



# Archaeological Investigations at Chickasaw National Recreation Area: A Successful Community Project

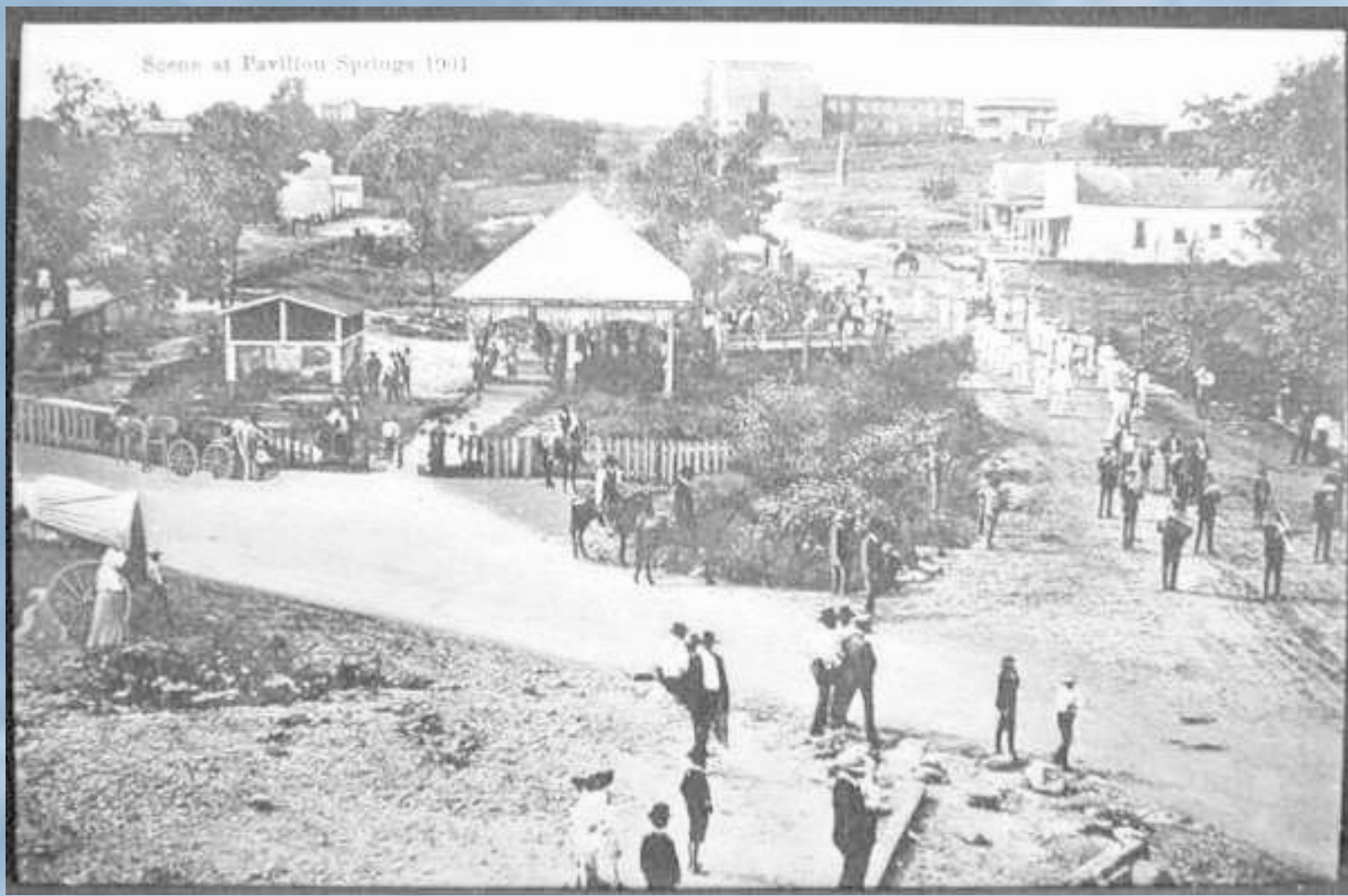
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**This poster summarizes a joint project between the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and the Midwest Archeological Center which was funded by the Great Plains-Cooperative Ecosystems Studies Unit**

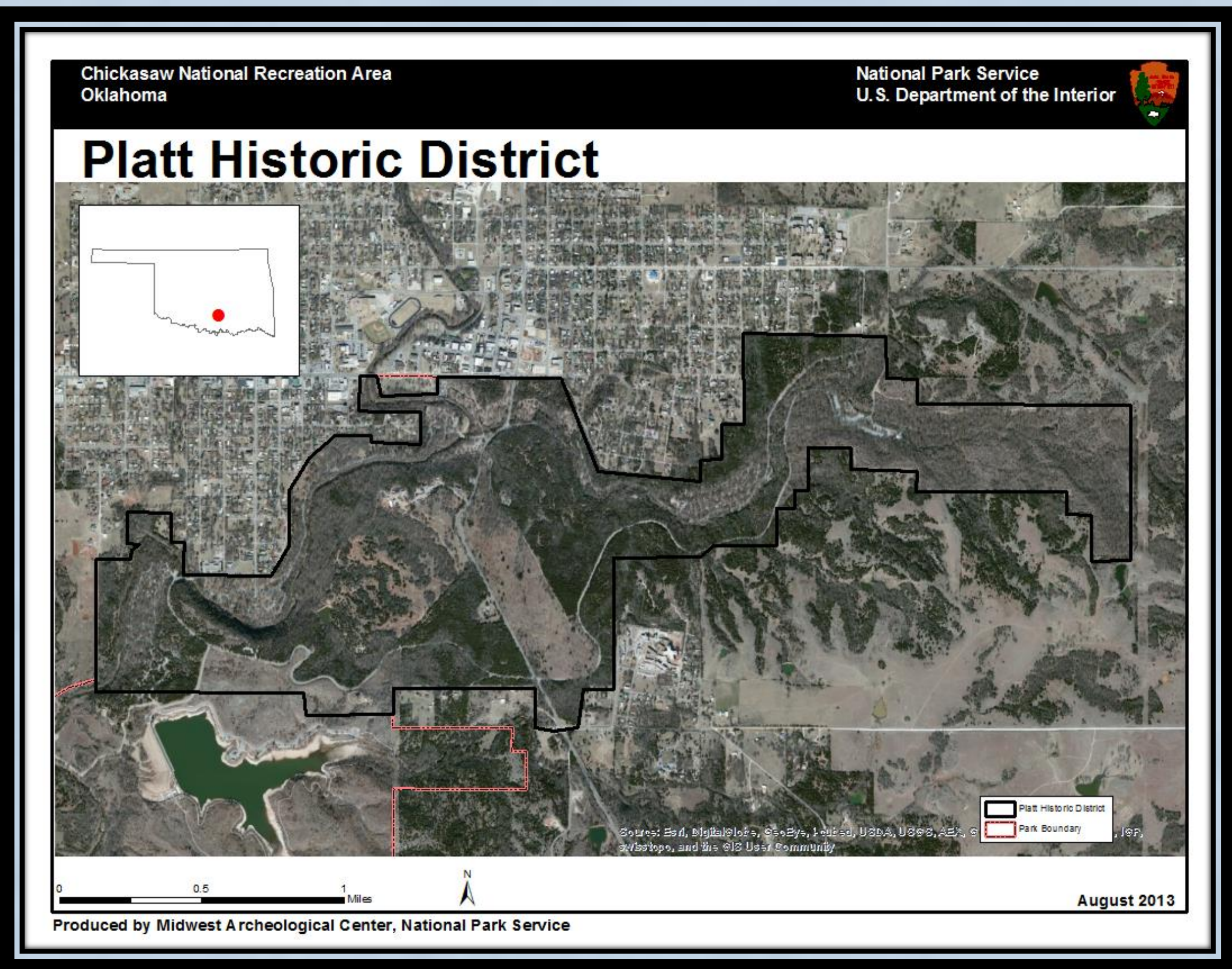
**Goal:**

- To develop a research plan that would inventory archaeological remains and aid future development at Chickasaw National Recreation Area
- The CCC era had been extensively documented, but little was known about the former town of Sulphur Springs that had been located within the Park boundary



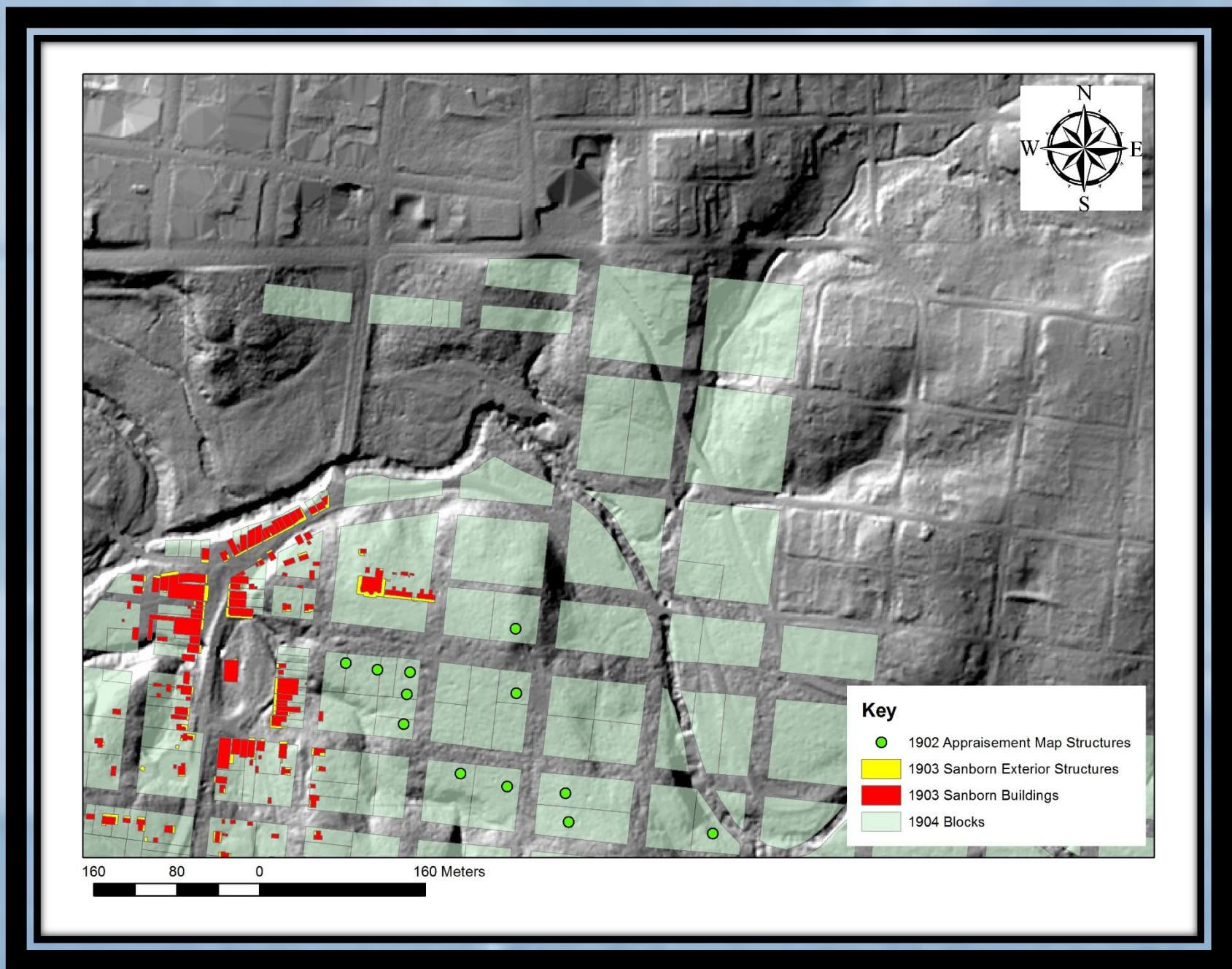
**History:**

- Sulphur Springs was founded in the mid -1870’s and located on the Chickasaw Nation, Indian Territory (Present-day Oklahoma)
- Centered on 30 fresh and mineral water springs
- The springs drew visitors and investors due to their reputed health benefits and the turn-of-the-century trend of middle class vacationing for its physical, emotional and spiritual well-being
- The new town developed quickly until 1902 when Col. R.A. Sneed traveled to Washington D.C. to plea the town’s case. He returned with the announcement that the town site was to be purchased from the Chickasaw by the Federal Government, creating a reservation and that the town would have to move
- The town moved to the south, but in 1904 it was determined that the town would have to move again due to the new development’s damage to the springs
- The third move was to the northern boundary of the new reservation
- In 1906 the reservation became Platt National Park, named after Senator Orville Platt of Connecticut who had been influential in the Park’s creation
- Town site buildings were either removed or torn down to make way for the new Park
- 19030’s CCC efforts completed the removal of the old town, and the Park was developed into its current iteration



**GIS**

- We used historic maps and LIDAR data to orient the former town
- Identified over 300 building locations as well as former roads
- We were not sure what could be seen from the ground



**Archaeological Survey**

- Surveys were conducted as part of a UNL field school
- The GIS was ground truthed
- The survey focused on hotels, boarding houses, and a variety of residences
- Artifacts were analyzed and recorded in the field using tablet computers
- Artifact complexion conformed to what we hypothesized for the types of buildings surveyed with more expensive porcelain wares dominating hotels. Boarding houses tended to have a greater variety of less expensive ceramic wares

**Public Interest and Outreach**

- The community of Sulphur expressed great interest into our research and were excited to share information with us
- We had produced great data with the GIS, but we were not sure how to present it to the interested public
- Public talks were held at the historical society and were extremely well attended
- Local newspaper and television covered our investigations
- A Facebook page was created to share data with the public



**3D Reconstruction**

- We were able to move the digital elevation map into the Unity game engine to create a virtual Sulphur Springs that the public could experience
- During Dr. Matthew Douglass’ Great Plains Archaeology class we worked with students to create “Monopoly” house 3D placeholders that matched all of the building footprints in the first two iterations of Sulphur Springs
- While still under construction, the 3D reconstruction allows students to use technology to both learn about and share the past in a way that appeals to modern students



**Results:**

- The implementation of the GIS survey will help with future Park planning and development
- The creation of the 3D digital reconstruction as a public outreach tool has allowed for greater input and ownership of the project by an interested and engaged public audience