's)
Visitor Center and Museum (1935, 1938, 1948)
Residence #1 (1938, 1949)
Residence #2 (1958)
Utility Building (1936, 1958)
Comfort Station (1938)
Pump Vault (1936)
Pump House (1938)
Campfire Circle (1958)
Flagpole
State Highway 92 (1934-1938)
Summit Road, Three Tunnels, and parking area (1934-1939)
Named for Hiram Scott, a fur trapper who died in the vicinity about 1828, Scotts Bluff is an ancient landmark and was noted by the earliest tribes whose records have been preserved. To the Indians of the Plains, Scotts Bluff was Me-a-pa-te, or "the-hill-that-is-hard-to-go-around." It became a principal landmark of the great overland migrations of the nineteenth century.

The bluff was once part of the ancient High Plains. Erosion over long periods has cut down the surrounding valleys to their present level, leaving Scotts Bluff and the adjoining hills as remnants of the unbroken plains which now lie farther to the west.

The North Platte Valley, of which Scotts Bluff is the dominant natural feature, has been a human migration corridor for centuries. Some stone artifacts found here indicate that man has been here for more than 10,000 years. When white men first arrived, they found that this area was a favorite hunting ground of Sioux, Cheyenne, and Arapaho Indians, for here vast herds of buffalo came to water.

The first white men to see Scotts Bluff were Robert Stuart and his companions, who in 1812-13 passed by carrying dispatches to John Jacob Astor from his new fur post in Oregon. In the years that followed, trappers and traders saw it when they brought their beaver pelts down the Platte River to settlements farther east; and explorers and missionaries passed the bluff on their way from advance posts of civilization into the western wilderness.

In 1843 the vanguard of a great pioneer army passed Scotts Bluff in the first large migration to Oregon. Four years later Brigham Young led the first group of his followers past the bluff on the north side of the Platte, a route later famous as the Mormon Trail. The two years following the discovery of gold in California in 1848 saw more than 150,000 men, women, and children traveling through the area.

In 1860-61 Pony Express riders galloped through Mitchell Pass, which skirts the southern base of the bluff. They were followed shortly by the first transcontinental telegraph. The Overland Mail, Pony Express, Pacific Telegraph, and Overland Stage built stations near Scotts Bluff. In 1864 Fort Mitchell was established two-and-a-half miles to the northwest to protect stagecoaches and wagon trains on the Oregon Trail. The following year the North Platte Valley was considered as a possible route for the Union Pacific, then building westward to link up with the Central Pacific to form the first transcontinental railroad, but a line through Cheyenne was chosen instead. The completion of the railroad in 1869 marked the decline of the Oregon Trail, although it continued in use locally for many years.
CONTINUATION SHEET ITEM NUMBER 6 PAGE 1

TITLE: List of Classified Structures

DATE: August 1, 1975

FEDERAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: Midwest Regional Office, National Park Service

CITY: Omaha

STATE: Nebraska
Numerous trails, including "Scout Trail" and "Scotts Spring Trail" which features a tunnel cut through Saddle Rock
Union Pacific Railroad tracks to the south of the North Platte River
Power transmission lines across the southeast corner of the Monument
Numerous markers and signs including those commemorating the following:
  Hiram Scott
  Mitchell Pass
  Oregon Trail
  Observation Point
  Jackson Camp
In the late 1870's and early 1880's, Scotts Bluff was the geographical center of the open-range cattle industry, the last great romantic episode of the frontier. With the arrival of the first homesteaders in the North Platte Valley in 1885, the local frontier disappeared and Scotts Bluff became a symbol of the Nation's past.

It was the development of Scotts Bluff as a symbol of the Nation's past that local and state interests devoted themselves following the turn of the century. Following a period of strong activity, Scotts Bluff was proclaimed a National Monument on December 12, 1919. The following decade saw little development, save for foot trails and picnic areas, despite widespread interest. With the advent of the depression the Monument underwent a period of active development under the aegis of such employment programs as the C.W.A., W.P.A., and C.C.C. Constructed during this period were the Summit Road with its three tunnels and parking lot, State Highway 92, the Museum (later called the Visitors Center) in which is housed a notable collection of paintings and memorabilia of the famed Western artist, William Henry Jackson, landscape preservation work, a temporary camp (Civilian Conservation Corps Camp 762) near the Scottsbluff Country Club which was later removed and had housed up to 200 men, picnic grounds west and south of Mitchell Pass, a water supply system, a residence, and a utility building. By 1939 the extreme popularity of the picnic grounds led to a degenerate state and to their permanent closing, despite strong local protest.

During the decade encompassing the World War II and decade following it, some minor changes were made to the Monument, including additions to the Museum and the residence in 1948. Numerous major rock slides occurred along the Summit Road which required lengthy clearance work. In 1949 use of the Gering Golf Course and a rifle range, both within the boundaries, was discontinued.

During the early 1960's a number of construction projects were undertaken as part of the "Mission 66" program of the National Park Service. Besides considerable upgrading of facilities, roads, and trails, a new residence, an addition to the utility building, and an amphitheater were constructed. At this time 47.63 acres were added to the Monument.

Thus, a consistent and thorough program has been undertaken for the preservation of this unique historic and geologic area.
Beginning at a point on Nebraska State Highway 92 about 1100 feet southeast of its intersection with a county road in Section 32 of Township 22 of Scotts Bluff County, Nebraska, the boundary of Scotts Bluff National Monument meanders northward about 1200 feet to its intersection with the north border of Section 32 where it then proceeds due north about 1300 feet to a point (G) where it turns due east about 1500 feet to a point slightly west of an intermittent stream which it follows northward about 1500 feet to the stream's intersection with the Mitchell and Gering Canal. The boundary then follows the Canal eastward about 2700 feet to a point where it turns due north-northeast about 1700 feet to its intersection with the North Platte River, which it follows eastward about 7700 feet to a point (B) where it turns due south about 1800 feet to a point (C) where it turns westward following the Gering Canal about 1500 feet to a point where it turns southward following an intermittent stream about 5700 feet to the point where the southern of two power transmission lines running west from Gering turns south-southwest. At this point the boundary proceeds due south about 1400 feet where it crosses an intermittent stream and follows along its south side about 1800 feet southwestward to a point where it turns and proceeds due south about 2800 feet to a point where it turns due east about 1300 feet to a point where it turns due south about 1600 feet to its intersection (point D) of Gering lateral stream which it then follows west-northwestward about 2300 feet to a point where the boundary turns due north about 600 feet to a point where it turns due west about 3100 feet to a point where it turns due north about 700 feet to a point where it turns northwest about 1000 feet to a point where it turns due west about 4700 feet to a point (E) where it turns north-northwest about 3400 feet to its intersection of Scotts Bluff Lateral Stream (point F) which it follows about 1800 feet to the intersection of the stream and the south border of Township 22. At this point the boundary turns due east about 900 feet to a point where it turns due north about 200 feet to a dirt road which it follows north-northwestward about 3300 feet to its intersection with State Highway 92, which it then follows about 1800 feet northwest to the point of beginning.
Archeological materials excavated within the boundaries of Scotts Bluff National Monument and historic objects from within the park are historically associated with its primary theme, the Oregon Trail. The Jackson Collection includes water colors, sketches, photographs, and personal memorabilia of Civilian William Henry Jackson, famous frontier photographer and artist.