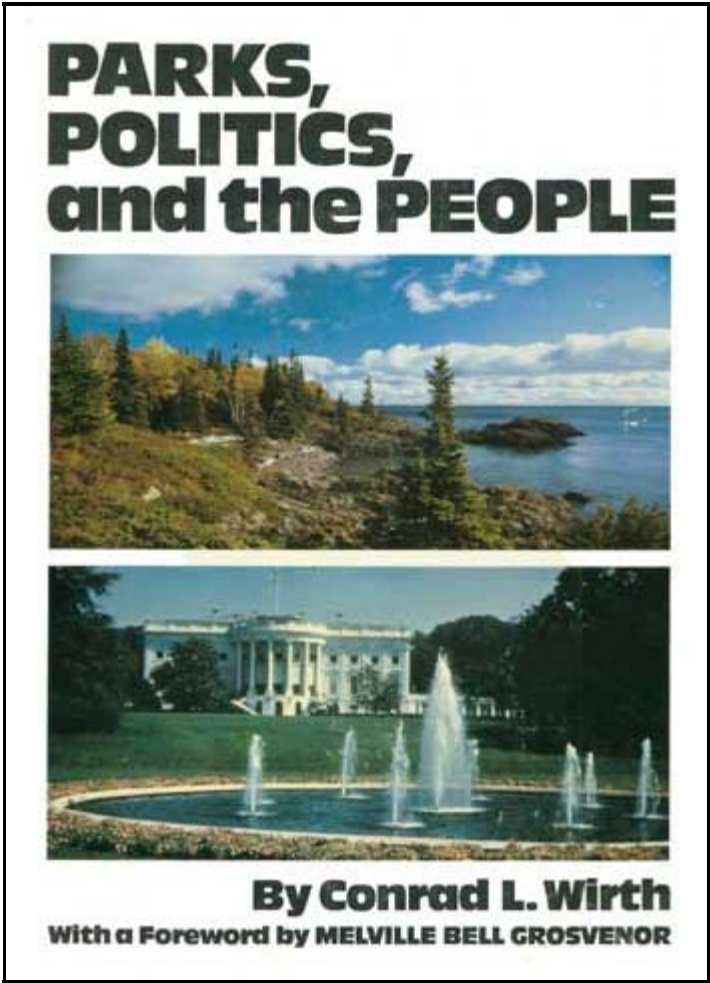


# Parks, Politics, and the People



## Parks, Politics, and the People

Conrad L. Wirth  
Foreword by Melville Bell Grosvenor

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# Parks, Politics, and the People

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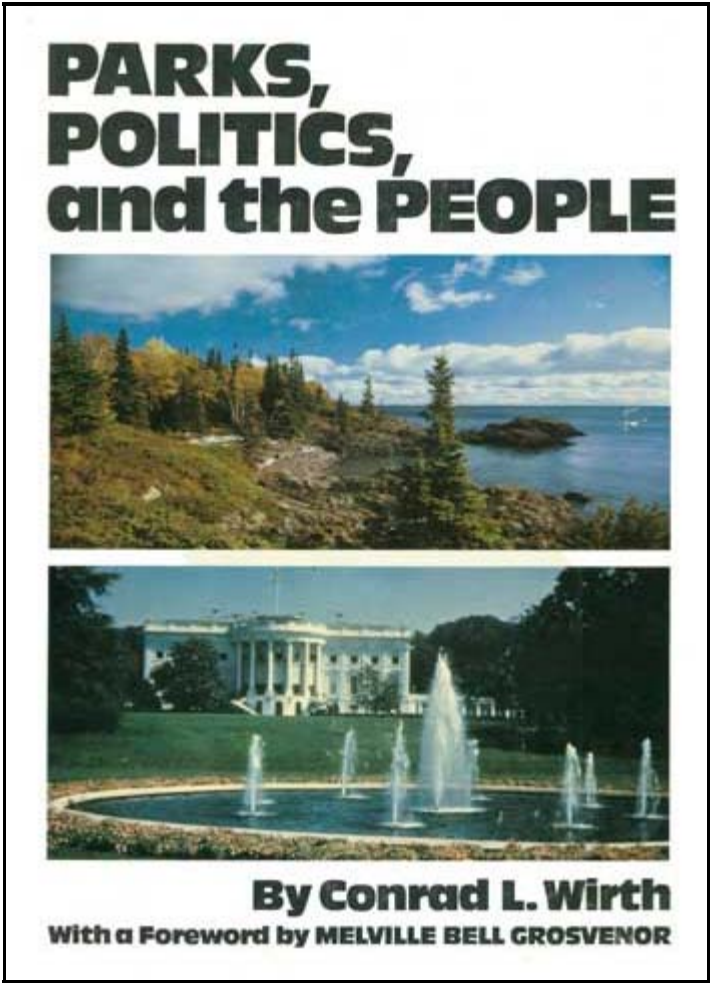
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# Parks, Politics, and the People



## Dedication

It is with deep appreciation that we dedicate this book to those who have made possible the opportunities that have been ours down through the years:

Our Parents

Professor Frank A. Waugh

General U. S. Grant III

Mr. Horace M. Albright

Secretary Oscar L. Chapman

Mr. Laurance S. Rockefeller

Dr. Melville Bell Grosvenor

and

The National Park Service  
employees for their loyalty, hard  
work and devotion to the national  
park concept.



Conrad L. and Helen O. Wirth

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# Parks, Politics, and the People

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## Preface

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The motivation to provide an account of my thirty-six years of experience in planning and administering national parks and other recreational areas grew out of the belief that such an account would be helpful to people who want to pursue careers in public service, particularly in the field of conservation of our natural and human resources.

It has been said that public servants live in a fishbowl. The public, Congress, and heads of government departments are constantly scrutinizing everything government employees do. Every letter they write, every document or plan they work on is the public's business. Public servants are subject to constant criticism, and they are often the victims of misrepresentation without benefit of any opportunity or means for rebuttal. Yet many of the best administrative, professional, and scientific people in the country are government employees. It is my belief that close observation by the public makes government employees more alert and proficient than they would be otherwise. Their skill and attitudes are thereby frequently adjusted and improved for better service to the country.

This is not to say that government service is all unrewarding drudgery. My point is simply that people should know as much as possible about the ups and downs of their proposed life's occupation and should select one they will enjoy, for if they do not enjoy their work they will not achieve success. Remember President Harry Truman's advice: "If you can't stand the heat, get out of the kitchen!" Although this statement was made in a political frame of reference, it can apply as well to any occupation, including working for the people at any level of government.

The event that crystallized my decision to write this, my first book, was the receipt of a letter dated January 5, 1957, from President Robert F. Goheen of Princeton University informing me that I, along with my counterpart and good friend in the United States Forest Service, Chief Forester Richard J. McArdle, had been selected to receive the Rockefeller Public Service Award for distinguished service to the nation in the field of conservation of resources. In his letter President Goheen said:

The purpose of the University and of Mr. John D. Rockefeller, 3rd in establishing the program was to strengthen public service by giving recognition to distinguished civilians in the federal government, to improve the public service as a career, and to make it possible for experienced men and women thus recognized to pass on to others some of the fruits of their career experience. Because of this last feature, the Trustees hope you will want to make some further contribution of your own, and to that end the University is prepared to provide financial assistance. . . . You have no obligation to the University nor to anyone else in connection with, or as a condition to receiving, the Award.

In my reply I stated:

I believe I understand fully the objective of the Princeton University and of Mr. John D. Rockefeller, 3rd in establishing the award, and the desirability of following certain procedures in order to obtain full benefits from its intended purpose. I am wholeheartedly in support of its purpose of creating in the public's mind an accurate picture of the scope and quality of work done by career public servants, which I hope will, at the same time, improve the quality of the career service.

I have been thinking about this book for a long time. When I retired from government service in 1964, I gave more thought to it, indicating in my retirement letter to my associates in the National Park Service that among the several things I was going to do in retirement was write a book, and a lot of people encouraged me to do so. I have tried to relate in an interesting way not only my own experiences but those of some of my associates and of the Park Service as a group, experiences that we have had as career public servants. Some of these episodes I think are quite interesting as illustrations of the problems that arise in public administration and of how they are approached and resolved. In telling of these experiences I hope to convey the overall importance of the human values in public service.

Although this book has turned out to be more about my own life in government than I originally intended, nevertheless that is perhaps the best way I can describe what government service is really like—its good points and its bad ones. Certainly it is the life I am best acquainted with, and I consider myself to be representative of thousands of other government employees. Much of the content of the book was assimilated from many years of association with National Park Service people in a common effort to serve our country as managers of the people's heritage, natural and man made. I thank each and every one of them for wonderful memories of the National Park Service of my time.

I am especially indebted to Horace M. Albright, one of the founders of the National Park Service and its director at the time the service's Civilian Conservation Corps organization and program were established in 1933. Mr. Albright read in draft the two chapters on the CCC, found them to be accurate and adequate, and suggested no corrections or revisions.

I must also say that had it not been for the succession of fine secretaries who kept me advised and helped in keeping my records straight during my years in the Park Service, I could not have attempted to write this book. To them—Florence Duncan, Lorraine Griffith, Virginia Ayres, Belva Brandon, Rita Matthews, and Helen Johnson—I owe a great deal.

Friends are a great asset and comfort, and they can keep one busy and on the right track. This book is as much the work of William S. Bahlman and James F. Kieley as it is mine. Bill spent hours on hours with me in the archives digging out material, setting up files, and being a general adviser. Jim has been my editor and must be given the credit for putting the entire manuscript in fine, readable condition. All three of us are retired National Park Service people, a part of the Steve Mather Park Service family.

CONRAD L. WIRTH

*Montgomery County, Maryland*

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# Parks, Politics, and the People

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## Foreword

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Although I had known Connie Wirth for some years, I never realized the full measure of his devotion to his country and to the service of his people until we hiked together into the towering coastal redwood trees of California's Rockefeller Forest. It was 1958, and the graceful giants in the grove where we paused for a breather were then believed to be the world's tallest living things.

"Mel," said Connie, "suppose we lie on our backs and look up through the crowns of these trees into the sky. Not in this life, not even in a great cathedral, will you then feel closer to your Maker. For men built the cathedral, but God created the trees.

"And I am sure He created them for people—all the people of our country and of the earth, not just the few who want to cut them down for their personal profit. Now I am a servant of the people, and I think the best way to make sure these trees remain forever the property of the people is to get them into parks. Naturally, since I'm director of the national parks, I'd like to see as many redwoods as possible placed under the protection of the National Park Service."

Connie wasn't just talking. Just ten years later, Congress established Redwoods National Park. The National Geographic Society, I am proud to say, was able to help the legislators decide upon the size and boundaries of this important park by granting funds for a complete survey of the coastal redwood belt in northern California. The idea was born as Connie and I walked out of the Rockefeller Forest.

"Are these really the tallest trees in the world?" I remember asking.

"We don't really know," Connie said. "There's never been a thorough survey made, not even by the lumber companies. The Park Service has a little money we could use for the job. Do you think you could talk your Geographic trustees into putting up the rest?"

I did. The survey was duly made, concentrating on the broad question of what groves worthy of national park status were still available. Meanwhile, a *National Geographic Magazine* staffer, Dr. Paul Zahl, discovered the 367.8-foot giant that thus far holds the record as the world's tallest living thing. Hidden along the banks of isolated Redwood Creek, the tree and its neighbors were subsequently purchased from the lumber company that owned them, and the grove is now part of the national park.

The battle to establish Redwoods National Park was a bitter one. Without Connie Wirth to lead it, the cause could never have been won, and the American people he served would have been the losers. He cajoled congressmen. He browbeat people who could be swayed no other way. When he had to, he accepted insults with a smile. Loggers cursed him at public meetings, while lumber barons, in their plush offices, insulted him in more sophisticated terms.

But insults and other unpleasantries can be turned to advantage when one is a

"magnificent bureaucrat," as a high federal official once called Connie Wirth. In his book Connie writes: "One should never forget his experiences, no matter how unpleasant, because experiences are the foundation of the road to the future." Sound advice for anyone, that, but especially for the public servant, the ready target of criticism from congressmen, from the top people in the executive branch of government, and from all the organizations and individuals with special interest in the public servant's field of jurisdiction. You can find this sort of advice, implicit or offered through example, throughout the book, making *Parks, Politics, and the People* a valuable manual for those who seek careers in government and for those already embarked upon them.

It is, in addition, a history. The exciting period during which the author served in government has been well documented by serious historians. Connie makes no attempt to duplicate their efforts but rather illuminates their accounts. He sheds light upon the government people at the working level who had much to do with shaping events for which the top brass received the credit but who drew little notice in the broad history of the era. This fleshing-out of history is a most valuable service.

Necessarily, the book is considerably autobiographical. The author describes the background that led him into government service: the influence of a father who, before there was a national park system, gained renown as a designer and administrator of local parks; Connie's venture into business as a landscape architect; and finally, his entry into a long career in the federal government.

Much of the book—again necessarily—concerns the National Park Service, in which the author served for thirty-three years. Of his many accomplishments in senior staff positions and as director of the service for twelve years, two were outstanding: his direction of Civilian Conservation Corps activities of his own and other bureaus of the Department of the Interior as departmental representative on the CCC Advisory Council and his initiation of the service's Mission 66 program through which our national parks were rehabilitated after years of unavoidable neglect during World War II.

Even when he was seconded to the Civilian Conservation Corps during the New Deal, Connie didn't leave parks entirely behind. His job was to build CCC camps, and many of these were in national and state parks. The work he did in the CCC was certainly one of his finest contributions to the welfare of the country. The CCC took city boys off the streets in the depression years, sent them into the wilds, and there built them into men sound in body and character. They planted trees, cut trails, fought fires, and built lasting structures. We are still reaping benefits from their work.

Perhaps the high point in Director Wirth's career was his inspiration and organization of Mission 66, a giant proposal to rejuvenate the parks. By 1956, the national parks had grown so numerous and become so run-down because appropriations had not kept up with growth that something dramatic, mammoth had to be done to restore them. It couldn't be a simple one-year appropriation but must be a long-term push. Connie proposed a ten-year effort, called Mission 66, whose culmination in 1966 would coincide with the fiftieth anniversary of the National Park Service. He kicked off the program with a huge banquet in the halls of the Department of the Interior and had rangers and others give illustrated talks that would dramatically point out the low condition of the parks and what ought to be done to bring them up to par for the millions of annual visitors.

Invited to the dinner were important members of Congress and all the committees that dealt with the parks, cabinet members, government officials, and distinguished friends

from civilian life. The dinner was to be something different. From western parks Connie obtained surplus buffalo and elk, which were served as tempting roasts. Pictures flashed on the screen showing rangers families living in squalor, poor facilities for tourists, congested and bumpy roads, and other defects. In contrast, architectural drawings conjured up villages of neat homes for park personnel and beautiful visitor centers designed to interpret the culture, history, and other information about the parks. Then Connie inveigled high-ranking government officials who were fond of the parks to give pep talks emphasizing the low state of the parks and what should be done. The whole program was dramatic, fast-moving, and enthusiastic. So well did Connie plan and carry out his project that he indeed accomplished everything he wanted, and in the fiftieth anniversary year the new wonders were dedicated with great ceremony and admiration.

Connie left the parks only once. Just after World War II the late Harold L. Ickes, then secretary of the interior, sent him to Europe to help work out a peace treaty with Austria. Then Connie returned to his beloved parks.

If *Parks, Politics, and the People* is largely the story of one man's service in the national parks, the fact does not diminish the value of the book as a public servant's guide. Except for the fields in which they function, one government bureau is much like another. Those who administer them face the same unrelenting pressures. If they are to be successful bureaucrats, they must employ the same techniques to find their way through the tortuous federal jungle.

Describing his methodology, Connie leaves out nothing. He tells of the battles he won and lists those he lost. He gives us full texts of the reprimands he received. He criticizes those he feels deserve criticism. But he tempers his barbs with kindness. When I first read his manuscript, I told him I couldn't understand why he was so temperate, since he was now out of government and not exposed to retaliation.

"Well," he replied, "it's like Voltaire is said to have put it: 'I may not agree with what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it.' So when a fellow bucked me, he was only exercising his right as a citizen of a democracy.

Democracy, American style, is really what *Parks, Politics, and the People* is all about—not democracy coldly defined, but democracy at work, serving the people under the skilled, devoted guidance of a "magnificent bureaucrat."

MELVILLE BELL GROSVENOR  
*Chairman Emeritus and Editor Emeritus  
National Geographic Society*

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# Parks, Politics, and the People

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## Chapter 1: An Overview

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Civilized man has fortunately retained an instinct for holding on to the reality of his undisputed identity as an integral part of the universe. Colonel Richard Lieber, an ardent conservationist whose unstinting efforts gave Indiana its exceptional state park system, used to quote Francis Thompson: "Thou canst not stir a flower / without troubling of a star." An astute observation, certainly, projected to its not illogical conclusion. It is undoubtedly this feeling for the homogeneity of all creation that prompts so many of us to get outdoors and "back to nature" as a respite from the travail of everyday living. Henry David Thoreau succinctly explained his personal motivation: "I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived."

The importance of reserving space for what we have come to call recreation has long been understood. The first American settlers provided their towns with commons or village greens, and as communities grew larger they included parks in their civic planning. As the nation's westward expansion proceeded in earnest after the Civil War, thoughtful people advocated conservation practices to insure the protection of suitable lands and waters for public enjoyment. Although their influence was initially only slight at a time when the store of such natural resources seemed inexhaustible, they scored a remarkable early success with the establishment of a state park in the Yosemite Valley of California in 1864, and with that the movement got well under way.

Congress acted as early as 1832 to reserve acreage in the Hot Springs region of Arkansas for public use, but the first area (first in the world, in fact) to be designated a national park was Yellowstone, in 1872. This was done at the urging of three men from Montana who had explored the region in the northwest corner of their neighboring Territory of Wyoming in 1870 to investigate the reports of fantastic natural phenomena—hot pools, geysers, and volcanoes—that had been circulated for over fifty years by hunters and trappers, who were the only white men to have visited the area. The Montanans not only confirmed these tales, which until then had been taken only lightly, but also described the awesome beauty of Yellowstone's canyons, waterfalls, and forests. Actual photographs of these natural treasures made the following year by a United States Geological Survey expedition helped to convince Congress that the area should be set aside and protected as a primeval wonderland.

In 1890, Congress designated Yosemite as a national park and added two others in California, namely Sequoia and General Grant National Parks. From these beginnings a large and diversified system of natural, historical, recreational, and cultural areas was developed which in 1972, a hundred years after the first national park came into being, totaled 284 units through out the country.

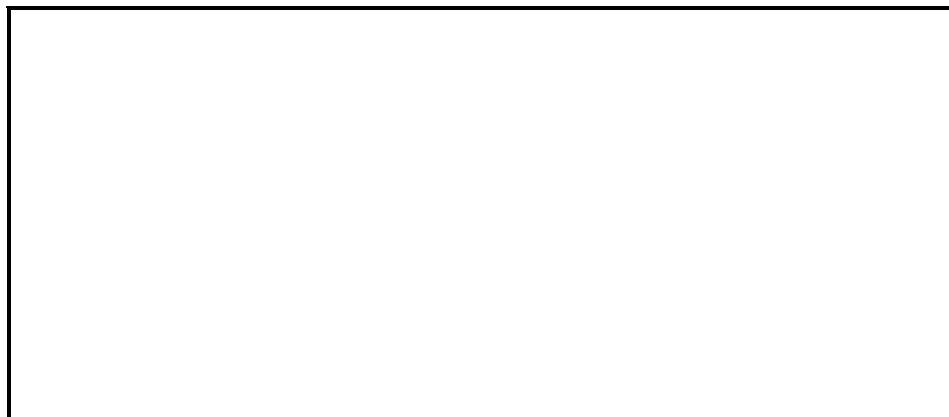
In the early years of the national park movement, the parks were almost wholly inaccessible to visitors. The basic reason for establishing them was to prevent their

unique resources from being exploited for profit by the lumber and mining industries which were then avidly seeking to penetrate remote parts of the West in anticipation of high returns on their investments. Gradually, however, railroad lines were built to serve park areas where practicable, and roads were extended or improved when the age of automobile travel arrived. In 1970, near the end of their first century, the national parks reported a year's total of 172,307,500 visitors.

With public use of all types of areas in the system increasing exponentially over the years, the main problem for park administrators became one of protecting them not simply from commercial exploitation, but rather from the erosive effect of heavy use by the park visitors themselves. This has continued to be a peculiarly baffling problem. The parks are for the people to use, and the people are encouraged to use them, but it has been aptly said that now the parks are literally being loved to death. How, then, can the irreplaceable resources of these areas be preserved for the veiny people whose intensive use of the parks threatens to destroy or at least impair them?

This is the challenge that led me into park planning and administration, for I had been cognizant of it throughout my childhood as I watched my father wrestle with the problem in developing and administering the municipal park systems of two large cities in the East and Middle West. I was actually born in a park and lived in parks until I left home to attend preparatory school and then college, where I majored in landscape architecture. Professionally, then, I am a landscape architect and planner—a land-use planner, that is—throughout a career that brought me major responsibilities in my professional field and in management.

My father, Theodore Wirth, a horticulturist, professional park planner, and administrator, immigrated to this country in the late 1880s from the oldest democracy in the world, Switzerland. According to the custom in those days, after getting his education in his home country he served an apprenticeship of four years in park work abroad, in Paris and London. When he arrived in America he got a job working as a tree trimmer in New York City's Central Park. Within two or three years he worked up to the position of sub-superintendent of Riverside Park, an area extending along the Hudson River for about a mile north of Seventy-second Street. A change of city government left practically all municipal employees without jobs. This abrupt unemployment came as a shock to Dad, who was inexperienced in the spoils system of New York City politics of that time, and he decided that working for the city was not for him. He found private employment on the Perkins estate at Glen Cove, Long Island, under a Frenchman, Felix Mense, a horticulturist who was head gardener, or manager, of the estate. The connection proved to be the most important of his life, because a few years later he proposed to the elder of the boss' two daughters, Leonie, and was accepted. Soon afterwards he accepted an offer to become superintendent of parks in Hartford, Connecticut, where he began his long and distinguished career.





The Wirth brothers, Theodore, Walter, and Conrad, in Hartford, Connecticut, just before the family moved to Minneapolis, Minnesota.

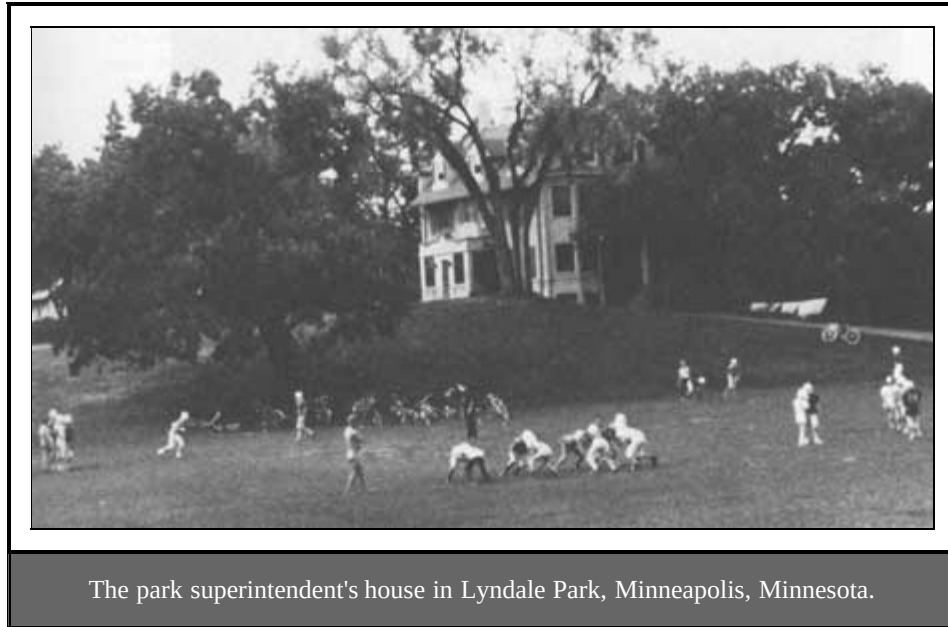
In Hartford we lived in the superintendent's residence in Elizabeth Park. I always get a great deal of pleasure going back there to see the beautiful rose garden my father built, the first recorded municipal rose garden in the United States. It has changed very little and people by the thousands visit it every year.

Having established a sound reputation through his work in Hartford, Dad began to receive offers from other cities as early as 1903. He and Mother really had no desire to leave Hartford, where he had taken his bride and where their three sons had been born, but the die was cast after he accepted an invitation from Charles Loring, a prominent businessman in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and a member of the city's park commission, to come out and meet with them. He found the city very much to his liking. Minneapolis was then a small but growing town with great potential. It had very few parks but a lot of lakes, rivers, and other possibilities for park development. The park commission made him an attractive offer which included building a house of his own design in one of the parks as his official residence. In 1906 the Wirth family moved to Minneapolis and it was there that Dad thoroughly enhanced his reputation as a park planner and administrator.

Our house was built in a new park not far from Lake Harriet. It had a first floor at the level with the top of the hill it was built on. It had a second floor with four bedrooms and a big sleeping porch. The third floor had two bedrooms and a big storage room. In the basement level underneath the porch on the first floor, there was an office and a big drafting room with four drafting tables. The house was on the outskirts of Minneapolis and to get to school we had to cross farmlands in the winter but had to go around them in the summer. We went on skis in the winter and in the spring we played on the rubbery ice of a pond near the school. When the weather started to warm up, the ice would soften and some ten or twelve of us kids would link arms and run back and forth across the ice and watch it sort of wave in front of us. The more we did it the looser it

became and then we'd have to gradually start cutting down the size of the gang. It was always exciting to see who could make the last run across without falling in.

Dad proved himself an imaginative planner and excellent designer and was one of the first park administrators to establish a professional recreation department as part of his organization. His plans provided for parks around all the natural waterways and lakes, a playground within a quarter mile of every child, and a complete recreation center within a half mile of every family. He was fortunate in having as his principal assistant Chris A. Bossen, who had served in this capacity in the Hartford days. I have fond recollections of Mr. Bossen and his family. Chris' administrative skill was a perfect match for Dad's creative ability. He succeeded Dad as superintendent of the Minneapolis park system when my father retired in 1936.



The park superintendent's house in Lyndale Park, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

With Dad settled for what proved to be the rest of his professional career, we were a happy family in an ideal setting in Minneapolis. Mother ran the household with the same deft, sure hand that Dad used in running the parks. In addition to three lusty, growing sons, she had a temperamental, intelligent, hardworking husband to handle—one with the old country notion that the father was really the head of the house. But Dad knew that not all the skills of his calling were in his sole possession, for Mother was no mean horticulturist herself. It was she who taught my brother Walt and me how to build and take care of a garden, even though at the time it did seem to us that she was merely trying to keep us occupied and out of mischief. We had to respect her expertise, for she was an active member, and several times president, of the Ladies' Horticultural Society.

Mother died in 1940 in her 65th year, and only Dad and Mother's sister, Aunt Juliette who had never married, were left in the family home. About two years later we three boys received wires from Dad stating that Juliette and he felt that the neighbors were beginning to talk and they had decided to get married if we didn't object. Within 24 hours Juliette and Dad received three wires from different parts of the world expressing our delight over the good news. I might say that the Swiss immigrant had not only had a successful career in his adopted country but had really hit the jackpot in marrying his boss' two daughters—the dearest mothers any boy ever had.





The Wirth family, about 1916, on a camping trip to Lake Itasca State Park, Minnesota. Conrad took the picture, with father and mother on the left, and brothers, Walter and Ted.

During the course of my father's long career in park management, he made considerable contributions to the field. He was one of a group of about a dozen park men who met in Boston in 1898 and formed an association of New England park superintendents, the first professional organization of its kind in the United States. At the time of his death, in 1949, he was the last surviving charter member of the organization that became the American Institute of Park Executives, which in turn was combined with other groups to form the National Recreation and Park Association. I have been a member of those organizations since 1924, and my brother Walter was a very active member from 1926 throughout the rest of his career, holding the office of president several times. I was president of the American Institute of Park Executives, as Dad had been, and I am still a member of the National Recreation and Park Association; my son Ted is also a member. My older brother, Theodore, ignored the family tradition of horticulture in favor of a career in the United States Navy, reaching the grade of Admiral. Walter, however, followed in Dad's footsteps, first in private practice with me in New Orleans, then on his own in the Tulsa, Oklahoma, park system, and later becoming superintendent of parks in New Haven, Connecticut; director of Pennsylvania State Parks; and superintendent of the Salem, Oregon, Regional Parks.



Cadets Wirth and James in rowing shell on Lake Nagawicka at Saint John's Military Academy, Delafield, Wisconsin.

My brothers and I attended Saint John's Military Academy at Delafield, Wisconsin. At Saint John's they put each new cadet in one of the two clubs, the Kemper Club or the Dekoven Club, and he belonged to that club throughout his stay at the academy. The two clubs competed with one another both athletically and scholastically. I was a Dekoven and, in my last year, one of the five directors. Dr. Smythe, the headmaster and a Kemper, refereed some of the athletic events. I remember one of the last things before graduation was the shell race on Lake Nagawicka. The Dekovens felt certain that we had won both the heavyweight and lightweight shell races, but the headmaster's decision was in favor of the Kempers. Then in the cross-country race a Dekoven man came in first, but the headmaster ruled a foul on him, which gave first place to a Kemper. The Dekoven Club decided to make our feelings known to the headmaster, and I was detailed to do it. I was "officer of the day" and in full dress uniform. I went to the headmaster's office, saluted, and told him the Dekovens felt that the decisions on the boat race and the cross-country race were wrong and therefore unfair. He replied, "Is that all?" I said, "Yes, sir." And he said, "You are dismissed." I saluted and left. I was disturbed that he did not discuss the matter with me. The day after this incident was graduation day. In handing out the yearly awards they always left to last the most important one, the Delafield Medal for the most worthy cadet. I hadn't expected anything and was surprised when I was called up and presented with the medal. I was a little sorry about what I had said the day before, and I think maybe the headmaster realized that, because in passing me he stopped and said: "I want you to know you were awarded that medal before our interview the other day. And I also want you to know that when you came in and spoke your mind I realized that we had made the right choice." He further said his decisions were right, "however, you have a right to express an honest opinion and we admire you for it."

From Saint John's I proceeded to Massachusetts Agricultural College, now the University of Massachusetts. Here my preparation for a career in park and recreational work began with the business of earning the bachelor of science degree in what was then called landscape gardening. I studied under Professor Frank A. Waugh (known to the students as "Pinkie" when he was not around), who was my father's choice of teachers. He could not have selected a better one. Professor Waugh went into depth on the relationship between man and the natural environment. He and his assistant, Professor Harrison, an engineer, believed that man-made landscape developments, to be successful, must meet the needs of the people and that the natural elements were a part of these needs. They proceeded on the principle that man's advanced culture and social development required certain modern conveniences but that these utilities should not be ugly or destructive of the needed natural environment. In fact, certain professional societies in those days would not recognize Waugh's graduates because of this conviction. The landscape profession then was oriented more toward the formal types of landscape design.

Professor Waugh felt that the term *landscape architecture* implied formal design and the destruction of the natural environment. He preferred the old term *landscape gardening*.



Officer of the Day Wirth at Saint John's Military

as more descriptive of the type of landscaping best suited for park and home improvements. Generally speaking, his concept has proven correct, and time has adjusted the meaning of the term *landscape architecture* to agree with the spirit of Professor Waugh's concept. Many landscape architects today, however, are using the term *land planner*, considering it more descriptive of the type of service provided. Really, the terms *land planner* and *landscape architect* are interchangeable with reference to the type of work these professionals are called upon to do. They are trained to provide plans for land uses that will best serve, over the long term, the environmental requirements of the people.

On arriving in Amherst, I stayed with the Waughs for a month before moving to a rented room in a home. Of course Professor Waugh had invited me, but I believe I stayed longer than he intended. When my father gave me the money I would need to pay for my room and board for the first month, he warned me to beware of gamblers and thieves on the train. But I had to learn the hard way. I got in a poker game on the train between Minneapolis and Chicago on the invitation of a couple of seemingly very nice, friendly gentlemen. I guess the usual routine followed, and my money for room and board for September was soon gone.

I applied myself pretty thoroughly to my landscape studies, but I had trouble because of extracurricular activities; in fact, I actually found myself below the average student. Actually, I wasn't a bad student in the subjects I liked: landscape architecture, planning, engineering, physics. Languages always gave me trouble and still do. We had to have two languages in addition to English in order to be graduated, and I never could fully understand why.

I made the freshman football and basketball teams and did a little track work. I never made any of the varsity teams, although in trying I lost two front teeth tackling somebody from the rear, had my Adam's apple stepped on good and hard, and broke my collarbone and my right leg. There were plenty of social activities at Mass Aggie, too. I was asked to join the Kappa Sigma fraternity, which I did. And there were two women's colleges nearby, each only a half-hour streetcar ride from Amherst: Smith College, at Northampton, and Holyoke College, near Holyoke. There were about a thousand male students in Amherst College and Massachusetts Agricultural College in Amherst and some four or five thousand women at Smith and Holyoke.

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# ***Parks, Politics, and the People***

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# Parks, Politics, and the People



## Chapter 2:

### Introduction to Washington: The National Capital Park and Planning Commission

At the age of twenty-eight I placed my young wife and our ten-month-old boy with our parents in Minneapolis and Saint Paul and went to Washington to begin a career in the federal government. I had to leave my little family behind until I could afford to bring them east. I had been out of work for over nine months, we were broke, and our debts were staggering.

It was a rather warm but windy Tuesday in May, 1928, when I arrived in Washington on an early train. After checking the newspapers to see about a room, I decided to delay renting one until I had called at the National Capital Park and Planning Commission, since perhaps there I could get advice as to a suitable location. The offices were then in the World War I temporary Navy Building at Constitution Avenue and Eighteenth Street, N.W. Because I had more time than money, I checked my bag for ten cents in Union Station, walked the eighteen blocks to the Navy Building, and got there a half-hour before the offices were to open at 8:00.

I waited around a few minutes before Mrs. Nettie Benson arrived. Mrs. Benson was later to become secretary to two National Park Service directors and, in 1951, my administrative assistant. At that time she was secretary to Lieutenant Colonel U. S. Grant III, who then had three titles: vice-chairman and executive and disbursing officer of the National Capital Park and Planning Commission and engineer in charge of the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds of the National Capital. The latter agency built, operated, and maintained the federal parks and buildings in the city of Washington and the nearby region. Grant was one of the finest Corps of Engineers officers I have ever known, a man who was not only an excellent engineer but a fine administrative officer, a gentleman, and a strong conservationist of our natural environment, deeply involved in the preservation of our historic heritage. I was very fortunate to have the opportunity of working under his direction.

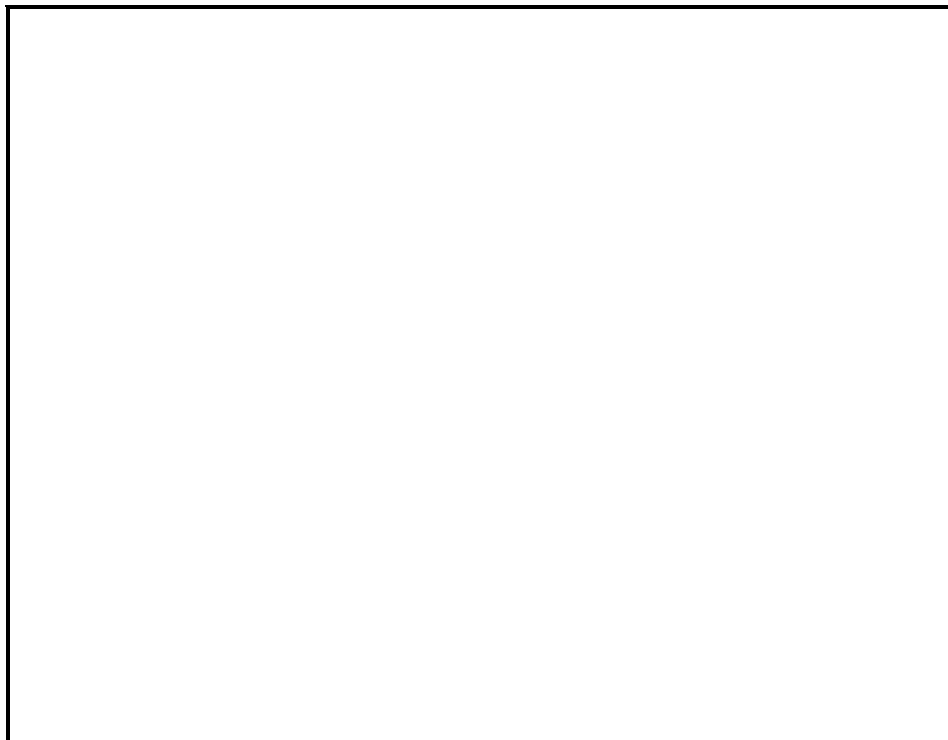
I had first met Colonel Grant some five weeks before, early in April. But I had not yet met the staffs of the planning commission and the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds. After a short talk Grant took me down to meet the staff of the planning commission, including Major Carey H. Brown, assistant executive officer to Grant, and Charles W. Eliot II, director of planning. I was to join Eliot's staff in the planning commission, but I soon learned that the colonel had assignments for me in connection with the operation of the parks of Washington as well. Therefore I was taken to meet Major Joseph C. Mchaffey, Grant's assistant in the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds. He in turn took me to meet the top-flight park people charged with responsibilities for the parks of Washington. I met Captain Kelly, chief of the park police; Frank Gartside, general manager of the parks; George Clark, the chief engineer; and John Nagel, who was the engineer responsible for such big construction projects as the Arlington Memorial Bridge. I also met Charles Peters, who was then in charge of

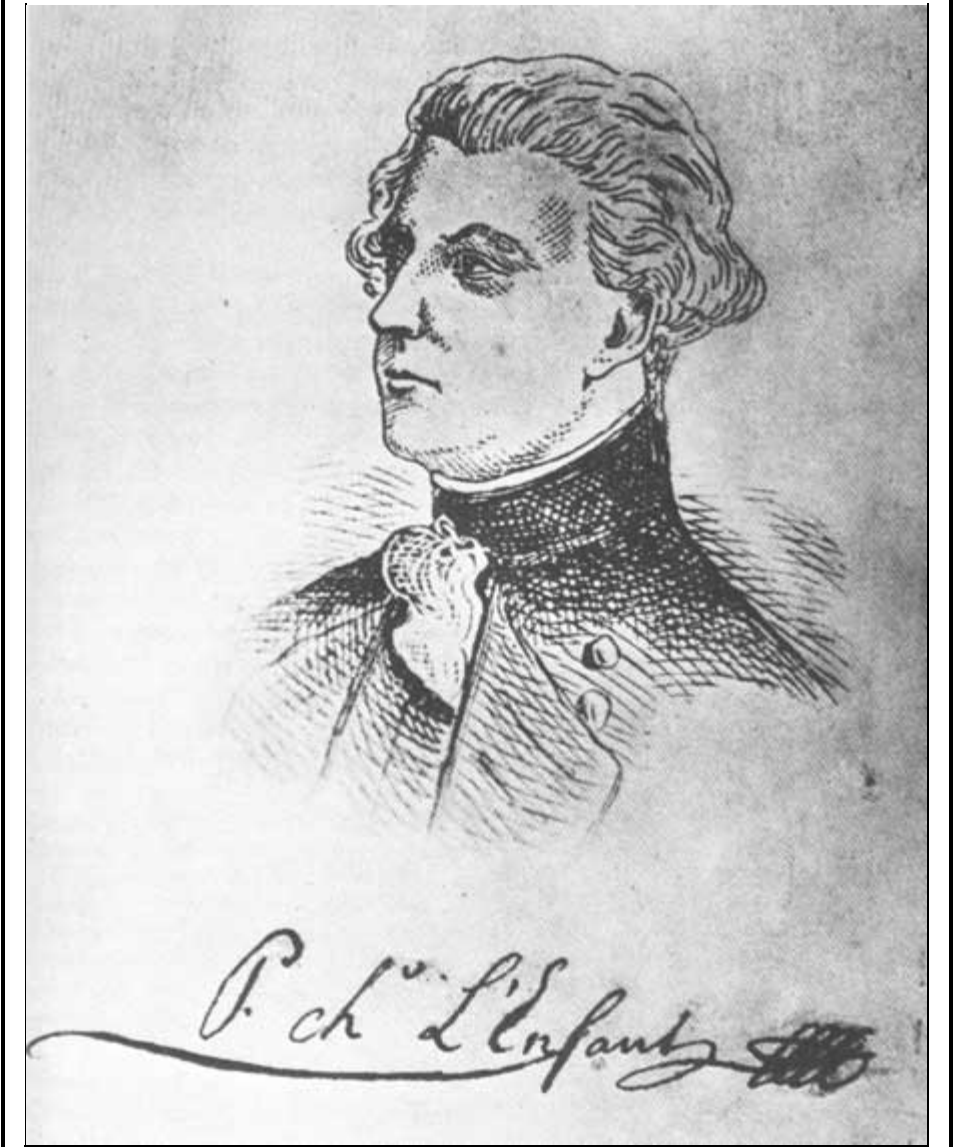
the federal buildings and who through the years became a very dear friend. By his reorganization order (no. 6166) of June 10, 1933, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt transferred to the National Park Service the entire Office of Public Buildings and Grounds. So, the group of fine park people I met that morning in May, 1928, became National Park Service people.

After meeting my new colleagues, being assigned a drafting board and part of a desk, and having lunch in a cafeteria on the roof of the old Navy Building, I inquired about where I might look for a room on a weekly or monthly basis. I was told that there were fairly good and reasonable places in northwest Washington. I spent that afternoon looking for a room and found one that suited my strained financial situation, though the landlord required a down payment of one week's rent. That night I quickly discovered the bed was infested with bedbugs, and the next morning I packed my bags and left, reluctantly forfeiting my first week's rent.

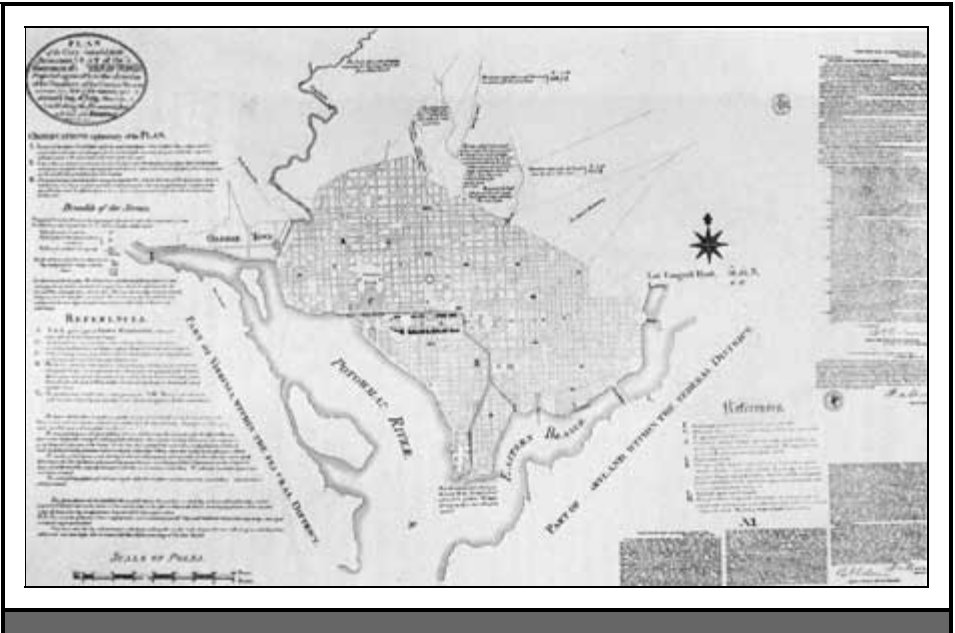
It occurred to me that there were a couple of universities in Washington and that possibly one of them had a chapter of the Kappa Sigma fraternity, of which I was a member. Sure enough, there was a chapter at George Washington University, and they had a room for me. Apparently they needed a few paying guests, even though the state of my funds required that they wait until my first payday for the rent money.

On May 17, I received my appointment. The National Capital Park and Planning Commission was established by Congress in 1926, made up of several odd committees established in earlier years for special projects with no effective coordination to develop a sound comprehensive plan for the National Capital. Shortly after the federal government was established on April 30, 1789, and Congress started meeting, it was realized that it would be very difficult for the government to operate in any of the existing cities. President George Washington was authorized to proceed with the selection of a seat of government and the plans to develop the national capital. He employed Major Pierre Charles L'Enfant, of France, for the task. L'Enfant, working with the president and Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson, laid out a plan for the city of Washington and the District of Columbia. Construction was started shortly after 1791, and in 1800 Congress moved to Washington.





Major Pierre Charles L'Enfant, of France. *Courtesy National Capital Planning Commission.*



While the plan prepared for the city of Washington in the late eighteenth century was a very good one, very advanced in relation to those of other cities in the United States at that time, a lack of continuous attention caused it to deteriorate during the nineteenth century. Alterations in the plan were made at times during the nineteenth century to satisfy political and personal interests. These changes more often than not were at odds with original concepts of Washington as the capital city of a great nation. Consequently, in late 1898, when the first hundred years had passed and an anniversary celebration was being planned, the central part of the city, especially the Mall area, was in sorry condition. Permits had been granted for buildings in the Mall, cattle and other livestock were grazed there, and Congress had approved the building of the railroad station at the foot of Capitol Hill.

The people of the District of Columbia worked hard making arrangements for the centennial, which naturally took on a national aspect. A joint committee of the two houses of Congress was appointed to act with the citizens' committee in planning the celebration. The celebration was very successful and was brought to a very satisfactory conclusion with a reception and banquet given by the Washington Board of Trade in honor of the congressional committee and distinguished guests. However, a good deal of dissatisfaction was expressed by people throughout the country with the conditions they found in Washington.

As a result Senator James McMillen, chairman of the Committee on the District of Columbia, introduced a resolution which, when passed on March 8, 1901, instructed his committee as follows:

Resolved, that the Committee on the District of Columbia be, and it hereby is, directed to consider the subject and report to the Senate plans for the development and improvement of the entire park system of the District of Columbia. For the purpose of preparing such plans, the committee may sit during the recess of Congress, and may secure the services of such experts as may be necessary for a proper consideration of the subject. The expenses of such investigation shall be paid from the contingent fund of the Congress and reported to the Senate on the 15th day of January, 1902.

Senator McMillen and his committee selected Daniel H. Burnham, a noted architect from Chicago, and Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., a nationally recognized planner and landscape architect of Brookline, Massachusetts, and gave these two gentlemen the opportunity to add to their committee for the study as they saw fit. Burnham and Olmsted chose as their colleagues Charles F. McKim, a well-known and capable architect of New York, and one of America's great sculptors, Augustus Saint-Gaudens.

The report that resulted, often referred to as the McMillen Report, really stirred things up. On the front page of the second edition, dated March 14, 1903, a note by the Senate Committee on the District of Columbia states:

The 57th Congress authorized the construction of the War College and the Engineering School of Application (page 117); the building of the Agriculture Department (page 44); a building for the national museum, to be located on the north side of the Mall (page 44); the Union Railroad Station, to be located at the intersection of Massachusetts Avenue and Delaware Avenue (page 29); a building for the use of the members of the

House of Representatives, to be located on the square facing the Capitol grounds, East of New Jersey Avenue (page 38); a municipal building for the District of Columbia, to be located on the south side of Pennsylvania Avenue, between 13 1/2 and 14th Streets (page 70); and a Hall of Records, to be located on E Street between 18th and 19th Streets (page 29). The Daughters of the American Revolution have begun the erection of a Continental [Constitution] Hall, on the second square south of the Corcoran Museum of Art, and, the restoration of the White House has been completed (page 65).

All these projects were recommended in the first edition of the McMillen Report. Within a little more than a year those actions had been taken. Thus did Congress eagerly begin carrying out the recommendations of the report and continued to do so in the first two decades of the century. An Act of Congress of May 17, 1910, established a permanent Commission of Fine Arts. A zoning law passed in 1920 provided the authority to control building set back and elevation of buildings in conformity with the overall city plan.

In 1924, Congress made provisions for the detailed planning of a public park and open space system, recognizing the failure to carry out the proposals of the 1901 plan for an open space system so important to the growing population of the city. Very soon the National Capital Park Commission and Congress came to the conclusion that a satisfactory park system could not be laid down without the full knowledge of the inter-relationship of parks, roads, zoning, building, and other elements of a comprehensive city plan. The authority of the commission was therefore broadened in 1926, when it was given its new title and responsibilities as the National Capital Park and Planning Commission. The authority of the presently named National Capital Planning Commission has been extended to regional responsibility, insofar as federal interests are concerned, which requires close cooperation with the authorities of Maryland and Virginia surrounding Washington.



Members of the McMillen Commission working on a model of the Mall area.  
*Courtesy Fine Arts Commission.*



The National Capital Park and Planning Commission in the mid-1930s. *Left to right:* H. S. Settle, staff; J. A. Ryder, staff (behind Settle); Planner J. Nolen, Jr.; Commissioners Colonel Dan Sultan, William A. Delano, Norman Brown; Chairman Frederic A. Delano; J. C. Nichols; J. B. Gordon; Arno B. Cammerer; unidentified; H. V. Hubbard; T. C. Jeffers, staff; unidentified. *Courtesy National Capital Planning Commission.*

After I had settled into my work in Washington, I found that one of the big things the commission, other governing agencies, civic groups, and Congress were working on was a proposed piece of legislation called the Cramton-Capper Bill. The sponsors of the bill were Representative Louis C. Cramton, from Michigan, and Senator Arthur Capper, from Kansas. Representative Cramton, one of my heroes, was chairman of the House Subcommittee on Appropriations, which handled the Park Service's as well as the Planning Commission's appropriations. He had been associated with many of my other idols, such as Horace Albright, U. S. Grant III, J. Horace McFarland, Frederic Delano, Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., and Miss Harlean James, secretary of the American Civic Association. Several of this group had worked for some ten years to establish the National Park Service and, joining with Mather and Albright, helped to get the legislation passed authorizing the service in 1916. This same group, along with others, were the backers of the establishment of the planning commission in 1926. Cramton was perhaps as much a Park Service man as he was a member of Congress. He befriended the service particularly when we greatly needed his help during the late twenties and early thirties.

The Cramton-Capper Bill called for an appropriation of some thirty-two million dollars for land acquisition for parks and for stream-valley protection within and adjacent to the District of Columbia. It included establishment of the George Washington Memorial Parkway on both sides of the Potomac River from just above Great Falls, upriver from Washington, to Mount Vernon on the Virginia side and to Fort Washington on the Maryland side, downriver. It also included acquisition of land for the city's park and recreation system and the development of a Fort-to-Fort Drive connecting the Civil War forts that ringed the capital. The growth of the city was such that by the time acquisition funds were available it was no longer practicable to build the Fort-to-Fort Drive, although practically all of the fort sites had been acquired and are now part of the city park system. The bill included aid to the counties in Virginia and Maryland bordering the District of Columbia on a matching-fund basis for the development of their park systems.

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***Parks, Politics, and the People***  
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# Parks, Politics, and the People

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## Chapter 3: The National Park Service

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I entered on duty in the National Park Service February 6, 1931, as an assistant director (grade CAF-13) at a yearly salary of \$5,600, to head the Branch of Lands. The service at that time occupied the third floor of the east wing of the old Department of the Interior building, between Eighteenth and Nineteenth streets and E and F streets, N.W., in Washington. The next two years were interesting as a breaking-in and training period for me before the intensified activities of the New Deal period.

The National Park Service was then approaching its fifteenth anniversary. Its founder and first director, Stephen T. Mather, had retired in 1929. My father had been with Mather in 1921 when he, Horace Albright, and Secretary of the Interior John Barton Payne organized the National Conference on State Parks, in Des Moines, Iowa. Although I was too late to qualify as one of the devoted and capable group known as the "Mather men," once in the service I found myself surrounded by them. They were the core of about twenty-five people in the Washington office—a loyal, hard-working group. The thoroughness that Mather and Albright applied to insure a good, sound organization based on an equally sound policy, one constructed and documented to last through the years, quickly became apparent to a new staff member.

On May 13, 1918, Secretary of the Interior Franklin K. Lane wrote to Mather in some detail about the National Park Service and what he hoped it would become. In that letter Lane set forth the policy governing administration of the national park system by the new service:

For the information of the public, an outline of the administrative policy to which the new Service will adhere may now be announced. This policy is based on three broad principles: First, that the national parks must be maintained in absolutely unimpaired form for the use of future generations as well as those of our own time; second, that they are set apart 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.

On March 11, 1925, Secretary of the Interior Hubert Work wrote Mather a similar letter:

Owing to changed conditions since the establishment in 1917 of the National Park Service as an independent bureau of the Department of the Interior, I find it advisable to restate the policy governing the administration of the national park system to which the Service will adhere.

This policy is based on three broad, accepted principles:

First, that the national parks and national monuments must be maintained un touched by the inroads of modern civilization in order that unspoiled bits

of the native America may be preserved to be enjoyed by future generations as well as our own;

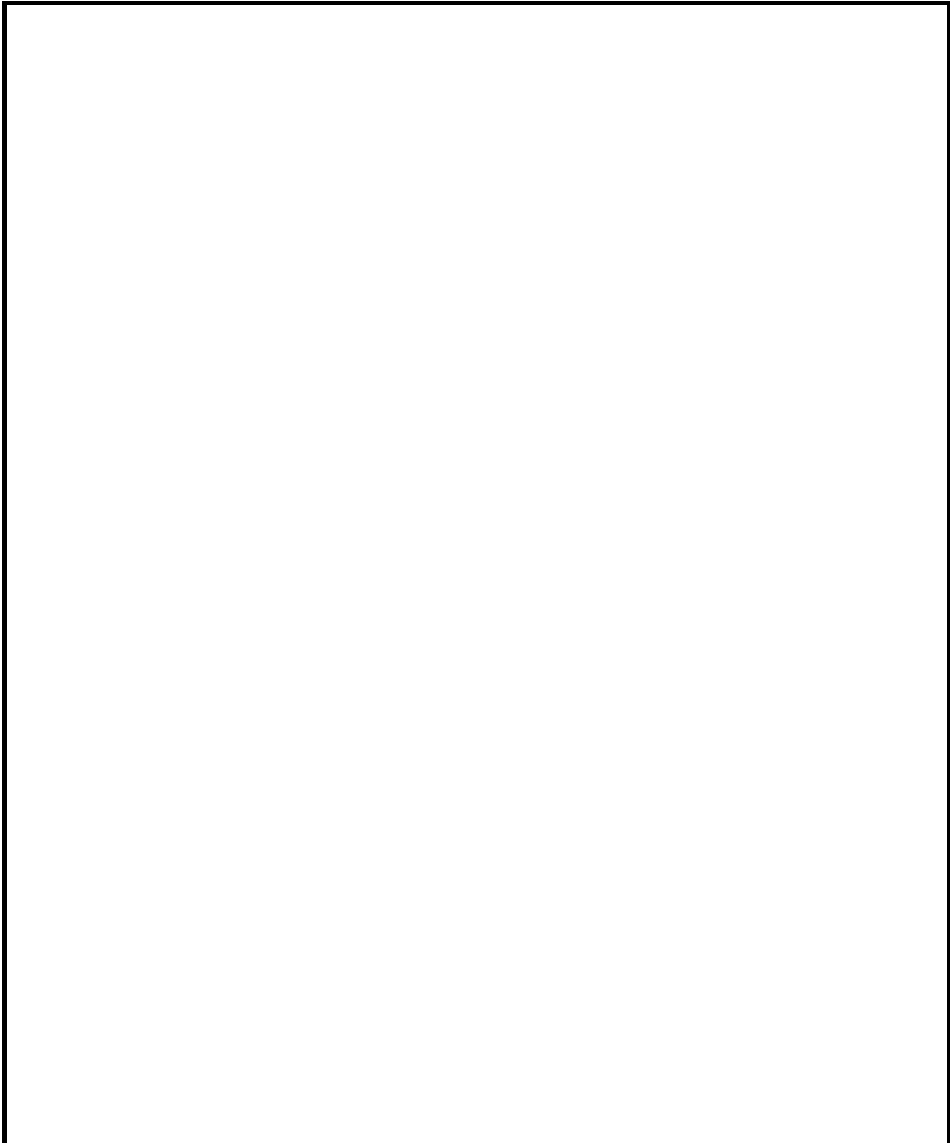
Second, that they are set apart, for the use, education, health and pleasure of all the people;

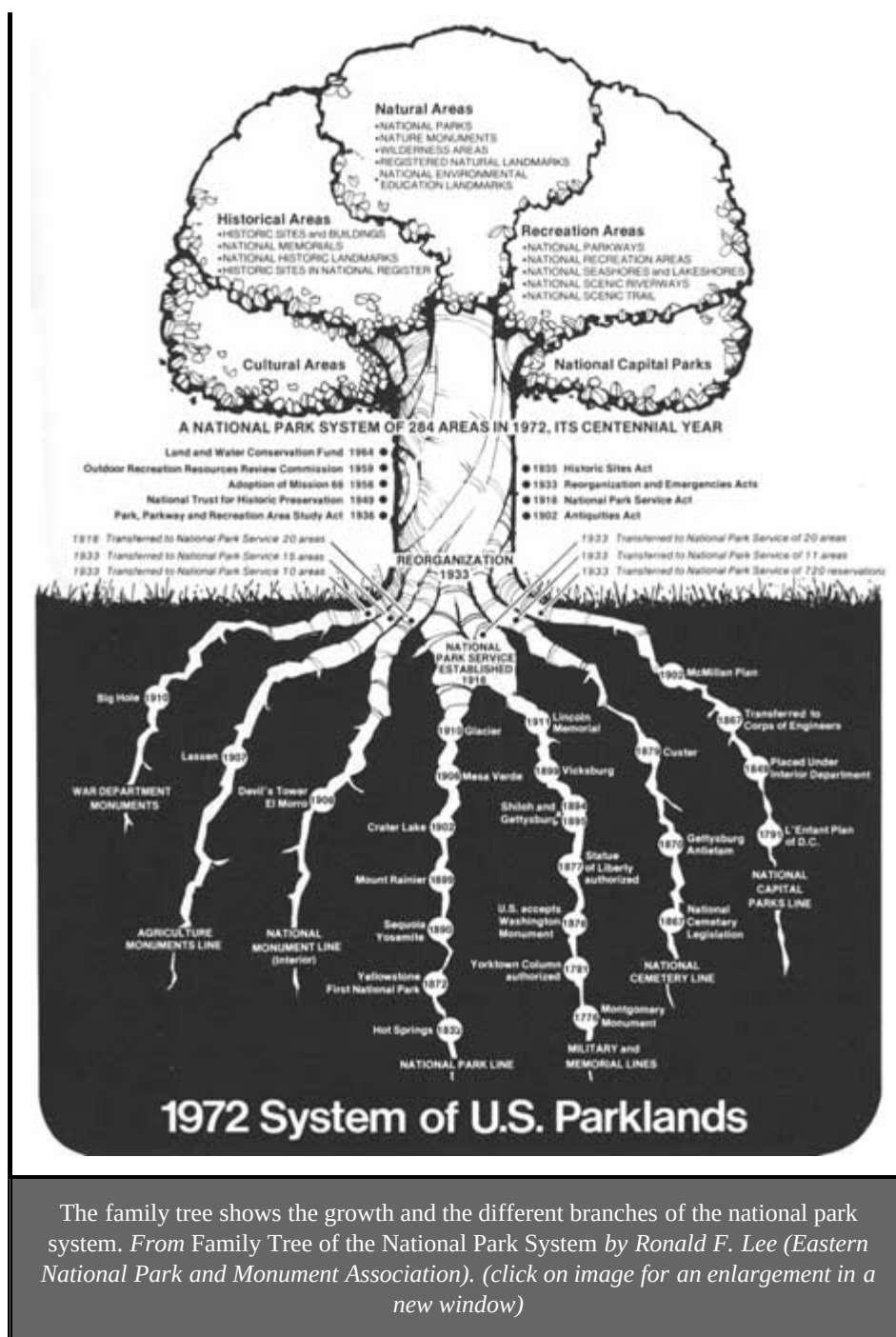
Third, that the national interest must take precedence in all decisions affecting public or private enterprise in the parks and monuments.

The duty imposed upon the National Park Service in the organic act creating it to faithfully preserve the parks and monuments for posterity in essentially their natural state is paramount to every other activity.

The commercial use of these reservations, except as specifically authorized by law, or such as may be incidental to the accommodation and entertainment of visitors, rs not to be permitted.

It is not too difficult to recognize that these letters were carefully prepared by the team of Mather and Albright and signed willingly and with pleasure by the secretaries of the Department of the Interior so as to establish firmly the administrative policy in conformity with the legislation. Secretary Lane was a Democrat, and Secretary Work a Republican.





Ronald F. Lee's *Family Tree of the National Park System*, a booklet published by the Eastern National Park and Monument Association, is valuable to an understanding of the history of the National Park Service. Early in the Civilian Conservation Corps period we brought Ronnie Lee to Washington as a young historian from one of the National Park Service CCC camps. He was a very imaginative, energetic, and intelligent person. After service in World War II he was gradually advanced to the position of chief historian of the National Park Service. He stimulated interest in the establishment of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and he worked closely with Tom Vint in establishing the Federal Register for Historic Preservation. I hope that some day one of his associates will put all his accomplishments in print. In his *Family Tree* he traced seven categorical lines, or types of units, that made up the national park system as of 1972:

#### 1. National Memorial Line, 1776

2. National Military Park Line, 1781
3. National Capital Parks Line, 1790
4. Mineral Springs Line, 1832
5. National Cemetery Line, 1867
6. National Park Line, 1872
7. National Monument Line, 1906

In Chapter 1, I briefly covered the founding and development of the National Park Service from the perspective of the individuals involved. Lee cogently outlined the evolution of the national park concept as it was set down in acts of Congress:

Yellowstone National Park, established March 1, 1872, marks the beginning of the National Park line and the center of gravity of the chart. . . . Although Yosemite State Park, created by Federal cession in 1864 to protect Yosemite Valley and the Mariposa Big Tree Grove, was an important conservation milestone, Yellowstone was the first full and unfettered embodiment of the National Park idea—the world's first example of large-scale wilderness preservation for all the people. The United States has since exported the idea around the globe.

The remarkable Yellowstone Act withdrew some two million acres of public land in Wyoming and Montana Territories from settlement, occupancy, or sale and dedicated it "as a public park or pleasure-ground for the benefit and enjoyment of the people." Furthermore, the law provided for preservation of all timber, mineral deposits, natural curiosities, and wonders within the park "in their natural condition." The twin purposes of preservation and use, so important and so susceptible to conflict, yet so eloquently reaffirmed by Congress when the National Park Service was established in 1916, were there from the beginning.

Once invented—and Yellowstone National Park was an important social invention—the National Park idea was attacked by special interests, stoutly defended by friends in Congress, and refined and confirmed between 1872 and 1916. During this period fourteen more National Parks were created, most of them closely following the Yellowstone prototype. Their establishment extended the National Park concept throughout the West....

One milestone in this history is notable—the emergence of a distinction between National Parks and National Forests. Eighteen years elapsed after the Yellowstone Act before another scenic park was authorized, and then three—Sequoia, Yosemite, and General Grant—were created in the single year of 1890. Yosemite and General Grant were set aside as "reserved forest lands," but like Sequoia they were modeled after Yellowstone and named National Parks administratively by the Secretary of the Interior. The very next year, in the Forest Reserve Act of 1891, Congress separated the idea of forest conservation from the National Park idea. That act granted the President authority to create, by executive proclamation, permanent forest reserves on the public domain. Here is the fork in the road beyond which National Parks and National Forests proceeded by separate paths. Within sixteen years Presidents Cleveland, McKinley, and particularly Theodore Roosevelt established 159 National Forests containing more than 150 million acres. By 1916 Presidents Taft and Wilson had added another 26 million acres. During this same period each new National Park had to be created by individual Act of Congress, usually after many years of work.

Nevertheless, by 1916 eleven National Parks including such superlative areas as Mount Rainier, Crater Lake, Mesa Verde, Glacier, Rocky Mountain, and Hawaii, had been added to the original four and Mackinac abolished, bringing the total number to fourteen and the acreage to approximately 4,750,000.

Establishment of these first National Parks reflected in part changing American attitudes toward nature. The old colonial and pioneering emphasis on rapid exploitation of seemingly inexhaustible resources was at last giving way, among some influential Americans, to an awakened awareness of the beauty and wonder of nature....

While the early National Parks were being created, a separate movement got under way to preserve the magnificent cliff dwellings, pueblo ruins, and early missions discovered by cowboys, army officers, ethnologists, and other explorers on the vast public lands of the Southwest from plunder and destruction by pot-hunters and vandals. The effort to secure protective legislation began early among historically minded scientists and civic leaders in Boston and spread to similar circles in Washington, New York, Denver, Santa Fe, and other centers during the 1880's and 1890's. Thus was born the National Monument idea. With important help from Rep. John Fletcher Lacey of Iowa and Senator Henry Cabot Lodge of Massachusetts, it was written into law in the Antiquities Act of 1906—with profound consequences for the National Park System.

The National Monument idea extended the principle of the Forest Reserve Act of 1891 to antiquities and objects of scientific interest on the public domain. It authorized the President, in his discretion, "to declare by public proclamation historic landmarks, historic and prehistoric structures, and other objects of historic or scientific interest" situated on lands owned or controlled by the United States to be National Monuments. The act also prohibited the excavation or appropriation of antiquities on Federal land without a permit....

Between 1906 and 1933 three Federal agencies, the Departments of Interior, Agriculture and War, initiated and administered separate groups of National Monuments. In the *Family Tree*, these form three National Monument lines, one for each department....

We conclude our presentation with the definition of the National Park System written into law in 1970 by the Congress of the United States. The General Authorities Act of that year, Public Law 91-383, signed by President Nixon on August 18, 1970, reads in part as follows:

"Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, that Congress declares that the national park system, which began with establishment of Yellowstone National Park in 1872, has since grown to include superlative natural, historic, and recreation areas in every major region of the United States, its territories and island possessions; that these areas, though distinct in character, are united through their interrelated purposes and resources into one national park system as cumulative expressions of a single national heritage; that,

individually and collectively, these areas derive increased national dignity and recognition of their superb environmental quality through their inclusion jointly with each other in one national park system preserved and managed for the benefit and inspiration of all the people of the United States; and that it is the purpose of this Act to include all such areas in the System and to clarify the authorities applicable to the System."

The title of Ron Lee's *Family Tree of the National Park System* is apt, for it suggests more than a genealogy. Through the years the people of the National Park Service have often been referred to as the "Stephen T. Mather family," and they have, as Steve Mather did, devoted time and effort over and above their official duties to protect and manage the National Park System. (When I say "the people of the National Park Service," I include spouses and children as well as employees.) I am certain that they inherited this fondness for their assigned responsibilities as the protectors of the nation's great heritage of natural and human history from those who pioneered in the establishment of the first national park, Yellowstone, and those who subsequently developed a chain of such reservations for recreational use or cultural preservation throughout the country.

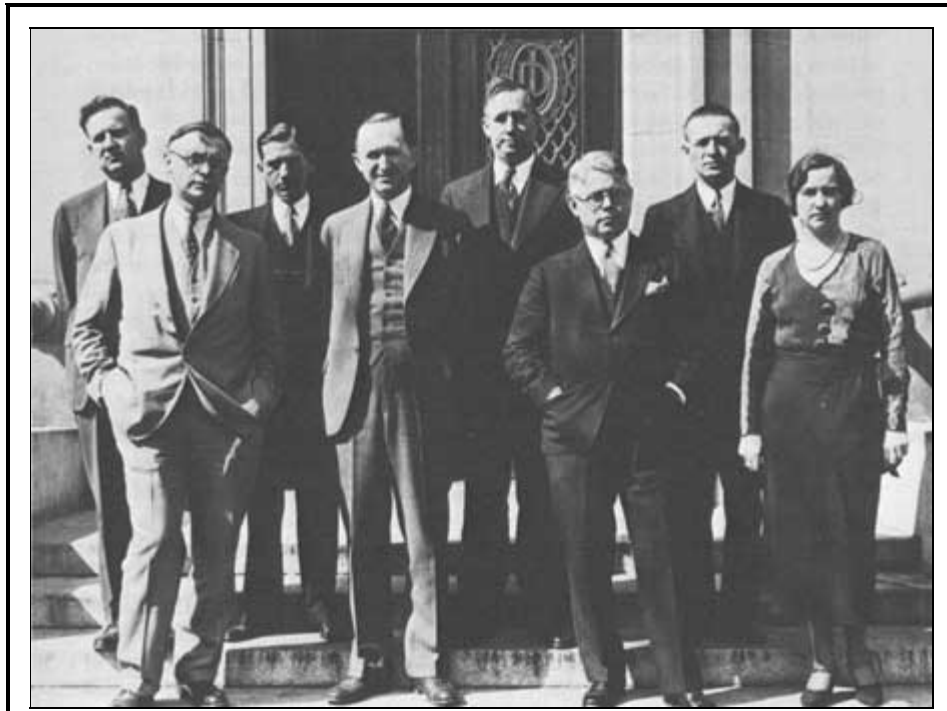
Mather contributed much of his private fortune and all of his energies the last eleven years of his life to organizing the Park Service, formulating policies, and developing the park system. There are several instances of other people with private means who followed his example. Among them was George Wright, a man of independent fortune and a dedicated worker in the service. He served without salary for a while and paid the salaries of some of his staff when Congress failed to make funds available. Another was Roger Toll, an engineer from Denver. He followed Horace Albright as superintendent of Yellowstone and field assistant to the director when Albright moved to Washington to devote his full time to assisting Mather. Both Toll and Wright met their tragic deaths in an automobile accident in the Southwest while studying proposed international park sites along the Mexican boundary.

Among the many others whose generosity benefited the Park Service, I should include George B. Dorr, superintendent of Acadia National Park in Maine, a man of considerable means who spent much of his own money buying land for the park. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., also spent a lot of money buying land for Acadia, and the joke of the time was that Superintendent Dorr was trying to outdo Rockefeller. When the time came for his retirement as superintendent of the park, he had spent all of his substantial fortune and had only two old family homes left. Representative Cramton, of Michigan, then chairman of the Subcommittee on Appropriations for the Department of the Interior, was apprised of Dorr's circumstances. He persuaded Congress to write into the appropriation act a specific amount each year for the salary of Superintendent Dorr of Acadia National Park. Dorr later willed his holdings to the government, and the old family home, with one-quarter mile of waterfront, became a part of Acadia National Park.

This deep feeling of concern and responsibility for the parks continues today, and while there may be no individuals of comparable wealth in the service at the present time, the Mather spirit prevails: complete dedication and devotion to the protection of the great scenic, historic, and scientific areas of the national park system for the use and enjoyment of the people.

Mather may not have originated the idea of providing park visitors with interpretation of what they saw in the national parks, but he believed in it strongly and adopted this

public service as one of the cornerstones of his overall policy. The concept evolved over the years into the establishment of a strong ranger force responsible for the protection and informed use of the national parks. This force grew, and as conditions changed and gradually demanded new skills and specializations in protection and interpretation, its members became classified as ranger naturalists, ranger historians, and a ranger protection force. The early park buildings contained what were called museums. These were gradually changed until, during Mission 66, they became focal points for all park activities and were named visitor centers. Today almost every area of the system has a visitor center where information concerning the area's indigenous features is available to the public.



The Washington office staff of the National Park Service in 1932. *Left to right:* Assistant Director Conrad L. Wirth, Associate Director Arno B. Cammerer, Chief Clerk R. H. Holmes, Director Horace M. Albright, Assistant Director Harold C. Bryant, Senior Assistant Director A. E. Demaray, Assistant Director G. T. Moskey, and Editor Isabelle F. Story.

Not all of these aids to park use are paid for by tax dollars. Since the beginning of the service the rangers, and to a great extent their families, have been on duty around the clock. In the Mather-Albright era the larger parks formed natural history associations that, under agreements with the service, undertook to prepare, print, and distribute literature for the park visitor. They charged nothing for their time or efforts, and any profits from sales were used to prepare additional material and buy needed equipment for the interpretive program. Even the neighbors around the parks joined in and assisted these associations with their activities (see chapter seven).

The executive roster of the National Park Service at the beginning of the New Deal, March 4, 1933, was about the same as when I entered on duty in 1931. Director Albright's right-hand man was Arno Cammerer, assistant director from 1919 through January, 1926, and associate director from 1926 and 1933. Arthur Demaray was the senior assistant director in charge of general administrative matters, having under his jurisdiction personnel, finances, and so on. He had transferred to the National Park Service in the early twenties as a draftsman and went on to become the editor of

publications, then assistant director, and then senior assistant director in 1929. George A. Moskey, assistant director, was the service's lawyer and handled legal matters, including legislation. In those days the bureaus had their own attorneys rather than having to depend on the solicitor of the Interior Department, as is now required. Harold C. Bryant, a naturalist, was the assistant director in charge of the Branch of Natural History and Interpretation. He had been in the field for a number of years and had transferred to the Washington office in 1930. Hillory A. Tolson was Moskey's assistant. In October, 1933, when Albright left to become vice-president and general manager of the U.S. Potash Company, Cammerer stepped up to be director, Demaray became associate director, and Tolson was promoted to assistant director in charge of the Branch of Administration. Isabelle F. Story was the editor for the National Park Service and supervised the preparation of informational bulletins and other printed material. Charles L. Gable was head of the Concessions Division, and R. M. Holmes was chief clerk.

As assistant director in charge of the Branch of Lands, I had responsibility for all land matters, including investigation, study, and reporting on proposed new areas for the park system, as well as land acquisition. Superintendent Roger Toll of Yellowstone was the principal pivot man for most of the field investigations of proposed new parks and monuments. I had a secretary and two draftsmen in my Branch of Lands, and besides land maps we prepared maps used in the publications issued for park visitors. The national highway system of the western states wasn't anything like it is today, and our *Park-to-Park Highway Map* of the western parks was always in demand.

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***Parks, Politics, and the People***

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# Parks, Politics, and the People



## Chapter 4: The New Deal: The First Hundred Days

The first storm clouds of the Great Depression began to show themselves in 1927, if not earlier. But most people did not recognize them. In 1927-28 the bottom started falling out of the resort development business along the Mississippi and Alabama Gulf coast and in Florida, which had been experiencing one of the greatest land booms this country has known. By the time Hoover took office as president in 1929, the depression had begun to spread like wildfire, and it spared nobody. Even the biggest red plums on the trees of prosperity fell to the ground to rot. Land investors were trying to get back ten cents on the dollar, but there were no buyers. Private enterprise and government alike were letting employees go and cutting salaries. Contracts were being canceled, and resort to court action was useless. The stock market went bust. Everybody was trying to lift himself by his bootstraps.

These are my recollections. I was there, and my young family went broke and in debt to such a degree that I didn't think we would ever get ahead again. Those too young to have shared that experience can visualize it from a vivid description in *The New York Times Chronicle of American Life from the Crash to the Blitz, 1929-1939*, by Cabell Phillips:

No new year ever dawned with less hope than 1933. The Great Depression, having grown progressively worse for three long years, had spread a pall of fear and desperation across the whole land. The new year brought no promise of abatement, only the prospect of more of the same. . . . The physical signs of distress were everywhere. You encountered them with wearying monotony day after day: clusters of hungry men and women waiting like docile peasants for food handouts at the relief stations; the smokeless chimneys and rusting sheds of factories standing mute and empty behind their locked gates; the abandoned shops and stores, their doorways littered with trash, their grime-streaked windows staring vacantly upon half empty streets; the drooping shoulders of a father, husband, brother, or friend whose pride had been battered into lethargy and dejection by months of fruitless job hunting; the panic and anger of the crowd milling before a bank entrance on whose door a typed note stated, "Closed until further notice by order of the Board of Directors."

But even worse than this visible evidence of breakdown was the knowledge that it was everywhere—not just in your town or your state or your part of the country. The blight spread across the whole nation—big cities, small towns, and limitless countryside—like a deadly plague of the Middle Ages. Nor were its victims just certain kinds of people. They were farmers, bankers, carpenters, lawyers, factory workers, preachers, chorus girls. Every class, it seemed, except the poor Negroes in the slums who had never known anything but hard times anyway, was stricken in some degree. But even those who still had jobs or income lived with a hot ball of fear in their

gut that tomorrow their luck would run out. "What will I do then?" sprang equally from the tortured clerk behind the counter and the merchant behind his desk.

Worse still was the knowledge that there was nothing you or your boss or the governor of your state or the President of the United States could do about it. All the towers of wisdom and strength on which you were accustomed to lean had crumbled. The roots of your faith in the American way and even, perhaps, in the benevolence of God, had begun to wither like a vine too long deprived of rain. You felt trapped, like an animal in a cage, as some malevolent force that you could neither comprehend nor fend off inexorably worked to destroy your whole scheme of life. And in these early weeks of the new year 1933 you felt that the climax was approaching. Things were happening that seemed to warn, like thunderclaps in the hot night sky, that the storm was about to loose its furies.



Symbol of the Great Depression of the 1930s: "...a father, husband, brother, or friend whose pride had been battered into lethargy and dejection by months of fruitless job hunting."

Well, the storm was about to break, but it was a good storm. It went away, and the sun came out, brightening up homes throughout the country.

On March 4, 1933, a new president, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, took the oath of office. Every seat in the stands was taken on that inauguration day, and people by the thousands crowded in front of the platform and lined Pennsylvania Avenue. Americans throughout the land heard on the radio the words of the new president.

This is a day of national consecration, and I am certain that my fellow Americans expect that on my induction into the Presidency I will address them with a candor and a decision which the present situation of our nation impels.

This is preeminently the time to speak the truth, the whole truth, frankly and boldly, nor need we shrink from honestly facing the conditions in our country today. This great nation will endure as it has endured, will revive and will prosper.

So first of all let me assert my firm belief that the only thing we have to fear is fear itself—nameless, unreasoning, unjustified terror which paralyzes needed effort to convert retreat into advance....

Phillips' *Chronicle* records the events and spirit that enlivened the government and the nation immediately after Franklin Delano Roosevelt's inauguration:

In the days that followed, the Washington scene was abruptly transformed from the quagmire of torpor and bewilderment that had gripped it for the past six months into an arena of spirited activity. . . . The Roosevelt Administration's fabled "Hundred Days"—probably as crucial a brief epoch as any in the nation's history—had started. They were to dissipate the panic of the Depression, even if they would not break the back of the Depression itself.

In virtually his first official act in office, initiated within hours of taking the oath, the President decreed a national bank holiday, shutting down every financial institution in the land, and called a special session of Congress to convene within four days. Simultaneously, a dozen task forces were at work drafting one of the most revolutionary legislative programs ever essayed by any President. Between March 9 and June 16, Roosevelt would propose and Congress would pass fifteen "emergency" acts, which, in their totality, would drastically affect the nation's social and political orientation far into the future. Some of these laws were temporary stopgaps, and some would in time be struck down by the courts, but fully half of these "emergency" enactments remain embedded in the statute books today. Never before had such a legislative miracle been wrought in so short a time.

"Whatever laws the President thinks he may need to end the Depression," Senator Burton K. Wheeler of Montana said on Inauguration Day, "Congress will jump through a hoop to put them through." His prophecy was fulfilled.





Franklin Delano Roosevelt and Eleanor Roosevelt on the way to the White House after the inaugural ceremony on March 4, 1933. *Courtesy National Archives.*

Whatever the causes and cures of the problems of the depression might have been, the immediate and most pressing responsibility of the government was to put men back to work. It was absolutely necessary to bring an end to idleness and to restore family incomes, even in a small measure, in order to strengthen the national morale, avert panic, and at the same time create a breathing spell that would permit the mobilization of the nation's forces for a systematic study and correction of the underlying causes of the depression.

The *Chronicle* continues with an account of Roosevelt's approach to these problems:

The broad outlines of the New Deal program had been spelled out by F. D. R. in his campaign, and he brought to Washington not only a sizable portfolio of policy papers and legislative proposals but also a crop of aides and experts capable of putting his plans into effect.

The nucleus of this corps was the "Brain Trust," a small team of scholars and technicians who had gravitated to Roosevelt during his 1932 campaign to help him formulate his program. The involvement of scholars instead of the familiar priesthood of business and finance on such a high political mission was, in itself a significant innovation that would distinguish the New Deal from most Administrations of the past....

That same night [of March 4], after the Cabinet had been sworn in, the new President sat down in the unfamiliar surroundings of the White House with Woodin, Moley, Cummings, and a handful of other advisors, and made a series of momentous decisions that were to set the Hundred Days off from any similar period in American history. . . . The first decision was to go through with the plan of declaring a national bank holiday; the second, to call Congress into special session to deal with the bank crisis; and third, to summon a group of leading bankers to Washington immediately for any advice they could give in the emergency. . . .

By 10:00 o'clock that night (Sunday) the necessary proclamation and orders were issued (thoughtfully postdated 1:00 AM Monday to avoid profaning the Sabbath). Effective immediately every bank in the nation was closed for four days, the shipment of gold and silver was embargoed . . . and Congress was under orders to convene at noon on Thursday, March 9th.

When Congress convened in special session on noon of Thursday, March 9, Secretary of the Treasury Woodin had ready for it the draft of an emergency banking bill. . . . There was not time enough to have the bill printed. The half-dozen typewritten copies that were rushed to the Capitol the morning of March 9 still bore marginal notes and corrections scribbled in pencil. In the House of Representatives there was no pretense of committee consideration. Only a few of the leaders had even seen the text. As the House reading clerk finished reading the one copy available in that chamber, cries went up from the floor. "Vote, vote, vote!" Thirty-eight minutes later the bill was passed by acclamation. The Senate was slightly more deliberate. It listened to three hours of debate . . . before passing the bill, 73 to 7. At 8:37 that night, F.D.R., with newsreel cameras focused on his desk in the White House, signed the first legislative enactment of the New Deal....

It had originally been Roosevelt's intention to send Congress home once the emergency bank bill was passed, because he thought that his new Administration needed a chance to get the feel of the job and to devote a lot of care to the drafting of the legislative program. But the momentum and the good will generated by his swift handling of the banking crisis was too valuable an asset to be wasted. Tugwell urged him to rush for passage of the farm bill while he still had Congress in his hand, and Lew Douglas urged with equal vigor that now was the psychological moment to strike a blow for economy and fiscal "soundness." Roosevelt, aglow with optimism and impatience, said "Why not?" and picked up Senator Wheeler's option.

I won't go into details of the bills that passed and other actions taken in the famous "hundred days," but I will list the bills, the executive orders, and their dates: (1) We've seen that the bank bill became law on March 9, without congressional hearings. (2) The Agricultural Adjustment Act was introduced March 16 and enacted May 12. (3) The Civilian Conservation Corps Act was introduced March 21 and enacted March 31. The CCC was an original idea of FDR's, stimulated by his long interest in forestry and conservation in general. He proposed to take 250,000 unemployed young men off the streets and welfare rolls and give them jobs at thirty dollars a month, plus their keep, to do useful work primarily in the federal and state forests and parks. According to Phillips' *Chronicle*, "This work program of youths was the first and most widely approved of a variety of work relief programs that were to follow." Within a week after

enactment boys were being enrolled by the thousands and the first CCC camp was being constructed near Luray, Virginia. (4) The Federal Emergency Relief Act was introduced March 21 and enacted May 12. (5) The Farm Credit Administration Act was introduced March 27 and enacted June 16. The FCA was initially established by executive order of the president. (6) The Truth in Securities Act was introduced March 29 and enacted May 27. (7) The Tennessee Valley Authority Act was introduced April 10 and enacted May 18. (8) The Home Owners Loan Act was introduced April 13 and enacted June 13. (9) By an executive order of April 19 the gold standard was abandoned. (10) The Railroad Coordination Act was introduced May 4 and enacted June 16. (11) The National Industrial Recovery Act was introduced May 17 and enacted June 16. (12) The Glass-Steagall Banking Act was introduced May 17 and enacted June 16. (13) The Annulment of Gold Clause in Contract Act was introduced May 26 and enacted June 5.

The *Chronicle* states:

The 73rd Congress, 1st session, adjourned in the early morning hours of June 16, bone weary but jubilant. In ninety-nine tumultuous days it had established a record such as no Congress before it or since has matched. In fifteen [Phillips cites only thirteen] major legislative enactments it had broken many bonds with the past, had set the nation on a revolutionary course toward new social and political goals, which could be perceived only dimly, and had subdued (though it had not wholly overcome) a crisis of confidence that had shaken the foundations of the Republic....

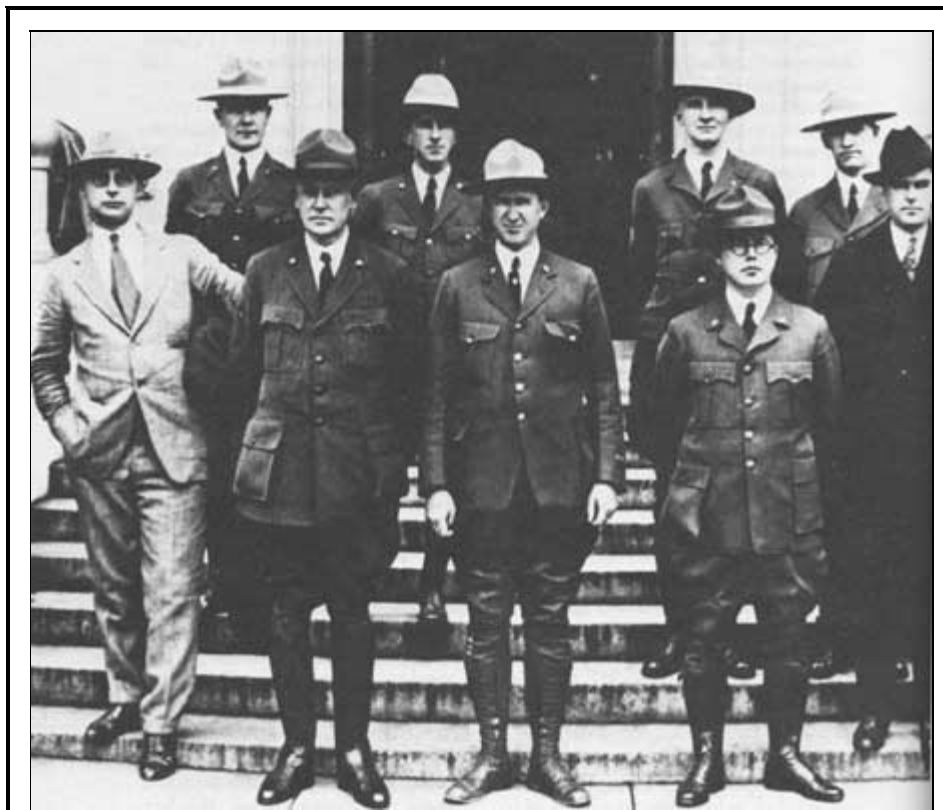
The tide turned with Roosevelt's swift and decisive action as he took office. Despair turned into hope and faith and confidence reached a peak as the Hundred Days came to an end.

The *Chronicle* goes into much greater detail, but the above should be enough to set the stage for a look at the National Park Service at the beginning of the New Deal. Size of staff was at a low ebb. Salaries were low; in 1932 they had been cut 10 per cent across the board. But we were all glad to have jobs and plenty of work to do. When the CCC and other New Deal programs began, we were happy to be a part of them and to put in long hours, far into the night, with a sandwich and coffee at our desk for dinner.

We got great satisfaction in providing jobs for others. Highly qualified professionals—architects, landscape architects, engineers—were available in all the fields needed to carry out our programs successfully. I remember one well-known landscape architect who wrote and said he was coming to Washington, hoping we could give him a job. Before we could reply he showed up in our office. We told him we could use him at the Richmond district office, which we were just setting up. He jumped at the chance, signed the necessary papers, and left the office to drive to Richmond so that he could start work the next day. In about fifteen minutes he was back with the sad story that somebody had broken into his car and stolen his suitcase and satchel, which contained all of his clothing and thirty dollars, the last money he had to keep him going until payday. We took up a collection and sent him on his way with about twenty dollars. He left an IOU and returned the money in sixty days.

The legislative accomplishments of Congress in its three-month session that marked the beginning of Roosevelt's New Deal were astounding, but the machinery to operate these programs still had to be organized by the administration and put to work. Of course, there was a lot of discussion of what might happen, whether the new secretary of the interior would want many changes, whether the whole department would be reorganized, or whether the old bureaus would be given additional responsibility. After

the inaugural address on March 4 all agencies of government seemed to take on an aggressive attitude, a feeling of "What's my job? Let me get on with it." Just listening to the president's fireside chats was an inspiration.



The Washington staff of the National Park Service in uniform in 1926. *Left to right:* Arno B. Cammerer, assistant director; Harry Karstens, superintendent of Mount McKinley National Park; Stephen T. Mather, director; Charles G. Thompson, superintendent of Crater Lake National Park; Horace M. Albright, superintendent of Yellowstone National Park; John R. White, superintendent of Sequoia National Park; Arthur E. Demaray, assistant director; Ernest Leavitt, assistant superintendent of Yosemite National Park; W. B. Lewis, superintendent of Yosemite National Park.

But if the fireside chats alone didn't turn us on, the CCC idea certainly did. The first official inkling I got of just what might happen was in a memorandum that Director Albright wrote to Senior Assistant Director Arthur Demaray on March 13, 1933:

I was talking to Judge Finney last night and he told me that he was one of the men who drafted the \$500,000,000 bond issue relief bill. He said that it is to be administered by the Secretaries of War, Interior and Agriculture. It contains authority for almost all kinds of public works, including road and trail building. He said the word "reforestation" will permit the cleaning up of old forests, removing dead and down timber, installation of protection facilities, as well as planting of young trees. I suggest that you wire Coffman to get up a reforestation or forest improvement budget for the Park Service, this is to include cleanup of construction areas, of timber around the west entrance of Glacier Park. It should also include cleanup of reservoirs such as Jackson Lake and Sherburne Lake in Glacier Park.

There is no way of course of telling how much money will be allotted to the National Park Service. It will all depend upon the showing we make as to the need of the people in the neighborhood of the parks and the plans that

we have for doing the work. Also we can point out that in Grand Canyon and Glacier we could use large numbers of Indians on roadside cleanup.

Obviously there was a lot of guesswork in Albright's memorandum, but he was out to get information in order to justify a good, sound park program should the funds suddenly become available.

The idea of creating a Civilian Conservation Corps wasn't an overnight decision. On at least four occasions before assuming the presidency, Roosevelt had outlined in public addresses certain ideas that appeared to presage his recommendations concerning the establishment of the CCC. In his acceptance speech in Chicago he stated that he had very definite plans for the conservation of human and natural resources on a national scale. Then in a speech he gave in Atlanta he gave his views concerning the conservation of forests. That was followed by a talk he gave in Boston in which he proposed a plan for employing men at public works that would benefit the nation. Finally, in his inaugural address he reiterated his views on putting the unemployed to work on projects that would be of value to the nation. Of course, we all knew that as governor of New York he had been very much interested in forest preserves.

On March 13, just nine days after Roosevelt was inaugurated, an unemployment bill that included work proposals similar to those finally assigned to the CCC was introduced in Congress, but because of considerable opposition it was withdrawn. Reintroduced on March 21, the act passed. It was signed on March 31, 1933. On March 14, the day after the first bill was introduced, however, the president had issued a memorandum for the secretary of war, secretary of the interior, secretary of agriculture, and secretary of labor:

I am asking you to constitute yourselves an informal committee of the Cabinet to coordinate the plans for the proposed Civilian Conservation Corps. These plans include the necessity of checking up on all kinds of suggestions that are coming in relating to public works of various kinds. I suggest that the Secretary of the Interior act as a kind of clearing house to digest the suggestions and to discuss them with the other three members for this informal committee.

I have nothing in my records that would indicate just what this committee did; but I would assume, inasmuch as the first bill was introduced on March 13, withdrawn, and reintroduced on March 21, that the changes made in the bill during that week were the result of recommendations made by this committee of departmental secretaries. It actually took eighteen days for the CCC act to get through Congress; that is, eighteen days from the day the first bill was introduced on March 13 until March 31, when the president signed the act. Still, that was very fast in terms of legislative enactment.

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# Parks, Politics, and the People

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## Chapter 5: The Civilian Conservation Corps

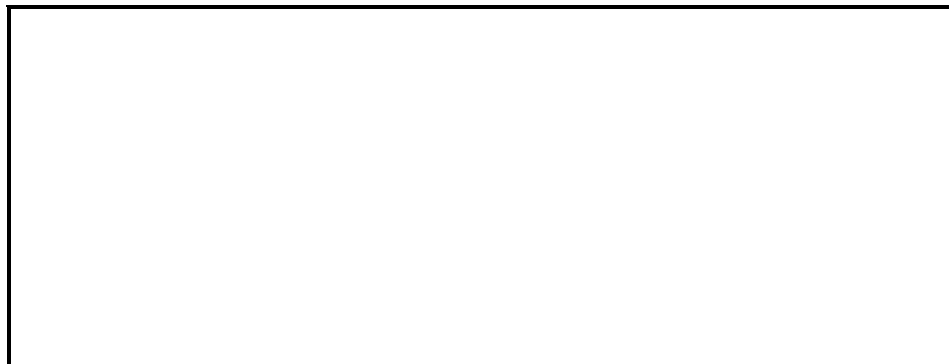
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The War Department was proud of its part in getting the Civilian Conservation Corps started and had a right to be. In a letter to CCC Director Bob Fechner dated July 1, 1935, the department gave an interesting account of the first CCC enrollment:

On May 16th [1933] enrollment jumped 5,890 to a total of 62,450, the next day added 8,100 men, the next 10,500 men. On June 1st a peak daily enrollment of 13,843 men was reached. The average daily gain in actual strength for this period was 8,700 men. During part of May 150,000 men were in reconditioning camps being organized and equipped for the field. By June 7th, 253,200 men had been enrolled, and by July 1, the enrollment of local men had increased this figure to 296,700. Of these, after deducting losses from all causes 270,000 men occupied 1,331 work camps in the forests of the country by June 29th. 55,000 men in 335 companies were transported from the eastern corps area to the far western states of the Ninth Corps area.

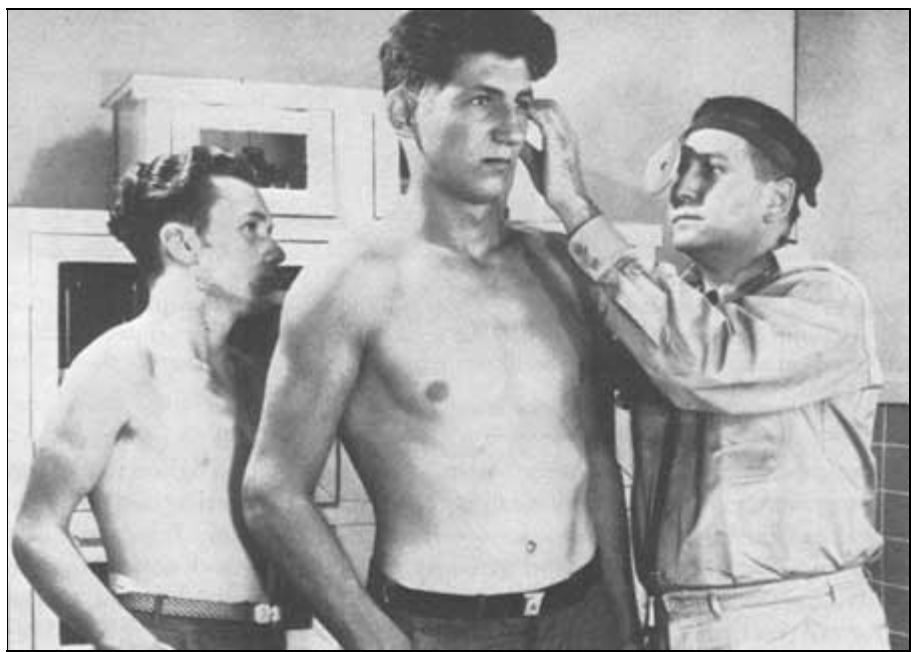
A comparison with world war accomplishments is interesting. During the corresponding first three months of the world war, the War Department mobilized by July 1, 1917—117,000 men in the regular army, 58,000 in the National Guard, and 6,000 in the National Army, or a total of 181,000 men. By that date less than 16,000 men, mostly regular army units had embarked for France.

The processing of over 250,000 men in such a short time was no mean accomplishment. Before his enrollment each one of those young fellows was personally interviewed by welfare officials, who determined that the man needed employment and that his family was in need of substantial support from his earnings. The interviewers had to establish that the enrollee was a citizen of the United States, between seventeen and twenty-eight years old, and unmarried. They had to be satisfied that the enrollee, if finally accepted, could perform hard work without injury to himself and was free from communicable disease. They obtained a good record of his past experience, his interests, and his general character.



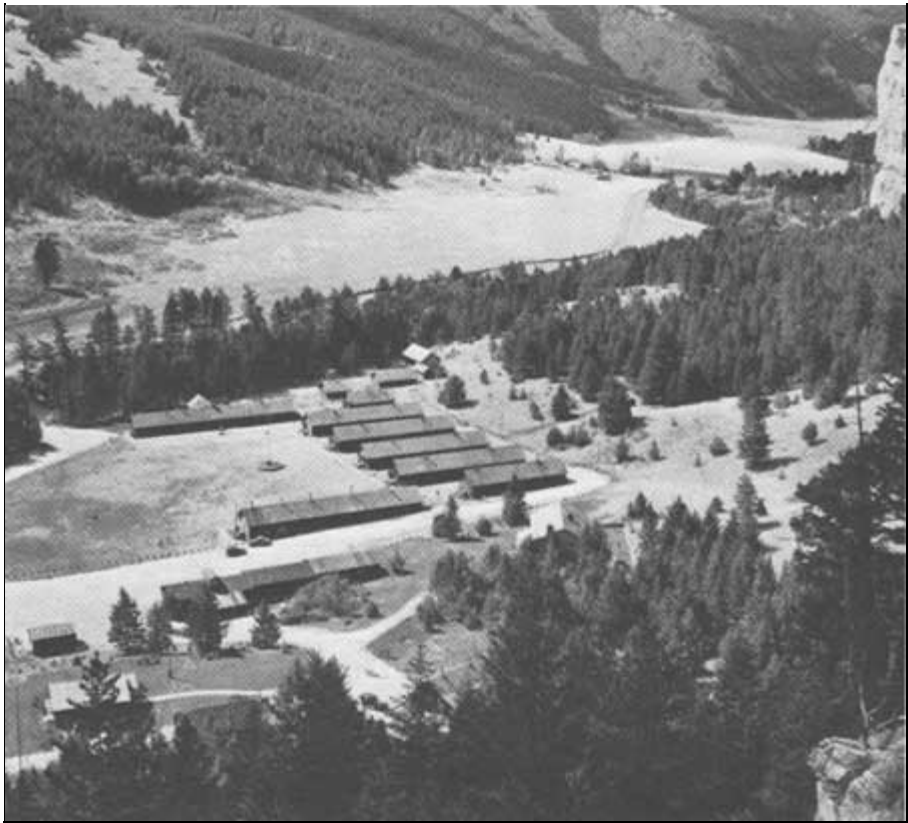


After personal interviews, CCC enrollees were given information and guidance by a welfare official.



An important step for the CCC enrollee was his physical examination before entering on duty.

If the welfare officials felt the man met CCC standards and qualifications, they asked him to report for medical examination to make certain that his health would permit him to do hard work. Only after having passed the army's physical examination was the man formally enrolled in the Civilian Conservation Corps. He was then given a good meal and assigned to a group of young men who were sent with an officer or leader aboard a train or bus to a Civilian Conservation Corps camp.



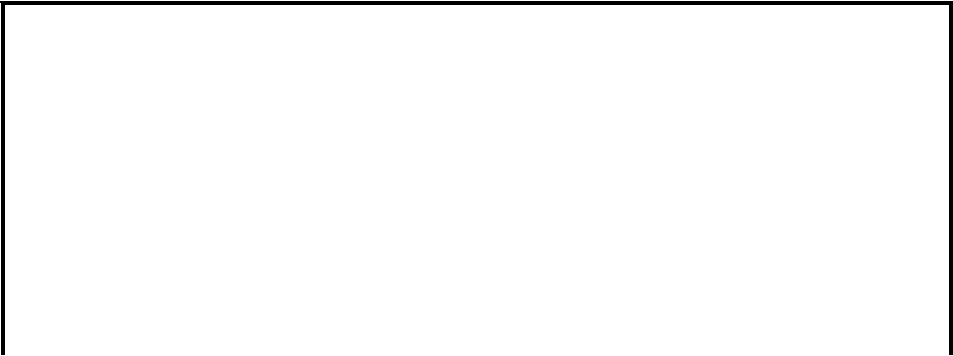
A typical CCC camp provided housing for two hundred enrollees, quarters for the military camp commander and staff and the supervising agency's superintendent and staff, medical services, recreation facilities, equipment storage and repair shops, and a mess hall.

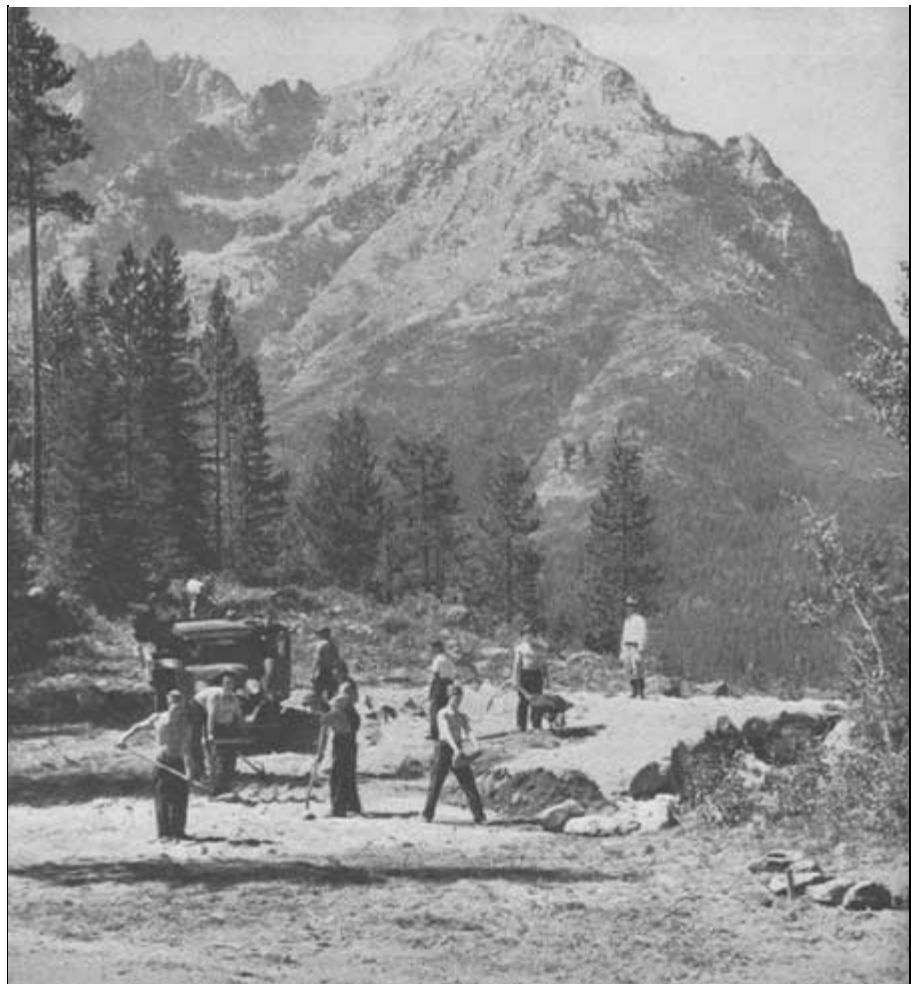




All set to go to work, the new CCC enrollee totes away his issue of clothing and bedding.

When the young man arrived at camp he was furnished with complete outfits of work and off-duty clothes and was assigned a bed in one of the barracks. The clothes he wore on arrival were put away until he finished his service with the CCC. Within twenty-four hours after arriving at camp he was vaccinated against smallpox and given his first anti-typhoid inoculation. He was also given a pneumonia inoculation if he volunteered for it. On the day the enrollee arrived at camp the company commander welcomed him and explained the general rules of the camp. Then the enrollee, depending on his individual need, was given one to three weeks of physical conditioning before joining the work crews. This conditioning was done under the camp commander's supervision and consisted of light duties around the camp along with good food, regular hours, sufficient sleep, and medical observation. In the beginning these conditioning periods were given at a military post. This period provided an excellent time to instruct the enrollee in disease prevention and safety.





A CCC crew grading an overlook along a mountain road.

It is interesting to note some of the items that the military bought for the boys initially enrolled. About 1,061,000 pairs of service shoes were purchased for \$2,824,000, or a little more than \$2.66 per pair; approximately 295,000 raincoats, for about \$953,000, or a little better than \$3.16 each; and, the prize purchase, 3,600 motor vehicles, at a cost of a little more than \$591 each. A sampling of some 15,000 boys showed that they gained an average of 277 inches in height and 7.23 pounds in weight in the first six month's in the CCC.

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# Parks, Politics, and the People



## Chapter 6: The CCC: Accomplishments and Demise

By August 1, 1937, the total number of CCC camps had gone down to 2,029 and a year later to only 1,623. The National Park Service had gone back to a four-region setup with 83 national park camps and 337 state park camps. Director Arno B. Cammerer had made his move in January to regionalize the National Park Service, effective August 1.

The eastern region, Region I, had offices in Richmond, Virginia, and Dr. Carl P. Russell was its director. Russell had many years of service as an administrator and naturalist in the field as well as in the Washington office.

Region II included the states of the northern Midwest. Its headquarters were in Omaha, Nebraska, and Thomas J. Allen served as regional director. Allen was a Mather man whose experience went a long way back. He started as a ranger and advanced through all the steps, including assignments as superintendent of Bryce Canyon, Hawaii Volcanoes, Hot Springs, and Rocky Mountain national parks.

Region III included Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, Oklahoma, and Arkansas, with the regional office in Santa Fe. Herbert Maier, the regional director during the CCC program, was made acting regional director. Maier had been with the service from the beginning of the CCC program. He was an excellent architect and exerted a strong influence on the style of park architecture that still persists. The first Region II director was Assistant Director Hillory Tolson of the Washington Office, who took up the assignment on May 1, 1939.



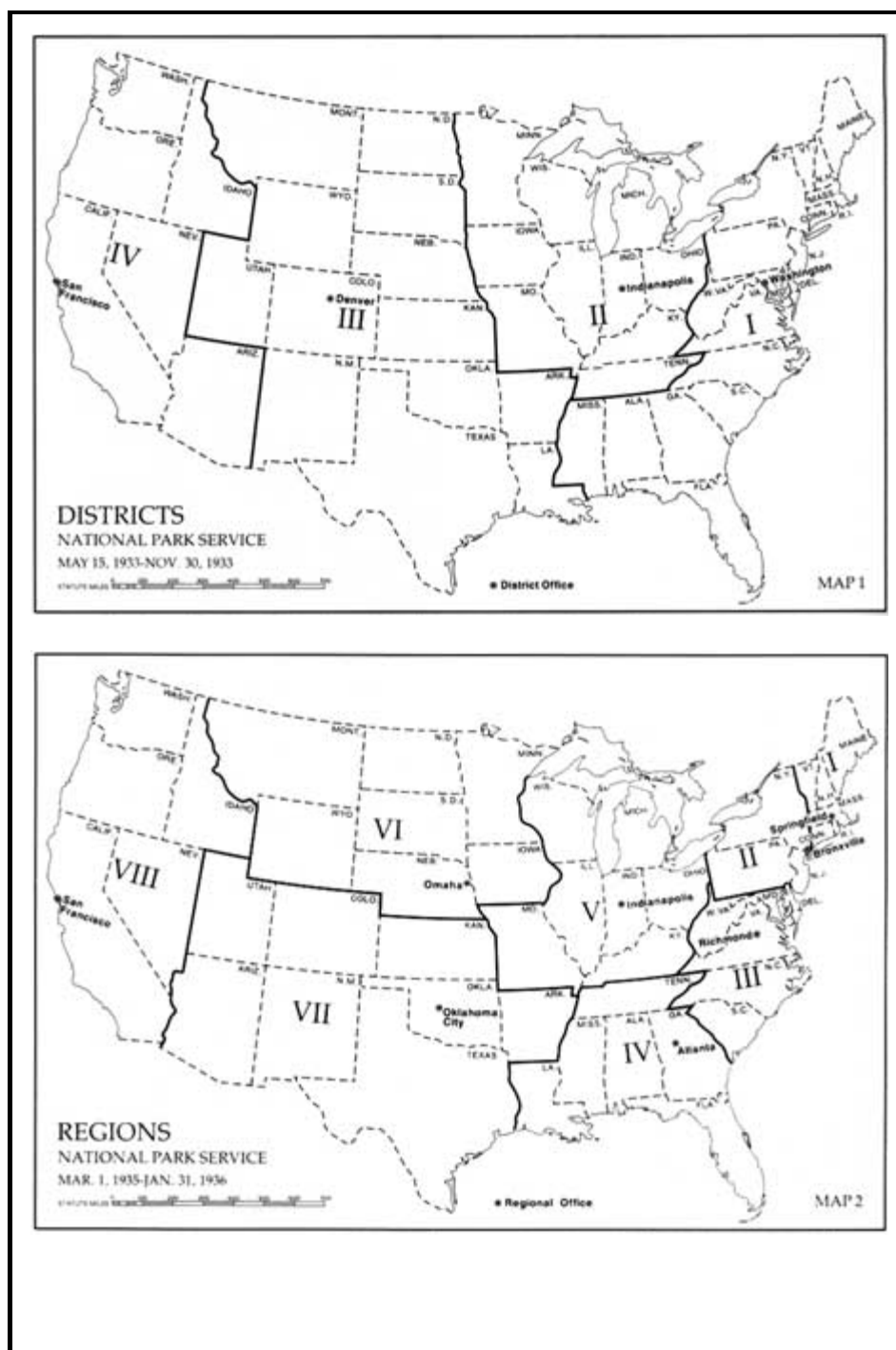
Arno B. Cammerer, director of the National Park Service from August 10, 1933, to August 9, 1940. The service was regionalized under his leadership.

It was Secretary Ickes' idea to send Hillory Tolson to Santa Fe. He also suggested that I be sent to Yellowstone as superintendent for a year, but then I got word that my move had been called off. E. K. Burlew, assistant to the secretary, asked that I not be reassigned because it would be difficult to get somebody to handle the emergency programs in which I had become so deeply involved. Instead, they made me the secretary's representative on the CCC Advisory Council in place of Director Cammerer.

Region IV included California, Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Nevada, and Utah. Chief Engineer Frank A. Kittredge was regional director with offices in San Francisco. The members of Kittredge's engineer staff were moved to the regional offices and to Tom Vint's new office, the Branch of Plans and Design. This move put engineers, architects,

and landscape architects all in one organization.

The year 1937 was one of the roughest years of the CCC as far as I personally was concerned. Although we got a great deal of satisfaction and pleasure out of the CCC because it was such a good program, there were difficult times—times of disappointment, times of concern, times when one wished to have a little more opportunity for meditation. My new designation as the secretary's representative on the CCC Advisory Council didn't really change my activities very much. I had already gone through a consolidation of the national park and the state park CCC. I had been attending all the council meetings, and practically all of Coffman's responsibilities had already been turned over to me and my staff. I had been in direct contact with E. K. Burlew and Mrs. J. Atwood Maulding, who were Secretary Harold Ickes' closest working associates. Practically everything was known to them, and they took on a lot of hard work.





With the beginning of the Civilian Conservation Corps, the National Park Service established four district offices to administer the state park CCC program, as shown on Map 1. At that time there were 100 camps assigned to this work.

By 1935 the number of camps assigned to state and metropolitan parks had reached 475. Under the Park, Parkway, and Recreational-Area Study Act of 1936, federal aid to the states for planning park and recreation activities and to certain federal agencies for similar purposes was greatly increased. The districts were increased to eight and were redesignated regions (Map 2).

By July 1, 1937, the camps administered by the National Park Service had decreased to 325 as the CCC program began to taper off. At that time the National Park Service as a whole was regionalized in four areas, as shown on Map 3.

But nobody in the department worked any harder than did Secretary Ickes himself. He practically lived in his office, a circumstance that more than likely had something to do with the planning of the secretary's suite in the present Department of the Interior Building. The construction of a new Interior Building was one of the early projects he authorized as administrator of the Public Works Administration, a position he held simultaneously with his service as secretary of the interior. Although the National Park Service, which then was responsible for all public buildings in Washington, was in charge of this project, the secretary kept close watch over the planning and actual construction. One of the rooms in the secretary's suite in the new building was equipped with furniture that could be converted to bedroom use, and adjoining it was a bathroom complete with tub and shower. Nearby was the official dining room. There was quite a bit to do about all this in the newspapers at the time, but I know Ickes spent many nights in his office working very late, and I have no doubt that he often slept there, because his home was several miles away in the vicinity of Olney, Maryland.

Ickes served as secretary under Presidents Roosevelt and Truman for twelve consecutive years, which I believe is a record for a secretary of the interior and possibly for secretary of any federal department. He wasn't a person one could get very close to, yet he



Harold L. Ickes was secretary of the interior from 1933 to 1945—longer than any other head of the department.

was a hard worker who believed thoroughly in what the Park Service was doing, and he had the reputation of being a strong conservationist. I didn't have much contact with him when he first came to office and Horace Albright was director. But as I became involved with the CCC, and particularly after I was designated Ickes's representative on the CCC Advisory Council in 1937, I got to know the secretary well. He was a gruff sort of a person, but I enjoyed working for him very much. He was unequivocal in his instructions and could be depended upon to back up an employee who got in trouble carrying out his orders.

One case in point was an embezzlement in the CCC, concerning a camp that never existed. Bob Jennings was the head of our fiscal division, handling both regular appropriations and CCC allotments. One day the army finance officer telephoned and asked for one of Jennings' men. Jennings informed him that the man was on sick leave. The finance officer then wanted to know who was going to pick up the payroll. Jennings was startled but quickly said, "Well, I'll come down and get it very shortly." The finance officer gave him the copies of the receipted payroll together with the salary checks. This procedure was irregular, but Jennings accepted them and returned to his office. The standard procedure for handling the payroll for the camps was for the superintendent to send it to the army finance officer, who would check it over, make out the checks, send them directly to the individuals through the mail, mark the payroll "paid," and send one copy of it to the superintendent and another copy to the office of the bureau that had jurisdiction over the camp. In this case there was no camp. The man in Jennings' office was taking the checks, forging the payee endorsements, and getting them cashed at stores and banks in Washington. Jennings reported the embezzlement to me immediately. He found that it had been going on for over a year. In order to maintain a semblance of authenticity, the man had actually "fired" certain foremen, "hired" additional ones, given promotions, and relocated the fictitious camp.

Just as this matter was being checked into, one of the ambitious young clerks in our fiscal office managed to slip upstairs to the secretary's investigation division and give them an oral report of what was happening down in the Park Service. The investigators immediately informed the secretary, and I got a telephone summons to the secretary's office. When I went into his office, Ickes was working at his desk, coat off as usual, shirt sleeves rolled up, and without looking up he said, "*You* are in charge of the CCC program, aren't you?" I said, "Yes." He then said that he understood there had been a payroll issued for a camp that never existed. I said, "Yes, we've just discovered the embezzlement, we're getting all the details and our report will be up very shortly." He said, "Well, then, it actually happened?" And I said, "Yes." He said, "You are in charge." And I replied, "Yes." He said, "Well you're through as of now." There was little I could do. I turned around, walked out, and returned to our office. The director was not there, and so I reported the incident to Arthur Demaray, the associate director. He knew that our investigation was in progress and told me to go back to my office and act as though nothing had happened. He said everything would be straightened out. I

tried to keep busy, but naturally I was disturbed.

About three days later I was called back to the secretary's office. I tried to get hold of Demaray to accompany me, but he was not in the building and so I went alone. The secretary was in the same position—coat off, sleeves rolled up—and, again without looking up, he said he thought that I was carrying too much work. I replied that I was doing only the jobs that he and the director of the Park Service had assigned to me. He talked a little more, never looking up, and finally said, "Well, I'll have to see what I can do to shift some of your work load." I waited a few minutes, nothing more was said, and so I turned around and walked out. He said nothing about having fired me three days before, and I certainly saw no reason why I should bring it up. A month later I received written notice assigning me additional duties and responsibilities.

Secretary Ickes did seem to have a penchant for premature judgments, as illustrated by my sudden firing and also by the following letters.

THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR  
WASHINGTON

January 25, 1937

Mr. Conrad L. Wirth,  
Assistant Director,  
National Park Service

My dear Mr. Wirth:

Your memorandum of January 18 sent to Mr. Blossom has been brought to my attention.

I regret that your action in serving notices of separation on five employees in the Recreational Branch of your office is cause for reprimand. You are fully informed of personnel procedure and your explanation that the action you took conformed to procedure in effect in the State Park Emergency Conservation Work and in other emergency activities for at least several years is untrue. This is another example of the unsatisfactory handling of personnel matters in the activities under your supervision and, unless marked improvement is shown immediately, it will be necessary to reorganize your office and separate from the service the offending employees.

Sincerely yours,  
H. Ickes  
Secretary of the Interior

UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

February 2, 1937

The Honorable  
The Secretary of the Interior

My dear Mr. Secretary:

It is with sincere regret that I acknowledge your letter of reprimand dated January 25. To the best of my ability, I have devoted my entire efforts to the carrying out of what I honestly believe to be your wishes and policies. The most disturbing part of the reprimand is the reference to my memorandum as being untrue. I am not given to falsifying nor would I knowingly permit any one in an organization, which I might be given to manage, to be untruthful. If my statement is untrue, may I assure you it is due to misunderstanding, and I respectfully request that other members of the National Park Service dealing with personnel be questioned as to their understanding of that particular part of the personnel procedure which I have violated.

With reference to the handling of personnel matters in the activities under my supervision, definite steps have been undertaken to correct this situation. By the time the entire Park Service is together in one building, all personnel procedure will be handled through the regular national park personnel division, and my office will retain only administrative matters such as selections, organization, etc.

I sincerely hope that my future efforts will prove to be satisfactory and that you will be convinced that my foregoing statements are my honest convictions.

Sincerely yours,  
Conrad L. Wirth  
Assistant Director

I do not intend this as a criticism of Secretary Ickes, for this was not the only time I got fired or reprimanded. Other letters by other secretaries will appear in later pages. I have never failed to answer such letters, but my answers have never been acknowledged. While this silence leads me to believe that my answers were found to be correct and that the secretaries were willing to let the record rest, I believe they should have acknowledged my replies. Again I emphasize that my direct contacts with Secretary Ickes were very rewarding, and I have a very deep feeling of gratitude for the support, understanding, and backing of Secretary Ickes, Director Cammerer, Associate Director Demaray, Senior Assistant to the Secretary Burlew, and his very efficient and understanding assistant, Mrs. Maulding.

In the same vein I must also relate an incident, concerning a silver bowl, that grew out of a simple park dedication ceremony in Virginia. Will Carson, who had the big house on the hill in the relatively small town of Riverton near Front Royal at the north entrance of Shenandoah National Park, was conservation commissioner of the state of Virginia in the early CCC days and held the office until the state made it a salaried job in the late thirties. The Carsons lost their only son in the First World War, and in memory of this boy they had given to Riverton some forty acres of land along the Shenandoah River for a park. The town of Riverton applied for a spike camp of forty CCC boys for one year to develop park facilities for the community and offered to pay for all materials. This was a normal request and well within the regulations; we had undertaken such projects many times in other places throughout the country. This spike camp came from a CCC camp some fifteen miles away, in Shenandoah National Park.

After the job was completed the local committee decided to have a dedication as an

expression of thanks to the Carsons. They invited Mrs. Wirth and me and asked me to say a few words. I spoke for about five minutes along with four or five local people. Then Will Carson got up and responded, and at the end of his talk he turned, picked up a package, and presented it to me. In it was a good-sized, engraved Paul Revere silver bowl. I knew I should not accept it, but it would have been terrible to refuse at that moment—so I thanked them. The next day I sent a memo to the director telling him what had happened and asking for instructions on what to do. Cammerer sent my memo to the secretary, recommending that I be allowed to keep the gift. In about two days word came back telling me to return it. I wrote the Riverton committee that I was not allowed to keep the gift and asked whether I should send it to them or return it to the store in Washington where they had bought it. About two weeks later Will Carson called to say that the committee was undecided just how to handle the matter, that they didn't want to embarrass me any further, and that if it was agreeable with Mrs. Wirth they would appreciate it if she would hold the bowl for them until they worked the matter out. I reported this development to Director Cammerer, and he sent my memo on to the secretary, who approved it. A few days later I received the following letter from Will Carson. A copy of this letter was sent to the secretary, without eliciting any comment. Helen is still holding the bowl for the Riverton citizens.

WILLIAM E. CARSON  
RIVERTON, VIRGINIA

September 9, 1938

Dear Mr. Wirth:

This is to own your letter in which you advise me that due to a ruling in the U.S. Code, Section 66, Title 5, you had to return the silver bowl that was presented to you by the citizens of this community.

Of course we had no information of the ruling and are sorry that we put you in such an embarrassing position. However, you will realize that the presentation of the bowl by the citizens of this community was made out of the fullness of feeling of the good work you had done, and was a way to acknowledge to you and to the Department our gratitude.

This letter also acknowledges the return of the bowl.

Yours very sincerely,  
Wm. E. Carson

Mr. Conrad L. Wirth  
National Park Service  
Washington, D.C.

As the silver-bowl incident showed, things often happen when they are least expected to; "Chic-Chat" provided another of those happenings. At the CCC camp in Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park in Georgia and Tennessee, there was a disagreement over the location of a park entrance road. The argument was between the superintendent and our technical people, but the local community took sides. It began to be a hot issue, and no plan could be approved. Finally, Director Cammerer asked me to go there to try to arrange a solution. I indicated to Cammerer that I would be glad to go but would like to have the authority to make a decision on the spot and get construction under way at once. This he readily gave me. When I arrived representatives of the state highway department, our park superintendent, and our

technical people were all present, and we spent a whole morning examining plans and going over the proposed locations in the field. Finally, I reached a decision and told them that we would start construction that afternoon. I asked the superintendent to get in touch with the mayor in the nearby community and announce that we were going to have a brief ground-breaking ceremony at three o'clock that afternoon. Then I told the CCC camp superintendent to have two or three trucks and some twenty or thirty CCC boys there with shovels so we could break ground.

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***Parks, Politics, and the People***

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# Parks, Politics, and the People



## Chapter 7: Other Emergency Period Programs

This chapter describes major programs and activities related to the full scope of National Park Service responsibility, as differentiated from programs of relatively short duration and limited scale. These emergency programs are treated under the following subheadings:

- Natural History and History Associations
- Historic Sites Act of 1935
- Park, Parkway, and Recreational-Area Study Act of 1936
- Recreational Demonstration Areas
- Historic American Buildings Survey
- Seashore and Lakeshore Studies
- Shangri-La
- Park Structures and Facilities
- Digest of Laws Relating to Local Parks and Recreation

### NATURAL HISTORY AND HISTORY ASSOCIATIONS

One of the most efficacious and gratifying aspects of the administration of our National Park System has been the cooperation received from voluntary groups in developing a wide range of services to park visitors. This movement came about primarily through the concern of our field operations people in the parks and of people living close to parks who helped provide or supplement services not supplied in adequate measure by the limited government funding. These groups formed nonprofit distributing associations to assist and extend the historical, scientific, educational, and interpretive activities of the National Park Service. Some sixty-six cooperating associations have been established, and all of them engage in one or more of the following activities: (1) publishing and making available relevant literature; (2) selling souvenirs; (3) acquiring materials pertaining to the history or natural history of an area; (4) developing a suitable park library; (5) helping improve interpretive programs, including signs, markers, and museums; and (6) acquiring lands needed to protect significant features of a park.

Where local resources have not been sufficient to support separate cooperative programs, regional associations have been formed to give mutual support to groups serving individual park needs. An outstanding example is the Eastern National Park and Monument Association, which was organized to encompass the many small, historic sites along the east coast. This arrangement has demonstrated how an association operating profitably for larger parks can upgrade visitor services of all parks in a region by underwriting the operations of smaller cooperating groups.



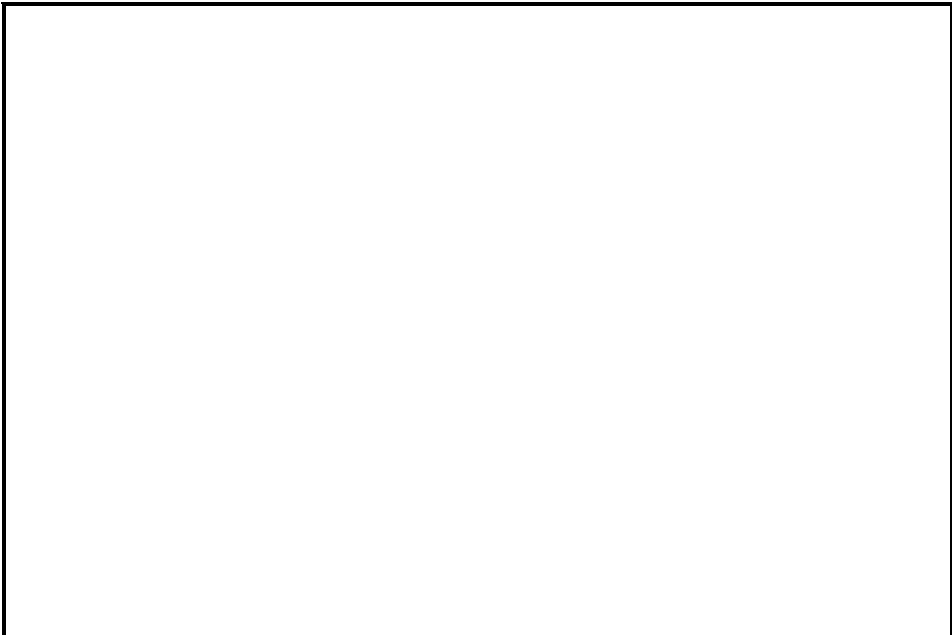


Glass House Point, a part of Jamestown National Historic Site, Virginia, is the site of the first industry of the colonial period. The glass industry, under the leadership of Carl Guskey, financed the study and development of colonial-design furnaces, now operated by the Eastern National Park and Monument Association. *Photo by Richard Frear, courtesy National Park Service.*

At this point it will be helpful to quote from the annual report of the Eastern National Park and Monument Association for 1972:

The Eastern National Park and Monument Association was formed in response to a recommendation made at the National Park Service Interpretive Personnel Conference in Gettysburg in May 1947. Incorporated on May 2, 1948, under the laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia, by Roy E. Appleman, Edward A. Hummel and Elbert Cox, the charter of the corporation was issued by the State Corporation Commission in Virginia on May 18, 1948 in Richmond, Virginia.

The new organization encompassed associations that had served individual large parks since the thirties and a few even older groups.





Donations to the Eastern National Park and Monument Association financed a study of the kind of clothing worn by Abraham Lincoln's family and other early settlers in Indiana. These women wear costumes made at Lincoln Boyhood National Memorial, Lincoln City, Indiana, as they dye material for other costumes to be worn by the interpretive staff. In the background is a smokehouse used in curing meat. *Photo by Richard Frear, courtesy National Park Service.*

Roy Appleman, who was regional historian of the Park Service's eastern region, was designated executive secretary and did outstanding work in launching the association. He drafted the articles of incorporation, beat the bushes for memberships, and set up the first six outlets, or agencies. When he resigned in 1951, the association was well established. James W. Holland was appointed his successor and moved ahead with vigor. Within ten years the association had grown to thirty-five agencies, had gross annual sales of \$129,000, and had donated \$109,000 to the service.

The procedure for allocating funds to a park is relatively simple. Any park or monument with an approved educational or interpretive program may apply for financial assistance by submitting a request through the regional director to the board of the association. The board at its January meeting considers all worthy requests. Its aim is to put funds to productive use.

The rapid growth of the Eastern National Park and Monument Association made it apparent that the work load could no longer be supported on a volunteer basis by the executive secretary and the chairman. In 1964 the board decided to hire a full-time professional executive secretary, and Herbert E. Kahler was offered the job. Herb had served as chairman of the association since it was organized in 1948. With this offer in hand he retired from the National Park Service, where he had served as chief historian. With a full-time executive secretary to give guidance and direction, the services to park visitors, as well as sales, increased manifold. In a nine-year period (1964-72) sales skyrocketed from \$368,000 to \$1.4 million per annum, and the accumulated donations to the service totaled \$1 million.

Leslie T. Arnberger, chairman of the board of directors, in 1972 wrote in his annual

report:

We have gotten so used to success that we sometimes take it for granted. Success does not just happen. It takes teamwork from dedicated, enthusiastic people throughout the organization—from the field areas, through central office to the Executive Director at the top.

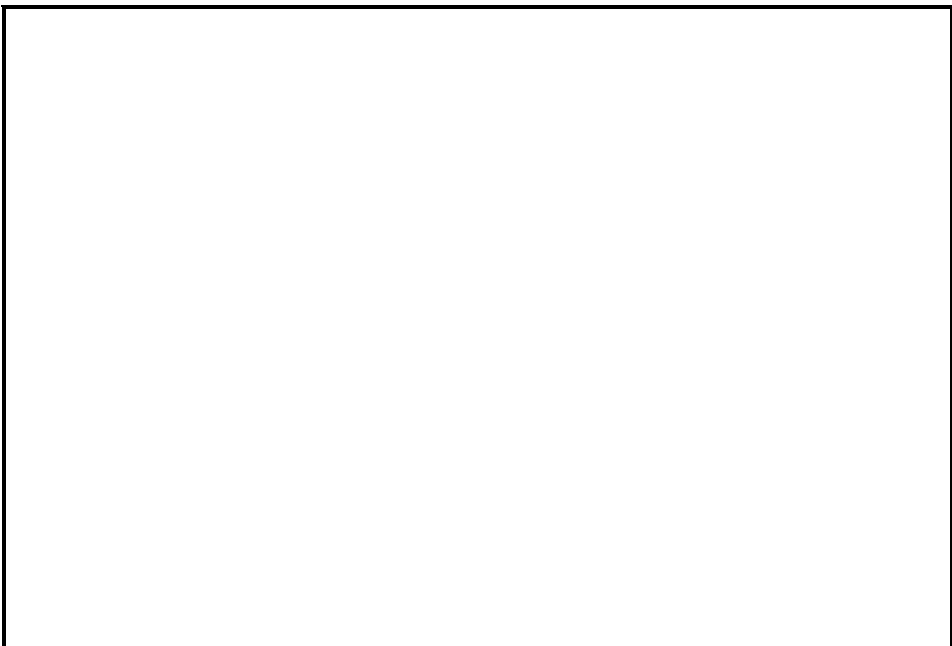
Your Association has had this kind of teamwork for years. From my experience during the past three years I have learned that this stems principally from the tireless and devoted work of one man—Executive Secretary Herb Kahler.

Your Association has been in operation for 24 years and has had spectacular success. In 1948 gross sales were \$997, and in 1972 they were over one and a quarter million dollars. We have served more people than ever this year, and sales have exceeded any previous year.

All who have participated in the growth of the Association can draw real satisfaction from its accomplishments and feel their efforts have been well spent. In supplying visitors with selected interpretive items at nominal cost, the Association has brought many benefits to the interpretive program; in supplying funds to the National Park Service, it has helped to improve the Interpretive Program. . . .

The primary purpose of the Association is to assist the Service in the interpretive field. The more we meet the visitors' needs in the interpretive program, the more funds we have to help the Service improve its Interpretive Program. . . . For the year 1972 the Association honored requests totaling \$168,223.50.

The Eastern National Park and Monument Association has a total of 73 agents. An agent is a man or a group that runs the operation in an area. The association's 73 areas of operation are located in 26 different states and in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. The association has 509 paying members—people who are interested in the work and support it with membership dues. Members do not necessarily have to be from any of the parks in which the association is operating.





Interpretive merchandise is attractively displayed for visitors in the refurbished sales center in the West Wing of Independence Hall, a part of Independence National Historic Park, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. *Photo by Clyde Lockwood, courtesy National Park Service.*

In 1972 the smallest total sales of an agency that had been in existence more than one year were at Saint Gaudens National Historic Site (\$1,057), and the largest were at Independence National Historic Park in Philadelphia (\$187,380). The assets of the association at the end of the fiscal year 1972 totaled \$1,260,035.

I've gone to considerable length on this subject primarily to show what people can do to improve their product by "pulling themselves up by their bootstraps." There are other associations in the national park system that have similar records, but Eastern is the largest and the one that tackled the toughest job, for it took in all the small areas in the eastern part of the United States that wanted to join. Without that help the small areas could do little or nothing toward developing satisfactory programs.

There has been a spin-off from the success of organizations of this kind. At the beginning of the Kennedy administration Jacqueline Kennedy took a great deal of interest in refurbishing the White House, and of course that took money. The National Park Service maintains the White House grounds, which are the number one reservation of the National Capital Parks, and the White House is classified as a historic building. In a conversation with Mrs. Kennedy we suggested that a historical association similar to the Eastern National Park and Monument Association be established that would prepare a booklet about the White House to be sold only in the White House as a souvenir for those making the guided tour. The White House Historical Association was established in 1961. The National Geographic Society gave the association a loan of noninterest money to get started and also donated editorial services and pictures for the booklet. The booklet was published by the association and went on sale at the beginning of 1962. It has undergone several revisions and reprintings, and several companion publications, such as *The Living White House* and *The Book of the Presidents*, have been issued. The revenue from the sale of its books enabled the White House Historical Association to pay back the loan and, as of December, 1978, to contribute close to \$3.5

million to the White House to refurbish the interior of the building, provide funds for the painting of portraits of the presidents and first ladies, and give assistance to the White House library. This is a remarkable record, and it was made possible through the donation of thousands of hours of professional time and other resources by the National Geographic Society.

Similar associations have since been formed for the Capitol and the Supreme Court. The Washington Monument Association has issued a historic booklet on the Washington Monument, which has also been very successful. They too have taken advantage of the generosity of the National Geographic Society and several trustees of the society have memberships on one or more of these four associations.

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***Parks, Politics, and the People***

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# Parks, Politics, and the People

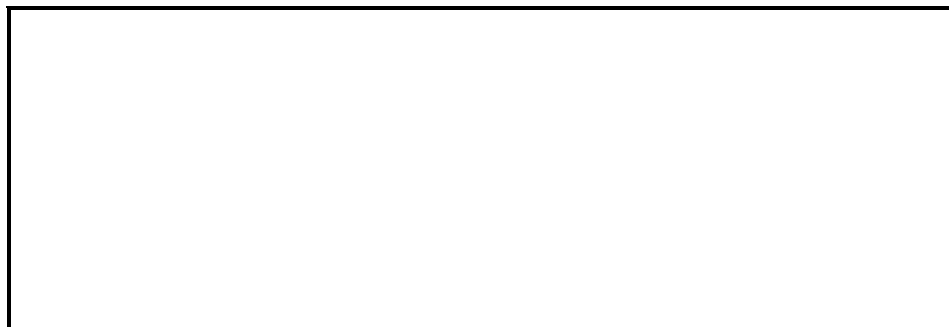


## Chapter 8: War: Hot and Cold

By 1941 the oncoming war had affected all activities in the National Park Service and in many other bureaus of the government as well. Although a bill had been introduced in Congress to abolish the CCC, many of us were still clinging to the hope that it could be sustained at a low ebb for at least a few years. In December, Secretary Ickes wrote to the president regarding a letter the president had sent to Social Security Administrator Paul V. McNutt that called for gradual elimination of the army from the operation of the Civilian Conservation Corps and that requested that legislation be framed to consolidate the corps with the National Youth Administration. The secretary stated that he was in full accord with the removal of the army from the CCC, but he concluded with this appeal: "I strongly urge that instead of transferring all War Department duties in the CCC administration to the Federal Security Agency you consider a plan which would transfer the bulk of these duties to the Departments of Interior and Agriculture, leaving with the Federal Security Administrator responsibility for determination of general policies and for program coordination." He reported that the Department of Agriculture fully agreed with his recommendations. That letter was forwarded to the White House on December 6, 1941.

The next day, Sunday, December 7, the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor, and we were at war. The United States declared war on Japan on December 8, and on Germany and Italy on December 11. There was no doubt then that we were through with the CCC; it was no longer a question of reorganizing it but rather of disbanding it. Every emergency program began to dry up, and by the next fiscal year—July 1, 1942, to June 30, 1943—the only funds available for CCC operations were a few thousand dollars to take care of the transfer of equipment and materials to other jurisdictions.

Meanwhile, orders came for the National Park Service, along with two other bureaus of the Department of the Interior, to move to Chicago and make their Washington space available for war activities. With the splendid cooperation of all concerned, all arrangements were handled smoothly. Associate Director Arthur Demaray, his secretary, and three or four staff members remained in Washington to carry out the service's responsibilities there and to act as liaison for the Chicago headquarters. An office and a secretary also were maintained in the capital for Director Newton B. Drury, who often had to visit Washington.





Director Newton B. Drury and Elizabeth Drury attending a fortieth class reunion at the University of California in 1952. They saw the National Park Service family safely through the trying years of the move to Chicago and back during the World War II and cold war periods of restricted operations, 1940 to 1951.

August 8, 1942, was our moving day. Assistant Director Hillory A. Tolson was assigned full responsibility to organize the move. Many railroad cars were required to transport the service's furniture and equipment to Chicago. Arrangements had to be made to temporarily house the service's staff in hotels and motels there until houses and apartments could be found to rent. Quite a few of us found living quarters along the north shore of Lake Michigan. The offices were in the Merchandise Mart, within walking distance from the station for me; though there were winter days when, walking into the icy wind blowing off Lake Michigan, I didn't think I'd make it.

Those were very discouraging and trying times. Many of our best people were the first to leave for military service, and because of family ties many could not go to Chicago with the Park Service. Further, the call to military service affected the individual parks almost as much as it did the Washington office. With gasoline rationing, travel to the parks went down. Funds for maintenance and care of facilities were cut below the minimum needed for preservation alone. Our appropriations in 1940—regular funds together with the cost of the CCC camps in national parks—amounted to \$33,577,000, but during the war years they were rapidly reduced. The low point was reached in the 1945 fiscal year, when funding for the service amounted to only \$4,740,000. After V-E Day our budget began to pick up until it reached \$30,111,000 in 1950. But the damage had been done so far as maintaining park roads and structures was concerned. Moreover, our organization had been greatly reduced, and not all who had left came back.

In June, 1945, the secretary of the interior was asked to send representatives of the department to Berlin, Vienna, and Rome to advise the military government on matters in which the department was interested. I was selected to go to Berlin, but since no definite date was set, the director sent me to the West Coast on an inspection trip. I received word while in Yosemite that I should return immediately and get ready to leave for Europe. I returned to Chicago, having taken some of the necessary inoculations before I left Yosemite, and made arrangements to move my family back to Minnesota, the home of both our parents. We stored our furniture in Chicago and found a small furnished bungalow in Minneapolis.

On September 21, 1945, I left Minneapolis, spent a day in Chicago, and then continued to Washington. I was transferred to another payroll but retained my civil service status and grade. I was told that I would have to be in uniform, as were all Americans in the foreign theater at that time, but that I would have no military rank. I was also told the kind and amount of clothes I would need in Berlin, and I bought them right away. But the urgency apparently was over, because I sat in Washington checking every other day on when I was supposed to leave and how. I found out that special planes would be provided to take us over. The wait proved to be a long one, keeping me in Washington until October 28. I helped Demaray around the office and renewed contact with my brother, who was then a captain in the navy. He had been through the Pearl Harbor attack, the Battle of the Coral Sea, and Guadalcanal, and he had been wounded. During the month I was in Washington there was a change in plans; on October 22 I received word that I would be sent to Vienna, Austria, instead of Berlin.

I departed on the twenty-eighth and, after stopovers in Bermuda, the Azores, and overnight in Paris, then proceeding via Frankfurt and Salzburg, I arrived in Vienna at 5:15 P.M. October 31. There were about seven of us in the party, and we were the first group of American civilians to arrive in Vienna. We were met by several officers, including Colonel Wm. E. Caraway and General L. (Les) D. Flory. General Flory was on General Mark Wayne Clark's staff and was handling the military government part of Clark's command in Vienna. We all had dinner together that evening. It was unusual for a general to meet a group of civilians, but General Flory explained that he wanted very much to meet me. In the late thirties, as a captain, he had been in charge of a National Park Service CCC camp on the historic site near Fredericksburg, Virginia, where several major Civil War battles had been fought, the Battle of the Wilderness among them. He had read many of the instructions the Park Service had sent out regarding the CCC work program on the battlefield sites, and most of them had been signed by me. We became very good friends, and I enjoyed my stay there very much. It turned out that I was the ranking civilian, with a civil service grade that gave me the general's commissary privileges.



Civilian advisers to the World War II United States military command in Vienna, Austria, wore officer's uniforms without military insignia.

One thing I learned in Vienna was what it meant to be on the losing side in the war. The Austrians were taken over by Hitler against their will before the war really started, and then they were subjected to the pounding forces of our side in driving Hitler out. After our victory, the occupation of their country by the fighting forces of the Allies wasn't any too pleasant for them, either, though I believe it was absolutely necessary during the reorganization of local government. After years of occupation by troops of several nations, people get to the point where they give a wide berth to anybody in uniform. My little apartment in Vienna belonged to an Austrian family of four that had to move out so that I could live there. I found out who they were and where they were staying and invited them over several times. The first time they came their attitude was a little cold, although they did say they were glad to see the Americans. Before they left I invited them to come again and asked whether the wife would cook dinner for the five of us if I furnished the materials. This offer was accepted with pleasure, and

Photographed at Kahlenberg the winter of 1945-46 were, *left to right*, Conrad L. Wirth, Walter Armstrong, and Fred Meyer.

we did it several times.

I had greater difficulty establishing rapport in another instance. After I left for Austria, my wife went to the University of Minnesota to brush up on conversational German in anticipation of joining me in Vienna. Her professor happened to be from Vienna, and when he found out that I was there, he told Helen that none of his letters had gotten through to his mother since the Germans took over and that he had not received any news from her. He gave Helen a letter addressed to his mother in the hope that I could find her and deliver it.

I took my trusted jeep and followed his directions until I came to a big, heavy wooden gate between two four-story buildings that were joined together as one building above the gate. The only way to get to any of the apartments in that city block was through those solid wooden gates. All the apartments faced inward, away from the four surrounding streets, and there were no side street entrances. It was after dark, and through a very small crack I could see a dim light on the other side. I pulled the rope that rang a low-pitched bell inside, and I knocked hard on the gate. I was about to give up when I heard somebody coming down some wooden steps. Soon a male voice at the gate asked what I wanted. I explained, and he told me to push the letter through a little slot he would open. I objected, saying I wanted to see the lady and give her the letter in person and explaining why. After a few more words he told me to wait a few minutes. About five minutes later I heard the footsteps of two people coming. They opened the gate to let me into the courtyard, closed and locked it after I got inside, and told me to follow them. We went up some outside stairs to the second floor, then along a porch, and finally to a door. They knocked and were told to come in. They didn't leave me alone for a minute. There in the room was a very dignified, nice-looking lady sitting on a plain wooden chair beside a large round table. She was smoking a cigarette, and beside her was a plate containing some small cigarette butts.

I introduced myself and asked her if she had a son in the United States. She said yes, told me his name, and said she had not heard from him for years. I gave her the letter, and she asked me to sit down. As she read it she tried very hard not to show any emotion. When she finished she could hardly speak, but she passed me the plate and asked if I would like a cigarette. I took one of the butts and lit it. We talked a little, and she offered me a glass of wine. Then she asked me if I would mail a letter to her son. I said I would and gave her my office address. The next day one of the men who had let me in brought me the letter. And so I became her letter carrier.

Before I left that night, I gave her a couple of packages of cigarettes, two bars of soap, and a half dozen bars of candy that I had carried in my overcoat pocket. She was very grateful, because soap and cigarettes were very hard for them to get. The cigarette butt she had offered me had undoubtedly been picked up on the street after some GI discarded it. In those times if you were walking along a street smoking, pretty soon you would hear footsteps behind you, and when you threw away your cigarette it would be picked up as a collector's item. Later her son sent a box of food which I delivered to her.

I was assigned to work with a Colonel E. A. Norcross, who was responsible for dealing with land matters and conservation of natural resources. As a part of my orientation program I made a trip by jeep to Salzburg, headquarters of the American army in the American sector of Austria under the command of General Harry J. Collins. On my return I wrote a memorandum on what I thought ought to be done in and around Salzburg. It was a relatively short report and didn't say a great deal other than that I

objected very strenuously to the troops painting the letters and numbers of their units in bright colors on old, historic buildings. Norcross handed my report to General Flory, who called me in to see him. He suggested that I delete from my report the part that was critical of the field troops under General Collins, explaining that one never criticizes a general in the field with the fighting troops. I understood his point of view, but I told him that I had been sent over to represent Secretary Ickes and his department, that the department considered painting on the walls of historic buildings to be vandalism as well as poor public relations, and that I wanted to have that viewpoint on the record. (Actually I was serving as policy adviser to the United States Allied Council.) Flory implied that he'd send the report through if I wanted him to but that it might result in my being sent back to the States. I replied that, though I was enjoying my duty there, I would take the risk.

I had arrived in Vienna on October 31, handed in my Salzburg report on December 8, and got my first paycheck on December 10. On December 21 I was told that I was to be transferred to the executive division directly under General Flory, and I moved there on December 27. Apparently I had been on the State Department payroll and now, in the executive division, I was transferred to the War Department payroll with the same civil service classification. The executive division coordinated the work of the several divisions responsible for the military government under the command of General Clark. The command of the military government was changed every month amongst the four allies—the United States, England, France, and Russia. Every time the command was changed, the chairmen of the divisions were likewise changed. Consequently, toward the end of the month, each of the various divisions going out of office had a farewell party, and, the first few days of the following month, the divisions taking over would have their incoming receptions. As a member of the executive division, I was invited to eight or ten parties a month.

Toward the end of February it became clear that the ranking officers would soon be able to bring their families over, and so I notified my wife and began to look for a house. In March the ban was lifted, and I filed a request to bring over my wife and our son Pete. General Clark approved my request, and I selected a nice villa not far from General Flory's home. On March 28, General Flory showed me a wire received from the War Department to the effect that the Interior Department was requesting my return. I knew that Secretary Ickes had resigned, and I had heard that Oscar Chapman was the new secretary. I wired the secretary's office for information, and on April 4 I received a wire from Under Secretary Chapman saying it was important that I return soon. General Flory and General Tate agreed that I should be released from duty as requested by the Department of the Interior. All approvals were in from Washington—the State Department, War Department, and Interior Department—by April 10. I wanted to leave the several assignments I was working on in good order, and this task took me about two weeks. One of my main assignments was working with two colonels on drafting an American version of a treaty with Austria.

I finally got things straightened around so that I could leave on April 26. I left Vienna on the Mozart at 7:35 P.M., and the commander of the train gave me his bed, or bunk, since there were no other sleeping accommodations. I arrived in Linz at 2:25 A.M. and transferred to the Orient Express, which left at 6:30 A.M. We passed over the Austrian-German border at 9:55 A.M. and over the French-German border at 10:20 P.M., arriving in Paris on Sunday, April 28, at 9:00 A.M. The first ship I could get back was the *General Brooks*, which was to sail at 4:00 P.M. on May 4. I was assigned to share a room with seventeen army officers. The ship was a regular navy transport, and I was the only civilian in the officers' quarters. Everything was crowded, because of all the military personnel heading back home, but nevertheless it turned out to be a very

enjoyable voyage. After letting the captain know I was the brother of Turk Wirth, Naval Academy Class of 1921, I received a much-coveted invitation to dinner in the captain's cabin, an honor usually reserved for ranking officers. The ship docked in New York at 11:00 A.M. on May 13.

The next morning my wife and I took the train back to Washington and started hunting for a furnished house, because Chapman's wire had indicated I would be stationed in Washington and our furniture was stored in Chicago. The reasons why I was in Washington were a little vague to Helen and me, and finally I came to the conclusion that the department must be planning to bring the whole Park Service back to Washington within the year. The war was over, and the pressure for space was easing. When I reported at the Washington office on the morning of Wednesday, May 15, I found that they had no money to pay my salary until the beginning of the next fiscal year, July 1. So I stayed on the War Department payroll until then.

I was informed several years later by Horace Albright that Oscar Chapman had been told that he was going to be appointed secretary of the interior and that he was calling me back to appoint me assistant secretary; but at the last minute President Harry Truman changed his mind and instead appointed Julius A. Krug secretary. By that time it was too late to change the orders returning me from Austria. I told Horace that, while I would have been very appreciative of the high honor, I would have turned it down, preferring to remain with the Park Service. But as I look back, it is possible that on the spur of the moment I would have accepted.

The National Park Service made a very important contribution to the war effort, although we had to assume a defensive attitude. We wanted to cooperate to the fullest extent possible with the military and other federal agencies involved in war activities without allowing the national park system to deteriorate. Many of the facilities, especially those that belonged to the concessionaires, were made available to the military as rest areas for recuperation of injured men. Some park areas were used for mountain maneuvers and for training ski troops. Others were used to train paratroopers and men who would work as saboteurs behind the enemy lines.

All of this was good, and we were happy we had facilities and personnel to be of help, but we did not lose track of the fact that the national park system was a heritage that should not be destroyed, except as a very last resort. The service's main problem was with those who wanted to exploit the resources that were being conserved in the national parks. Some thought the sitka spruce in Glacier Bay National Monument, in Alaska, should be cut for airplane construction or for the use of other countries, even though they had far more sitka spruce than we had. There were situations where certain minerals in a park were closer to manufacturing centers than the source of minerals the manufacturers were using, and therefore they wanted to take minerals from the park. Many applicants would not take no for an answer but would apply all the pressure they could muster. Although the pressures on Director Drury were tremendous, he approached all the problems in a very practical way. In a few places where no



Newton B. Drury, director of the National Park Service from August 20, 1940, to March 31, 1951.

appreciable harm could be done, he allowed certain surface minerals to be used if they were in short supply. I know of one case in particular in which a valuable source of a mineral that was in very short supply was located in one of our big parks way up on a mountain and very close to the park boundary. No permit was granted, but under our close supervision we allowed the mineral to be removed. For convenience of reference and analysis, the various kinds of proposals and authorizations have been broken down into ten major classifications. These and the number of authorizations issued in each classification for all areas administered by the National Park Service, except the National Capital Parks, are as follows:

| Classification                                                                                      | Number of Authorizations |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Permanent transfer of jurisdiction                                                                  | 4                        |
| Temporary transfer of jurisdiction                                                                  | 6                        |
| Utilization of minerals, timber, forage, water, etc.                                                | 31                       |
| Occupancy and use, involving construction or appreciable modification of landscape features or both | 71                       |
| Occupancy and use of existing facilities                                                            | 73                       |
| Exclusive occupancy of operators; facilities                                                        | 5                        |
| Field exercises, maneuvers, overnight bivouacking                                                   | 162                      |
| Temporary rights-of-way                                                                             | 26                       |
| Loan or transfer of materials or equipment                                                          | 27                       |
| Miscellaneous                                                                                       | 58                       |

I am certain that nothing was done in the parks that was permanently detrimental to them. When the war was over, however, we realized very vividly what had happened. The lack of maintenance—preventive maintenance as it is called—had caused deterioration of roads, buildings, and other facilities to such an extent that they could not be repaired but had to be replaced. The asphalt pavement on roads, for instance, had dried out and cracked in many places, and, as traffic began to build up, the road surfaces began to crumble. Patching a dried up and crumbling road is not feasible. Buildings that had been used for a number of years without maintenance had also deteriorated.

The appropriation of less than \$5 million in 1945 was barely enough to keep the heart of the park organization intact and could not provide even ordinary protection of some 180 parks. Some units in out-of-the-way places, especially, were left unattended. Although there was a gradual buildup after 1945, by 1950, with 21 additional parks and twice as many visitors as we had in 1940, the Park Service funds were 25 per cent less than in 1940. And things were getting worse. The shooting war was over, but the cold war and grants in aid to nations throughout the world—allies and former enemies alike—left very little funding for the National Park Service. The number of visitors to the parks had grown from 33.2 million in 1950 to 56.5 million by 1955, while our appropriations had increased from \$30.1 million to only \$32.9 million. It got so bad that conservation writer Bernard De Voto wrote a very strong column urging that half of the parks be closed and that all funds be devoted to those left open to the public. It was quite evident that the cold war was damaging our parks more than the war itself had. We coined such expressions as "the people are loving the parks to death," and "patch on patch is no longer possible," to describe the seemingly hopeless situation in 1955. Something

drastic had to be done to protect the parks and keep them in condition for the amount of use that people were entitled to give them. Many natural, scientific, and historic areas that should have been added to the national park system were being gradually destroyed and lost forever. The seashores that were studied and recommended for parks in the thirties were disappearing; they were no longer available. It was most discouraging.



On an inspection trip to Big Bend National Park, Texas, before its dedication were, *left to right*, Assistant Director Conrad L. Wirth, Regional Director Miner Tillotson, Pedro, and Director Newton B. Drury.



A committee from Texas and a congressional delegation called on President Harry Truman to invite him to attend the dedication of Big Bend National Park in 1950. Director Newton B. Drury of the National Park Service, *second from right*, and the author, *second from left*.

Looking back, suppose we had got double the appropriations we were given between 1950 and 1955. Could we possibly have done enough to heal the damage suffered during the stagnant war years? What would have happened had we carried out Bernard De Voto's suggestion and used the money we had for operating half of the parks, letting

the rest go to seed? I know, of course, that De Voto didn't really mean that; it was just his way of saying how bad things were. We were, however, in a situation where something spectacular had to be done to awaken Congress and the administration to what had actually happened, to rouse everybody to roll up their sleeves and go to work.

The damage to parks during World War II was going to require a big sum of money to bring all the various elements back into full bloom to be of service to the public. The fact is that even twice the amount of funds that we were getting at that time would not have provided the answer. It was not alone a question of repairing what existed; it was a question of rebuilding both the national park system and the National Park Service. Conditions got so bad that greater amounts of money, up to an average of \$100 million a year for ten years, would have to be provided to do the job right. The Park Service was ready and willing to roll up its sleeves and go to work if the administration and Congress would only give the word. And under the Mission 66 program, they did.

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***Parks, Politics, and the People***

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# Parks, Politics, and the People



## Chapter 9: Mission 66 and the Road to the Future

The National Park Service's Mission 66 might be fairly described as a renaissance. From the time that automobile travel began to build up in the 1920s following World War I until driving was curtailed by gasoline rationing in World War II, visitor use of the national and state parks increased tremendously. Moreover, the types of facilities preferred by people visiting the parks in their own cars were different from the kind formerly provided for those who traveled by train and took coach tours. Annual appropriations had been sufficient to protect park areas and develop the necessary facilities for this increased use. During World War II attendance dropped sharply, and a number of the national parks were made available to the military both as training grounds and as rest areas for troops suffering from combat fatigue. In view of the need to pour funds into all phases of the war effort, appropriations for administration of the park system were sharply curtailed. But ten years after the war the park system was still short of funding, in spite of a resurgence of visitation and the problems of inadequate maintenance, protection, and development during the war and postwar years. Mission 66 was conceived in 1956 and was designed to overcome the inroads of neglect and to restore to the American people a national park system adequate for their needs. This was to be accomplished within ten years, by 1966.

A lot could be written on the conditions that existed in the areas of the national park system in 1955, but an article in *The Reader's Digest* described them bluntly:

One out of three persons in the United States will visit some part of our national-park system during 1955. To these visitors I must pass along a warning: Your trip is likely to be fraught with discomfort, disappointment, even danger.

This warning, the result of a year-long investigation which included an 8000-mile inspection tour, is borne out by the director of the National Park Service (NPS) himself, Conrad L. Wirth. Says Mr. Wirth:

"It is not possible to provide essential services. Visitor concentration points can't be kept in sanitary condition. Comfort stations can't be kept clean and serviced. Water, sewer and electrical systems are taxed to the utmost. Protective services to safeguard the public and preserve park values are far short of requirements. Physical facilities are deteriorating or are inadequate to meet public needs. Some of the camps are approaching rural slums. We actually get scared when we think of the bad health conditions." [Charles Stevenson, "The Shocking Truth About Our National Parks," *The Reader's Digest*, January, 1955. Quoted by permission.]

Mission 66 required a lot of helping hands in its formulation and execution. A group of Park Service professionals started with nothing but an idea and put together a program of such comprehensive proportions and solid design that it attracted nationwide attention

and received the full backing of the Department of the Interior, the president, and Congress. The service developed an *esprit de corps* and a determination in this endeavor that were wonderful to behold. Mission 66 influenced the activities of several other federal and state agencies and even attracted the interest of the White House in favor of other conservation studies and projects. Roy E. Appleman, the Park Service historian, had a very important part in working up the program and later compiled the history of organizing and launching Mission 66. I am indebted to his report for much of what follows in this chapter.

One weekend in February, 1955, I was pondering the reason the Park Service couldn't get the money we needed for the national parks. In 1940, when there were 161 areas in the system, totaling 21-1/2 million acres, with close to 17 million park visitors, total funds available were \$33,577,000, including funds for some 109 national park CCC camps. In 1955, with 181 areas totaling 23-7/8 million acres and visitation more than tripled to a total of 56,573,000, the appropriation of \$32,525,000 was approximately \$1 million below the 1940 level. Moreover, our appropriations had been cut drastically during the war—down to a low of \$4,740,000 in 1945—and we were in desperate need of extra money to repair the damage that wartime neglect had wrought. I had been in the director's chair for three full years, during which we had presented the government with some very strong arguments for what we felt were reasonable requests for funds. We had also submitted two-, three-, and four-year programs as requested by the Bureau of the Budget. But nothing happened. A few minor increases were approved, but even those were knocked out by the committees of Congress.

As I pondered our dilemma, I asked myself, "What would I want to hear from the Park Service if I were a member of Congress?" The answer to this question was a series of new questions: What would be the total amount of work required to bring the whole park system up to a satisfactory condition after the lean years of funding? How much would it cost? What would be the most economical way of getting this job done? How long would it take the service to do this on a reasonably economic basis? I envisioned not a crash program but a long-range one. As I went along with my cogitations, the various aspects of the problem began to clear up and make sense. I also realized that this kind of program would be difficult to set up, and I began to have strong doubts. Perhaps it would not clear the department, not to mention the Budget Bureau. Two- or three-year programs were all they were ever willing to consider, and even then they would make no commitment beyond the first appropriation year.

I spent several hours the next day, Sunday, working up some notes and making estimates based on figures I remembered—they were more "guesstimates" than estimates—and my thinking began to crystalize. I reasoned that other bureaus, such as the Bureau of Public Roads, the Bureau of Reclamation, and the Army Corps of Engineers got money year after year. They had big projects, such as dams and long highways, to construct that couldn't possibly be completed under a single annual appropriation or even in two or three years. That was it. Our projects were all relatively small ones that could be cut out of the budget because they were not sufficiently appealing to the committees that reviewed our request. But if we submitted one all-inclusive, long-term program for the entire park system, it would mean a complete review and some major policy changes by Congress. The whole program could be so arranged that if it were stopped halfway through, for example, half of the parks would be in good shape and the other half would be in poorer shape than ever. If we requested funds for a specific segment of a complete package program and all the congressmen knew that the parks in their states were part of the package and would be similarly taken care of within a given time, it seemed that once the overall program got started it would be hard to stop. Further, by letting larger contracts to do all the work necessary in an

area and finishing the job instead of doing a little bit at a time, the project would in the long run be more economical and would interfere less with management and public use.

On Monday morning, February 7, I expounded my ideas to my branch heads. I proposed that we set up a special staff, selected from personnel in the Washington office, and put this group in the conference room, with no telephone, to work exclusively on the plan. They would be relieved of all their regular duties and would devote full time to the plan until it was completed, even if that took a year. These Mission 66 committee members would be selected so as to represent the major functions of the service, and they would be people who were so important in their regular assignments that they would be sorely missed.

The branch heads favored the proposal with enthusiasm. Although my original thought provided for only one Mission 66 committee, they suggested that a steering committee be set up consisting primarily of the bosses of the members of the main committee. Both were under my general supervision. The steering committee was to meet with the Mission 66 committee at regular intervals to review the work and make suggestions. The two committees worked well together and came up with an outstanding report and program that were the envy of other bureaus of the federal government. The members were:

| Steering Committee                                                                                | Mission 66 Committee                                                                                        |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Lemuel A. Garrison, Chairman<br>Chief, Conservation and Protection<br>Branch, Operations Division | William C. Carnes, Chairman<br>Chief Landscape Architect, Division of Design<br>and Construction            |
| Thomas C. Vint<br>Chief, Division of Design and<br>Construction                                   | Harold G. Smith<br>Assistant Chief, Programs and Plans Control<br>Branch, Operations Division               |
| Henry Langley<br>Chief, Programs and Plans Control<br>Branch, Operations Division                 | Robert M. Coates<br>Chief, Economics and Statistical Section,<br>Conservation and Protection Branch         |
| John E. Doerr<br>Chief, Natural History Branch,<br>Division of Interpretation                     | Howard N. Stagner<br>Principal Naturalist, Natural History Branch,<br>Division of Interpretation            |
| Donald E. Lee<br>Chief, Branch of Concessions<br>Management, Operations Division                  | Jack B. Dodd<br>Assistant Chief Forester, Conservation and<br>Protection Branch                             |
| Keith Neilson<br>Finance Officer, Administration<br>Division                                      | Roy E. Appleman<br>Staff Historian, History Branch, Division of<br>Interpretation                           |
| Jackson E. Price<br>Chief, Branch of Lands, Operations<br>Division                                | Raymond L. Freeman<br>Assistant Chief, Branch of River Basin Studies,<br>Division of Cooperative Activities |

We realized from the beginning that if the program was to be successful we would have to have a title that was short, expressive, easy to remember, and provocative. We spent some time on the problem of the title at our first meeting, and our discussions concerning a title helped us to form a better understanding of our total objective. We felt a sense of "mission" in the program and listed all that we hoped to accomplish. We talked about the time needed to do all that had to be done. We felt we had to allow enough time to make certain that what we did would be economically sound and well executed, and we finally decided that ten years was the length of time to "try on for size." Further, 1966 would mark the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of the National Park Service, and it would be a good golden anniversary if the park system was in acceptable condition by that time. We reasoned that everything we had in mind was contained in two words, *Mission 66*.



The Mission 66 committee, whose members devoted full time, including after hours, to setting up the program. *Left to right:* Howard Stagner, naturalist; Bob Coates, economist; Jack Dodd, forester; Bill Carnes, landscape architect and chairman; Harold Smith, fiscal; Roy Appleman, historian; Ray Freeman, landscape architect—land planner. 1956. *Courtesy National Park Service.*

Roy Appleman's account describes the temper of the Washington office after the staff meeting on February 7: "Excitement ran through the Park Service offices just before noon that Monday as word passed around that a special study group had been formed to inquire into possible changes in the service's policies and to plan for the future. Members of the staff received news of their selection for the work with a mingled feeling of surprise, uncertainty, and anticipation. But all looked forward to the afternoon meeting when they would learn more about the task ahead."

At that meeting I emphasized two things: one, a reasonable objective for the service over a long period; and, two, a program to accomplish that objective. I told them they wouldn't find the answers in any book, regulation, or even in legislation, but we had to find the answer, whatever it might be, because the public was not satisfied with the condition of the national park system and was calling on us to say what must be done, and why, to correct that condition; the public wanted to see our cards. I handed down two dead lines. I informed the staff that I wanted the program outline available for presentation at the Public Services Conference at Great Smoky Mountains National Park on September 18, 1955. I also got very emotional and told them that I would give them until Friday, February 11, to prepare a memorandum that I could send to the field and the personnel in the Washington office informing them of the service's Mission 66 project and what we hoped to accomplish.

The Mission 66 staff and the steering committee started right to work. The memorandum was prepared and went out on time. It stated in part:

The year 1966 will mark the Golden Anniversary of the National Park Service. In an effort to solve, by that time, the difficult problem of protecting the scenic and historic areas of the National Park System from over-use and, at the same time, of providing optimum opportunity for public enjoyment of the parks, I have initiated a project which we are calling MISSION 66....

The purpose of MISSION 66 is to make an intensive study of the problems of protection, public use, interpretation, development, staffing, legislation, financing, and all other phases of park operation, and to produce a comprehensive and integrated program of use and protection that is in harmony with the obligations of the National Park Service under the Act of 1916.

The *immediate* objective of MISSION 66 is the development of a dynamic program to be presented to the Secretary for consideration by the Bureau of the Budget and the Congress beginning with the 1957 fiscal year estimates. The *ultimate* objective is the complete execution of the program by the time the Service celebrates its Golden Anniversary in 1966.

In the first two or three weeks the staff delved into a considerable amount of history, policy, and legislation, going back to the establishment of Yellowstone, the Antiquities Act, the founding of the Park Service, the presidential reorganization orders of 1933, the Historic Sites Act of 1935, the Park, Parkway, and Recreational-Area Study Act of 1936, and the CCC program. As an axiom of intent and purpose, the committee adopted for its own, a statement that was made by Justice Mathew W. Hill in the case of *Dexter v. Washington* and that was delivered in the Washington Supreme Court on February 18, 1949 (202 Pacific reporter, 2d series): "Edmund Burke once said that a great unwritten compact exists between the dead, the living, and the unborn. We leave to the unborn a colossal financial debt, perhaps inescapable, but incurred, none the less, in our time and for our immediate benefit. Such an unwritten compact requires that we leave to the unborn something more than debts and depleted natural resources. Surely, where natural resources can be utilized and at the same time perpetuated for future generations, what has been called "constitutional morality" requires that we do so.

Each person within the Mission 66 staff and steering committee was free to question anything he thought could be done in a better way. Nothing was to be sacred, except the ultimate purpose to be served. Men, method, and time-honored practices were to be accorded no vested deference. Old traditions seem to have determined standards far beyond their time; for instance, the distance a stagecoach could travel in a day seemed to have been a controlling factor in establishing public facilities in some parks.

By the end of February the Mission 66 committee had started collecting detailed material in order to develop the program for Mission 66. A request for factual information was sent to each division and branch of the service, and a questionnaire was sent out to the parks. (The term *parks* was to be common to all classifications of areas in the system for the purposes of Mission 66.) The office in Washington, the regional offices, and the field offices were instructed to give high priority to any request that came from the Mission 66 committee or the steering committee. A list of twenty-eight items that should be looked into in each park was tabulated. The Mission 66 staff reviewed the Mount Rainier National Park master plan and asked for a pilot study of

Mount Rainier. The superintendent, Preston P. Macy, came to Washington for five days. Macy was a man with many years of very successful park administration experience. They had a lot of good "skull practice" with Macy, with excellent results.

By March 17 work had progressed far enough that the steering committee and Mission 66 staff felt a second memorandum should go to the field. The memorandum reviewed the work done by the committees, clarified certain of the earlier directives, summarized some of the more troublesome problems, and outlined the steps yet to be taken. It firmly requested suggestions and recommendations from the field. Part of the memorandum was a questionnaire to be answered by each park superintendent, outlining a course of action for the Mission 66 program in the park under his administrative control. All replies were to be sent to the Mission 66 staff by April 11. Finally, the memorandum also invited all employees to send any suggestions or thoughts they might have to the Mission 66 staff in Washington. The responses were many and good.

During the week of April 11 a meeting of regional directors was held in Shenandoah National Park and attended by representatives of the steering committee and the Mission 66 committee. In view of the findings of the Mount Rainier National Park pilot study, it was decided at that meeting that pilot studies should be carried out on a variety of other areas. The parks selected constituted a good cross section of the service's administrative, preservation, protection, development, and visitor-use problems. They were Yellowstone National Park, in Wyoming, Chaco Canyon National Monument, in New Mexico, Shiloh National Military Park, in Tennessee, Adams Mansion National Historic Site, in Massachusetts, Fort Laramie National Historic Site, in Wyoming, and Everglades National Park, in Florida.

The Mission 66 staff placed on my desk once a week a brief of their accomplishments on the subjects they were currently pursuing or would be taking up the following week, together with a statement on the decisions they had reached the past week. Copies of this report went to key people in the Washington office. It reminded all of their responsibility to speak out with suggestions or objections as the work progressed and not to wait until the report was completed. I quote from Roy Appleman's notes:

As often as his duties would permit, Mr. Wirth stepped through the side door of his office to join the Staff informally for a few minutes. He would comment on some aspects of the work or pass on to the Staff members some bit of information he had just received. He cut through the confusion that often seemed to overwhelm the Staff and helped to keep its work on course by advice and criticism. Above all, his optimism on the outcome of the Staffs work was of immeasurable value.

As this indicates, everybody had a responsibility to help put Mission 66 together. We were not going to have time for long reviews after the committee finished its report which, when finished, was to be final.

The service's field forces had conducted several visitor polls during the summer at the request of the Mission 66 committee, and the results followed very closely those of a poll made by an outside organization that was not financed by National Park Service funds. Of approximately 1,750 persons interviewed, a total of 718 had visited national parks in the preceding five years. Of those, 69 per cent had complaints of one kind or another. Many complaints concerned the facilities available in a park and the general condition of the parks; there were very few complaints against Park Service personnel. About one-third mentioned overcrowding, and about one-half referred to overnight accommodations. Practically all park visitors wanted either cabin or motel

accommodations. Very few wanted hotel accommodations, and only 14 per cent wanted campgrounds. Seventy per cent visited a park for one day or less, and only 29 per cent stayed overnight.

In 1952, my first full year as director, we had a field meeting in Glacier National Park. At that time we got a lot of complaints from the ladies about living conditions for the staff in the parks. I had seen some of the housing, and it was terrible. At that time I asked Herma Baggle, wife of George Baggle, then superintendent of the Lake Meade National Recreation Area, in Arizona and Nevada, if she would head a committee made up of a Park Service wife from each park to get pictures and make a report with recommendations on the condition of their housing. Tom Vint was to work with them in drawing up standard floor plans for new housing. Besides the terrible condition of the buildings, the rooms and windows were of different sizes in different parks so that when a family moved from one park to another such items as furniture, rugs, and curtains did not fit. The ladies did a great job, and their final two-volume report, with pictures and descriptions, came in just about the time Mission 66 got started. It fitted right into the scheme of things. The report contained standard floor plans for two- and three-bedroom houses. The exterior architectural appearance of these more or less uniform houses could be varied and suited to a particular locality. This study made a great impression on the Bureau of the Budget and the committees of Congress and resulted in the building of thousands of new homes for our field people.

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***Parks, Politics, and the People***

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# Parks, Politics, and the People



## Chapter 10: The Winds of Change

Late in the fall of 1950 some vague rumors were circulating that Newton Drury was considering going back to California. Then, in February, Associate Director Arthur Demaray disclosed that he was thinking of retiring in April. He had spent some forty years in government service, including thirty-four years with the National Park Service, of which he had been associate director for eighteen years. But before Demaray had a chance to retire, Director Drury announced his decision to resume his work with the Save-the-Redwoods League and to accept appointment as director of the state parks of California, which had been offered him by Governor Earl Warren, a classmate of his and of Grace and Horace Albright's at the University of California. Secretary of the Interior Oscar L. Chapman informed me that he was planning to appoint me director of the National Park Service but wanted to offer the job first to Arthur Demaray if he would stay on. He asked me if I would talk to Demaray to see if he would defer retirement if appointed director. Chapman wanted to honor Demaray by giving him the directorship before he retired. I too felt Demaray deserved the position and urged him to accept the appointment, and he agreed to stay on for a short time. Newton Drury's resignation took effect on March 31, 1951, and Demaray took office the following day. I was appointed to succeed him as associate director.



Arthur E. Demaray, director of the National Park Service from April 1, 1951, to December 8, 1951.

Demaray had done a considerable amount of work in connection with budget and legislative matters and had represented the director on the planning and zoning commissions for the city of Washington. When he became director he assigned many of these responsibilities to me. As associate director I began to appreciate the tremendous amount of work that the Administrative Branch under Assistant Director Hillory Tolson did in preparing the budget and justifications.

In October, Director Demaray announced that he was going to retire on Friday, December 7. I entered on duty as director on Saturday, and my first day in the director's office was Monday, December 10, 1951.

Chapman and Demaray had timed their moves in accordance with the fact that 1952 would be an election year. Though the Park Service was a career service, there was always the chance that a new secretary might try to change that status. I'm very sure that Chapman and Demaray both felt that the new director should be in office at least a year before the beginning of the term of the next secretary of the interior, and that was expected to be January, 1953,

whether the Democrats or Republicans won the 1952 election. In other words, I had a year to prove my capability in order to avoid the possibility of the director's position becoming a political appointment.

As it turned out, Secretary Chapman left office January 20, 1953, when the Eisenhower administration came in. Oscar was a politician and a very, very good one. He was a strong believer in the principles of conservation and in what we in the Park Service were doing. He went out of his way to be helpful. I'm sure he felt that the profession of politics required many of the qualities that a good administrator should have. He believed strongly that a good job well done was the best politics. He was always courteous, smiling, and reasonable, and I developed a personal affection for him. I may be a little biased, because it was he who promoted me to the directorship of the National Park Service.

I will confess that nearly every day since my talks with Secretary Chapman and Arthur Demaray in March I could not help but think and plan for the time when I would be director, and as I did my self-confidence got stronger and stronger. I analyzed my abilities and considered what things should be done differently—not that the way they had been done in the past was wrong but that my own approach would be different. Of one thing I felt certain: if my administration was to be a success, it must earn the full support of the park people in the field. True, I was a civil service career person with a good background and considerable experience, but all of my twenty years with the National Park Service had been in the Washington office. I had had a lot of contact with the field people and had spent much time in the field, but I felt very strongly that I needed a well-qualified, highly respected field man to share in policy-making and administrative responsibilities if my administration was to be strong and responsive to the field forces. They were the real troopers in the front-line trenches who protected the parks and gave the kind of service the people had a right to expect.



A statesman-politician in the finest sense of the term, Oscar L. Chapman served ten years as assistant secretary, two years and eight months as undersecretary, and three years and eight months as secretary of the interior. *Photo by Abbie Rowe, courtesy*

During the eight months of Demaray's incumbency as director I had given considerable thought to several other things that seemed very important to me. First, and of utmost importance, as director I wanted to know the Washington office personnel intimately. I wanted to hear them express themselves on various problems and subjects pertaining to management of the National Park Service. In order to do that I established, starting in February, 1952, a regular squad meeting every Monday morning. The squad consisted primarily of branch chiefs, together with one or two other special assistants to the director. At these meetings we discussed general policy, work accomplished, and important matters that should be handled and who was to handle them. I also set up staff meetings for the first and third weeks in each month. The purpose of these sessions was to let the staff—the branch heads and their division chiefs and any special assistants they would like to have present—tell in their own way of their accomplishments and express any ideas they wished to expound. The meetings took on a seminar quality and were very enlightening to me. They gave us all better insight into the various problems encountered from day to day—problems that we perhaps would never have heard about if it were not for those meetings.

Second, I wanted to reestablish what was known as the superintendents' meetings, and I wanted these meetings held in the parks and not in Washington. We had discontinued them during the war and the following cold war period because of lack of funds. Although they were called superintendents' meetings in the thirties, they were organized by the Washington office, and the papers given were prepared mostly by the Washington office staff. The field staff found this disturbing. I felt that the superintendents should organize their own meeting, subject to review in the director's office, that papers given by the Washington staff should be limited to very important policy subjects, and that the rest of the session should be an open forum, sort of an old-fashioned town meeting.

Third—and very important—the Park Service ever since the Mather and Albright days had paid a great deal of attention to budget and legislative matters and to relationships with members of Congress, and I wanted to be sure that there was no slippage in these efforts and try if possible to improve them. The Park Service had a lot of friends on the Hill: the result of good service, sound budgets, and carefully drawn and reasonable legislation. Quite a few people on the Washington staff knew various congressmen personally, and we encouraged them to increase and enhance these friendships wherever possible. For instance, on the House Appropriations Committee the chair man, Mike Kirwan, was a very good friend of mine, and Ben Jensen, of Iowa, the minority leader of the subcommittee handling Park Service work, was a very close friend of Hillory Tolson's. A few days before our hearings on the budget, Mike Kirwan and I would discuss our request in his office. These talks gave me an opportunity to indicate to him both the needs that we were unable to include under our budget ceiling and, if the committee felt they had to reduce our request, which items we considered absolutely essential. I'm sure that Hillory Tolson did the same with Ben Jensen, especially when Ben was chairman. On the Senate Appropriations Committee we had Carl Hayden, of Arizona, and Guy Cordon, of Oregon. Most of our matters before the legislative committees had to do with special items, and nine times out of ten these matters applied to a state, or maybe two or three states, for establishing new park or recreation areas. In cases where the representatives and senators from the states involved wanted a bill reported favorably the committee usually did so.

The first superintendents' meeting in the new style was held in the fall of 1952 in Glacier National Park. We discussed it in advance in the squad meeting and selected

two superintendents to organize the meeting. We suggested that at least two or three afternoons be set aside as discussion periods in which people from the floor could address the director and his staff, outline problems, and ask for clarification or change of policy. The meeting in Glacier was a lively one, and we gave answers to questions right on the spot whenever possible, confirming them in writing within two weeks after the meeting. Written response was given as promptly also to questions that could not be answered from the platform. There were only about four or five out of some forty or fifty issues raised that we had to delay answering until we got back to Washington and checked the law or the administrative policies of the secretary.

The last night of the superintendent's meeting there was a banquet. Howard Hayes, who was president of the Glacier Park Company, the National Park Service concessionaire for Glacier National Park, had arranged with the Blackfoot Indians to make the new director an Indian chief. Two of the biggest, huskiest Indian chiefs I had ever seen, all decked out in ceremonial dress with strings of beads, feathered bonnets, and what not, came to the platform along with an interpreter. They talked to me in their native language while the interpreter translated their words into English and my replies into the Blackfoot language. They finally put a headdress on me with the finest colored Indian feathers I'd ever seen. I was told that I was a "blood brother" and that my new name as a chief of the Blackfoot Indians was Curly Bear. I thanked them, and then in a facetious way I told them I had read in the newspapers that we—the Blackfoot—had struck oil on the reservation and that now as a blood brother I assumed I would share in the profits. Before the Indian translator could pass this along, one of the chiefs turned to me and said, "Hell no!" in very good, loud English accompanied by a scowl that led me to believe he didn't think I was kidding. He snatched the Indian bonnet from my head, we shook hands, and the Indians left the stage. Mike Mansfield, then the congressional representative from that district, was present and was highly amused.

All told, the meeting was a howling success. One of the greatest benefits of a meeting of this kind was getting people together where they could talk things over and get to know and understand one another better. We decided that future meetings should be held in odd-numbered years to avoid national election years, when political candidates might seek to get good local exposure. For the Glacier meeting we had received a letter from the headquarters of one of the major political parties offering to place a speaker on our program, but of course we declined. The next meeting was therefore held one year later, in 1953, in Yosemite National Park, and from then on the meetings took place every two years.

These meetings paid big dividends; they were great for morale building, and they provided every superintendent, from the smallest park to the largest, equal opportunity to bring up any problems he felt ought to be discussed. They were a service not only to the superintendents but also to the branch chiefs in the Washington and regional headquarters. They gave all those attending a far clearer idea of the workload and the requirements of the field and the problems of the Washington and regional offices. But the biggest dividend as far as I was concerned was the firsthand insight I got into the ability, character, and habits of the key people of the service, which was particularly helpful in selecting people for promotion.

Knowing that I was to become director a number of months before I was actually appointed enabled me to give considerable thought to the selection of an associate director, the number two man. I knew that from the standpoint of service morale as a whole a field person should be selected for that position if at all possible. Had it seemed otherwise, the logical choice would have been Hillory Tolson; but although Hillory was a sincere, very capable, and loyal National Park Service man, he had been pretty well

fastened to the Washington office during his entire service, as I had been, except for the short time he had been regional director in Santa Fe.

By the time I took office I had made up my mind that I needed a park superintendent as associate director—a person with a good record who would be thoroughly acceptable to the field forces. He also had to be a person who could work with both Hillory Tolson and me. The one field man who came to mind almost every time I started thinking about filling the job was Eivind T. Scoyen. Although getting close to retirement, he was held in high regard by everyone. He had been superintendent of Sequoia and Kings Canyon national parks in California since 1947 and had literally spent his whole life in the national parks. He was born in Old Fort Yellowstone at Mammoth Hot Springs, headquarters for Yellowstone National Park before the National Park Service was established, and had been a ranger in the early Mather days. In length of service and field experience, he was senior to both Tolson and me. I finally selected him, and he entered on duty in Washington on January 17, 1956, just as Mission 66 was getting under way. I could not have made a better choice. He had everything I needed in that position and fitted right into the Washington office.

When Dwight D. Eisenhower took office as president of the United States in 1953, he appointed Douglas McKay, former governor of Oregon, as secretary of the interior. I liked him from the day I met him. I went to him with a memorandum about the National Park Service and told him that I was the director, that I liked working at that job, and that I thought I could do a good job for him, but that if he felt somebody else in the Park Service would make a better director, I would step aside and would appreciate getting my old job back in the Park Service. He smiled and said he had given some thought to that and had come to the conclusion that I had to stay in the job and he wouldn't think of replacing me under any circumstances. He believed strongly in the career service, and while I had been in the job as director for only a year, he had nothing but good reports about the Park Service. It was in Doug McKay's term of office that we came up with Mission 66, and he certainly supported that program—every feature of it.

I learned a lot from Doug McKay, and there is one incident I like to tell about because it illustrates a sound principle. The National Press Club in Washington had a luncheon for McKay shortly after he took office, and some of the bureau chiefs of the department were invited over to hear him speak. The press club dining room was crowded. The secretary was given fifteen minutes to make a statement, after which he was plied with questions. The first reporter asked him what he thought of Oscar Chapman's water policy. McKay answered something like this:

Well, Oscar Chapman is my friend, and I am not going to say anything about his water policy.... I have the Chevrolet agency in Salem. I have been in business for quite a few years and I learned a long time ago to tell a customer coming into my shop about Chevrolet, all the good parts at least, and never tell him what's wrong with the Ford because there is a Ford agency down the street and I know he would be pretty sure to go down there and check me out and I'd have a good chance of losing a sale. So if you want to know about my water policy I'll be glad to tell you, but you'll have to talk to Oscar Chapman about his water policy.

When President Eisenhower asked McKay to run for the Senate from Oregon, the president appointed Fred Seaton as secretary of the interior. He was an excellent man, in my opinion, who left it pretty much up to the Park Service personnel to do a good job but to keep him posted. In fact, he practically took me in as an adopted member of the secretarial staff, inviting me to their parties when other bureau chiefs were not included.

I did the same thing with Fred Seaton as I had done with Doug McKay when he came into office: I called on him, presented him with a resume on the Park Service, and expressed my hopes that he would still want my services as director. Fred Seaton felt the same way about the Park Service as Doug McKay. Seaton had been an assistant to President Eisenhower and was at the cabinet meeting when we presented Mission 66 to the president.

The superintendents' meetings in the field provided an effective way of developing comprehensive policies and plans, and the early meetings contributed to the formulation of Mission 66. The 1952 meeting in Glacier did a great deal to breach the change in directorship and develop amongst us a better understanding of each other: we saw that each man's job, each area of the system, each office was very important to a successful total operation. The 1953 meeting in Yosemite brought out the importance of the concessionaires as a part of the team. And it got us thinking of trying to find some way out of our quandry over financing a reconstruction program. It emphasized the need of working out new concession contracts and mending the bad feeling that had developed when in the forties the department's solicitor had told the concessionaires that when their contracts were up, all their investments accrued to the federal government. The Public Lands Committee of Congress then put on record the term "possessory interest" so that the concessionaires investments in the parks placed on government property in accordance with the terms of their contracts had the same legal status as improvements on private properties. Both the Glacier and Yosemite meetings set the stage for a united effort that resulted with the development of Mission 66. By the time of the Great Smokies meeting of 1955, Mission 66 was presented in nearly final form (as described in Chapter 9).

On June 1, 1954, we were finally able to establish western and eastern design and construction offices as recommended by Tom Vint, with Sanford (Red) Hill in charge of the San Francisco office and Edward S. Zimmer heading the Philadelphia office. The regional offices retained a liaison officer who could go out and help the small areas on minor matters, and each of the larger parks had its own professional planners. But the design offices, in accordance with Tom Vint's recommendation and my concurrence, were to handle all design and construction work. In winter the field men would be pulled into the central offices at San Francisco and Philadelphia, and there the landscape architects, engineers, and architects would meet and talk over the past summer's accomplishments and plan the next year's work. This procedure helped greatly in devising detailed master plans. The eastern design office handled almost everything east of the Mississippi, and the western office covered the parks west of the Mississippi.

The spirit was running high, and by 1957 when we had our meeting in Yellowstone and Teton I'm sure we all had the feeling that nothing could stop us. We were in our 1958 fiscal year, the program called for \$73,794,500, and Congress had given us \$76,005,000 in accordance with our adjusted request.





Three horsemen start out on a seven-day trip to the Two Ocean Plateau and Heart Lake Basin of Yellowstone National Park; Associate Director Eivind Scoyen, Director Conrad L. Wirth, and Superintendent Lemuel A. "Lou" Garrison. *Courtesy National Geographic Society.*

I arrived in Yellowstone early to work on an article for the National Geographic Society (*National Geographic*, May, 1958) and one of their writers, Nat Kenney, was with me. We were going on a five-day pack trip. I got sick the second day out and had to turn back. I was laid up in the hospital for several days, and Senator Byrd found out about it. One morning while still confined to bed, I looked out the window and saw the senator and his old friend, Blackburn Moore, the speaker of the House of Delegates of Virginia, coming across the lawn from the hotel carrying a big covered platter. They came right to my room, and on the platter was a Yellowstone Lake Cutthroat they had caught the day before, all fixed up for my breakfast. It was at that time that I prevailed upon Senator Byrd to attend the meeting and say a few words. He told the meeting that his Committee on Finance had made a study of the National Park Service and had come to the conclusion that the service was getting \$1.10 out of every dollar appropriated by Congress. That statement was transmitted by both the United Press International and Associated Press and was also printed in the *Congressional Record*.





"Ranger Onelick Evergreen," who mysteriously showed up at the superintendents' conference in Grand Teton National Park in 1959, is greeted by Director Wirth and ordered to return to his ranger district as fast as he can.

The meeting that started in Yellowstone and ended in Teton was a hard working session. We had some in-house matters to straighten out and we cleaned them all up before the meeting was over, including the problem of housing needs presented by the wives of the superintendents. They were very happy to know that in accordance with their recommendations new houses were being built and many more were financed. We ended the meeting with a skit featuring Ranger "Onelick Evergreen" played by Superintendent John G. Lewis of Isle Royale National Park, Michigan.

Also at that meeting I was presented with a scroll signed by over six hundred people. I consider it the nicest thing anybody could have received, because it expressed so well the spirit of unity that prevailed.

The National Park Service Family  
Assembled at the  
Park Development Conference

September 10-17, 1957

Yellowstone National Park  
Grand Teton National Park

Hereby subscribe their names for themselves, and for the National Park Service employees they represent

in honor of  
CONRAD L. WIRTH, DIRECTOR

With unswerving devotion to the principles of conservation, together with perception of the needs for greater public use and enjoyment of the

National Park System, you have given unsparingly of your energy and enthusiasm, and through your MISSION 66 Program, have awakened and sustained the interest of the public and their elected representatives to the need for action and appropriations to preserve and develop the NATIONS HERITAGE.

Your determination, strength and belief in PARK IDEALS, your unfailing recognition of work well done, your friendly manner and good humor, have won for you and your park family, respect and acclaim. The recognition you have received in the form of Trusteeships, Doctorates, Citations, Distinguished Service Awards, Gold Medals, and other honors are all well deserved. We take pride in their bestowal.

By this means, we wish to express our continued ADMIRATION and APPRECIATION, and give you our pledge of FULL COOPERATION in future years. May they be golden years, rich in the rewards of public benefits from the good you are accomplishing.

WELL DONE, CONNIE!

Another honor came my way that year. I had been a member of the National Geographic Society for many years. In 1957 Melville Bell Grosvenor was elected to the presidency and editorship of the society. About two months after his election, he called me and said he wanted to come over with Thomas W. McKnew, then vice-president and secretary, to discuss an important matter. At the meeting they told me they were considering filling a vacancy on the society's Board of Trustees and wanted to know whether I would accept the position if elected. I didn't take more than a split second to say yes and that I would consider it a high honor. Apparently I was elected at the next board meeting, because within thirty days I was informed of the date and time of the first meeting I would attend as a trustee. I consider being elected to the Board of Trustees of the National Geographic Society a great distinction, affording, as it does, a close association with an organization whose purpose and activities I wholeheartedly endorse. I learned after I was on the board that I was filling the vacancy created by the death of Admiral Richard E. Byrd, the renowned explorer and brother of my good friend Senator Harry F. Byrd. I am now also on the society's Executive Committee and its Research and Exploration Committee.

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***Parks, Politics, and the People***

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# Parks, Politics, and the People



## Chapter 11: Congressional Relations: Official and Personal

Now that I have retired from the government and have a chance to look back objectively on thirty-six years in the federal service, I have a desire to express some of my thoughts about the Congress of the United States. I have a very high regard and deep appreciation for Congress, both the House and the Senate. The members represent a cross section of the people of the United States and are well qualified to make the laws for our country. They are often maligned and referred to as "politicians" as if that were something bad. We are a democracy, and our form of government requires politicians or statesmen—whichever you wish to call them. We, the people, select them and can remove them if they do not serve us well. Consequently I've always felt that derogatory references to them are not fair. A congressman must be prudent, shrewd, artful, expedient, and judicious to survive in political life. These attributes make up the science or art of politics. If he has these qualifications he'll be in Congress for a long time, to the benefit of the country.

As a government employee my direction and responsibilities were derived from the laws of our land, which were enacted by Congress. My actions were subject to review and approval by both Congress and the secretary of the interior. I have been critical of Congress at times because my judgments did not prevail, and I have also criticized higher administrative authority for the same reasons. On looking back, though I think I was right in most cases, I do recognize the possibility that I may not always have presented my thinking effectively and that there is always the chance of an honest difference of opinion. When something positive was accomplished, we in the bureaus of the departments have, more often than not, taken credit for a job well done and neglected to share it with committees of Congress. In many cases, without the backing of Congress, which provided authority and financing, we could not have been successful. Mission 66 is a good example. I say "thank you to the Congress of the United States for the support it has given the National Park Service through the years in carrying out our assigned duties and responsibilities.

In mentioning some of the members of Congress who have been particularly helpful, I know I will leave out some very important friends, not intentionally, but nevertheless unfortunately. I know that the committee and subcommittee chairmen are very important and powerful individuals, but I also know that they derive their power from the members of their committees and that their leadership stems from their statesmanship. Committee members, if they read these pages, should know that my expressed appreciation is intended for all.

### THE HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

When I first arrived in Washington in 1928, Representative Louis C. Cramton, of Michigan, was chairman of the Subcommittee on Appropriations for the Department of the Interior. His committee also processed appropriations for the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds and the National Capital Park and Planning Commission. At that

time I was an assistant to Lieutenant Colonel U. S. Grant III, engineer in charge of Public Buildings and Grounds and executive officer of the planning commission. In a minor way I helped with appropriation and legislative matters, mostly in connection with the development of the park system of the city of Washington. Cramton along with Senator Arthur Capper, of Kansas, had introduced the bill that would authorize an appropriation for park land acquisition in the District of Columbia and, on a matching basis, for acquisition and development of the park system beyond the district line into Maryland and Virginia. The authorization included funds to buy the land for the George Washington Memorial Parkway. I got to know the congressmen very well.

When I transferred to the National Park Service, I found that Representative Cramton was almost like one of the Park Service family. He was a very good friend of Director Albright's and was included in many of the Park Service social gatherings. His advice on legislative matters, apart from his function as chairman of the Appropriations Subcommittee, was highly respected and greatly appreciated. He was defeated when he ran for reelection in 1932, went back to Michigan, and a few years later was elected to the state legislature. He died in 1966, the year the National Park Service celebrated its fiftieth anniversary.

The 1932 election gave control of the House of Representatives of the Seventy-second Congress to the Democrats, and Representative Edward T. Taylor, of Colorado, took over as chairman of the Subcommittee on Appropriations for the Interior Department. Here again we were most fortunate in having a good friend and a strong supporter of the National Park Service. I won't attempt to enumerate the many things Representative Taylor did with far-reaching effect on the responsibilities of the entire Interior Department. He had become a highly respected leader in Congress. He was on the Appropriations Committee as early as 1928 and served as chairman of the Subcommittee on Interior Appropriations from 1933 to 1943. His congressional district took in all of Colorado west of the Rocky Mountains, an area that included two national parks and five national monuments. By 1937, Representative Taylor had become chairman of the Appropriations Committee, but he retained the chairmanship of the subcommittee on the Interior Department through 1942, when he was followed by Representative Jed Johnson, of Oklahoma, who had been a member of the subcommittee since 1935.

*House Subcommittee on Interior Appropriations*

| Fiscal Year |               | Chairman, Majority Leader |          | Ranking Minority Leader               |                      |
|-------------|---------------|---------------------------|----------|---------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Congress    | Appropriation |                           |          |                                       |                      |
| 69th        | 1928          | Louis C. Cramton          | Michigan | Charles D. Carter<br>Edward T. Taylor | Oklahoma<br>Colorado |
| 70th        | 1929          | "                         | "        | "                                     | "                    |
|             | 1930          | "                         | "        | "                                     | "                    |
| 71st        | 1931          | "                         | "        | "                                     | "                    |
|             | 1932          | "                         | "        | "                                     | "                    |
| 72d         | 1933          | Edward T. Taylor          | Colorado | Frank Murphy                          | Ohio                 |
|             | 1934          | "                         | "        | "                                     | "                    |
| 73d         | 1935          | "                         | "        | W. P. Lambertson                      | Kansas               |
| 74th        | 1936          | "                         | "        | "                                     | "                    |

|      |      |                     |            |                        |              |
|------|------|---------------------|------------|------------------------|--------------|
|      | 1937 | "                   | "          | "                      | "            |
| 75th | 1938 | "                   | "          | Robert F. Rich         | Pennsylvania |
|      | 1939 | "                   | "          | "                      | "            |
| 76th | 1940 | "                   | "          | "                      | "            |
|      | 1941 | "                   | "          | "                      | "            |
| 77th | 1942 | "                   | "          | "                      | "            |
|      | 1943 | Jed Johnson         | Oklahoma   | "                      | "            |
| 78th | 1944 | "                   | "          | Albert E. Carter       | California   |
|      | 1945 | "                   | "          | "                      | "            |
| 79th | 1946 | "                   | "          | Robert F. Jones        | Ohio         |
|      | 1947 | "                   | "          | "                      | "            |
| 80th | 1948 | Robert F. Jones     | Ohio       | Michael J. Kirwan      | Ohio         |
|      | 1949 | Ben F. Jensen       | Iowa       | "                      | "            |
| 81st | 1950 | Michael J. Kirwan   | Ohio       | Ben F. Jensen          | Iowa         |
|      | 1951 | "                   | "          | "                      | "            |
| 82d  | 1952 | "                   | "          | "                      | "            |
|      | 1953 | "                   | "          | "                      | "            |
| 83d  | 1954 | Ben F. Jensen       | Iowa       | Micheal J. Kirwan      | Ohio         |
|      | 1955 | "                   | "          | "                      | "            |
| 84th | 1956 | Michael J. Kirwan   | Ohio       | Ben F. Jensen          | Iowa         |
|      | 1957 | "                   | "          | "                      | "            |
| 85th | 1958 | "                   | "          | "                      | "            |
|      | 1959 | "                   | "          | "                      | "            |
| 86th | 1960 | "                   | "          | "                      | "            |
|      | 1961 | "                   | "          | "                      | "            |
| 87th | 1962 | "                   | "          | "                      | "            |
|      | 1963 | "                   | "          | "                      | "            |
| 88th | 1964 | "                   | "          | William Henry Harrison | Wyoming      |
|      | 1965 | "                   | "          | "                      | "            |
| 89th | 1966 | Winfield K. Denton  | Indiana    | Ben Reifel             | South Dakota |
|      | 1967 | "                   | "          | "                      | "            |
| 90th | 1968 | Julia Butler Hansen | Washington | "                      | "            |
|      | 1969 | "                   | "          | "                      | "            |
| 91st | 1970 | "                   | "          | "                      | "            |
|      | 1971 | "                   | "          | "                      | "            |
| 92d  | 1972 | "                   | "          | Joseph M. McDada       | Pennsylvania |
|      | 1973 | "                   | "          | "                      | "            |

At the meeting of the Subcommittee on Appropriations for Interior on March 17, 1943, Chairman Jed Johnson welcomed as new members, Michael J. Kirwan, and Ben F. Jensen. Those men, the first a Democrat and the second a Republican, turned out to be two of the best supporters we had on the Appropriations Committee over a period of

seventeen years.

Jed Johnson, the Oklahoma Democrat, remained as chairman through to 1948. While I knew Johnson quite well from CCC days, I had practically no contact with him when he was chairman of the Appropriations Subcommittee. He served during the difficult war years. In 1945 the total appropriation for the Park Service was only \$4,740,000, which is less than the service had in 1930 and \$28,800,000 less than in 1940. Representative Robert Jones, of Ohio, followed Johnson as chairman for one session of Congress and in turn was followed by Ben Jensen, of Iowa, for the 1949 appropriations bill. Both were Republicans.

In 1949, Jensen was the ranking Republican on our subcommittee, and Mike Kirwan the ranking Democrat. Whenever the party majority changed in the House of Representatives, one or the other of them became chairman of the subcommittee. During that period, between 1949 and 1965, the Democrats had a majority in the House of Representatives for fourteen years, and consequently the chairmanship fell into Mike Kirwan's hands more often than into Ben Jensen's. Ben and Mike worked together, however, and if they had any disagreements over our budget because of political differences they never displayed them during committee hearings. I am most familiar with this period because it is the period that I was director and appeared before the Appropriations Committee to justify the service's requests for funds.

I should explain that it is customary in the National Park Service for the director and the assistant director for administration to defend the service's request for appropriations and legislation before the committees of Congress. It is the responsibility of the service's Branch of Administration to collect the necessary data for preparation of the budget request. All branches and offices of the service cooperate in reviewing and making recommendations concerning items that pertain to their respective operations in the field as well as in the Washington office. The responsibility for preparing the budget for the service, however, belongs to the assistant director of the Branch of Administration subject to the final approval of the director. When the director and assistant director of the Branch of Administration attend the congressional appropriation hearings, they are usually accompanied by fiscal and other technical staff people who can help justify the request.

Hillory Tolson was the assistant director in charge of the Branch of Administration while I was director, as he had been for a number of years. Tolson was a good administrator and had handled the preparation of budgets under the directorships of Cammerer, Drury, and Demaray. He had developed a very efficient staff, and the two on that staff that I most often dealt with were Clarence Montgomery and Harold Smith, both outstanding men.

During the dozen years that I was director of the National Park Service, the two key members of the House Appropriations Subcommittee were Ben Jensen, the Republican, and Mike Kirwan, the Democrat. They, and in fact the whole committee, were most considerate and favorable toward our Mission 66 program, and it can certainly be said that without their help and understanding Mission 66 could not have succeeded. But I am also certain that a lot of the confidence and support that we received resulted from the way in which our budgets were prepared, justified, and presented to Congress. Many times we were complimented on this by the Congress and the Bureau of the Budget, and I know that much of the credit for this was owing to Hillory Tolson and his boys, whose aim in their work was perfection.

I must relate an incident involving Mike Kirwan that illustrates his character. (I have

told the story about the first money we got for Mission 66 in Chapter 9 on that program.) After I retired in 1964 I wanted in some way to show Congressman Kirwan my appreciation for all he did for the service while I was its director. On Laurance Rockefeller's suggestion I took Mike and his wife to Virgin Islands National Park. The three of us had a very enjoyable time at Caneel Bay for a little over a week. The last night there, while I was getting ready for dinner after having cocktails in Mike's room, he came in and sat down and said, "What can I do for you Connie?" I told him absolutely nothing, that the purpose of this trip was to express thanks for all he had done to help me while I was director and that Laurance had made this trip possible. He repeated several times, "Are you sure there is nothing I can do for you?" I said no. He then said, "I'm glad to hear you say that, because when you are a congressman most people are nice to you because they want something, but you have never asked for anything except those things in line with your government responsibilities." Then he said that he never had received much schooling because his family was very poor. He had had to go to work when he was still a young boy 7 and he knew what it was to be hungry and knew the value of money. He was interested in the parks because they brought a lot of people enjoyment that they could not get in any other way. That tied right into his reasoning expressed during committee hearings when he kept wanting us to put in more picnic and camping areas so that the low income people would have places to go and enjoy themselves.

Mike Kirwan was a good representative of the people who elected him. As far as I know he never went back to his district to campaign for office; but it seemed that in every succeeding election he would get a larger percentage of the vote. He said that if he went back to campaign he would have to promise the people a lot of things he couldn't deliver.

### **THE SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE**

The Constitution requires that all appropriation bills originate in the House and then go to the Senate. Often disagreements are resolved in conference between the House and Senate committees. Bureaus that suffer budget cuts in the House usually try to get them restored in the Senate. As far as the Park Service is concerned, I would say we were successful in this maneuver 75 per cent of the time, although whenever the House and Senate committees go into conference to iron out their differences it seems that more often than not the House view prevails.

In 1928 Senator Reed Smoot, of Utah, was chairman of the Senate Subcommittee on the Interior Appropriations. I really never knew him. He was chairman until 1934, when one of the great men of the Senate, Carl Hayden, became chairman. Hayden was chairman over a period of thirty-one years, from 1934 through 1968, with only two breaks of two years each—in 1947 and 1948, when Kenneth S. Wherry, of Nebraska, was chairman, and in 1953 and 1954, when Guy Cordon, of Oregon, held the chair.

Once when Mission 66 was under way and Hayden was chairman, we had several requests for funds to restore some of the old Civil War battlefields and to establish visitor centers to help interpret the engagements. Most of the battlegrounds are in the southern states, and four or five southern senators came in to urge that the appropriations be granted. Chairman Hayden was the only member of the committee present; perhaps it was just as well because, even though the other members relied almost entirely on his judgment, when they were present the hearings took a great deal longer. After the southern senators had left, Hayden said, "Off the record, Connie, I thought the South lost the war between the states." And I replied, "Yes, Senator they did, but they didn't lose a battle."

At one of the hearings when Senator Cordon, also a supporter and friend of the service, was chairman, he asked me a question and before I had an opportunity to answer it, Carl Hayden spoke up with the answer. Whereupon the chairman turned to me and said jokingly, "Connie, I think you'd better let Carl Hayden defend your budget; he knows as much about parks as you do." I answered, "I'd be very glad to let our case rest with Carl Hayden any time, providing it had the chairman's approval also." Carl Hayden retired at the end of the session of Congress in 1968. He had been in Congress first as a representative and then as a senator ever since Arizona had become a state in 1912, a total of fifty-six years.

The senator who followed Hayden as chairman was Alan Bible, of Nevada, who retired at the end of the 1974 session of Congress. I never had an opportunity to appear before the committee while he was chairman, but I know him well. He also served for many years on the Interior and Insular Affairs Committee, the legislative committee of the Senate, and helped to pull our irons out of the fire many times. We always found him to be an upright, thoughtful, pleasant, intelligent, helpful senator, and a gentleman.

*Senate Subcommittee on Interior Appropriations*

| Fiscal Year                                      |      |                   |                         |                   |              |
|--------------------------------------------------|------|-------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|--------------|
| Congress Appropriation Chairman, Majority Leader |      |                   | Ranking Minority Leader |                   |              |
| 69th                                             | 1928 | Reed Smoot        | Utah                    | William J. Harris | Georgia      |
|                                                  |      |                   |                         | "                 | "            |
| 70th                                             | 1929 | "                 | "                       | "                 | "            |
|                                                  | 1930 | "                 | "                       | "                 | "            |
| 71st                                             | 1931 | "                 | "                       | "                 | "            |
|                                                  | 1932 | "                 | "                       | "                 | "            |
| 72d                                              | 1933 | "                 | "                       | Kenneth McKellar  | Tennessee    |
|                                                  | 1934 | "                 | "                       | "                 | "            |
| 73d                                              | 1935 | Carl Hayden       | Arizona                 | Gerald P. Nye     | North Dakota |
| 74th                                             | 1936 | "                 | "                       | "                 | "            |
|                                                  | 1937 | "                 | "                       | "                 | "            |
| 75th                                             | 1938 | "                 | "                       | "                 | "            |
|                                                  | 1939 | "                 | "                       | "                 | "            |
| 76th                                             | 1940 | "                 | "                       | "                 | "            |
|                                                  | 1941 | "                 | "                       | "                 | "            |
| 77th                                             | 1942 | "                 | "                       | "                 | "            |
|                                                  | 1943 | "                 | "                       | "                 | "            |
| 78th                                             | 1944 | "                 | "                       | "                 | "            |
|                                                  | 1945 | "                 | "                       | "                 | "            |
| 79th                                             | 1946 | "                 | "                       | Chan Gurney       | South Dakota |
|                                                  | 1947 | "                 | "                       | "                 | "            |
| 80th                                             | 1948 | Kenneth S. Wherry | Ohio                    | Carl Hayden       | Arizona      |
|                                                  | 1949 | "                 | Iowa                    | "                 | "            |
| 81st                                             | 1950 | Carl Hayden       | Arizona                 | Kenneth S. Wherry | Nebraska     |
|                                                  | 1951 | "                 | "                       | "                 | "            |
| 82d                                              | 1952 | "                 | "                       | Guy Cordon        | Oregon       |
|                                                  | 1953 | "                 | "                       | "                 | "            |

|      |      |             |         |                  |              |
|------|------|-------------|---------|------------------|--------------|
| 83d  | 1954 | Guy Cordon  | Oregon  | Carl Hayden      | Arizona      |
|      | 1955 | "           | "       | "                | "            |
| 84th | 1956 | Carl Hayden | Arizona | Karl E. Mundt    | South Dakota |
|      | 1957 | "           | "       | "                | "            |
| 85th | 1958 | "           | "       | "                | "            |
|      | 1959 | "           | "       | "                | "            |
| 86th | 1960 | "           | "       | "                | "            |
|      | 1961 | "           | "       | "                | "            |
| 87th | 1962 | "           | "       | "                | "            |
|      | 1963 | "           | "       | "                | "            |
| 88th | 1964 | "           | "       | "                | "            |
|      | 1965 | "           | "       | "                | "            |
| 89th | 1966 | "           | "       | "                | "            |
|      | 1967 | "           | "       | "                | "            |
| 90th | 1968 | "           | "       | "                | "            |
|      | 1969 | "           | "       | "                | "            |
| 91st | 1970 | Alan Bible  | Nevada  | "                | "            |
|      | 1971 | "           | "       | "                | "            |
| 92d  | 1972 | "           | "       | Charles H. Percy | Illinois     |
|      | 1973 | "           | "       | Ted Stevens      | Alaska       |

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***Parks, Politics, and the People***

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# Parks, Politics, and the People



## Chapter 12: Advice: Good and Bad

Anyone who has worked in government, whether federal, state, or local, will know what I mean when I say that a public servant is subjected to an unlimited amount of unsolicited advice on an unlimited number of subjects. Some of it has value, but much of it is absolutely worthless. In a lower-level job one is spared the brunt of this assault; but as one advances in rank and assumes more responsibility, one not only gets more advice but realizes how valuable it can be when it comes from well-informed, judicious sources. In any case, one has to listen, smile, and thank everyone for the advice offered.

Some of this advice comes via Capitol Hill, which introduces additional complications. I have received telephone calls from members of Congress telling me that they have written me a letter on a certain matter in stronger terms than they wanted to use but that this was necessary because a copy was being sent to a constituent. This kind of letter is not answered in the same vein. It must be answered honestly, expressing a firm stand on what is believed to be right, because the reply is usually sent on to the constituent. The rationale for handling letters received through congressional referral emphasizes the difference between an elected or politically appointed official and a career civil service person. The former is obliged to please his constituents as much as possible, while the latter is charged with administering the laws in accordance with the policies and regulations in his department or agency. When the civil service must give a citizen a negative answer, it must state it firmly but as diplomatically as possible.

I have been involved in a number of politically sensitive situations. Some are recounted elsewhere in this book, but one instance should be related here. A relatively high-ranking politically appointed officer made a definite attack on the Park Service and on me for no really good reason, other than to stimulate his ego. He caused quite a rumpus in the upper echelon of the department, and even though the discussions took place behind closed doors, the information was leaked and came to me loud and clear. For a while it was a question whether the person making the attack should resign. Some time later I had an occasion to write a letter on the subject, and I pinpointed what had happened and cleared several people who were thought to have had something to do with it. Shortly thereafter I got a handwritten note from a highly placed official of the department, part of which stated: "You have been one of the 'magnificent bureaucrats' of our day, and I hope by now that the unfortunate events of last October have been forgotten. I have forgiven the guilty one, but I have not forgotten. One should not forget his experiences no matter how unpleasant, because experiences are the foundation of the road to the future. I believe that ultimately the nasty attack on the service and on me did more good than harm.

A lot can be learned from politicians, and I can't help but repeat a story I heard over the radio a week before the 1976 New Hampshire primary election. Representative Morris (Mo) Udall was running for the Democratic presidential nomination along with some eight or ten others. As he approached a gathering of prospective voters in a meeting room, he heard a lot of laughter. When he got inside he was greeted by the presiding

officer, who said, "I was just telling these people that you are running for president." Mo replied with a big smile, "Yes, and I heard all the laughing." That got a loud laugh and a big hand, and it broke the ice. This bit of humor must have got him quite a few votes from the people in that room.

Having written about members of Congress and in-government relationships in other chapters, I will now turn to the activities of individuals and organizations outside of government. About two years after I became director of the National Park Service, I received a letter from an old friend, Joe Prendergast, an official of the old National Recreation Association. At the time he lived in Alexandria, just across the river from Washington. He signed the letter as president of a historical association. He was disturbed about the possibility that the National Park Service would reroute the George Washington Parkway along the Alexandria waterfront. His letter resulted in a meeting in my office, and we talked for about a half-hour. Just before he left I said, "Joe, I haven't heard of your historical association; it's new to me. How many members do you have?" With a smile he told me that he was the only member and that he had the letterhead run off as a gag. He added that he thought it would help him get in to see me so that he could go into detail about preserving the historic Alexandria waterfront. He further said he would be very glad to have me as a member without dues and he could elect me vice-president. I declined.

I don't know how many associations there are in this country, but I dare say we have more organizations concerned with the conservation of natural and historic resources than any other country in the world. As director I took out membership in nearly every organization that might have a bearing on the activities of the National Park Service. My dues amounted to over \$1,200 annually, or almost 7 percent of my salary. It was the best way for me to keep tabs on what was going on, and it was educational. I learned a lot about people and their thinking, individually and collectively. Now my memberships are limited to organizations in which I have a very definite professional interest and personal association, though these still number over two dozen.

Private organizations and special-interest groups can bring considerable pressure to bear on a public agency. One of the problems we had on Yellowstone Lake will serve to illustrate. Motorboats of a certain size are permitted on the lake, and all the launching sites are either at the north end or near Fishing Bridge, Bridge Bay, and West Thumb. About 80 percent of the lakeshore is thus left in wilderness. We wanted to keep all motorboats out of the area south of Frank Island, especially the southern half of the Southeast Arm. Several streams flow into the lake at that location, including the Upper Yellowstone River. Over many thousands of years these streams have formed deltas and small, low islands with sandy shores. On the sandbars certain kinds of birds made their nests. Much to our concern *some* people took great delight in speeding their boats by the sandbars to make waves and see the birds fly away, and sometimes the waves would flood the nests. Of course there were other good reasons for keeping motorboats out of such wilderness regions, but this kind of behavior by motorboat users, even if unintentional, left us no alternative but to close the South and Southeast arms to them. Yellowstone Lake is a large lake, and the closing of these two arms—which amounted to 20,000 acres of water surface with 90 miles of shoreline—still left around 90,000 acres of water surface and 110 miles of shoreline open to motorboating. Nevertheless, closing the area below Frank Island to motorboats brought a great deal of pressure on the service from a small but well-organized group of motorboat owners and even from an assistant secretary of the department who came from a nearby state. This pressure made it necessary for the service to hold five public hearings in and around Yellowstone at considerable expense. Thanks to help from several national conservation organizations, we were able to hold our ground. The protesters did not represent

anywhere near even 10 percent of the people who lived around the park or a majority of those who owned motorboats.

There was another case where a large commercial company took over a choice camping spot for the entire season, even though camping was limited to two weeks per camper, by using the names of some ten people in the company on different applications for camping permits. They moved in a large, expensive trailer for the summer and assigned it at different times to some of their best customers as a business promotion, thus depriving the general vacationing public of camping opportunities. Of course when the superintendent got wise to what was going on, he put a stop to it but not without protests. We bureaucrats were spoiling their business.

The national park system exists for the benefit of all the people, and it must be so managed that its natural and historic values will be available, let us say, in the year 2066, when Joe Doaks and Agnes Hobbleskirt will be born. Such is the responsibility of the service, or, if you prefer, the bureaucrats. I am sure that the people who objected to restricting the motorboats on Yellowstone Lake and those unscrupulous businessmen with their trailer and political partners blamed the bureaucrats for stopping them. I was a bureaucrat and am proud of it, and furthermore I am sick and tired of hearing everyone who runs for political office blame the bureaucrats for doing what is required of them even when some individuals don't like it.

So much for a very brief analysis of the climate in which a bureaucrat finds himself and which he must accept as a part of our governmental structure. If a career bureaucrat is to be successful he must never forget the right of the people—his fellow citizens and fellow taxpayers—to petition their government. He must listen to all the people, even though he may consider some of their ideas, suggestions, and demands to be more detrimental than helpful to the nation as a whole.

I have never before attempted to classify conservation organizations according to motivation, but on the basis of long experience in dealing with them I find it tempting. Actually, such sociological taxonomy is better applied to individuals than to organizations, because permanent organizations vary in emphasis and approach from year to year depending on their leadership, whereas an individual's thinking and habits don't usually change very much. I would say that conservationists fall into half a dozen classifications: (1) *Pests* are constantly after government about something that is of no importance except to them, and they are never consistent in their demands. They lack experience but feel they have to stick their cotton-picking fingers into everything. They are the hardest ones to avoid and the last to contribute any constructive ideas. (2) *Endrunners* are always running to the congressman, the secretary, the governor—anybody in higher authority—to complain, to ask the authority to overrule an administrator, or to submit a request on almost anything they think the bureaucrats would not approve. They are always on the job. (3) *Followers* will sign any petition. Pests and endrunners circulate petitions for and against projects, and some of the same names will be found on both. The people who sign just don't think, or perhaps they don't even read the petitions; they simply sign when asked. (4) *Constructive thinkers* are usually pretty competent. They will study a problem carefully, and if they feel strongly about it, they will offer constructive suggestions, most of which will usually be helpful. They can be reasoned with because they are invariably kind and courteous and understand when they are told why something can't be done. (5) *Professionals* are good to have around. If highly specialized in their own field, however, they may not understand the necessity of blending the principles of all professional fields to satisfy the requirements and habits of park users and at the same time protect the features of the park. If they had a little broader vision, most professionals would fit in the next

classification. (6) *Consultants*, because of their experience, study, and observation, have the ability to analyze a problem from many angles and are willing to sit down and help work out plans for solving it. While a consultant's final analysis of a situation might differ from the administrator's, he will probably introduce new thoughts worthy of consideration and his contribution could have a definite effect on the final solution.

I recall one particular case in which a park superintendent was plagued by the first category of conservationist. Great Smoky Mountains National Park had a fire lookout tower on Clingman's Dome that was old and rickety and hard to climb, yet it was a wonderful place for people to go because they could see for many miles in all directions. It was a replacement item in the Mission 66 program. Fred Overly was park superintendent at the time it was to be replaced. He had previously been superintendent of Olympic National Park in the state of Washington and had been severely criticized by conservation people in the Northwest. I'd known Fred for years: he was high-strung, but he had imagination and ingenuity. At Olympic during the cold war when money was scarce he had conceived an idea—which we all knew about—of taking down trees with dangerous snags in them around the park camping areas as a safety measure for campers. Trees also had to be removed to build roads into a camping area. In letting the contract for the road work, Overly saved money by having the contractor stack stripped-down trees along the roadside instead of hauling them away. He then arranged with lumber mills in Port Angeles to have the trees sawed into boards. The mills gave half of the boards to the park and kept half in payment for their trouble. Then Overly went to the high school and got the manual training teacher to have his classes build a visitor center for the park as a training project. It turned out to be a very nice and useful building. Some conservation-minded people complained, however, that Overly had taken down the trees just to build a visitor center. The pressure on the park superintendent was so great by the time I became director that I reassigned him as superintendent of Great Smokies. When replacement of the old, unsafe iron fire lookout tower on Clingman's Dome was scheduled, it was suggested that we build a concrete spiral ramp instead of stairs up the new tower so that people in wheelchairs or those who could not otherwise manage the steps could enjoy the view and see how the rangers spot forest fires. Well, certain eastern conservationists immediately got after Overly for proposing to build a concrete ramp instead of wooden steps. They pointed out that there was plenty of wood in the park that could be used at a saving. I can just see Fred now as he told me what he said to them. He told them: "I was superintendent of Olympic National Park and people like you complained because I did just what you are suggesting, so I was moved here, and for your information I'm never going to use even a twig in this park. You people complain no matter what we do, and that's that." According to Fred they did not know what else to say, and so they left and he heard nothing more from them about the tower.

Some organizations are always looking for a fight. They have got to have a cause for raising money. In some conservationist publications I've seen photographs that make it look as though the Park Service were taking a whole mountain down to build a park drive. The organizations may even be in agreement with a project but write up their campaign in their books in such a way as to suggest they fought for a long time, finally forcing the Park Service to take action. They end up taking full credit for the accomplishment. When I retired I wrote a letter to one organization stating that I'd been a member for over thirty years, that I had read its booklets and pamphlets, and that although they had championed the national parks they had never said a kind word about the service or given it credit for anything it did. I never received a reply.

There have been good organizations that supported the efforts of the Park Service but that nevertheless turned against the service when their leadership changed. I can find no

better illustration of this than the Sierra Club's views on the planning and construction of the Tioga Road in Yosemite National Park. Before the park was established, this road was a mining wagon road. It is the only road in the national park system that goes over the High Sierra and even now can be used only in the summer months. Its function is twofold: to permit people coming from the east to get into Yosemite National Park without first going far north or far south; and, most important, to provide an opportunity for people who cannot hike or ride horseback to see that most impressive great expanse of the High Sierra.

I crossed the Tioga Road in 1924, before I had any idea of becoming a Park Service man. Then it was a very narrow, winding mountain dirt road, difficult for automobiles to travel. Over the years, to accommodate the gradually increasing automobile travel, the park maintenance program had improved some of the curves and grades, paved the road in some places, and provided turnouts to allow cars to pass each other. But as travel increased and cars got larger, the number of accidents and complaints from visitors skyrocketed. Rangers assigned to this district had to undertake the burdensome chore of listening to unhappy park visitors. No matter how much the park staff improved and patched the old road, the accidents and hazards continued to increase, and it became evident by the late twenties that major reconstruction would be required over the entire route.

When reconstruction was started in the early thirties with PWA funds, the team of engineers and landscape architects worked closely on the location, alignments, grades, cuts, and fills; and all road structures, including bridges, culverts, parking areas, and the like, were blended into the natural landscape. In addition to review and approval within the National Park Service, the Tioga Road project was reviewed and approved on a continuing basis by the Yosemite Advisory Board, a group of citizens prominent in the conservation field. They included such Sierra Club members as Walter Huber, a prominent San Francisco engineer and conservationist; Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr.; and William E. Colby. They and the Sierra Club gave their approval of the project, subject to minor changes, back in the thirties.

By the fifties the most difficult section, some ten miles, had not been completed, and we hoped to finish it under the Mission 66 program. We began to run into trouble, however, with certain conservationists and with the engineers in the Bureau of Public Roads, even though we had decided to proceed on the route that had been selected and approved earlier.

We did make some very minor changes in order to meet improved safety standards. I went to the field and met with our design and construction people and with David Brower and Ansel Adams. Brower, then executive secretary of the Sierra Club, and Adams, the famous nature photographer, were violent protestors. In our discussions I believe we covered nearly every possible objection and suggestion. Their suggestions were feasible from a construction standpoint but not an improvement in any way over the approved alignment. Further, they were more costly. I asked why they had changed their minds, since the Sierra Club had approved the route years before I became director. I also said that I had heard from several officials of the Sierra Club, and, though they wished the road did not have to be built, they felt that the location previously approved would be as good, if not better, than any other. Dave Brower's reply was that it was a different Sierra Club now.

The objection of the Bureau of Public Roads was that road standards had changed considerably since the thirties, and that a wider road with wider shoulders was now required. In high country with steep slopes, every foot extended out from the centerline

of the road creates a scar, from both cuts and fills, much greater than on level ground and correspondingly increases the cost. We couldn't settle the question of shoulder width. The Park Service wanted a safe width of road with narrow shoulders and turnouts wherever the terrain would permit. The engineers wanted shoulders that would allow cars to pull off the road when in trouble. They indicated that if I didn't give them the shoulder width they wanted they would not undertake the project.

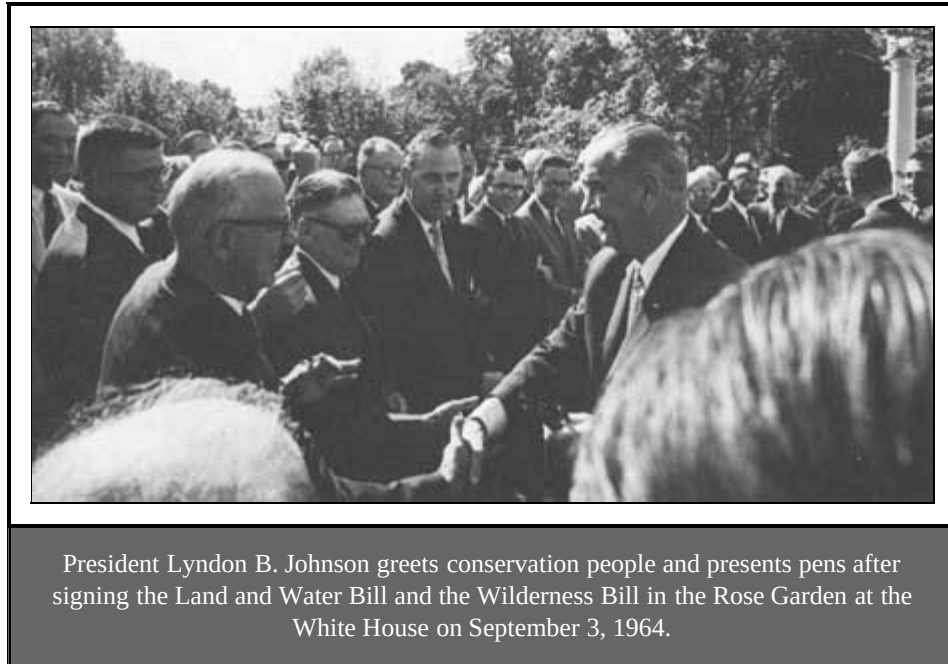
At this point the Park Service wrote a letter to Walter Huber, sending a copy to the Bureau of Public Roads. Huber, who had built many mining roads in the High Sierra before this part of the park was established, was a past president of the Sierra Club and past president of the American Society of Engineers. He was at that time a member of the secretary's advisory committee on national parks. We wanted to know whether our recommended two foot shoulders were sufficient to insure structural soundness of the road, which was another objection raised by the engineers, or whether we should go to four feet as the Bureau of Public Roads held was necessary. Huber took the time to go to the road site and study the matter very carefully. He then wrote me a very full letter indicating that our two-foot shoulder was ample for that type of road, with the turnouts we had planned, except for one place of several hundred feet where he felt it would be wise to widen the shoulder to three feet to provide the stability needed for the twenty-foot road. I then wrote to the Bureau of Public Roads, sending them a copy of Huber's reply, and told them that I was accepting his suggestions, that we were determined to go ahead on the basis of Huber's findings, and that we would appreciate reconsideration of their stand. I asked that, if their decision remained unchanged, they transfer to us the basic engineering data that they had prepared and that we had paid for, so that we could proceed with an outside engineering firm. I received a very nice reply from the bureau indicating that they would proceed with the job along the lines that Huber and the Park Service wished. We were both happy that the matter was finally settled.

Our friends in the conservation field, however, kept picking at us, and we heard from many people around the country, which kept us busy writing letters. It took two more years to complete the project. After the new road was dedicated and opened to the public, we got many letters complimenting us on a job well done. Some of the letters were from people who had criticized us but admitted that they had been wrong and now enjoyed the road very much, although they found it did make a large scar on the face of the glacier-polished granite surface.

I have not mentioned all of the people the service called upon to study and review the Tioga Road project. Practically every aspect of the project that affected the natural history of the area was considered and reviewed by a person professionally well qualified to do so. This is the policy the service uses in all its planning. It often calls upon other bureaus of the government and upon universities and professional individuals outside of government for help. Whether a project involves land, plant life, wildlife, water, or air, these consultants are a very important part of the responsibilities assigned to the National Park Service and therefore are fundamental to all the service's planning.

This is not to say, of course, that there are not times when disagreements of various kinds occur between professional people. Disagreements can be stimulating and constructive and can lead to better understanding of the issues involved. In that spirit I would like to correct here one such misunderstanding of an important matter. In the American Forestry Association's publication of January, 1976, there was an article by Richard McArdle, retired former chief of the United States Forest Service, on the history of the Wilderness Bill. It stated that the National Park Service was against this legislation. The Park Service was not against the bill; we were for it. We were opposed,

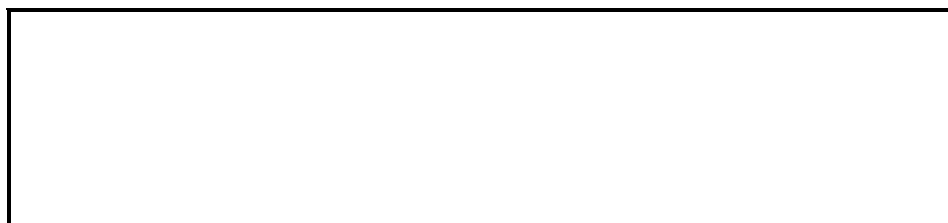
however, to being included in it because the protection section of the original bill was not as protective for national parks wilderness as our own basic legislation. When we convinced the mastermind behind the bill, Howard C. Zahniser, of that fact, he readily adjusted the wording so that the basic standards already established for us by Congress would prevail in the national parks, and we supported the revised bill. I should explain that Dick McArdle is an old friend of mine. He and I received the Rockefeller Public Service Award the same year, and he convinced me to write this book.



One of the greatest interagency programs was, of course, the CCC. To expound on this subject of cooperation and exchange of knowledge just a little further, I quote from a letter that Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes received from Fred Morrell, the representative of the Department of Agriculture on the CCC Advisory Council:

The CCC was, as you know, a large-scale social conservation undertaking that attracted world-wide attention. Its administration necessitated interdepartmental cooperation on a scale not previously attempted in the government of this, or perhaps any other country. Departmental interests were continuously in conflict. These differences had to be adjusted by yielding and compromise, and both Interior and Agriculture had to sacrifice interests and priorities, and work for the good of the Corps as a whole. Never in the nine years that I worked with Conrad Wirth did he violate a pact we made in 1933, that neither would advance the interests of his respective department without first advising the other and giving him an opportunity to present his case if he did not agree.

Mr. Wirth represented Interior's interests with remarkable vigor and ability, but as a part of a national program of conservation and not as an Interior's attorney out to win his case, regardless of its merits.





Connie Wirth, of the National Park Service, and Fred Morrell, of the U.S. Forest Service, highly respected each other. They handled the CCC programs for the Departments of the Interior and Agriculture and worked closely together.

The interesting thing about this is that I wrote a similar letter to the secretary of agriculture. Both were written and sent at about the same time, and neither of us knew that the other was going to write such a complimentary letter about his colleague. These letters should certainly serve to dispel the general belief that there is a lack of cooperation between bureaus and departments of the government. We do disagree from time to time, but that should not prevent cooperation and the lending of a helping hand where needed.

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***Parks, Politics, and the People***

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wirth2/chap12.htm — 21-Sep-2004

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# Parks, Politics, and the People



## Chapter 13: Some Observations from Retirement

Over the last twenty years there have been increased violations of the purpose and intent of the civil service system. Most of them have introduced patronage by changing methods of operation and disregarding the basic principle of a career service embodied in the Civil Service Act. In July, 1975, the comptroller general submitted to Congress a report that criticized actions of the Civil Service Commission and referred to some of the violations of the act.

### THE CIVIL SERVICE AND "SCHEDULE C"

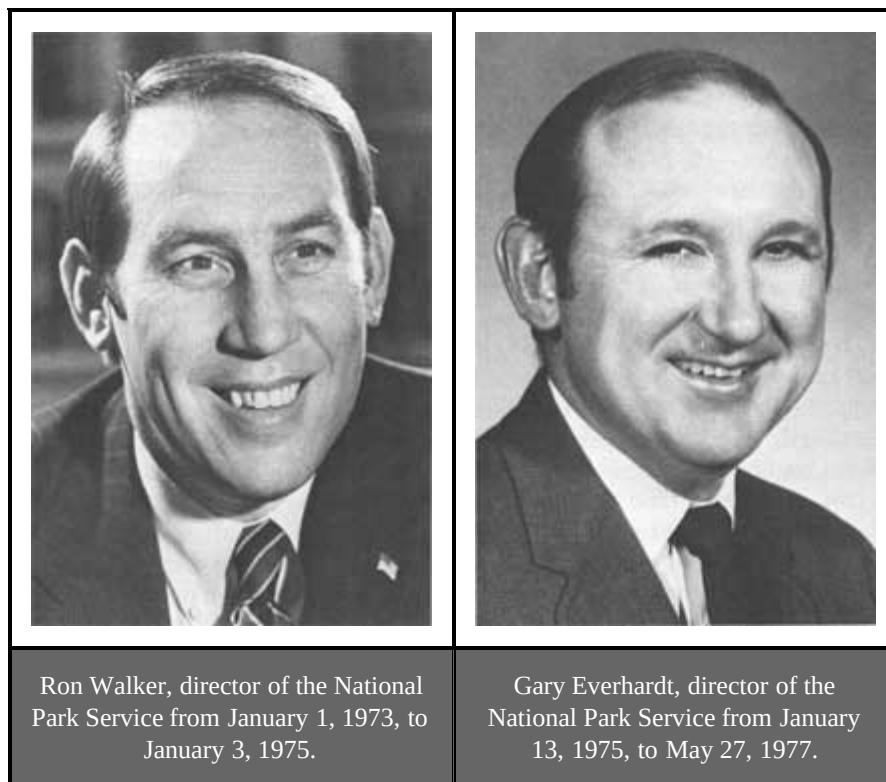
Some time in the late forties and early fifties, word came out that some civil service positions of high grade were to be placed in a "Schedule C" classification and that the people in those grades could be reassigned to other positions in the government. This concept has some real merit, provided such changes are based on sound administrative judgment; however, it is easily abused and that abuse has for all intents and purposes grown to the extent that it is destroying the main reason for the establishment of civil service.

Shortly after the beginning of the Eisenhower administration, word came down from Interior Secretary McKay of a proposal to place the positions of director of the National Park Service and some seven top personnel on his staff, together with their secretaries, in "Schedule C." I strongly objected, not only because such a step would forfeit the long years of special training and experience required to develop capable people in the specialties needed to plan, develop, and administer the national park system, but also because it disturbed the general morale of people in the organization who felt that they were going to be traded around like professional ball players. Any one of us could be moved to any other agency, and goodness knows who might be sent in to fill our positions. The National Park Service is a professional career service, and its effectiveness lies in that fact. By the time a person gets into the upper grades of the civil service in the National Park Service, he becomes very valuable to the service. On the average, he will have had about twenty years of administrative experience with national parks and be in his upper forties or early fifties, and it would be rather late for him to start a new career.

After several meetings the secretary approved the placing of only the director's position and that of his secretary under the new schedule. But as years went by more positions were gradually placed in the "Schedule C" category until at the present time, I understand, all or most of the so-called supergrades—16, 17, and 18—are classified in the "Schedule C" designation. An "executive" classification has also been established in which the top supergrade positions have been placed by executive order of the president. At the present time any person who accepts an appointment classified as executive grade must give up his civil service rating and agree to serve at the pleasure of the secretary.

By the last year of the first Nixon term, the National Park Service began to get requests from the White House to give certain people jobs. Many of these applications were returned with the explanation that the individuals were not qualified. Word came back to the Park Service from the White House to put them on because refusal to do so would interfere with the president's program. About that time the director of the National Park Service, a long-term career man in his fifties, was requested to submit his resignation, and it is my understanding that other bureau chiefs of the departments were asked to do the same. Director George Hartzog submitted his resignation under protest. He had to resign because he was in the executive classification. It was accepted, and in 1973 a White House staff man with no experience in the parks was appointed director of the National Park Service. After the new director took over, it wasn't long before some twenty or so additional people were brought into the service with qualifications unrelated to the positions they filled. The new director, Ron Walker, was a nice enough fellow and tried hard, but he was politically motivated and it was this that caused him to do some things that were very detrimental to the national park system. Many of us tried to help him, but it was like putting up a brick building with putty in place of mortar.

By the end of 1974, Walker resigned and Secretary Rogers C. B. Morton made an in-depth study, both inside and outside the service, to find a well qualified person to be the new director. He ended up appointing a career Park Service man, Gary Everhardt. Here again, Everhardt had to give up his civil service rights because the position is still in the executive classification.



I feel sure that Secretary Morton had nothing to do with the selection of Ron Walker. And I do not wish to imply that the secretary would not have made a good selection of a new director of the Park Service to succeed Walker. But I must say that Gary Everhardt was on a list of five suggested candidates that was drawn up by Park Service retirees ("alumni") at their reunion in Yosemite National Park in the early fall of 1974. Following is the letter to Secretary Morton that the alumni committee asked me to sign on their behalf along with Morton's reply. I wrote a similar letter to the White House and got a reply a long time later; both of these letters are also reproduced below, as is

my second letter to the White House.

October 7, 1974

Honorable Rogers C. B. Morton  
Secretary of the Interior  
Washington, D. C. 20240

Dear Mr. Secretary:

At the meeting of the Old Timers in Yosemite National Park, Sunday, September 29 through October 1, there were over 120 Park Service Retirees present, and the Chairman of the Employees and Alumni Association called a meeting of a special committee to discuss what action or steps, if any, should be taken by the Alumni of the National Park Service in connection with returning the Service to Career Civil Service status. Attached to this letter is a list of those who attended that meeting; and an additional number of the Alumni who had been contacted expressed their support of the committee's deliberations.

One of the decisions reached was that I should address a letter to the President of the United States on the general subject of Civil Service, especially as it relates to the National Park Service, and a letter to you suggesting individuals presently in the service whom we feel you should consider in selecting the new Director of the National Park Service. In other words, Mr. Secretary, we want to be helpful. Further we can't help but feel deeply concerned about the agency that we spent a lifetime working in, and we're proud of the National Park System and Service. We know full well that the responsibility for the appointment is yours and not ours, but we also believe that we know the career people and how they fit into an organization and whether they would be accepted as the Director by their associates. We feel that these factors of selection can be best communicated to you by those who have been closely associated with the growth and history of the Service. What we're trying to convey to you, Mr. Secretary, is our deep interest and most profound desire to help the National Park Service meet its administrative and assigned responsibility with full adherence to its purpose so ably expressed in the basic legislation. We know this objective is also yours, but I guess what we are trying to say is, "This is a family matter and we think Grandpas are part of the family also."

We are listing five people we feel should be given careful consideration, and we are willing to meet and discuss their qualifications in detail if you so desire. [Identification of the individuals recommended to the secretary is deleted out of consideration for them; obviously, Gary Everhardt was one of them.]

I'm sure the background of each of these individuals is fully exposed in the personnel files of the Department. We feel that the appointment of any one of them would be well received by the field. They have all had a certain amount of administrative work in a central office either in Washington or in the regions.

I would like to say personally a word about Ron Walker, and I think the others on the committee would endorse my statement regarding him. Ron is a likeable person who tried hard. There were several things which some of

us objected to or felt were unnecessary, although one very fine thing he did was to move considerable authority to the field. However, we feel that he lacked the qualifications and experience to head up a bureau like the National Park Service, and that's not really his fault. There are quite a few of us, however, who would like to have had a greater opportunity to help more than we did.

We beg of you, Mr. Secretary, to give our suggestions careful consideration. If for any reason these suggestions are not acceptable and you wish to discuss with us other people you have in mind, I'm sure that any individual among us or a group of members of the Alumni Committee will be glad to be consulted.

Sincerely yours,

Conrad L. Wirth  
For the Alumni Committee

United States Department of the Interior  
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240

Oct. 25, 1974

Dear Connie:

I appreciate your October 7 letter regarding the appointment of a new Director of the National Park Service when that position becomes vacant. Would you please also relay my gratitude to the other members of your special committee of the Alumni? I hope that all of you already know I value your counsel.

As you might well imagine, we have received a number of recommendations, not to overlook first person applicants. The qualifications of the five persons of your Alumni Committee selected for specific mention are, of course, well known. The five certainly have every right to be proud of being singled out by such a distinguished group, whose combined public service must total more than three centuries.

When the time comes to make the appointment from among the many names before us, it will be a serious responsibility, hardly to be treated lightly, and I regard your recommendations with gravity.

I know the high standards you and your fellow alumni have in mind. And, surely you understand we will insist upon a selection with the professional skills and managerial talent equal to the position. You have my assurance your recommendations will be given the most thorough consideration.

With best wishes.

Sincerely yours,  
(Sgd) Rog  
Secretary of the Interior

Mr. Conrad L. Wirth  
9633 East Bexhill Drive  
Rock Creek Hills  
Kensington, Maryland 20795

CONRAD L. WIRTH  
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ROCK CREEK HILLS  
KENSINGTON, MARYLAND 20795

October 7, 1974

The President  
The White House  
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. President:

On Saturday, September 28, while I was in San Francisco on my way to Yosemite National Park, I heard on T.V. your statement on inflation and the economy, and I thought it was a very good one. . . . When I arrived at Yosemite I found I was not the only one that heard your talk, and that it had instilled in people the feeling that a sound plan of attack on inflation would soon be made public. We will all pitch in and help in every way we can.

The meeting I attended in Yosemite was a gathering of some 125 Old Timers—retired Park Service employees—to celebrate the 84th anniversary of the establishment of Yosemite and to do honor to John Emmert and James Lloyd who were the first two rangers in Yosemite when the National Park Service was established as a career organization in 1916....

Mr. President, the Alumni and employees of the National Park Service want most sincerely to have the Service restored to the status of a career service. It had always been a career service until 1973 when, for the first time, the President requested the Director to submit his resignation and then appointed a person who knew nothing about parks. Director Ron Walker did the best he could, worked hard, and is a friendly person; however, he resigned as of January 1, 1975, and the professional park people most sincerely request that the Service be returned to career Civil Service status.

Mr. President, there were distributed copies of the article by Carol Kilpatrick in the *Washington Post* of September 21 and we like very much what you said about the Civil Service. We must report that the National Park Service has suffered from the strong assault on the federal career system. We have been informed that in the last several years over 50 career positions in the Service have been taken over by non-Civil Service people whose qualifications are questionable. Well qualified and trained career people, whether in government or private enterprise, can produce the best job, and the best job is the best politics in the long run. We urge most strongly that the present Administration return the National Park Service to its career Civil Service status. We also strongly believe that the national policy must be determined and defined by the Administration and the Congress, and that the professional career personnel are subservient to the Secretary in carrying out the policies of the Government.

The National Park Service down through the years starting with the Mather-Albright period has been a well trained, hard working, progressive organization always willing to work with and carry out the policies of the Government. The "C" classification imposed on the three highest grades of Civil Service has been destructive of the intended Civil Service as originally established. It has weakened the Civil Service structure and lowered the morale of many agencies of government. Under these conditions highly trained professional employees have left their jobs at the first opportunity.

Mr. President, we urge that as part of your anti-inflation effort you return to a sound quality employment program. We feel that such a move will produce better work, at less cost.

This letter and a letter to Secretary Morton have been written under instructions and on behalf of a Committee of Alumni appointed by the Chairman of the Employees and Alumni Association of the National Park Service. Attached is a list of the Committee. The active employees who are members of the Association have had no part in the actions taken by the Committee, and as far as I know have no knowledge that this letter and the letter to the Secretary are being written. We retirees want to be helpful, and in as much as this switch over to political appointment of a Director took place during a Republican Administration we are hopeful that "an in house" correction can be made. We are of a definite feeling that Ron Walker's appointment came out of the White House, hence this letter to you. A copy of this letter is being sent to Secretary Morton so that he will be fully advised of our feelings.

We join with you and all Americans in our prayers for the First Lady.

Sincerely yours,

Conrad L. Wirth  
For the Alumni Committee

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

November 8, 1974

Dear Mr. Wirth:

On behalf of the President, thank you for your October 7 letter with its generous compliments on his remarks at the closing of the summit conference on the economy, and your pledge to pitch in to do your part to help whip inflation. Your support of his September 20 memorandum on the Civil Service is also appreciated very much. It was most kind of you to add your good wishes for the First Lady's rapid recovery.

We note with interest your request that the National Park Service "be returned to career Civil Service status". It has remained in the career Civil Service without interruption, and shall continue. An agency's Civil Service

status is in no way destroyed by requiring the agency's uppermost officials to be directly and personally responsible to those who in turn supervise them.

We regret that we cannot agree with your assessment that the Civil Service structure has been weakened by non-career classifications placed upon some positions in the three highest Civil Service grades.

You may be aware that legislation has been introduced which would make a number of additional agency positions subject to Senate confirmation. Indeed, the Congress recently wrote into law a requirement that the Director of the Park Service's sister agency in the environmental field, the Fish and Wildlife Service, be a Presidential appointee subject to Senate confirmation.

If Cabinet and sub-Cabinet officers are to have adequate direction over the bureaus they are charged with supervising, then they must have control over the appointment of the top bureau administrators. It seems abundantly clear that, regardless of which Administration holds office, the Legislative Branch agrees with the Executive Branch on that point.

In this same regard, I understand that 26 members of the House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs have signed a letter to Secretary Morton stressing that his search for a new Director should not be limited to present or former employees of the National Park Service. Unquestionably, there are men and women without prior Park Service affiliation whose qualifications ought to be considered.

We appreciate your continuing support of the National Park Service, and can assure you of the President's commitment to the selection of qualified personnel.

Sincerely,

Norman E. Ross, Jr.  
Assistant Director  
Domestic Council

Mr. Conrad L. Wirth  
9633 East Bexhill Drive  
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KENSINGTON, MARYLAND 20795

November 18, 1974

Mr. Norman E. Ross, Jr.  
Assistant Director  
Domestic Council  
The White House  
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Ross:

I must answer your letter of November 8th. It is hard for me to believe that such a letter as yours could come out of the White House. Further, it is my firm belief that it doesn't exemplify the *present* administration.

Your attitude, as expressed in the second paragraph, is destructive of the Civil Service. The National Park Service, like many of the other Bureaus, is composed of professional people, and when you put a political staff of some twenty-five people or more in the top jobs you destroy the agency's character and morale. The Administration's policies and major administrative control rest in the hands of the Secretary and his Assistant Secretariate staff. The present Director is a nice enough fellow, but when he was sent over from the White House he was not equipped by training or experience to be Director. The NPS has, down through the years, done a good job, in my opinion, and supported the Administrative policies. It is hard for me to see why the change was made in January 1973. I am inclined to believe that it was a White House, rather than a Department decision.

As to your third paragraph, you do not seem qualified to make such a statement. Enclosed are some newspaper articles on the subject.

Regarding your fourth paragraph, yes, I know of this, but it never would have happened except for the things that have been taking place in the last six years, especially since January 1973. However, if the C classifications are going to provide the requirement of confirmation by the Senate of future Directors, this is the only sure means left to guarantee the appointment of qualified people. Such appointments will call for public hearings.

I agree with the statement in your fifth paragraph, the Director of the NPS has always been appointed by the Secretary. However, six of the first seven Directors and their staffs were career people, and the other one was an excellent conservationist and well qualified. It was at the beginning of the second Nixon administration that not only the Park Service but other Bureaus as well found non-qualified political personnel taking over.

As to your sixth paragraph, I agree it is quality that is needed, if you are going to do a good job. Further, when you pick quality for a Civil Service job you strengthen the Career Service. On the other hand, there are a lot of well qualified and loyal people in the National Park Service that could help the Administration in office. Remember, it has been proven, time and again, during the two hundred years of our Republic, that the good job is the best politics, and that can't be done without qualified people. We have left the old ward-heeling type of politics far behind.

I have answered your letter at length, because it needed an answer. I get the feeling from your letter that whoever prepared it had neglected his research.

I assume you know I am a retired government employee with 35 years of Federal service. I started during the Hoover administration and retired in the early part of the Johnson administration. The last twelve years I was Director of the National Park Service, including eight years of the Eisenhower administration. It was President Eisenhower's approval of the National Park Service, Mission 66 program at a Cabinet meeting

presentation arranged by Max Rabb that pre-dated the national upsurge in the park and recreation programs. The President shortly thereafter established the Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission which resulted in the establishment of the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation and their nationwide programs. I am an independent, and voted for President Nixon in 1972. I like President Ford, and like very much his selection for Vice President.

I'm telling you this because I want you to know I am not a nut. I want to be constructive and I dislike seeing a lecture-type letter such as you signed come out of the White House, especially while President Ford is there. It is very poor politics.

Sincerely,  
Conrad L. Wirth

Ross never replied to this letter, nor did anyone else.

The June, 1973, issue of the *National Park Courier*, the newspaper published by the Employees and Alumni Association of the National Park Service, printed an editorial I had written on this subject. I sent a copy of it to several senators. Senator Jacob K. Javits, of New York, thereupon wrote a letter to the Civil Service Commission referring to my published views and requesting a statement of the commission's position on the issues I had raised. Following are the commission's reply to Senator Javits, a letter which I addressed to the commission in 1975 raising new questions, and the commission's response to me.

UNITED STATES CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION  
BUREAU OF EXECUTIVE MANPOWER  
WASHINGTON D.C. 20415

4 Sep. 1973

Honorable Jacob K. Javits  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Javits:

This is in response to your letter of August 9, 1973, asking our views on the allegation regarding politicizing of civil service positions in the National Park Service, as stated by Mr. Conrad S. Wirth in an editorial in the June issue of the *National Park Courier*. Mr. Wirth expresses his feeling that the position of Director and other top-level positions in the National Park Service have become political positions and the filling of these positions by nonprofessional appointees has a deleterious effect on the morale of career employees.

The position of Director, National Park Service, was placed in Executive Level V of the Executive Schedule by Executive Order 11189, effective August 15, 1964, and upon recommendation of the Secretary of the Interior it was excepted from the competitive service. The position of Deputy Director, National Park Service, was abolished July 9, 1971 and has not been reestablished. Prior to that date it was filled by noncareer executive assignment since it was first established in January 1967. Noncareer

executive assignments are authorized by the Civil Service Commission when the incumbent will be deeply involved in the advocacy of Administration programs and support of their controversial aspects; participate significantly in the determination of major political policies of the Administration; or serve principally as a confidential assistant to a Presidential appointee.

Since it was established in 1967 until it was abolished in 1971, the position of Deputy Director was filled by long-term career employees of the National Park Service, serving under noncareer executive assignments. Since the position is noncareer, the incumbents have had to voluntarily relinquish their career tenure to accept the Deputy Director assignment. The position of Director, National Park Service, has been filled historically by career employees, who likewise voluntarily relinquished career status.

The vast majority of supergrade positions are filled on a career basis by career employees. Each request from an agency for excepting a position from the competitive service and placing it in the excepted service receives a most careful scrutiny prior to approval by the Civil Service Commission and every effort is made to keep the number of such positions to an absolute minimum. In fact, the number of noncareer supergrade positions declined from 579 on June 30, 1972, to 536 on June 30, 1973. We can assure you that there has been no wholesale movement of career jobs into the excepted service.

The qualifications of all appointees to supergrade positions, career and noncareer, is by law within the jurisdiction of the Civil Service Commission and each appointment must have the prior approval of the Commission. This enables us to effectively monitor the qualifications of all individuals moving into supergrade positions.

We are not aware of any impropriety in appointments to various supergrade positions in the National Park Service. Neither do we find anything in Mr. Wirth's editorial or letter that requires any action by the Civil Service Commission at this time. We see no threat to the normal goals and aspirations of the career professionals of the National Park Service.

In addition, we are not in receipt of any complaints from employees of the National Park Service reflecting a deteriorating morale of the work force. Complaints, if received, would be referred, as a matter of course, to our Bureau of Personnel Management Evaluation for exploration during their visits to evaluate personnel management practices. A copy of your inquiry and a copy of Mr. Wirth's editorial has been forwarded to the Director, Bureau of Personnel Management Evaluation, for appropriate consideration.

We hope this information has been responsive to your request. Please do not hesitate to call upon us if we can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely yours,

Joseph U. Damico  
Director

CONRAD L. WIRTH  
9633 EAST BEXHILL DRIVE  
ROCK CREEK HILLS  
KENSINGTON, MARYLAND 20795

September 16, 1975

Director Joseph U. Damico  
Bureau of Executive Manpower  
U.S. Civil Service Commission  
Washington, D.C. 20415

Dear Mr. Damico:

I have a copy of your letter of September 4, 1973 to Senator Jacob K. Javits in answer to his letter to you dated August 9, 1973 in which he transmitted to you an editorial I wrote that appeared in the National Park Courier. I did not bother writing further on the subject because your letter made it quite clear that you were not going to do anything about it and it was clear that other steps were necessary.

Now that the matter has been at least temporarily straightened out I would like to ask you a question and to point out where the information contained in your letter of September 4, 1973 to the Senator is not correct.

1. Did the Civil Service clear Ronald Walker as being qualified to be Director of the National Park Service?
2. Do you honestly think that an employee in a career appointment is going to go to the Civil Service Commission and file a complaint about its selection of an unqualified political appointment to head up a major bureau of the Federal Government?
3. You sent the Senator's letter and my editorial to your Bureau of Personnel Management Evaluation; that was a complaint. Did they do anything about it and if so what?
4. For your information the position of Deputy Director was not abolished in 1971. There is now and there has been a Deputy Director ever since 1967.
5. You state that "The position of Director, National Park Service, has been filled historically by career employees, who likewise voluntarily relinquished career status." I can only speak for myself when I tell you that I am a retired National Park Service career employee with 36 years of service of which 33 years have been with the Park Service and with better than 12 years as its Director. During my term as Director I served under four secretaries, two of whom were Republicans and two were Democrats and I had just one appointment and I never gave up my Civil Service status and I never was asked to resign as was Director Hartzog.

Mr. Damico, I am not trying to be mean, but there is a large group of retired career service people as well as employees who believe in training and improving oneself to do the best job possible for our government and our country and this can't be done if we and Civil Service don't do our

thing. Certainly you must admit that asking Hartzog to resign, which I understand he did under protest, and appointing Ronald Walker, with no knowledge or training in park administration, is not the right way to get the best results and the most out of the tax dollar.

I assume that Executive Order 11189 is still in effect. Would it be possible for you to send me a copy? I would appreciate it very much.

Sincerely yours,  
Conrad L. Wirth

UNITED STATES CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION  
BUREAU OF EXECUTIVE MANPOWER  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20415

Oct. 06, 1975

Mr. Conrad L. Wirth  
9633 East Bexhill Drive  
Rock Creek Hills  
Kensington, Maryland 20795

Dear Mr. Wirth:

This is in reply to your letter of September 16, 1975, in which you posed questions concerning the top management of the National Park Service.

The position of Director, National Park Service was established in 1964 at Level V of the Executive Schedule and excepted from the competitive service under Schedule C. The Civil Service Commission was not involved in the selection or approval of Mr. Ronald Walker for that position because we are not involved in the selection and approval of the qualifications of candidates for positions in the Executive Schedule. In case you are not aware of it, Mr. Walker resigned as Director of the Park Service in January 1975 and was succeeded by a former career employee of the National Park Service, Mr. Gary E. Everhardt.

Procedures exist for Federal employees to complain to the Civil Service Commission about all types of personnel actions, including political appointments, which they view as improper. The Civil Service Commission Complaint Office here at our 1900 E Street address handles written, telephone, and walk-in complaints. Employees contacting that office may complain anonymously or request that their complaint be maintained confidential. The system, thereby, allows employees to point out seeming irregularities when they otherwise would not for fear of reprisal.

The Bureau of Personnel Management Evaluation follows up on complaints with a prompt inquiry to the agency concerned and/or by flagging the complaint for investigation during a general evaluation of personnel management in the agency. Your complaint, which was referred to them as a result of your previous letter, was flagged for future investigation and should be considered in the evaluation of top managerial positions currently underway in the Department of the Interior.

Our records indicate that the position of Deputy Director, National Park Service was established in grade GS-17 on January 30, 1967, upgraded to grade GS-18 on January 14, 1971, and canceled on July 9, 1971. In August 1972 the Department of the Interior requested our approval of their proposal to reestablish the position of Deputy Director, National Park Service in grade GS-18 and requested concurrent approval of the qualifications of the proposed appointee. These requests, however, were not approved and the position was not established and filled again at the supergrade level until October 12, 1973. At the time of our response to your letter to Senator Javits in September 1973 the position of Deputy Director, National Park Service had not existed at the supergrade level for more than two years.

The position of Director, National Park Service was in the career service when you were appointed to it in December 1951. However, it was converted to be excepted service under Schedule C in August 1953 and continued under Schedule C when it was upgraded to grade GS-18 in November 1957. Since you were a career employee when you entered the position you retained your career status when the position was converted to Schedule C. If the position had been excepted under Schedule C prior to your appointment to it, you would have relinquished your career status in accepting it and would have served at the pleasure of the Secretary of Interior as did Mr. Hartzog.

Executive Order 11189 is still in effect and a copy is enclosed per your request. I appreciate your concern for the well-being of career employees and the career service and hope this letter has amply responded to your questions.

Sincerely yours,  
Joseph U. Damico  
Director

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***Parks, Politics, and the People***

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