

OKLAHOMA  
TERRITORY

## TERRITORIAL TALES

Bits of  
History  
Before  
Statehood

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# Spa Brought National Fame

Platt National Park was a wonderland of strange springs of water to travelers and settlers long before Oklahoma became a state. It was named for Sen. Orville A. Platt of Connecticut, who became a champion of statehood for Oklahoma, although not necessarily for the same reasons Oklahomans had in mind.

In 1886, when Col. Richard A. Sneed was a merchant in Pauls Valley, he conceived the idea of establishing a health and pleasure resort on the ranch of Perry Froman, which included the mineral water springs.

The area he had in mind later became 848 acres of Platt National Park. Sneed lost his business and other assets in the financial recession of 1893, but he undertook to develop his idea.

Among those associated with Sneed in this enterprise were Calvin and Thomas Grant, Chickasaw Nation pioneers; Charles D. Carter of Ardmore, later a congressman; Dr. J.A. Ryan; Samuel Kennedy, a merchant; Judge W.A. Ledbetter; and H.L. Stuart, lawyer.

They formed the Sulphur Springs Company, acquired 640 acres of the Froman Ranch, and began advertising the medicinal properties of the sulfur and bromide waters. Additional land was taken over when an act of Congress created Platt National Park in 1902.

Sneed was appointed superintendent of the park by Franklin K. Lane, secretary of the interior, in recognition of his vision of preserving and utilizing the waters. The town of Sulphur grew up beside the park and for many years attracted visitors from other states, who often stayed for weeks to drink the waters.