



NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
1916
1966
50TH ANNIVERSARY

File
NPS-General
D-479

IN
STORAGE

A

*Brief History and Description
of
The National Park System*

PREPARED IN :

Office of Information
National Park Service
United States Department of the Interior
Washington, D. C. 20240



ON MICROFILM

GEORGE B. HARTZOG, JR.
Director, National Park Service

FOREWORD

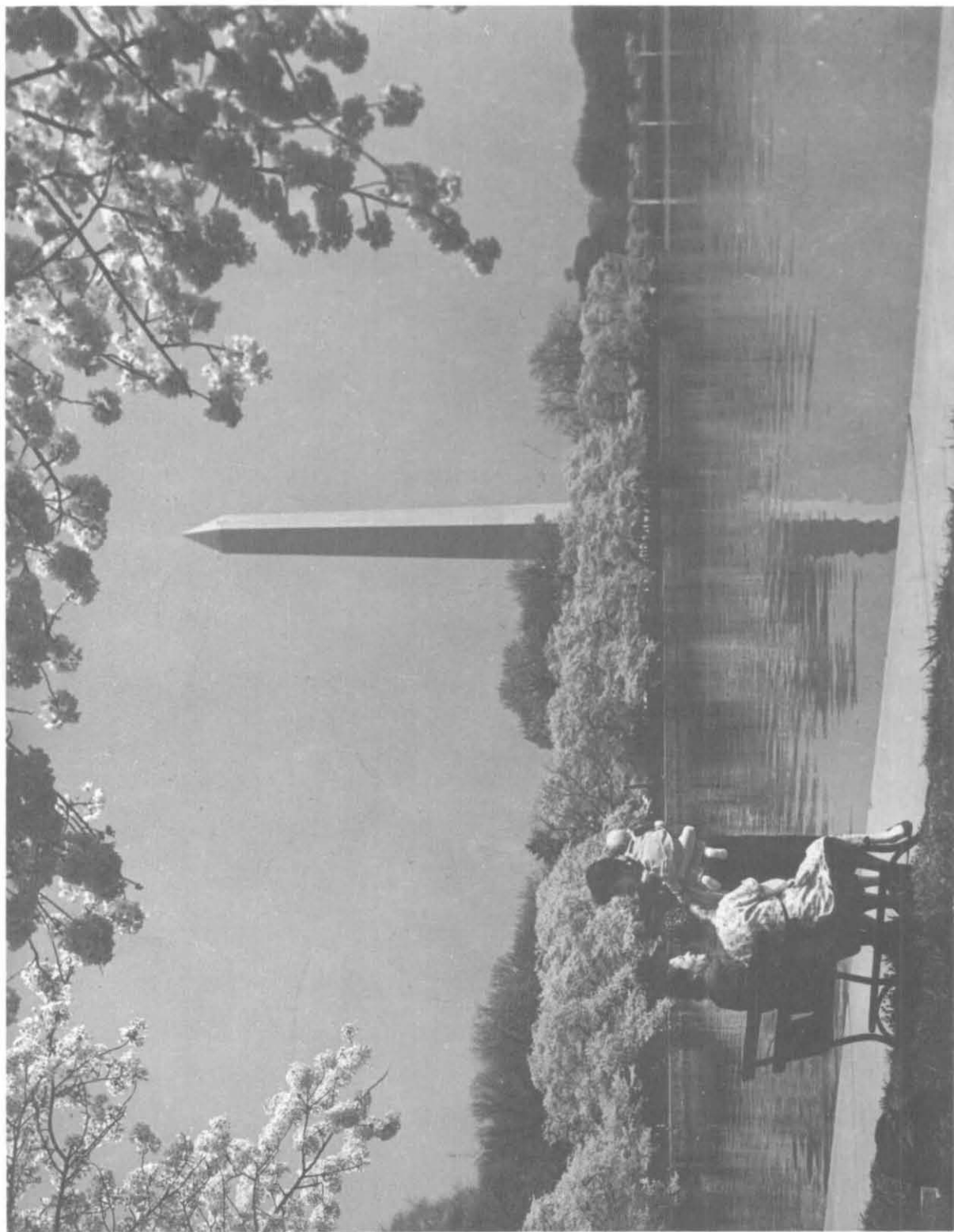
The National Park Service

The National Park Service was established as a bureau of the Department of the Interior on August 25, 1916. It administers the aggregation of public parks known as the National Park System, which includes natural, historic, and recreational areas.

Provision was made in the 1916 Act for the preservation and protection of the parks so that they would remain unimpaired. But it also provided for the promotion of the parks and for their enjoyment by the public now and in the future.

Today, with the Nation's population expanding rapidly, there is increasing need for more places of recreation and inspiration and for quiet solitude.

To meet the challenging needs of a greater number of people with more leisure time, a new program has been devised for the National Park Service by Director George B. Hartzog, Jr. Its three broad objectives include: GROWTH in response to human need; COOPERATION with all those concerned with the quality of the environment of the populace; and INNOVATION in finding ways to achieve the goals of the "New Conservation."



Cherry Blossom Time in the Nation's Capital

THE NATIONAL PARK SYSTEM

A Brief History and Description

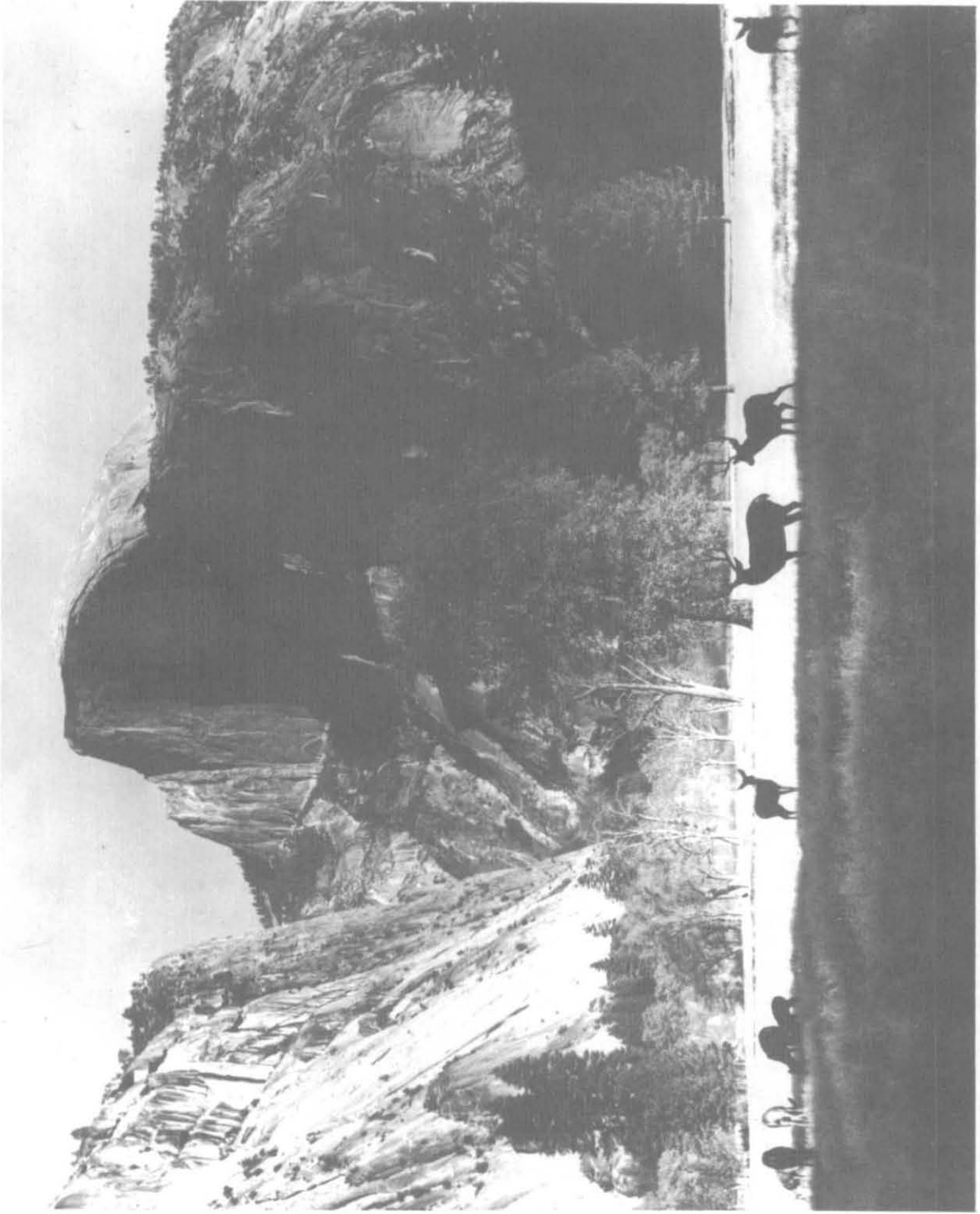
The National Park System did not spring into being full grown. It evolved, rather, from an idea born in antiquity, and its roots spread slowly.

The early colonists brought the seeds grown from these roots. Perhaps the first transplant in the New World was Boston Commons, a "village green" set aside as public property in 1634.

In his plan of 1682 for the City of Philadelphia, William Penn stipulated that there be five open squares "graced with trees." And in his design for Washington, D. C., Pierre L'Enfant provided for parks throughout the National Capital.

Beyond the cities and settlements lay the wilderness, seemingly endless, and forbidding to those comfortably settled along the Eastern Seaboard. But the beauty of the mountains and lakes, the rivers and forests stirred the hearts of those venturing into lands to the west. Efforts were made to preserve part of the wilderness as early as 1832, when George Catlin, the famous painter of the Indians, following a journey up the Missouri River, proposed that the Government set aside lands "in their pristine beauty and wildness" in a magnificent park that the world "could see for ages to come."

In the same year, for reasons of preservation, Congress established Hot Springs Reservation in what is now the State of Arkansas--four square



Deer Grazing Under Shadow of Half Dome - Yosemite National Park

miles of land containing 47 hot springs claimed to be beneficial to health. It is now Hot Springs National Park.

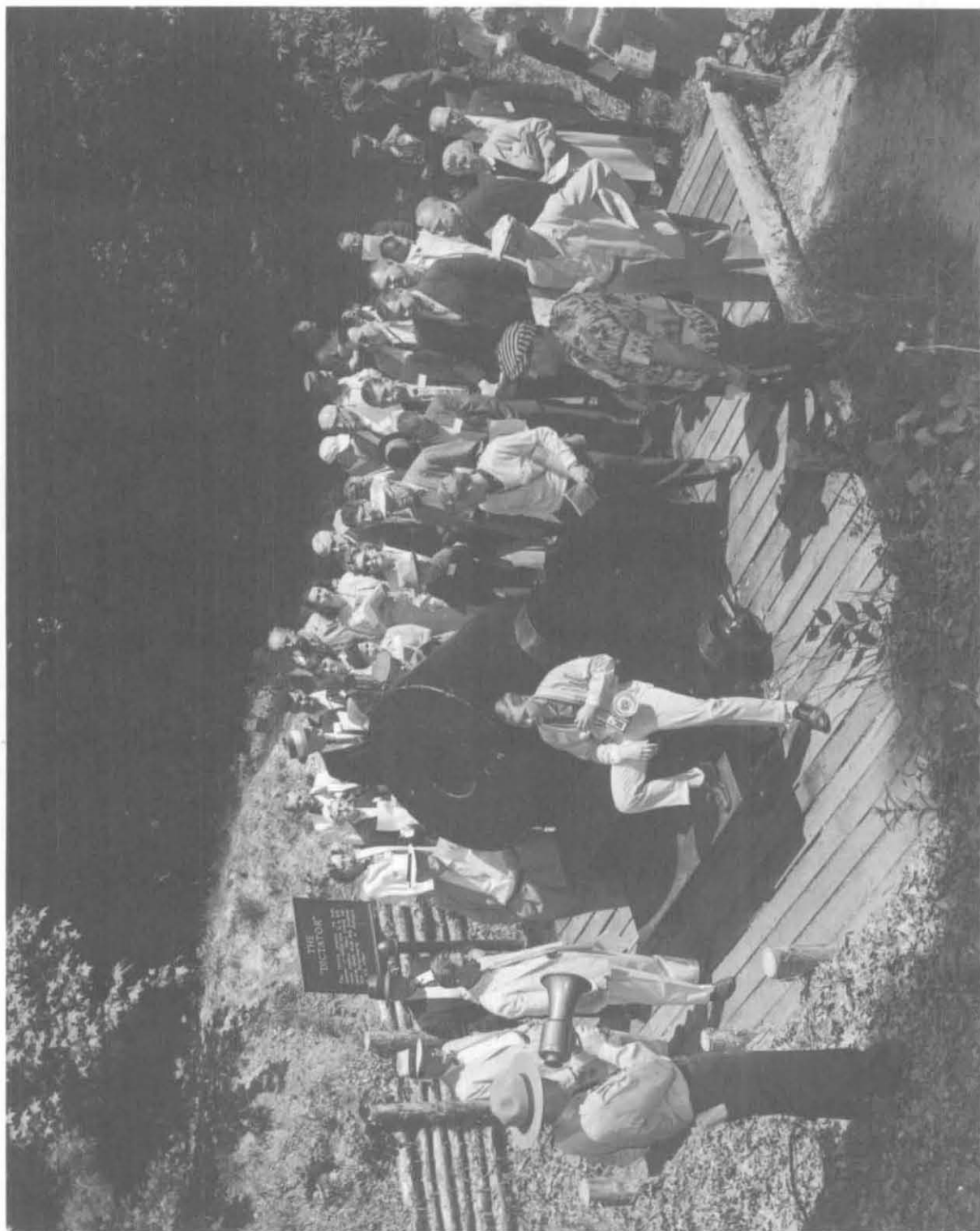
Half a continent away, in New York City, the poet and editor, William Cullen Bryant, advanced the idea of a park for pleasure in 1836. He agitated for his plan until city officials purchased 840 acres in 1856 for Central Park. Other cities soon followed suit.

On the Pacific Coast, after prospective miners, traders, and settlers of the Gold Rush poured into central California, the idea of preserving natural resources for inspirational purposes pushed forth fresh shoots.

Following the discovery of a mysterious valley with a thousand-foot waterfall and giant trees towering more than a hundred feet high, men moved in to strip groves of sequoias, settlers built cabins in the valley, and rough inns were built for tourists.

Public-spirited citizens called for means to protect this beautiful valley and these giant trees. On June 30, 1864, President Abraham Lincoln signed into law the Act transferring to the State of California "The 'cleft' or 'gorge' in the granite peak of the Sierra Nevada Mountains ...known as Yo-Semite Valley...for public use, resort, and recreation." The Act included the "Mariposa Big Tree Grove" in the park and provided for the use of the land and for its management by a State-appointed commission.

When Congress made this transfer in 1864, it also established a new concept of public land use--to protect and conserve a part of the public domain for enjoyment.



Interpreting Our National Heritage

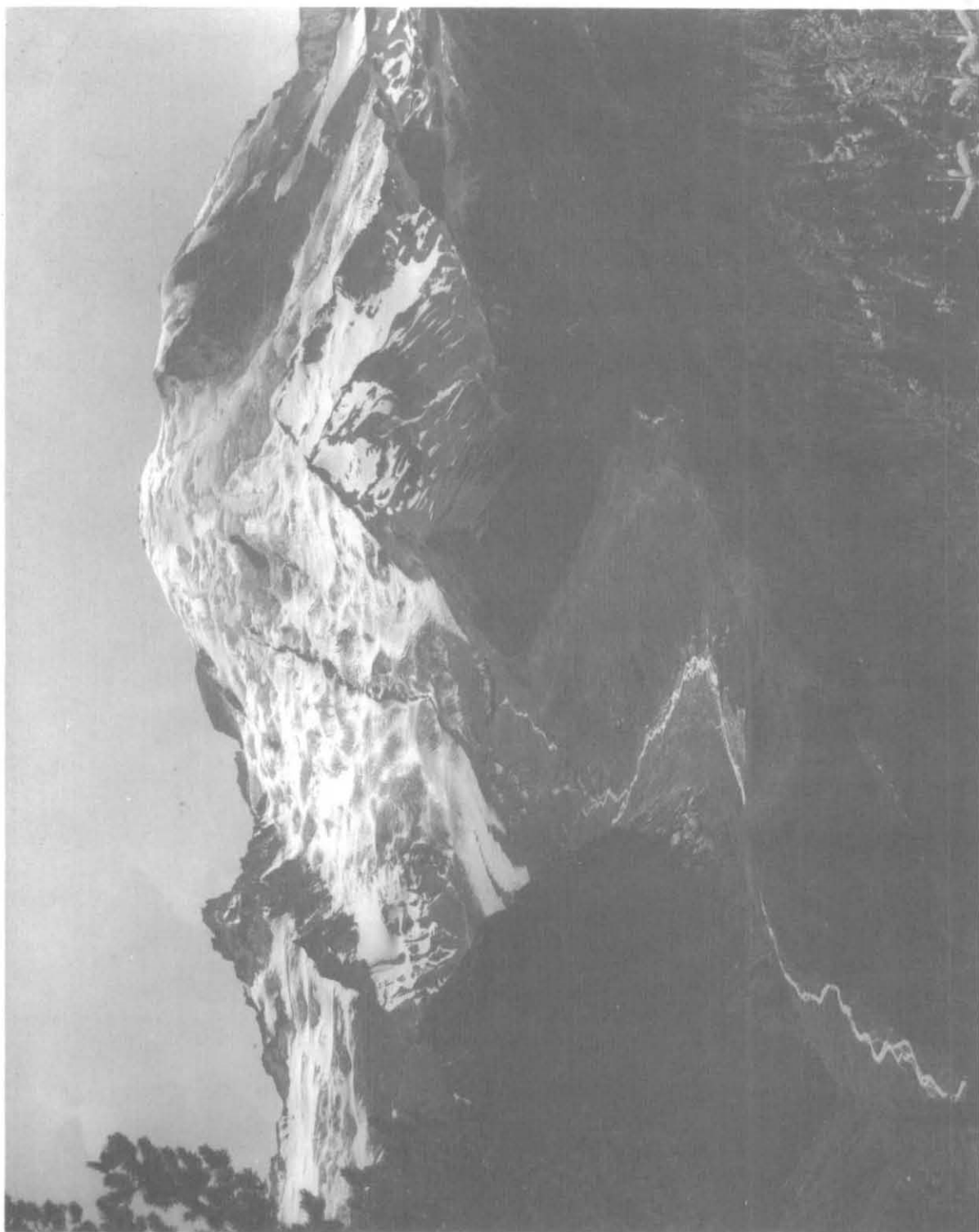
Eight years later, on March 1, 1872, Congress established Yellowstone National Park in Wyoming Territory, the Nation's first national park and the first in the world. The Act provided that the land "...is hereby reserved and withdrawn from settlement, occupancy, or sale...and dedicated and set apart as a public park or pleasuring-ground for the benefit and enjoyment of the people."

This was the first deviation from a national policy which had called for placing the public domain in private ownership as rapidly as possible.

Since 1807, when John Colter found a route through the Yellowstone region, there were strange tales of geysers, boiling springs, and brilliantly colored pools at a place high in the northern Rocky Mountains. But most accounts of the fur traders and trappers were disbelieved.

To satisfy their curiosity, David E. Folsom and two others ascended the Yellowstone River in 1869, and Folsom gave a personal account to the men who formed the Washburn-Langford-Doane Expedition of 1870 to explore the Yellowstone region. Probably in their campfire conversations, the 1870 explorers reached a decision to take what action they could to preserve and protect the wonders they found. Upon their return, Judge Cornelius Hedges and others wrote articles for the Helena Herald, and both Hedges and Nathaniel P. Langford started lecturing on Yellowstone, the latter going to New York and Washington, D. C.

While the Folsom trip led to the Washburn Expedition, the latter also led to the official 1871 expedition of the geologist F. V. Hayden--under the direction of the Secretary of the Interior and authorized by Congress--which surveyed and made maps of the region.



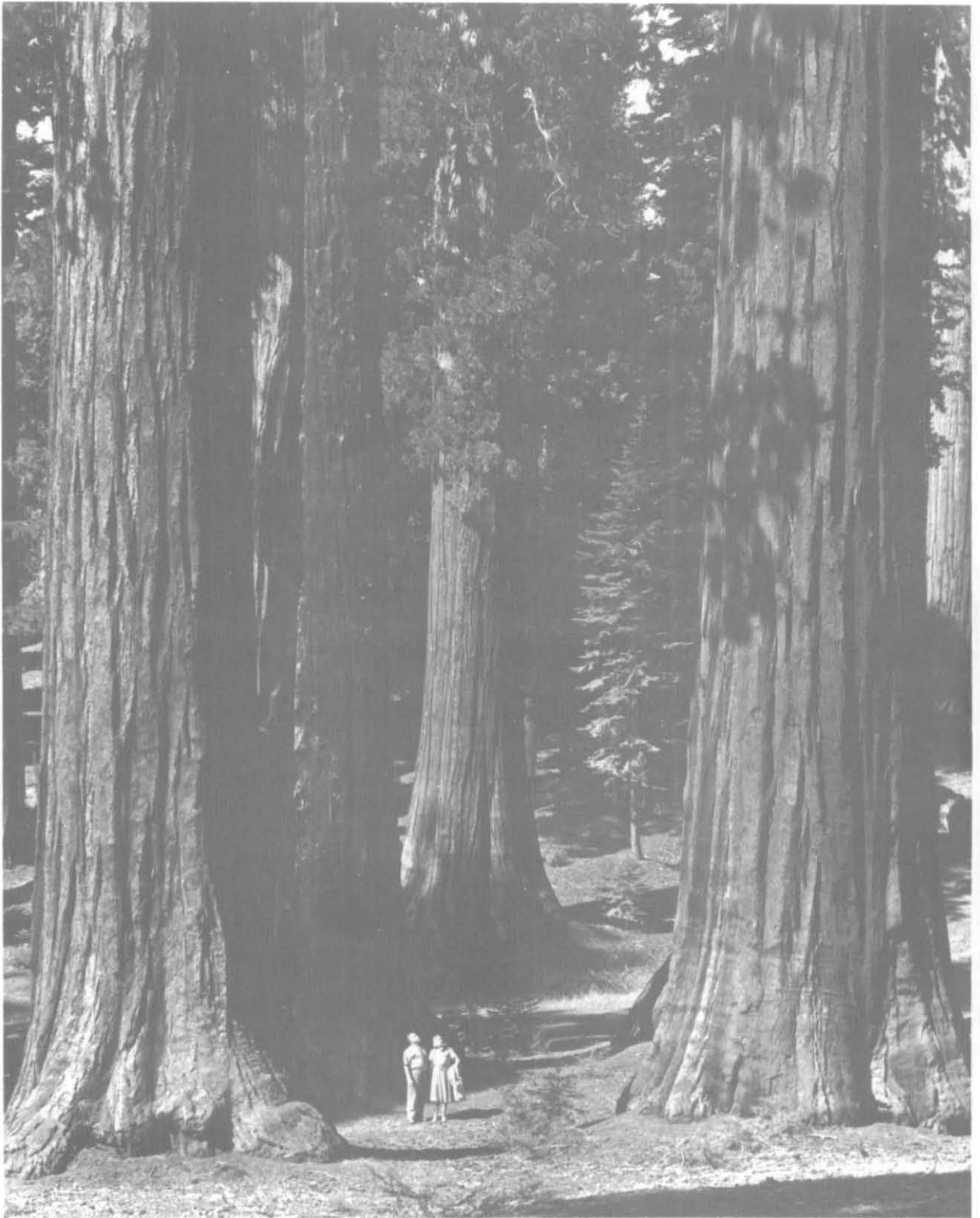
Mount Rainier - Gem of the Northwest

In December 1871, newly-elected Delegate William H. Claggett of Montana introduced into Congress the bill to create Yellowstone National Park. It was made law on March 1, 1872, its passage aided by Hayden's maps and the pictures of photographer William H. Jackson and painter Thomas Moran, both members of the Hayden Expedition, and by the presence in Washington of three members of the Washburn Expedition.

Largely through the efforts of naturalist John Muir, the high country surrounding the Yosemite Grant became Yosemite National Park in 1890. In the same year, and with assistance of public opinion aroused by Muir to protect the magnificent groves of sequoias and spectacular scenery, Sequoia National Park and the General Grant National Park in east-central California were established. The lands of the latter became part of Kings Canyon National Park, which was established in 1940.

Scenery, however, was not long to be the only criterion for preservation of the Nation's wonders. Because depredations endangered prehistoric Casa Grande Ruins in Arizona, Congress authorized reservation of both the ruins and surrounding lands in 1889. And by Executive Order in 1892, President Benjamin Harrison established another precedent when he wrote: "Let the lands described...be reserved for protection of the Casa Grande Ruin...."

This was followed in 1894 by an Act to protect the birds and animals in Yellowstone National Park and to provide for punishment of crimes in the park. It stipulated "preservation...of all timber, mineral deposits, natural curiosities, or wonderful objects within said park." It directed that United States commissioners and marshals be appointed, with



Man's Appreciation of His Natural Environment

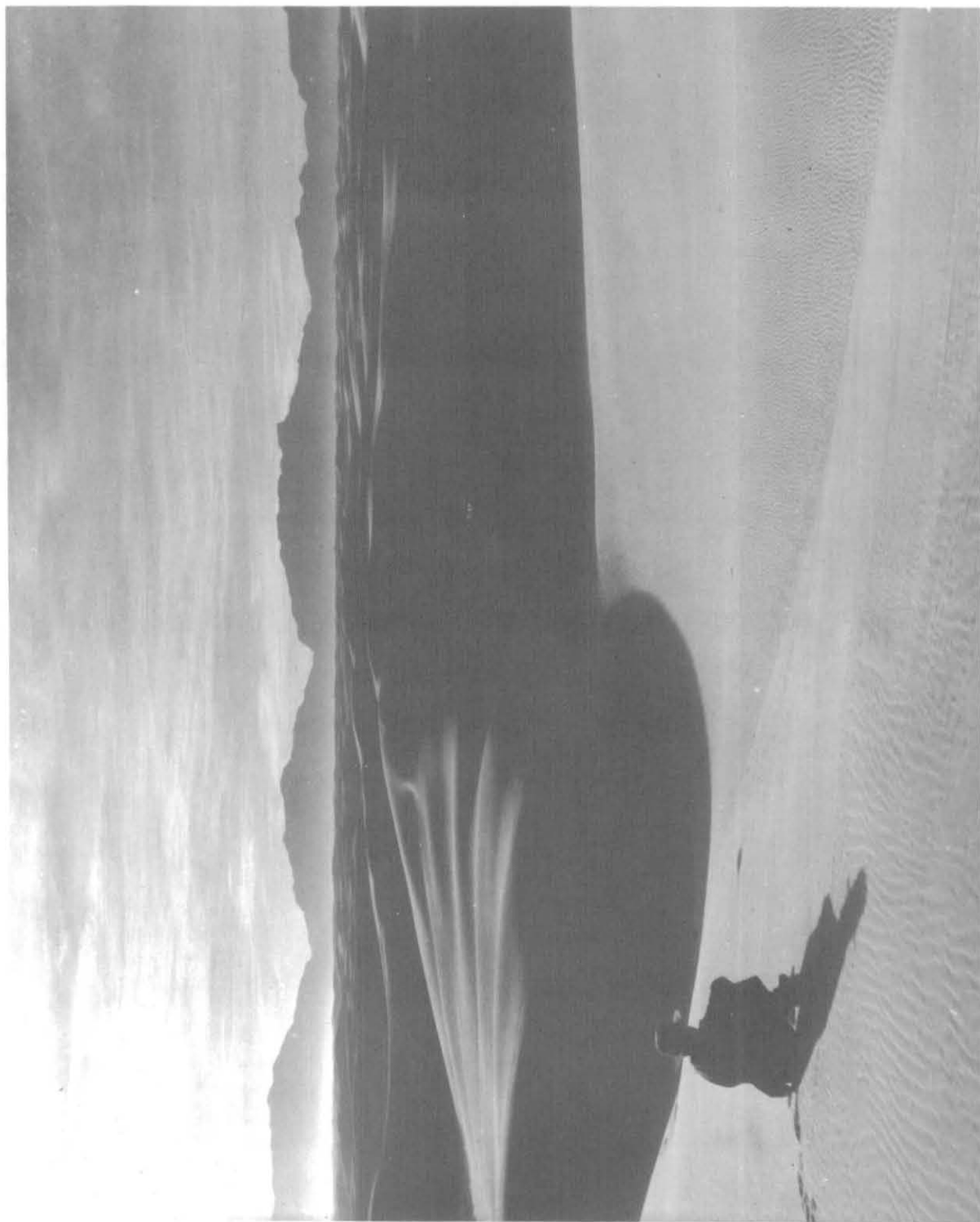
jurisdiction to act upon all complaints of violations of law or of park rules and regulations promulgated by the Secretary of the Interior for the management and care of the park, the protection of property therein and wildlife, and preservation of park features and resources.

From this law, an administrative landmark, evolved the rules and regulations enforced today concerning every park aspect and every phase of management and operation in all units of the National Park System. Such rules and regulations, issued by the Secretary of the Interior, allow all people an equal opportunity to enjoy their parks.

After Congress authorized reservation of the Casa Grande Ruins, agitation continued to protect the prehistoric Indian sites of the Southwest from vandalism and looting until passage of the American Antiquities Act of June 8, 1906. This Act extended the earlier public land policy relating to natural parks to provide authority for the President, by proclamation, to set aside as national monuments "...historic landmarks, historic and prehistoric structures, and other objects of historic or scientific interest that are situated upon lands owned or controlled by the Government of the United States."

The Act provided penalties for desecration of such areas; and, through its power, pot-hunting was stopped in prehistoric ruins. Collection of artifacts and study of the areas were to be granted by permit only.

By authority of this Act, President Theodore Roosevelt proclaimed Devils Tower in Wyoming as a national monument, the Nation's first. The imposing columnar rock tower rising 865 feet above its wooded base had been a landmark for Indians, explorers, and early settlers.



White Sands National Monument

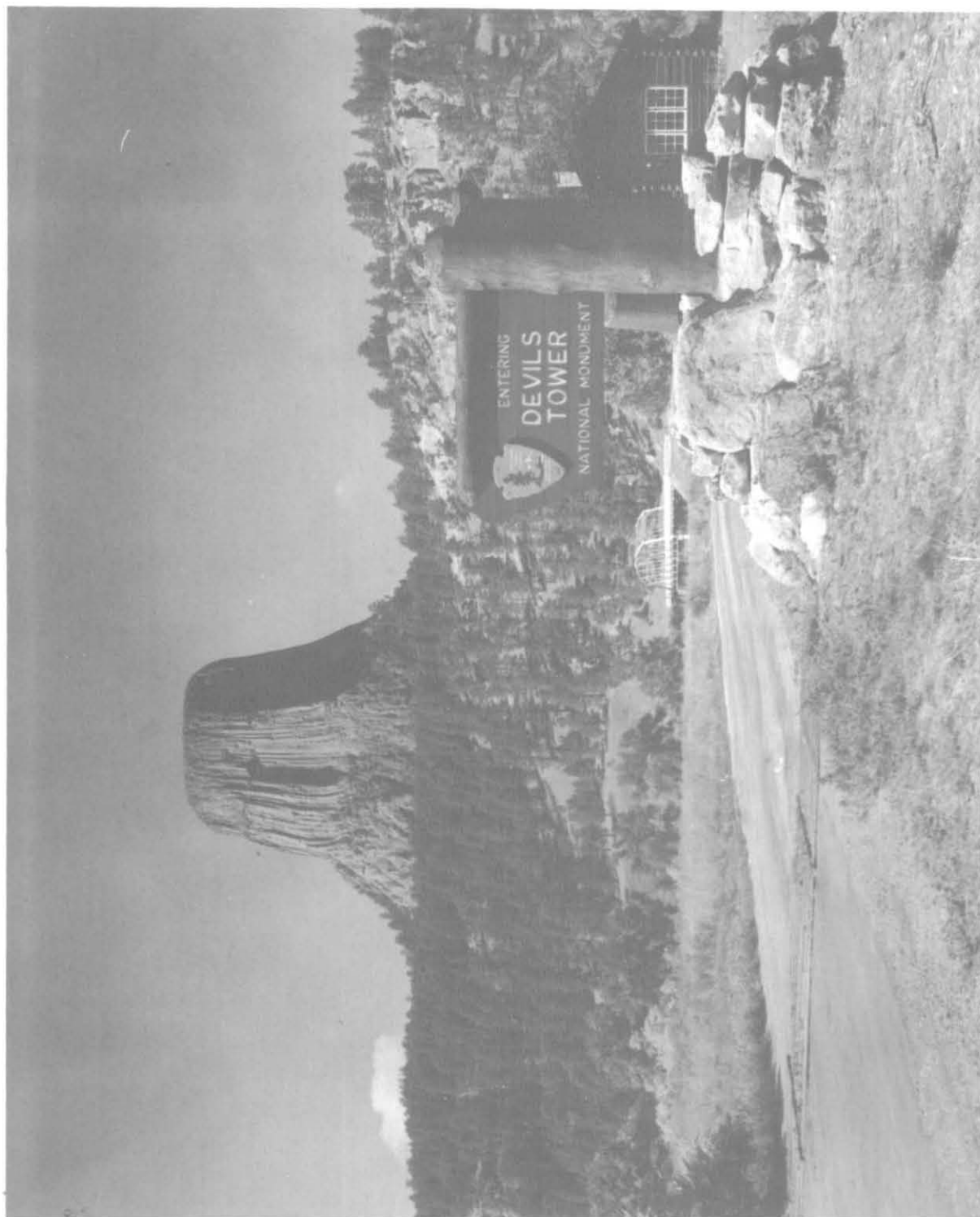
Within the next few years, many other national monuments were established--prehistoric Indian ruins and natural and scientific sites. The instrument for swift protection of endangered areas was now in the hands of the President of the United States.

The number of national parks also grew: Mount Rainier in Washington was established in 1899; Crater Lake in Oregon, in 1902; Wind Cave, South Dakota, 1903; Mesa Verde, Colorado, 1906; Platt, Oklahoma, 1906; Lassen Volcanic, California, 1907; Zion, Utah, 1909; and Glacier, Montana, 1910.

With the increase in the number of national parks and monuments, administered by three different departments--Agriculture, Interior, and War--difficulties arose because there was no unified method of administration, development, or protection. Accommodations and roads were built and managed diversely, sometimes under private lease or under different Federal agencies.

In 1915, Secretary of the Interior Franklin K. Lane called for a conference of park superintendents at which the need for a central organization of the national parks was discussed. Bills to establish such a bureau had been introduced into Congress in 1912 and 1913 but went practically unheeded.

Realizing the important and distinctive type of conservation and use represented by the parks and monuments and the advantage of unifying them into an integrated system, Secretary Lane appointed Stephen T. Mather, a successful industrialist and a keen lover of the outdoors, as his assistant for park matters. When he assumed office in January 1915, Mather had under his administration 11 national parks, 18 national



monuments, and 2 other reservations, totaling 4,544,552 acres.

Following a year of intensive action, of awakening in the people of the Nation an appreciation of the parks and their need for preservation, Mather, his aide, Horace M. Albright, and others drafted legislation which became the Act of August 25, 1916, establishing the National Park Service as a bureau of the Department of the Interior.

That Act contains a policy statement defining the purpose of the Service: "...to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wildlife therein [of the national parks, monuments, and reservations] and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations."

Stephen T. Mather was appointed first Director of the National Park Service. He organized administrative and professional phases of park work, but implementation was delayed until Congress could appropriate funds to set the new Service in motion. Early in 1917, however, the United States became involved in World War I, and the meager appropriation was of little help.

In the 1916 Act, provision was made for the promotion and regulation of the parks, and the Act stated the policy on such subjects as forest management, wildlife, concessions, and grazing--an unmistakable statement of purpose.

In a letter of May 13, 1918, to National Park Director Mather, Interior Secretary Lane strengthened that policy when he outlined the management principles for the parks:



Gettysburg New Visitors' Center

...First, that the national parks must be maintained in absolutely unimpaired form for the use of future generations as well as those of our time; second, that they are set aside for the use, observation, health, and pleasure of the people; and third, that the national interest must dictate all decisions affecting public or private enterprise in the parks.

Another important change came in connection with the Federal Government's reorganization in 1933, when President Franklin D. Roosevelt's Executive Orders of June 10 and July 28 transferred within one year 64 areas from the Departments of War and Agriculture and other agencies to the National Park Service. Included were the National Capital Parks, monuments, military parks, battlefield sites, memorials, and certain cemeteries.

Two years later, the Historic Sites Act, approved August 21, 1935, contained three important provisions which wrought still more changes. It empowered the Secretary of the Interior, through the National Park Service, "...to preserve for public use historic sites, buildings and objects of national significance for the inspiration and benefit of the people of the United States." Today, historic areas represent more than one-half of all areas of the National Park System.

Second, it authorized creation of the Secretary of the Interior's Advisory Board on National Parks, Historic Sites, Buildings and Monuments and provided for cooperative agreements with States and other agencies for administration of such areas. The Board approves, or disapproves, not only historic site proposals but all others for additions to the System. And third, it provided authority for a nationwide survey of historic and archeologic American sites, buildings, and objects and for



Parks for the Future

the research concerning them. From these lists come the proposals of historic significance submitted to the Advisory Board.

One of the far-reaching changes in the System--of interest especially to the Nation's increasing population--came when the Park, Parkway and Recreational Area Study Act was signed June 23, 1936. In that Act, Congress not only authorized a comprehensive survey of all such programs in the United States but also provided authority to include areas in the National Park System having primary recreational significance. This instrument opened the way for the national seashores and recreation areas.

A week later, by the Act of June 30, 1936, the scenic parkway concept was introduced into the System, when provision was made for administration by the National Park Service of the Blue Ridge Parkway, a 469-mile road near the crest of the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia and North Carolina.

Still another first came with the Act of August 7, 1946, which provided authority for the Service to administer the recreation on areas under the jurisdiction of other Government agencies. As a result, cooperative agreements have been made with the Bureau of Reclamation and other agencies for administration of Lake Mead, Glen Canyon, Coulee Dam, Shadow Mountain, and similar recreation areas.

Authority for the Nation's first national seashore, Cape Hatteras on North Carolina's Outer Banks, was approved August 17, 1937, with the condition that the lands be acquired by public or private donation. In



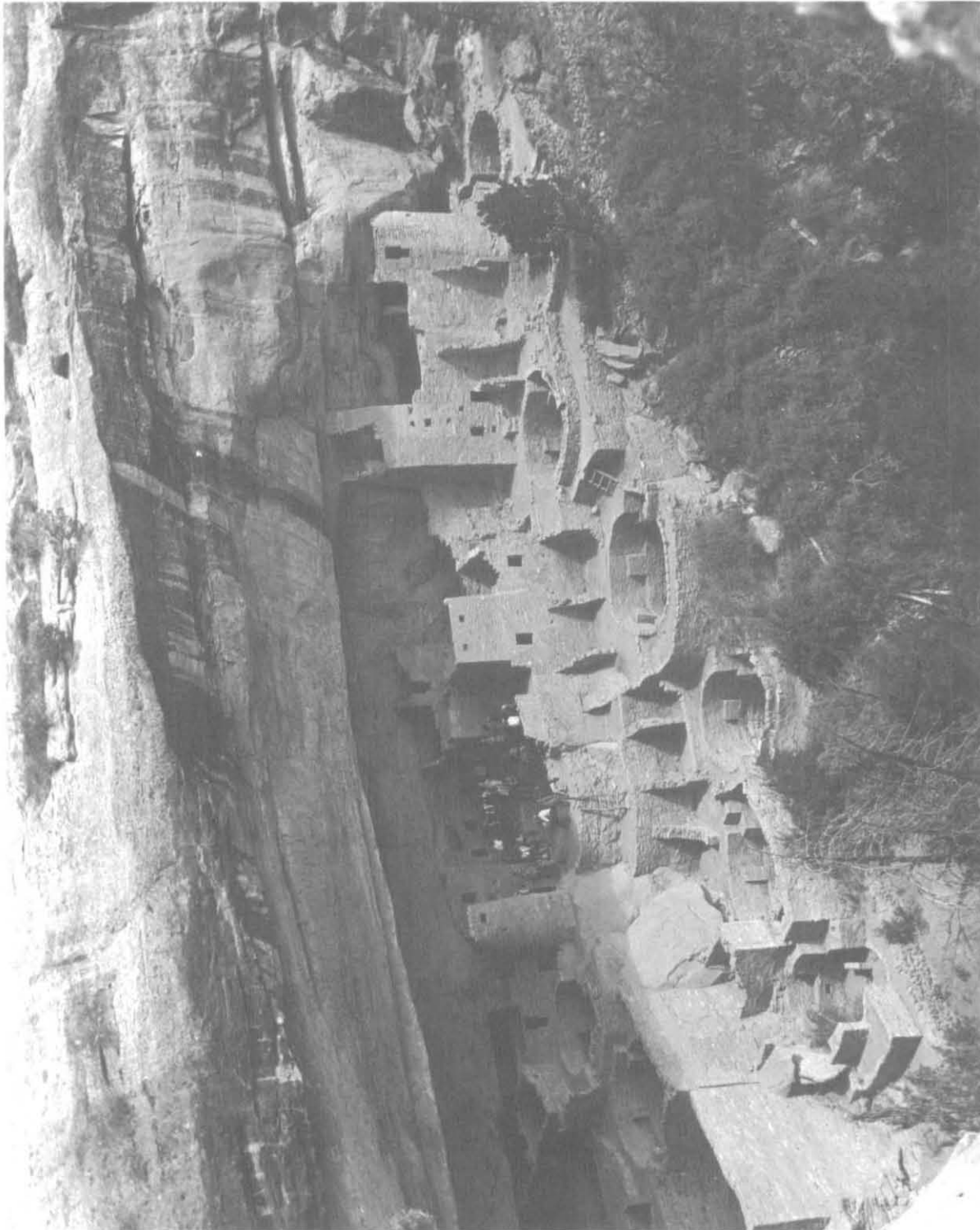
Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Barge

1940, the Act was amended to permit hunting in an area devoted mainly to recreation.

Part of Cape Cod, Massachusetts, became the second national seashore by the Act of August 7, 1961. This legislation also marked a new concept in the development of the National Park System, namely, the use of appropriated funds at the outset to purchase a large natural area in its entirety for enjoyment as a public park. Previously, areas within the System were, for the most part, established from the public domain or from donated land.

Under the same concept, two more national seashores were authorized in 1962, Padre Island in Texas and Point Reyes in California; in 1964, Fire Island in New York; and in 1965, Assateague Island, Maryland-Virginia. The Land and Water Conservation Fund, created by Congress in 1964, will finance much of the acquisition cost at these and other locations.

At the beginning of 1966, there were 231 areas in the National Park System, with a total of 26,717,000 acres, as follows: 32 national parks; 11 national historical parks; 81 national monuments; 11 national military parks; 1 national memorial park; 5 national battlefields; 4 national battlefield parks; 3 national battlefield sites; 30 national historic sites; 19 national memorials; 10 national cemeteries; 6 national seashores; 1 national scenic riverway; 3 national parkways; 12 national recreation areas; the White House; and the National Capital Parks comprising 763 units.



Interpreting Our Historic Heritage

Organization of the National Park Service

The areas of the National Park System are administered by the Director of the National Park Service and his staff in Washington, D. C., aided by representatives of that staff in regional offices.

Success of the National Park Service, however, rests heavily upon the effectiveness of management at the area level, where a superintendent is in charge, assisted by park rangers, maintenance staff, and a technical staff consisting of an engineer, landscape architect, naturalist, historian, or archeologist, depending upon the size and type of area.

In addition to planning and operation, the area staff acts as the official host to visitors and provides for their safety and comfort, as well as for their enjoyment and understanding of the area. The staff protects the parks, the visitors, wildlife and facilities, and maintains lands, roads, trails, buildings, and installations.

The Future

With the greatly accelerated use of the parks and with MISSION 66 drawing to a close, the National Park Service was required to study anew its objectives, organization, and management and to devise a plan to meet the needs of the future.

In his letter of July 10, 1964 to National Park Service Director George B. Hartzog, Jr., Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall stated that the resulting study had brought into sharp focus that different management principles should be employed for the different categories--natural, historical, and recreational areas--represented in the System.



Visitors Hear Stories About Our National Parks

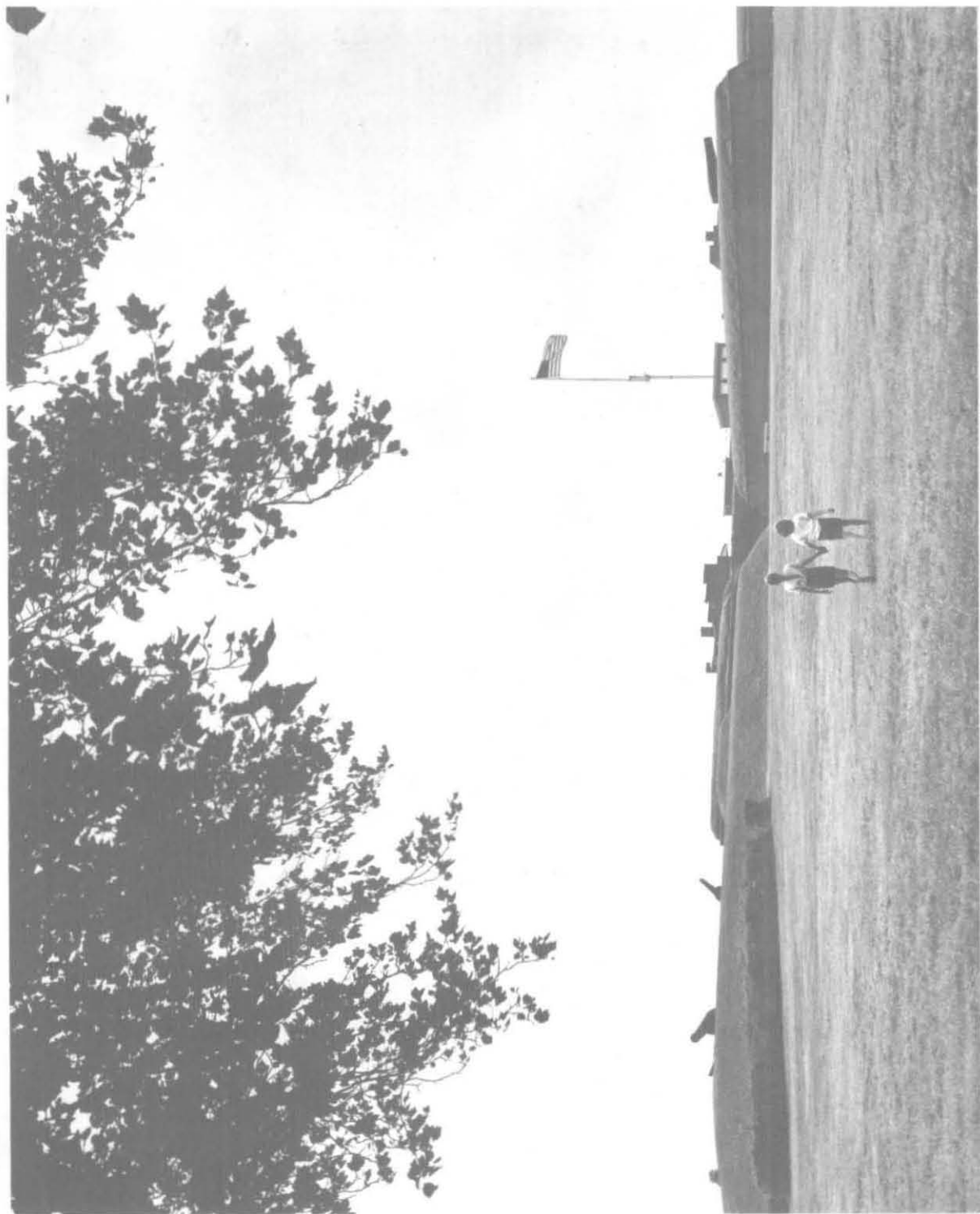
He directed that separate guidelines be developed for the management and use of resources and the physical development of each category.

Director Hartzog stated that, as the National Park Service plans to mark its 50th anniversary, with the support of Congress it will move ahead with a new program to improve the facilities in the parks and to meet the swift changes and new demands for the fulfillment of leisure time in a rewarding and enriching way. In the last four years, 30 major areas have been added to the National Park System, all requiring development.

The three broad objectives of the new program, said Hartzog, "will be growth in response to human need; cooperation with all concerned; and innovation in ways to achieve the New Conservation of preservation and restoration of the total environment in which man lives."

Supplementing these objectives is a five-point plan disclosed by Director Hartzog in September, 1965, as follows:

1. Complete the criteria for a National Park System Plan.
2. Broaden and strengthen joint planning efforts with other Federal, State and local agencies and others involved in managing lands adjacent to, or programs affecting areas managed by the National Park Service.
3. Strengthen and expand National Park Service cooperation with other nations seeking to preserve their natural and cultural heritage.
4. Improve and develop the national parklands in urban areas.



Fort McHenry

5. Improve and expand interpretive programs for visitors to areas of the National Park System, in order to communicate to and instill in young Americans an understanding of the natural and cultural heritage of the Nation.

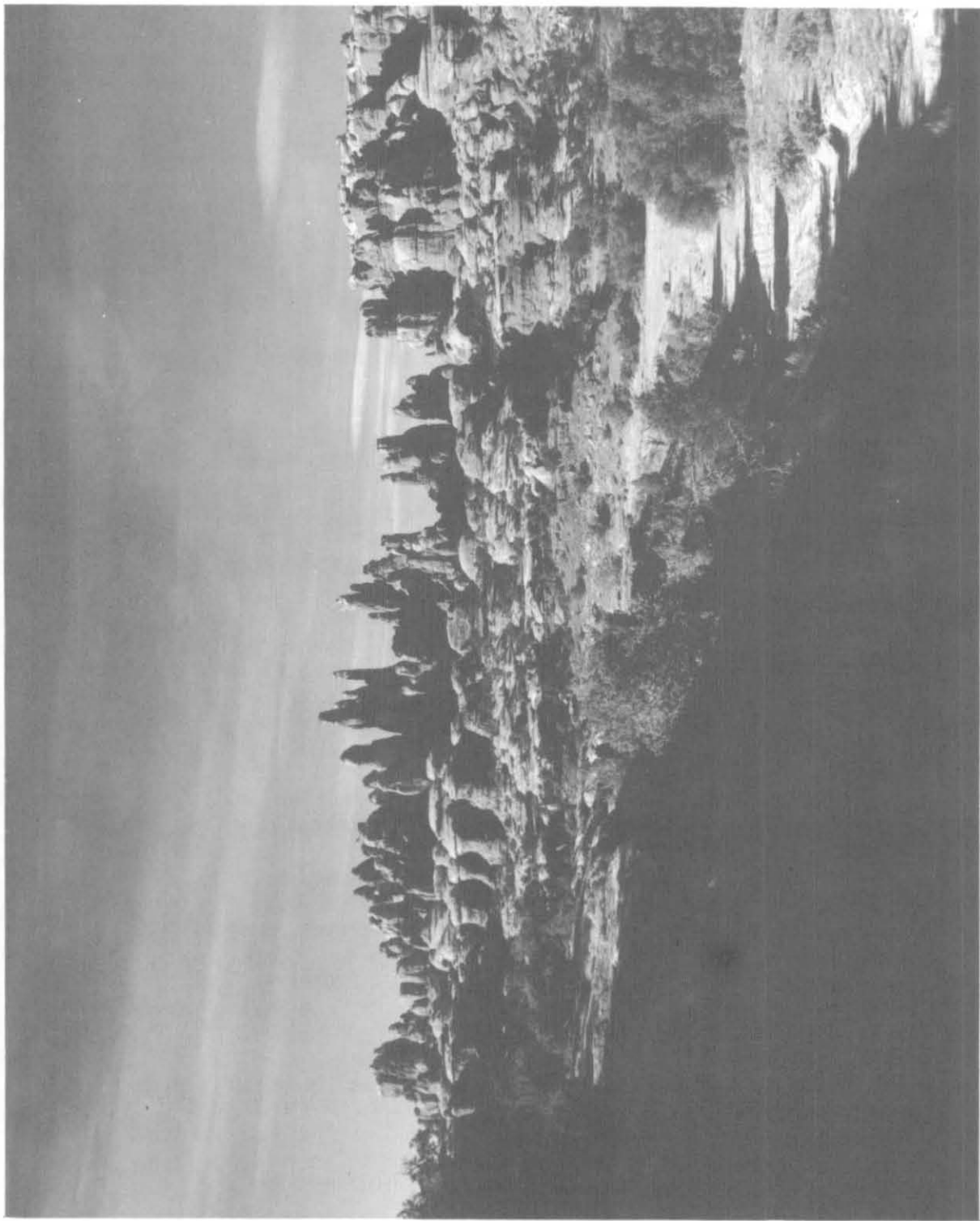
For the Visitor

Ready for the 1966 summer influx of visitors to all areas of the National Park System will be approximately 9,000 miles of roads, including overlooks, spurs, access roads, and parking areas; and another 9,000 miles of trails, most of them through forest lands. There will be 587 campgrounds in the System, 29,890 campsites, and 742 picnic areas with 12,400 sites.

The 27,782 campsites and spaces available in 75 areas in 1965 had more than 8,000,000 camp-use days--the highest in the history of the Park Service. And it is estimated that in 1966, with more campsites available, there will be 8,820,000 camp-use days.

Generally, use of the national parks is overwhelmingly family use; and this is particularly true of campgrounds, where the family pitches a tent or unfolds it from a camper. In the past decade or so, trailer camping has become so popular that special trailer campgrounds have been developed, but because of utility connections they are operated by concessioners. Perhaps the deepest enjoyment, however, is found by the backpacker who hikes into the wilderness to spend a day or a week at a primitive camp space along the trail.

Of all types of area in the System, none is more significant and



Nature's Handiwork

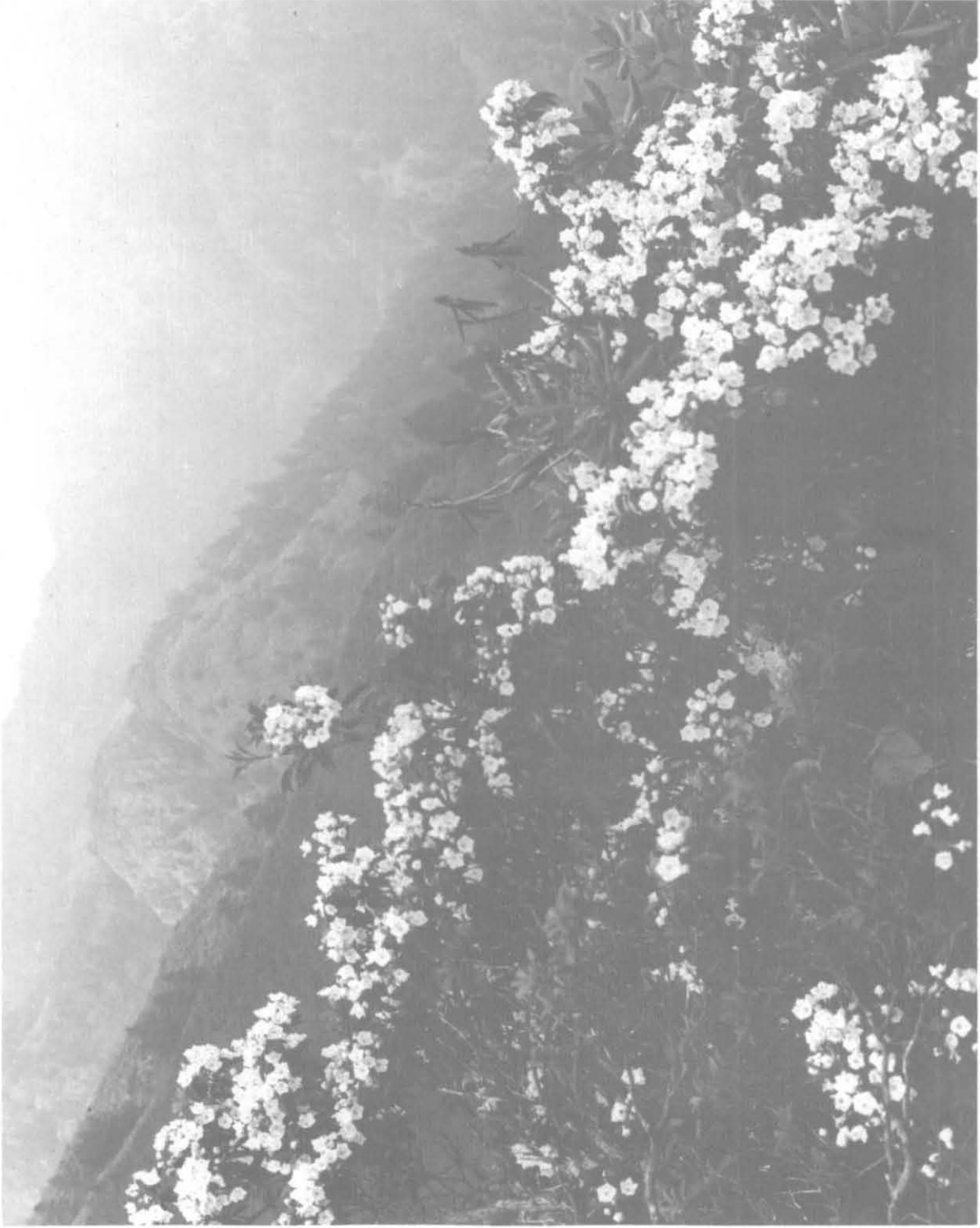
none more inspirational than those commemorating historic events. Over half are in that classification. Preservation of these sites and restoration of buildings, which reflect the history of this land, help to nurture the Nation's memory of its growth and cultural achievements.

A deep feeling of patriotism wells up as one stands before the Liberty Bell in Independence Hall, where this nation was conceived. Pride surges at the sight of the Statue of Liberty and of the flag flying at Fort McHenry--that same fort over which flew the flag that inspired Francis Scott Key to write "The Star Spangled Banner" as he saw it through bursting bombs. At the many prehistoric Indian sites of the Southwest--among them Aztec Ruins, Bandelier, Mesa Verde--who can fail to wonder about and appreciate the people who once lived there?

Nearly all the recreation areas have water-oriented developments such as beaches and bathhouses, marinas and boating facilities, and launching ramps, as well as organized campgrounds and concession-operated stores, restaurants, and overnight accommodations.

Statistics show that simple outdoor activities are the most popular--pleasure driving (which leads them all), walking, swimming, and picnicking. Topping the list of most visited areas in the National Park System is the 469-mile Blue Ridge Parkway in Virginia and North Carolina.

Many park roads--all built for leisurely driving with overlooks and one-way loops to the brink of the wilderness--offer inspiring, breathtaking views of the country's finest scenery. Both the Trail Ridge



Mountain Laurel - Great Smoky Mountains National Park

Road in Rocky Mountain National Park and Going-to-the-Sun Highway in Glacier National Park cross the Continental Divide. Yosemite's Tioga Road crosses the Sierra Nevada, and the Rim Road along the Grand Canyon provides a superb view of that great gorge of the Colorado River.

For the past fifty years, the National Park Service has endeavored to provide not only recreation but also inspiration and enjoyment for the people of this Nation. In February, 1965, President Johnson said: "It would be a neglectful generation, indeed, indifferent alike to the judgment of history and the command of principle, which failed to preserve and extend such a heritage for its descendants." He was speaking of the beauty of the country, but the words apply also to the National Park System, which contains so much of the national heritage.



DIRECTORS OF THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

STEPHEN T. MATHER, 1917-1929. Mr. Mather created the framework of the National Park Service and established the code and criteria for the standards of service which have marked the National Park Service since its inception in 1916.

HORACE M. ALBRIGHT, 1929-1933. An attorney who assisted Mr. Mather in laying the foundation of the Park Service, he served as field assistant director and first National Park Service Superintendent of Yellowstone National Park before he became Director.

ARNO B. CAMMERER, 1933-1940. Mr. Cammerer was Associate Director before succeeding to the top post of the National Park Service, from which he stepped down, for reasons of health, to become Regional Director of the Southeast Region.

NEWTON B. DRURY, 1940-1951. A distinguished conservationist for more than 30 years, Mr. Drury served as Director for 11 years. He left to become director of the California system of State parks and beaches.

ARTHUR E. DEMARAY, April 1951-December 1951. Mr. Demaray was a long-time Associate Director of the Park Service but retired in less than a year after becoming Director.

CONRAD L. WIRTH, 1951-1964. He was Associate Director, following a distinguished career of more than 25 years in park work, before he became Director. He was the originator of MISSION 66.



GEORGE B. HARTZOG, JR., 1964 - . Mr. Hartzog, an attorney, succeeded Mr. Wirth as Director, after a career of 20 years in the National Park Service, serving in both the Washington Office and in the field, and as Associate Director for more than a year.

TEXT BY

Hazel K. Wharton