Zion National Park
With Some Reminiscences
Fifty Years Later

BY A. KARL LARSON

The Three Patriarchs stand near the entrance to Zion Canyon.
Photograph by Zion Picture Shop, Cedar City.
November 19 of this year marks Zion National Park’s fiftieth anniversary. The contemplation brings many memories of fabulous days when the park was dedicated and when it was honored by a visit from President Warren G. Harding. I will try to share those memories, but first a few words about the park’s past for a backdrop.

In a day long past when I was tempted, with little success, to try my hand at painting, I asked my wise and gifted teacher, Professor Bent F. Larsen, if he had ever painted Zion. This was in a day when the canyon was just beginning to receive widespread national attention, and being from southern Utah, I felt a keen pride of “ownership” in the magnificent scenery which “outsiders” were telling us we had.

The professor looked at me with something akin to pity. No, he said, he had not ventured to paint it; it was too big, too vivid, too awesome to record on canvas; in fact he felt it little short of presumption to think of it. Others less fearful than he have since tried. But still it awaits the master artist to interpret its mystic majesty. Perhaps this will never happen. And it may be just as well; for one must see the canyon to believe it. Words on paper and color on canvas can never do it justice.

What the pueblo dweller in the ancient predawn of historic time felt about it we do not know. We can only imagine his thoughts and reflections as he gazed upon the beauties of Mukuntuweap and Parunuweap, those two tremendous gulches carved out over millions of years by the little Virgin River, truly virginal in mild weather but a raging hussy in flood. He cultivated the small patches of ground in the narrow valleys and grew his corn and beans to store in the high cliffs where he made his dwelling. Doubtless he felt the same wonder and reverence that affected the later inhabitants of these gorgeous works of nature.

We read that the better known yet more unlettered I-oogune-intz, who lived in the more open country near the mouths of the two great canyons, would not remain in the narrow valleys with the towering walls and cliffs after the sun sank behind the West Temple. In primitive innocence they believed the gods dwelt there, and that it was not safe or proper to encroach upon divine privacy. Not numerous, the I-oogune-intz farmed by irrigation the little plots between Rockville and the vicinity of old Shunesburg on Parunuweap (the East Fork of the Virgin)

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and as far into Mukuntuweap (North Fork) as the present location of the Grotto Campground.¹

The Mormons moved into “Utah’s Dixie” in 1852 at Fort Harmony on Ash Creek (tributary to the Virgin). Soon missionaries began their activities among the Paiute clans on the Santa Clara (1854); and in 1858, at the mouth of North Creek, Virgin City was established. In quick succession the occupation of the upper Virgin River area followed: Grafton in 1859, Adventure (Rockville) in 1860; and Springdale, Shunesburg (about three and a half miles up Parunuweap), and Northop (at the junction of Mukuntuweap and Parunuweap) in 1862.

Under Brigham Young’s orders Nephi Johnson, seeking possible sites for future settlement, was probably the first Mormon to see Zion Canyon. In late 1861 or early 1862 young Joseph Black went into the canyon hoping, perhaps, to find a place suitable for settlement. Black himself decided it was too difficult of access, but his enthusiastic description of the area led Isaac Behunin of Springdale to begin farming and the construction of a cabin near the spot where the Zion Lodge now stands. Others followed, cultivating the small acreage above and below the Behunin holding, but the scarcity of tillable land limited Zion’s population to a mere handful. Farming, however meager, was carried on by Springdale men right to the day of the park’s creation. Behunin is thought to have named the canyon and village “Zion,” a place of refuge for God’s people. When Brigham Young came there, he is reputed to have said, “This is not Zion,” so for a time it bore the appellation “Not Zion.” It was also called “Little Zion,” but the passage of time has decreed the simple title, “Zion.”

And what of Joseph Black? He probably felt somewhat as John Colter when he described the wonders of Yellowstone to his acquaintances on the Missouri frontier; with derision and some head-tapping, they disposed of the incredible tale with two words: “Colter’s Hell.” Some of the Mormons of the area were only a little less kind. They cynically referred to the little-known canyon as “Joseph’s Glory.” In both cases the scoffers were discredited; seeing, they remained to pray.²

It was not long after Mormon colonization that government explorers—geologists, topographers, and cartographers—came to make

their first surveys. Famous John Wesley Powell with two companions came through the deep Parunuweap gorge in 1872 and spent a day exploring Zion Canyon. In 1873 Jack Hillers, Powell’s photographer, took pictures of the canyon which were widely used by publications of a later day. It remained for Clarence E. Dutton, of the United States Geological Survey, to forget for the moment he was a scientist and become a poet to put into words the deep emotional feelings the sight of Zion stirred in him. His party was approaching Zion Canyon from Short Creek. They were captivated with the great mass called Smithsonian Butte, which they decided to sketch. But sketching was forgotten when

over a notch or saddle formed by a low isthmus which connected the butte with the principal mesa there sailed slowly and majestically into view... a wonderful object... In an hour's time we reached the crest of the isthmus, and in an instant there flashed before us a scene never to be forgotten. In coming time it will, I believe, take rank with a very small number of spectacles each of which will, in its own way, be regarded as the most exquisite of its kind which the world discloses. The scene before us was THE TEMPLES AND TOWERS OF THE VIRGIN.

He then launches into a word picture of almost dithyrambic ecstasy, describing majestic peaks, that “mighty throng of structures” with a display of colors “truly amazing.” Colors, colors, colors!

Chocolate, maroon, purple, lavender, magenta, with broad bands of toned white, are laid in horizontal belts, strongly contrasting with each other, and the ever-varying slope of the surface cuts across them capriciously, so that the sharply defined belts wind about like the contours of a map.³

He observed the Parunuweap as it united with Mukuntuweap and noted the great wall of the former as it became the east battlement of Zion:

As it sweeps down the Parunuweap it breaks into great pediments, covered all over with the richest carving. The effect is much like that which the architect of the Milan Cathedral appears to have designed, though here it is vividly suggested rather than fully realized—as an artist painting in the “broad style” suggests many things without actually drawing them. The sumptuous, bewildering, mazy effect is all there, but when we attempt to analyze it in detail it eludes us.

There is more, much more, if we but had the space to record it. In leaving the subject Dutton says:

Nothing can exceed the wondrous beauty of Little Zion Valley which separates the two temples and their respective groups of towers. Nor are these the only sublime structures which look down into its depths, for similar ones are seen on either hand along its receding vista until a turn in the course carries the valley out of sight. In its proportions it is about equal to Yosemite, but in the nobility and beauty of the sculptures there is no comparison. It is Hyperion to a satyr. No wonder the fierce Mormon zealot who named it, was reminded of the Great Zion, on which his fervid thoughts were bent—"of houses not built with hands, eternal in the heavens."4

Leo A. Snow, United States deputy surveyor of St. George, Utah, was detailed to survey that part of the area which cut across Zion gorge, his party using triangulation to make the survey from the east to west. When Snow submitted the report and a map of that part of the canyon, he described it as unsurveyable. In the report he said, "In my opinion this canyon should be set apart by the government as a national park."

Just a month from the time Surveyor Snow's account was dispatched to Washington, President Taft signed a proclamation designating the Zion Canyon area as Mukuntuweap National Monument (July 31, 1909).5

Interest grew as the canyon's wonders were disseminated. Local, state, and national enthusiasts took up the call for better roads that would bring the world to view the marvels of Zion; for marvels they were, people were becoming aware of that. There were trips into this isolated spot by nature lovers and pleasure seekers unafraid of the long miles of rough roads leading to Zion's fastnesses. Entrepreneurs anxious to capitalize on the wonders that have since become southern Utah's greatest source of income made their appearance. Leaders in the little towns along the Virgin River, both church and civic, threw themselves into the campaign to obtain roads that would accommodate automobiles, envisioning new and lucrative sources of revenue to rejuvenate these ingrown villages on the very fringe of civilization. As early as 1911 Wesley King of the Salt Lake Commercial Club with his wife hired a team and buggy at the railroad terminus at Marysvale and explored Zion. He was deeply impressed: "I do not believe there is anything on the globe like the canyon of the Rio Virgin, or to compare with the Vermilion Cliffs," he declared in the Salt Lake Tribune for November 12, 1911. Speaking of the possibilities of Washington and Iron counties, he continued, "[They] have great natural resources and wonderful possibilities which will blossom

4 Ibid., 89, 91.
Zion Canyon is a narrow, curving gorge, almost nine miles long, cut by the Virgin River. It has been estimated that each year the Virgin carries three million tons of sediment from the park. Thus the river continues to cut the canyon deeper through the strata of stone as it has done for centuries. Photograph from the PID Collection, Utah State Historical Society.

into reality only when the transportation problem has been solved . . . . It is a state problem and must be worked out by our state officials.”

Governor William Spry visited Utah’s Dixie in October 1913. On this occasion the people along the Virgin took a holiday and followed
the governor to the base of Cable Mountain where they enjoyed a picnic. The governor’s day was complete when the cable hoist lifted a man to the top of the great cliff and back within a few short suspenseful minutes. The governor traveled by horseback into the Narrows and came away duly impressed by the experience and convinced that the national government should take steps to develop the monument. He thereafter worked hard for its realization.⁶

Washington, Kane, Iron, and Beaver counties joined with Arizona’s Coconino County to form the Grand Canyon Highway Association with David Hirschi as president (1914). The idea of the organization was to tie highway access to Zion with that of Grand Canyon. Cedar City, Hurricane, Toquerville, and LaVerkin pledged $4,200 to improve the road up the Hurricane Fault and eastward toward Kanab. Meantime Governor Spry had become convinced that Utah should build a road south to the borders of Mukuntuweap.⁷

In 1916, under the prodding of Senator Reed Smoot, $15,000 in federal funds were appropriated “to construct an interstate wagon road or highway through the Mukuntuweap National Monument, Utah, approximately fifteen miles for the fiscal year 1917.”⁸

An expedition, sponsored by the Salt Lake Tribune and led by W. D. Rishel, headed for the southern wonderlands in 1916. The party first visited Kanab and continued on to the North Rim of Grand Canyon. From here they traveled back to Hurricane and then to Zion. As they were returning from the Grand Canyon, the party met a delegation at Pipe Spring from the Oregon Short Line and Union Pacific railroads and other travel agencies. This group was on the way to Bright Angel Point in Grand Canyon to scout possibilities of railroad traffic to the new scenic beauties. The expedition then returned to Kanab, Hurricane, and Rockville, where they held an evening meeting on August 16. Many of the people of the nearby communities declared a holiday and went to the canyon with the traveling dignitaries. Then the party proceeded to St. George to enjoy a feast of Dixie fruit. The party had induced Governor Spry and Road Commissioner Henry W. Lunt to accompany them for consultation on road development. The governor offered all possible support if the railroads decided to undertake the development of tourist traffic by bus to the new scenic areas.⁹ Out of this beginning eventually

⁶ Ibid., 195-96.
⁷ Ibid., 196.
⁸ Ibid.
⁹ Ibid., 197-98.
The route from Los Angeles to Salt Lake City was designated in 1916, with the road leading through Las Vegas, St. George, and Cedar City on the Arrowhead Trail, as it was called. In 1917 Charles H. Bigelow of Los Angeles promoted the organization of the Arrowhead Trail Association, with J. W. Manderfield of Salt Lake City as president and Joseph S. Snow of St. George as vice-president. Its primary purpose was to promote good roads. Bigelow was an enthusiast who saw the huge potential of future automobile traffic and worked untiringly for its development.10

About this time Dr. Frederick Vining Fisher, Methodist minister of Ogden, and a friend named Bingham took a trip through Zion, piloted by Claudius Hirschi, David Hirschi’s son. It was young Hirschi who spoke of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as he viewed three prominent peaks close together, so the party called them the “Three Patriarchs.” On the way back from the Narrows, Hirschi, struck with wonder by the great

10 Ibid., 198,
white monolith shining in the afternoon sun, said, "Oh, Doctor, look quick, what is that?" Overwhelmed, Fisher replied, "Never have I seen such a sight before. It is by all odds America's masterpiece. Boys, I have looked for this mountain all my life, but I never expected to find it in this world. This mountain is the Great White Throne."\textsuperscript{11}

Horace M. Albright, assistant director of the National Park Service, visited Zion in the summer of 1917. At once he was convinced that the canyon was indeed worthy to become a national park and so informed his superior, Stephen T. Mather. But first he was instrumental in getting the monument's name changed to Zion Canyon. On March 18, 1918, President Woodrow Wilson made it official together with enlarging the area to 120 square miles. Albright meanwhile had convinced Director Mather to press for the creation of a national park, and November 19, 

\textsuperscript{11} Quoted from a letter of Frederick Vining Fisher to Dr. Angus M. Woodbury, September 22, 1933, in \textit{ibid.}, 198-99.

\textit{The Great White Throne, rising 2,400 feet above the canyon floor, was named by Frederick Vining Fisher one of Zion's first enthusiasts. Photograph by Utah Photo Materials Company.}
1919, President Wilson signed the bill creating Zion National Park. Shortly thereafter Mather had an opportunity to visit the new playground, and seeing it, was completely captivated and henceforth devoted his energy to its development.\(^{12}\)

The park was dedicated September 15, 1920, and Walter Ruesch, life-long resident of Springdale, became its acting superintendent until May 5, 1925.\(^{13}\) Ruesch loved the park as if it were his own. He continued as chief ranger after Superintendent E. T. Scoyen came to take over. Exasperated on one occasion at the carelessness of campers, Ruesch put up a sign which read, "This is God's Country. Don't make it look like Hell."\(^{14}\)

During his incumbency Zion Lodge and its cabins were built by the Utah Parks Company (a subsidiary of the Union Pacific Railroad), from lumber lowered by cable over the 2,700-foot ledges of Cable Mountain. The main roads and trails of the canyons were built, including the trail into the Narrows.

Perhaps a word should be inserted concerning that greatest improvement of all, the Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway, which was dedicated by Utah Governor George H. Dern in 1930. Said the governor of those who conceived and directed its construction:

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\ldots \text{I take off my hat to the men who conceived this almost impossible project and carried through to a successful conclusion [J. B. Finch, district engineer with the U. S. Bureau of Public Roads and Howard C. Means, chief engineer of the Utah State Road Commission].} \\
\ldots \text{Too often we enjoy the picture without thinking of the artist; too often we admire a beautiful structure without remembering the architect whose creative brain and cunning hand conceived and designed it.}\] ^{15}\]

The large crowd at the dedication included National Park Service Director Horace M. Albright, fifteen governors, several lieutenant-

\(^{12}\) Ibid., 201-2.
\(^{13}\) Richard T. Evans was acting superintendent most of the time from May 16, 1925, to November 30, 1926. E. T. Scoyen became the first superintendent, serving from April 11, 1927, to January 15, 1931. Scoyen was followed by Thomas J. Allen’s brief tenure of one year. Preston P. Patraw took office January 16, 1932, and held it to the close of 1939. Paul R. Franke began the first of three separate incumbencies January 1, 1939, to August 31, 1940. Then C. Marshall Finnan filled in for less than a year to June 22, 1940, when John M. Davis became acting superintendent for about six weeks. Franke took his second stint, lasting nearly three years, August 16, 1940, to June 30, 1943. Charles J. Smith held the post for the longest single term of nearly nine years, July 1, 1943, to April 30, 1952. Paul R. Franke was appointed a third time June 6, 1952, to December 31, 1959. Frank R. Oberhansley occupied the position about five and a half years, January 1, 1960, to August of 1965. Warren T. Hamilton succeeded him from August 29, 1966, until his retirement in June 1968. Karl T. Gilbert served from June 1968 to May 1969. The present superintendent is Oscar T. Dick.

\(^{14}\) Superintendent Charles J. Smith, "Memorandum for the Regional Director, Region Three," December 10, 1947 (Zion National Park Library).

\(^{15}\) George H. Dern, "Dedicatory Address," July 4, 1930 (mimeograph copy, Zion National Park Library).
governors and ex-governors, top state and national highway personnel, the Utah Supreme Court justices, elected and appointed Utah State officials, officers of the Utah National Guard and Highway Patrol, a dozen Union Pacific Railroad officials, representatives of state and national newspapers including the International News Service, and President Heber J. Grant of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints with his first counselor, Dixie’s Anthony W. Ivins.16

Now I wish to reminisce a little on my own early experiences in Zion Canyon. They will recall, to a good many people at least, the events of nostalgic years past.

My first acquaintance with the park goes back more than fifty years. A hard land in which to make ends meet, Dixie had no industry to absorb its young men and women nearing maturity. If employment were found, it was in the mines or on the range caring for cattle, sheep, and goats. In the spring of 1918 I received an offer of a job to herd sheep in the wilds of Orderville Gulch among the breaks of the east watershed of Zion Canyon. My Uncle Joseph (Jode) Covington telephoned me at the store in Washington that he would meet me in Zion Canyon at the foot of Cable Mountain at 2:00 p.m. on a day late in May. My brother Eldon accompanied me on the journey to bring my horse home. We stayed at Hurricane the first night with Uncle Jode’s wife, Aunt Bergetta, and early in the morning struck out for Zion, arriving there a few minutes before the appointed hour. There were still evidences of recent farming on the flat where the lodge now stands; dried cornstalks in irrigation rows gave mute proof of not long-distant cultivation. The Wylie Way Camp had just been established, but there seemed little evidence of activity that I can remember.17 We ate the sandwiches Aunt Bergetta had thoughtfully provided, and as we finished we heard Uncle Jode’s “hallo” up on the trail. He was walking; he had left the horses at the sawmill at the brink of Cable Mountain because it was safer for a novice to travel that trail on foot.

I said good-bye to Eldon and began the long, hard climb to the sawmill. The sun was low when we reached the summit. We made it to a


17 In 1917 under national park permit to the National Park Transportation and Camping Company, W. W. Wylie, who formerly operated in Yellowstone Park, set up a tent camp in Zion Canyon and North Rim in cooperation with Gronway and Chauncey Parry, who had undertaken to provide transportation for visitors. In 1923 the Utah Park Company acquired part, and in 1927, all of the Parry and Wylie interests.
ranch at dark, where we spent the night. Bright and early the next day we continued through very rough country to the sheep camp deep in Orderville Gulch, where we arrived in time for breakfast.

Fate apparently did not intend me for a sheepherder. My own cooking, after nearly a month, was more than my outraged stomach could bear. On top of this I had an attack of dysentery that I thought would finish me. The boss could not leave the sheep, so he asked if I could find my way to the sawmill, while he rode to Orderville, after corraling the animals, to seek a herder. I was more than willing to try. At Jolley’s Ranch I obtained some good homemade bread and fresh milk from a sympathetic housewife, who offered to let me stay for a day or two to regain my strength. The new food seemed to settle my upset digestion, so after about an hour’s rest I proceeded on my way, reaching the sawmill about 4 o’clock in the afternoon. No one was there, so I began the long walk down the trail, rocky and sandy by turns. The constant travel downhill was wearing on my already tired feet and legs, and by the time I reached the bottom I was worn out.

A cold bath in the Virgin restored my flagging strength and drooping spirits, and I decided I could make it to Springdale. The canyon was beautiful with a deep soft haze that had settled over its brilliantly color-
ed cliffs and side canyons, but these were not calculated to excite my better nature. I was wondering where I could spend the night. At that moment my appreciation for the marvels of Zion was akin to that of my father, who two years earlier had gone to Zion for a load of lumber brought to the canyon floor by the fabulous cable. Mother remarked that she had heard that the canyon was beautiful; how about it? My father replied with understatement characteristic of him: just a lot of big cliffs and rocks; nothing to get excited about.

At the cable's framework I paused briefly to view that marvel of man's ingenuity in the face of seemingly insurmountable odds. It was years later that I learned of David A. Flanigan's attempts to construct with baling wire a device for lowering lumber cut from the forested area back of the sawmill at the top of the great cliff. Faced with defeat after several fruitless trials, he went back into the vast solitude of the canyon to think, to try to learn what mistakes had brought him only failure.

_Cable Mountain lumber delivery yard. Note the supplies ready to be hoisted to the top of the mountain. In 1901 David and William Flanigan constructed the cable which stretched some 3,300 feet and dropped 2,700 feet to the canyon floor below. By 1907 over 200,000 board feet of sawed lumber had been lowered over the cable, as well as an assortment of animals, vegetables, dairy products, grain, and other items. For twenty-four years the operation served the nearby communities with lumber from the top of the mountain. Photograph taken by Mabel Jarvis, Utah Writers' Project._
I was now thankful for every condition which had combined to bring me into this mighty thought-inspiring solitude, this place called “Zion,” where the stars shine by day and brighter by night . . . . Where earthly achievements and thoughtless, indefinite desires appear as things not worth while, if they are to be charged to our eternal account; where simple, silent thought comes to be regarded as the highest and most perfect expression of prayer; where man learns to fear God, to pray to God; to rely on God; to question and discount the judgment of men; to be slow to accept the opinions of his fellow-men and slow to accept his own hasty and thoughtless conclusions. Where man learns to stand without the support of his fellow men when he feels that he is right; where hope and faith in the universal scheme of things is inspired; where man is made to feel that if he is anything, he is the humble servant of God. And finally, where a careful review, if an attempt to explain something about Zion is followed by a feeling of regret, for here one may look, listen, see, hear, feel, and think, and live a thousand years in a day. And why should one expect, or be expected to explain?

Flanigan here received the inspiration to try once more. He was successful, and millions of feet of lumber were brought to the canyon floor where the freighter’s wagon took it to all parts of Dixie.18

It was dusk by the time I had covered the weary miles to Springdale. I bought some cheese and crackers at the store, then located a small half-finished haystack on which I hoped to stretch my aching limbs for the night. But my better judgment led me to ask the householder for permission, and he, kind soul, offered me a bed which I gratefully accepted. Next day, footsore and weary, I hiked to Hurricane, where I called the store in Washington—it had the only telephone in town—and asked the proprietor to have my folks send Eldon with a horse to bring me the rest of the way home.

Such were the circumstances of my first acquaintance with Zion Canyon. Two years and three months later I was there again under far more pleasant circumstances, on September 15, 1920, to witness the dedication of the new park by National Park Service Director Stephen T. Mather. I was there by virtue of membership in Earl J. Bleak’s Dixie College Band, otherwise I could not have been present. The place was crowded with dignitaries on a national, state, and local level, not to mention the authorities of the Mormon church. Then, of course, there were many of the inhabitants of the nearby towns of Washington, Iron, and Kane counties. Nearly a thousand people collected for the event. It was a crowded Model T. Ford I rode in. No baggage was allowed except one

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quilts each and our instruments. We wore our band uniforms consisting of navy blue coats and caps trimmed in fancy white braid and brass buttons, which were well covered with dust from the trip that lasted about four hours from St. George to Zion. There were the inevitable delays to pour water into the steaming radiator and to clean fouled spark plugs. We arrived late in the afternoon, dusted ourselves off, tuned our instruments, and got in a few marches before the Cedar City Band made its appearance. It was a matter of pride with us that we be the first band to play against that magnificent backdrop of canyon walls. It was a small group, only fourteen in number and lacked the best balance in the world. School had not yet started, and it was a group brought together to play at the Fruit Festival and Rodeo which preceded stake quarterly conference prior to school’s opening. What we lacked in number and finesse we made up in enthusiasm.

President Heber J. Grant of the First Presidency was there representing Governor Simon Bamberger. Stake President Edward H. Snow and his counselors, Thomas P. Cottam and George F. Whitehead, together with an assortment of high councilmen, bishops, mayors, county commissioners, and lesser lights made up the rank and file of the crowd. I ran into jolly Uncle John Covington from Orderville, who had brought his troop of boy scouts down the Cable Mountain Trail to be at the dedication. It was perhaps the biggest day in Utah’s Dixie since the dedication of the St. George Temple over forty-three years earlier.

Director Stephen T. Mather was present and with him Reed Smoot, Utah’s perennial United States Senator, flanked by Mayor C. Clarence Neslen of Salt Lake City and a large number of the city’s Chamber of Commerce, with Union Pacific Railroad bigwigs and camera men from Paramount, National, and Pathe motion pictures to make newsreels of the great event. Altogether it was a gathering of official brass—religious, civic, and business—the like of which had never been assembled in Washington County.

That evening after we had eaten in the Wylie Way’s dining room, there was an impromptu program with the two bands each trying to outdo the other. The Ariel Quartette from Salt Lake City captivated the large crowd with its rendition of “Oh, by Jingo,” and other popular songs, while a member of the Salt Lake group moved everybody to convulsions with his humorous readings, especially when he essayed the role of the Sanpete Swede. A dance followed in the Wylie dining room with the
Cedar City Band furnishing the music. It was so crowded—the room was not large—that dancing was no great exhilaration.

It was now late and we had to think of a place to sleep. My brother Eldon and I shared two quilts—one under and one over—on a bed of oak leaves. Before long the canyon breeze had us shivering; the ground sloped, and we spent much of the night inching back uphill to stay on the quilt. The night was miserable. Daylight revealed other forms lying nearby; I saw Sheridan Ballard shivering in his quilt with feet braced against two oak saplings to keep him from sliding downhill. Everyone agreed it had been a rough night out, but a good breakfast from the Wylie kitchen dispelled our gloom, after which we tuned our instruments and waited for the dedication.

At 11:30 the program got underway, with Director Mather presiding. Richard R. Lyman offered the invocation. Thereafter followed ten speakers, most of them stressing the theme of good roads. They included Senator Smoot, Mayor Neslen, former Governor William Spry, President Grant, D. S. Spencer, W. S. Bassenger, and a Mr. Comstock—these latter three were railroad representatives—Dr. C. G. Plummer, W. G. Wylie, and Joseph S. Snow. The talks were interlarded with musical numbers from the two bands and the Ariel Quartette. Director Mather then dedicated the park in these words:

This day we shall long remember. Today is the christening day of a most wondrous child born of God and Nature—a child of such ethereal beauty that man stands enthralled in her presence. Born but yesterday—the yesterday of Nature when man was not, it yet remains for man this day to be thy godfather, to keep and cherish thee forever as one of the beauteous things of the earth and to christen thee—Zion National Park.

Then with the bands leading, the crowd sang the “Star Spangled Banner” and the event was history.\(^{19}\)

I may have gone to Zion sometime during the next two years, but if so, memory does not record it. But I was there again in June 1923 when the President of the United States, Warren G. Harding, honored the newly created park with a visit. In spite of dirt roads, Zion had quite a few tourists, whose enthusiasm soon made the Dixie people feel that in Zion they had a resource that eventually would yield rich dividends.

Schools in Washington County had been out for some time, and to get a band together posed a problem. Earl J. Bleak hustled around to secure a semblance of an organization. I had just completed my first

\(^{19}\) Full details of the dedication program appear in the *Washington County News*, September 16, 1920.
year of teaching at Hurricane and was waiting for summer school on Mt. Timpanogos to begin, so Mr. Bleak invited me to join his skeleton group with my slide trombone. We were to go to Zion the day before the President arrived in order that no slip or accident would mar our getting there. Even so we almost failed to make the grand celebration.

For transportation of the band members and their instruments Mr. Bleak had secured the services of Mr. Chauncey Macfarlane and his Ford ton truck. He had just had it overhauled, and it was as tight as a Dixie pioneer musician after serenading town on the Twenty-Fourth of July. We planned to leave early in order to arrive at the park well before sundown. Alas! Macfarlane’s Freight did not get away from St. George until noon, and the hour it consumed in covering the five miles to Washington, where it picked up my brother Eldon and me at one o’clock boded ill for a speedy arrival at Zion. The Ford heated up to steaming point almost immediately following the replenishment of radiator water, and at every town—Harrisburg (almost a ghost), Leeds, Anderson’s Junction, Toquerville, Virgin, Rockville and Springdale—we poured water into this thirsty iron monster; and on the long stretches between villages we fed it sparingly from canteen and water bag.

Much of the way was uphill, and on the more pronounced grades like the Washington Black Ridge, Cotton Wood Hill at Harrisburg, and the notorious LaVerkin Hill we literally “put our shoulders to the wheel.” I swear we pushed that piece of reluctance up every hill between St. George and Zion. Night overtook us somewhere before we reached Virgin, and we continued pushing in the bright moonlight. It was one o’clock in the morning when, completely exhausted, we reached the neighborhood of Wylie’s Camp. Hungry and footsore, we spread our one quilt on the flat and fell into the troubled sleep of exhaustion, too tired to complain of the cold fresh breeze that swept down from the Narrows.

Morning brought a change in our spirits. We ate our food, then piled into the Ford, seemingly no worse from its gruelling experience of yesterday, and back we went to the park entrance to await the President’s caravan. We made the cliffs reverberate while we waited; as soon as we finished a march, the four members of the Springdale-Rockville Martial Band immediately took over. Three of them, John Dennett and Oliver and Freeborn Gifford were the remnants of Edward P. Duzette’s Martial Band of pioneer days. They played as men inspired, rolling their rhythms with an enthusiasm beyond description. Finally someone shouted, “They’re coming!” and we fell to with all the spirit we could muster.
The car in which the President and Mrs. Harding were riding stopped just as we finished. He leaned out, waved to us, and said pleasantly, "That’s fine! I used to play in the band myself." The martial band then began its stirring routine, and when they finished, Mr. Harding said with deep sincerity, "I’ve never heard better drumming in my life!" He spoke a few words of appreciation to Duzette’s veterans, then the caravan moved on its way to the Wylie Camp. While he rested and had lunch inside, the bands played and a chorus from St. George and Dixie College, led by Professor Joseph W. McAllister, sang "Build Thee More Stately Mansions," "O Ye Mountains High," "Utah, We Love Thee," "Pilgrims’ Chorus," and the "Star Spangled Banner." When finally the President came out, a handsome figure of a man, he graciously stood for some time shaking hands with several hundred people who waited in line to greet him. Afterward he was whisked away for a horseback ride to the Narrows, and riding with some trepidation he disappeared with a group of horsemen from our sight. For the ride he discarded coat, collar, and tie and placed a large blue bandana around his neck.\footnote{Washington County News, June 28, 1923.}

The news of his death shortly afterward, followed by the scandals involving his administration and his own personal life, saddened me greatly, as I am sure it did all those who saw and met him in Zion National Park that bright day in June. The President had been most grateful and friendly to the people of Washington County; he had made them feel that he cared about them, especially at Toquerville where he addressed a large crowd including a number of pioneers, among whom was Elizabeth Steele Stapley, the first white child born in Utah (August 9, 1847).

It takes courage ... to leave peaceful homes and lead out into the wilderness ... . It is a great pleasure ... to meet you people of the south, to see your great county and what you have done. It must be a great satisfaction to you pioneers to have made the wilderness blossom ... and this must be your reward. Surely God had a purpose when he prompted these pioneers, and I have reverent regard for them ... no place in America can offer a finer company of Americans than I see before me now.\footnote{Ibid.}

I have been to Zion many times since those memorable days of its dedication and the President’s visit. I never go there without recalling with satisfaction my participation in those thrilling events, and without thinking that no pilgrimage to Zion can ever compare with those two days of unforgettable memory.