

PIPE SPRINGS

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Recently, there were questions and discussions on Facebook about the Pipe Springs Park at Locust Grove. Shaun Perkins, representing the Locust Grove Chamber, asked me to share any information that I might have about Pipe Springs.

Shaun humorously refers to me as the “unofficial” town historian of Locust Grove. I can only chuckle about that because there is far more to learn than what I know. The good news is that I enjoy doing research. In that regard, here is a summary of what I’ve located on the subject of Pipe Springs with some town trivia thrown in. More reports may follow as the research continues, depending on what turns up.



Billie Cavalier and a friend at Pipe Springs in the early 1930s

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE:

The Pipe Springs area was the scene of a skirmish during the Civil War. It is referred to as the Battle of Locust Grove and occurred on July 3, 1862. The Union army overwhelmed the Confederates who were camped at the spring. One estimate placed the Confederate losses at approximately 250 casualties or captured, out of a force of approximately 300 troops. The Union force of 250 men had only a single fatality and few wounded, so were exceptionally victorious in this battle. This incident is the most noteworthy event to happen at Pipe Springs.

TEN OWNERS OF PIPE SPRINGS:

1. The United States in 1803:

The land that would become Oklahoma was part of the Louisiana Purchase in 1803. Thomas Jefferson was the buyer for the U.S. and Napoleon Bonaparte was the seller for France.

2. The Cherokee Nation in 1834:

In the 1830's, land within the Louisiana Purchase was set aside by the government and declared as "Indian Territory". Native American tribes were forcibly relocated by the government to this region. Specific tracts of land were conveyed to specific Indian tribes.

3. Lewis W. Ross in 1905:

Individual land ownership in the Indian Territory was started in 1902 with the allotment of lands by the Dawes Commission. The first individual to own the land containing the natural spring was Lewis W. Ross, a Cherokee citizen who received an allotment of ninety acres on November 14, 1905.

4. O. W. Killam in 1912:

On August 22, 1912 (after the founding of the town), O. W. Killam, the founder of Locust Grove, purchased twenty acres of the original Ross allotment for six hundred and seventy-five dollars. These twenty acres contained the spring.

Earlier, on May 1, 1912, a plat map and description of a town to be called Locust Grove was presented by Mr. Killam to the Mayes County Clerk's office. It containing 160 acres, with avenues, boulevards, streets and alleys laid out, as well as parks and other public places. On May 12, Mr. Killam held a public real estate auction. It is said that by four o'clock in the afternoon, all of the lots were sold. The town was incorporated in 1913.

When the town was founded, there were already a few homes and businesses in the area that utilized wells and springs for their water supply. Mr. Killam's intent, upon buying the spring, was to supplement the existing water supplies with an additional water supply to the town.

At some point, the town installed a pump at the spring with steel pipe carrying the water to town. Perhaps this is where the name "Pipe Springs" originated. It eventually proved to be an inadequate water supply. The Locust Grove Board Trustees voted on May 11, 1920 to "sell the pipe at the spring and also sell the pump if he could get anything near what it is worth."

OWNERS OF PIPE SPRINGS (cont.):

5. Town of Locust Grove in 1924:

On October 6, 1924, O. W. Killam and his wife Hattie conveyed five acres “known as the Town Spring” to the town of Locust Grove “to be used for a town park under rules and regulations to be prescribed by said town.”

6. State of Oklahoma in 1937:

On July 23, 1937, the City of Locust Grove conveyed the Pipe Springs Park to the State of Oklahoma. This may have been influenced by the designation of the new State Highway 33 through Locust Grove in the 1930s or done simply to eliminate the cost of maintaining the park.

7. City of Locust Grove in 1972:

On June 5, 1972, the Oklahoma State Highway Commission conveyed five acres (containing the Pipe Springs Park) back to the City of Locust Grove.

8. Industrial Development and Park Department of Oklahoma in 1972:

On June 21, 1972, the City of Locust Grove conveyed five acres (containing the Pipe Springs Park) to the Industrial Development and Park Department of Oklahoma.

9. Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Commission, sometime between 1972 and 1975:

At some point during this time period, the Industrial Development and Park Department of Oklahoma conveyed ownership of the park to the Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Commission.

10. City of Locust Grove in 1975:

On June 12, 1975, the Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Commission, successor to the Industrial Development and Park Department of Oklahoma, conveyed five acres (containing the Pipe Springs Park) back to the City of Locust Grove.

The Board of Trustee minutes do not contains any information about why these transfers occurred during the 1970's.

COMMENTS:

In 1924, Pipe Springs was conveyed to the town of Locust Grove by O. W. Killam to be “used as a park.” At that point, the park was a mixed blessing. It was an asset to the town, but also a liability because of the maintenance issues.

A review of Locust Grove Board of Trustees meeting minutes indicates a continuous battle to balance town expenses with town income. It appears that the most mentioned challenge facing the town was maintaining an adequate water supply. This challenge started when the town was founded and continues to current times.

There are a number of references to Pipe Springs in the early minutes of the Locust Grove Board of Trustees. For example:

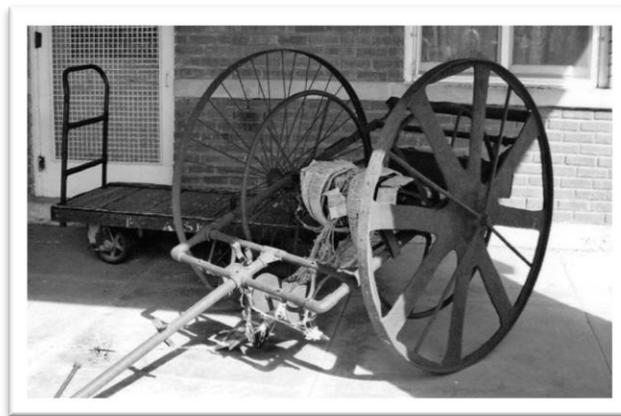
<u>Date</u>	<u>Expense</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Comments</u>
Jan. 7, 1926	\$ 3.50	“Sanitary work at spring”	<i>This indicates an outhouse at Pipe Springs.</i>
June 2, 1926	10.00	“5 days work at Spring”	<i>This work was performed by Jim Murphy, the long-time school custodian at Locust Grove.</i>
June 2, 1926	43.00	“Supplies at Spring”	
Nov. 3, 1926	8.00	“work in town & pipe springs”	
June 1, 1927	5.00	“Work at Pipe Springs”	<i>Jim Murphy again.</i>
Nov. 1, 1927	7.50	“Sanitary work at Pipe Springs”	
July 3, 1928	4.75	“Table for Pipe Spring”	
Dec. 17, 1928	9.00	“Cleaning Pipe Spg Toilet”	
Dec. 17, 1928	24.80	“Work at spring”	

These are not insignificant amounts of money. For instance, the monthly salary for the Town Marshall was fifty dollars in 1928. It was interesting to note that, for some unknown period of time during the mid-1930s, the Pipe Springs Park was leased to an individual who charged an admission fee for use of the park.

Over the decades, Oklahoma has suffered a number of severe droughts. It appears that the spring never dried up. The volume of water might go down, but it always ran. There have been many instances where this spring provided the only publicly available water. There are still witnesses to farmers and ranchers who filled barrels of water to take back home for their families and livestock in the early 1950s. Even now, people still fill jugs of water at Pipe Springs.

RAMDOMLY SELECTED MOTIONS BY THE L.G. BOARD OF TRUSTEES:

Date	Expense	Description	Comments
Oct. 7, 1925	\$ 3.70	“Groceries for travelers.”	
August 2, 1927	1.50	“Band Entertainment”	
“	4.60	“Groceries for Mrs. Bolin”	<i>There has to be a story here.</i>
“	25.00	“1/2 on Mrs. Eva Bolin casket.”	<i>Does anybody know?</i>
Oct. 5, 1927	3.50	“Killing of dogs and Hauling off dead animals”	<i>There were numerous postings of this type throughout the minutes.</i>
Nov. 1, 1927		“A meeting called to talk over and decide on a way to deal with the depredations of Halloween night. It was decided to try the case by arbitration.”	
Feb. 1, 1928	17.75	“Groceries for Chas Rush”	
“	6.65	“Med supplies for Chas Rush”	
“		“It was also resolved by the Board to have O.D. Caywood move the hamburger wagon situated on the corner of Main and Broadway”	
Aug. 14, 1928		Special meeting called to consider bids on the Water Works System. Bids were held pending investigation. The eleven bids ranged from \$22,612 to \$26,700. At a special meeting the next day, a new low bid of \$22,175 was accepted by the Board.	
Dec. 17, 1928	\$1,060.00	Buy fire hose, hose cart, nozzle and spanners.	



This is not the actual Locust Grove fire hose cart, but is the type of cart purchased by the town.

April 3, 1929

Motion made and seconded for “a fire department of ten men was adopted with R.R. Grew as fire chief and Ira Ingram as assistant and a fire alarm to be ordered and installed, also an ordinance to be selected for the maintenance of the fire department.”