

SURVEY VALLEY HISTORICAL SIGN

The historical sign for "Survey Valley" was placed without contacting anyone from the Professional Surveyor's Association of Nebraska to verify the accuracy of the wording. There are several problems with the wording. Aside from the errors in the text, the general theme that the area was named because of railroad surveyors is likely incorrect. Although railroad surveyors did look for a route through this area, there is no supporting documentation that the area was named "Survey Valley" because of the railroad. The most likely reason is because of the many resurveys that took place in the area in the early 1900's. The sign has completely missed the mark as to why the valley was named and does not mention the resurveys.

In October of 2017, I contacted the Nebraska State Historical Society with the statements below showing where the errors exist on the sign as it currently reads. This does not address the general theme that does not mention the resurveys. It is my opinion that the sign needs to be completely rewritten and replaced.

I received a response in January 2018 stating that my research was correct, however, the Nebraska State Historical Society did not feel that the errors were egregious enough to warrant the expense of replacing the sign. This is unfortunate. – Jerry Penry.

The text in red are the inaccurate parts of the sign.

1. This natural valley extending east and west across the Sandhills became known as Survey Valley after the Burlington and Missouri River Railroad surveyed a prospective line from O'Neill to Alliance in 1887.

The Burlington and Missouri River Railroad (a subsidiary company of the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad who built lines in Nebraska) did not have any ties to the railroad between Sioux City and O'Neill until they purchased it on November 1, 1907.

The line was built to O'Neill under the name of Nebraska & Western Railway, which was commonly referred to as the Pacific Short Line. The Pacific Short Line reached O'Neill on July 16, 1890. That same year, the railroad failed and reorganized under the name Sioux City O'Neill & Western Railroad in 1891, but retained the moniker of Pacific Short Line. The destination of this railroad was Ogden, Utah, and not Alliance, Nebraska. Maps indicate it would have crossed the Burlington Railroad somewhere in the vicinity of Hemingford, Nebraska.

The incorrect railroad information likely came from Perkey's Nebraska Place Names book.

Supporting documents:

Los Angeles Herald: 5-19-1890

Black Hills Weekly Times: 6-27-1890

Nebraska State Journal: 8-19-1890

Nebraska State Journal: 9-14-1890

Inter Ocean (Chicago): 12-16-1890

Omaha Daily Bee: 12-19-1890

Salt Lake Tribune: 3-10-1891

Chicago Tribune: 1-9-1892

The Home Knowledge Atlas 1891: George F. Cram map showing proposed route.

Suggested edit:

This natural valley extending east and west across the Sandhills became known as Survey Valley after the Pacific Short Line Railroad surveyed a prospective line from O'Neill to Ogden, Utah, in 1890.

2. No rails were ever laid.

This line is correct.

3. On January 19, 1909, Survey Post Office was established about eight miles west of here in the home of John C. Jones, the first postmaster.

Correct according to post office documents at the Nebraska State Historical Society.

4. A carrier delivered and picked up mail twice a week.

Correct according to post office documents at the Nebraska State Historical Society.

5. The post office moved a short distance to the homes of subsequent postmasters in 1913 and again in 1931.

The Survey Post Office had at least five different locations.

Supporting documents:

Nebraska State Historical Society post office reports on microfilm. RG529, Microcopy No. 1126, Roll 3.

Suggested edit:

The post office moved short distances to the homes of subsequent postmasters several times.

6. Survey Post Office was closed June 30, 1934.

Correct according to post office documents at the Nebraska State Historical Society.

7. Survey Valley settlers acquired land under the 1862 Homestead Act and, more often, under the 1904 Kinkaid Act, the latter sponsored by Nebraska Congressman Moses P. Kinkaid.

This line is correct.

8. They established a close relationship with the town of Hyannis in neighboring Grant County.

This line is correct.

9. A portion of John W. Shackelford's homestead located in Section 16, Township 27, Range 38 was set aside as a local cemetery.

John W. Shackelford's homestead was the South ½ of Section 18 and the North ½ of Section 19 in Township 27 North, Range 38 West. Section 16 was State owned land because it was a school section. This land was not sold by the State until October 20, 2004, and was sold to Albert T. and Dorothy C. Davis.

The cemetery is located in Section 6, Township 27 North, Range 36 West which is 10 miles east of the stated location. It is known as the Curtis Cemetery. The cemetery is near the boundary line between the SE Quarter and SW Quarter of Section 6. The SE Quarter was homesteaded by Samuel H. Dye, while the East ½ of the SW Quarter was homesteaded by James F. Dye.

Supporting documents:

Bureau of Land Management Homestead Records.
U. S. Geological Survey topographical 7.5-minute quad sheet.

Suggested edit:

A portion of Samuel H. Dye's homestead located in Section 6, Township 27, Range 36 was set aside as a local cemetery.

10. Eight children, several of whom died in infancy, and three adults were interred there between 1910 and 1917.

According to information of the website Find-a-Grave, the Curtis Cemetery has 11 marked graves and many others that are unmarked. The dates of the marked graves range from 1892-1914. Five would be considered adults and 6 children. The birth date for Clair Dye is unknown, but assume a child.

The death date for George R. Lackey is confirmed in an obituary.

Supporting documents:

Find A Grave website.
The Alliance Herald. July 23, 1914.

Suggested edit:

Of those in marked graves, six children, several of whom died in infancy, and five adults were interred there between 1892-1914.