National Geographic, April, 1916

# THE PASSAGE OF THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE ACT OF 1916

By Donald C. Swain

THE National Park Service Act of August, 1916, though ignored by historians for nearly half a century, stands as one of the landmarks in the history of conservation in the United States. Its passage was significant for three reasons. First, it foretold the birth of a new federal conservation agency designed specifically to protect and improve the administration of the national parks, a unique collection of scenic preserves containing some of the world's choicest mountain scenery. Second, it marked the emergence of the aesthetic conservationists—the so-called "nature lovers"—as an effective, organized force within the national conservation movement. Third, it forecast the end of Gifford Pinchot's domination of national conservation affairs and the decline of his strictly utilitarian conservation philosophy. Beginning in 1916, the federal conservation program took on a new dimension.

For more than forty years the national parks had been administrative stepchildren within the federal establishment. They were individually operated and maintained, with little or no policy co-ordination between the various units. Moreover, the lines of administrative and operational responsibility had become badly blurred as a result of years of sloppy management. While the Department of the Interior held legal jurisdiction over all the national parks, the fact was that the War Department had long controlled Yellowstone, Sequoia, General Grant, and Yosemite by means of the army detachments assigned to patrol their boundaries and maintain their primitive road systems.[1] Under the circumstances, these parks received indifferent and

[1] *Reports of the Department of the Interior, 1910,* vol. I, 443–501.

often pitifully inadequate supervision. Eight other parks, including Mount Rainier, Crater Lake, Mesa Verde, and Glacier, all under the direct administration of the Interior Department, received little more than custodial care.[2] There was no effective national park policy, only a haphazard, day-to-day administrative arrangement that served no constructive conservation purpose.

The national parks, which were located mostly in the far West, had been perennially neglected because neither the leaders of Congress nor the leading conservation policymakers in the executive branch of the federal government had any real interest in preserving natural beauty. Headed by Gifford Pinchot, the chief of the U. S. Forest Service and a close friend of President Theodore Roosevelt, the utilitarian conservationists were at the height of their power and influence during the progressive era. Glorifying scientific efficiency and technical expertise, they advocated giant multiple-purpose development programs that provided for the full and efficient utilization of timber, grasslands, irrigation sites, mineral deposits, and hydroelectric power.[3] Their elaborate plans almost always downgraded aesthetic considerations. A proposal to construct a "useful" irrigation dam in a mountain gorge, for example, invariably took precedence over a proposal to preserve the gorge itself for scenic enjoyment or recreational use. The aesthetic conservationists, who disagreed with the dominant utilitarian point of view, were accused of being muddleheaded and hopelessly impractical.[4] The passage of the National Park Service Act of 1916 came after a long and bitter dispute between these two groups of conservationists, each passionately devoted to the proposition that the other was wrong.

A small band of park enthusiasts and aesthetic conservationists had been trying to obtain congressional approval for a bureau to oversee national park affairs for more than ten years. J. Horace McFarland, the agile and ubiquitous president of the American Civic Association, had taken the lead in this effort and had inaugurated a so-called "national park lobby." He had ably defended the concept of preserving natural beauty while outnumbered and surrounded by Pinchot's militant supporters at the White House Governors' Conference on Conservation in 1908.[5] Almost single-handedly he had cajoled President William Howard Taft and Secretary of the Interior Richard A. Ballinger into supporting the idea of a national park bureau.[6] Ballinger's successors, Walter L. Fisher and Franklin K. Lane, also backed the proposed national park service. Congressmen John F. Lacey, Frederick C. Stevens, William Kent, and John E. Raker repeatedly threw national park service bills into the congressional hopper, but to no avail.[7] The Pinchot clique, accusing McFarland, John Muir, and the other park advocates of peddling "sentimental nonsense," posed a formidable obstacle.[8] The Forest Service eventually wheeled its influential lobby into the fight against the proposed park bureau, suggesting that the Forest Service rather than a new federal agency should administer the national parks.[9] In the meantime, the explosive Hetch Hetchy controversy, in which Muir and his followers loudly protested the planned construction of a large reservoir in Yosemite National Park, further polarized the conservation movement, dividing it more clearly than ever into two camps, the utilitarians or "practical" conservationists versus the aesthetic or "nature-loving" conservationists. With Congressman John J. Fitzgerald, Chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, jealously guarding the purse-strings,

[2] *Ibid.*, 505–598; *Report of the Secretary of the Interior, 1910*, 55–67.

[3] Samuel P. Hays, *Conservation and the Gospel of Efficiency: The Progressive Conservation Movement, 1890–1920* (Cambridge, 1959), 1–174, 261–276.

[4] Donald C. Swain, *Federal Conservation Policy, 1921–1933* (Berkeley, 1963), 1–5, 169.

[5] *Proceedings of a Conference of Governors in the White House, Washington, D.C.*, May 13–15, 1908 (Washington, 1909), 153–157; Hans Huth, *Nature and the American* (Berkeley, 1957), 183–188.

[6] J. Horace McFarland to Robert Sterling Yard, September 13, 1922, and R. B. Watrous to McFarland, September 15, 1922, National Archives, Record Group 79 (hereafter cited as NA, RG 79), General, Admin.

[7] John Ise, *Our National Park Policy, A Critical History* (Baltimore, 1961), 185–190.

[8] The quotation is from Amos Pinchot, "The Hetch Hetchy Fight," copy in the Gifford Pinchot Papers, box 1856, in the Library of Congress.

[9] Hays, *Conservation and the Gospel of Efficiency*, 195–198.

Congress seemed in no mood to create a new government bureau. The park enthusiasts still faced a tough political fight to get a National Park Service Act through Congress.

In the absence of legislation, Fisher and Lane, successive Interior Secretaries, had resorted to administrative devices in an attempt to put the national parks on a solid footing. Starting about 1911, W. B. Acker, an Assistant Attorney in the Office of the Secretary, devoted a small fraction of his time to park affairs, and though handicapped by lack of money, lack of time, and a shortage of clerical help, his enlightened efforts represented the first step in the unification of national parks administration. In 1913, Lane upgraded park supervision and co-ordination to the Assistant Secretarial level and brought Adolph C. Miller into the department to take charge of the parks. Two years later, Lane made his greatest contribution to the cause of natural beauty by naming Stephen T. Mather as the man to replace Miller.[10]

Mather, who became Assistant to the Secretary in January 1915, and his young administrative assistant, Horace M. Albright, were largely responsible for the enactment of the National Park Service Act of 1916. Mather was ideally suited to take charge of the final drive for national park service legislation. A wealthy borax manufacturer from Chicago, he had accepted a position in the Secretary's office as a favor to Lane, whom he had known since college days, and because he found his successful business career somewhat boring. He was an energetic, backslapping, high-minded extrovert with a fondness for mountain climbing. As a longtime member of the Sierra Club, he had been thoroughly indoctrinated with the preservationist ideas of John Muir, the club's venerable founder.[11] Park enthusiasts and aesthetic conservationists were enormously pleased when Lane announced that Mather would head up the national parks. "The appointment of Mr. Stephen T. Mather . . . is epoch-making," wrote Enos

Courtesy Horace M. Albright

*Horace M. Albright and Stephen T. Mather preparing to leave on a park inspection trip in Mather's new 1924 Packard with its special license plates.*

A. Mills, a longtime champion of Rocky Mountain scenery, in April, 1915. "He will bring" to the parks "that which they have not yet had—a strong, sympathetic, and constructive administration."[12] Economy-minded members of Congress applauded Mather's early announcement that he would "do all that lies in my power to establish a thorough business administration in these great national playgrounds."[13] Mather functioned primarily as a promoter and idea man for the national parks. His persuasive personality was his greatest asset as he buttonholed Congressmen and harvested votes for the proposed parks bureau.

Horace Albright was only twenty-five years old, but he was already a gifted organizer and administrator. He had originally joined the Secretary's staff in 1913 at the behest of Adolph C. Miller, Mather's predecessor as Assistant to the Secretary, and was assigned to Mather to help keep him "out of trouble."[14] Albright had grown up in the spectacularly beautiful Owens Valley of California, within

[10] Jenks Cameron, *The National Park Service, Its History, Activities, and Organization* (New York and London, 1922), Service Monographs of the U.S. Government, No. 11, 33–50; Ise, *Our National Park Policy*, 187–188.

[11] Robert Shankland, *Steve Mather of the National Parks* (New York, 1954), 1–41.

[12] Enos A. Mills, "Warden of the Nation's Mountain Scenery," in *Review of Reviews*, LI:428 (April, 1915).

[13] Stephen T. Mather to Dr. Shaw, March 6, 1915, in *ibid.*, 429.

[14] Robert Sterling Yard, "Historical Basis of National Park Standards," manuscript, p. 2, in the Papers of Horace M. Albright, in the possession of Mr. Albright, Los Angeles.

a few miles of Sequoia and Yosemite National Parks, and he was single-mindedly devoted to the ideal of preserving outstanding examples of natural beauty. While working in the Secretary's office, he had come into contact with most of the federal resource agencies and had gotten to know all of the bureau chiefs in the Interior Department.[15] But he never considered himself a career civil servant. He intended to practice law in California and, in fact, planned to resign from the government service in the summer of 1915.[16] When Mather pleaded with him to remain in the "national park game" for a few months and confided that he, too, expected to resign after about a year, Albright relented. The two men confidently set out to publicize the scenic wonders of the entire national park system, reorganize the administration of the parks, handpick a capable staff of administrators to carry on in the future, and persuade Congress to establish a national parks bureau.[17] Under the circumstances, a breakneck pace was almost inevitable.

MATHER'S first impulse was to launch a publicity campaign to persuade more Americans to spend their vacations in the West—in Yellowstone, Yosemite, Glacier, or in one of the newer park reservations such as Rocky Mountain National Park in Colorado. The war in Europe threatened to curtail or entirely end pleasure trips to Europe, and, accordingly, the nation's railroads had already launched a gigantic advertising campaign with the patriotic theme "See America First." Mather was enough of a promoter and opportunist to realize that the wartime dislocation of European travel represented a rare chance for the national parks to expand their operations and win new friends. "What an opportunity this will be," he exclaimed, "to break down provincialism!"[18] But he would require help. He needed a writer and a public relations man, someone who could be trusted, to originate a stream of publicity designed to acquaint the American people with the unsurpassed mountain scenery and natural beauty of the national parks.

Mather knew just the man. He went to New York City and persuaded Robert Sterling Yard, one of his old cronies from the New York *Sun*, formerly editor of *The Century Magazine*, the Sunday New York *Herald*, and the Sunday *New York Times*, to become publicity director for the parks. Albright skillfully handled the mechanics of Yard's appointment. Nominally, Yard was employed by the U.S. Geological Survey, but, by advance agreement, the USGS detailed him to Mather, who paid Yard's $5,000 salary out of his own pocket. This arrangement, though unorthodox, was perfectly legal, and it gave Yard the status of being a government official.[19] Albright then found him a comfortable office in the Bureau of Mines Building, only two blocks away, and hired a lady who seemed "to come very near possessing" the qualifications Yard wanted in a stenographer.[20] Bob Yard, an avid believer in wilderness preservation, thus began his long association with the national parks. It was only a matter of time until a steady flow of articles about the parks, written in his lucid, enthusiastic prose style, began to appear in the big eastern newspapers and magazines. Mather's extraordinary publicity campaign in behalf of the national parks had started, with Yard now a full "member of the team." He was "thoroughly imbued, as are all of us," Albright remarked after Yard had been in Washington for about a month, "with Mr. Mather's splendid enthusiasm. . . ."[21]

Mather's next impulse was to get to know the men who were then running the parks. He called a national park conference, to be held in Berkeley in March of 1915, and ordered all the park superintendents to be there. He invited most of the concessionaires, or "concessioners" as Mather and Albright called them, who operated business franchises in the national parks, and he asked a number of

[15] Horace M. Albright, "Reminiscences" (Oral History Research Office, Columbia University), 1–33.
[16] Albright to Beverly S. Clendenin, January 14, 1915, in the Albright Papers.
[17] Shankland, *Steve Mather*, 8–11, 56.
[18] Stephen T. Mather to Dr. Shaw, March 6, 1915, in *Review of Reviews*, LI:430 (April, 1915).
[19] Albright, "Robert Sterling Yard," manuscript, pp. 2–4, in the Albright Papers.
[20] Albright to R. S. Yard, March 24, 1915, *ibid.*
[21] Albright to Mrs. Stephen T. Mather, March 29, 1915, *ibid.*

Interior Department officials who had worked with the parks or who were especially interested in the parks to be his guests. Making the trip west from Washington were Mather, Yard, Albright, W. B. Acker, Robert B. Marshall and Guy E. Mitchell of the U.S. Geological Survey, Colonel L. M. Brett, Acting Superintendent of Yellowstone, and a few technical experts from outside the department. Marshall and Mitchell, both geographers, had already rendered valuable assistance to Mather, who planned to take full advantage of their interest in the parks. In Chicago, Mather made arrangements for a special Pullman car, which bore the hybrid name "Calzona" for the trip to California. "There were conferences day and night," Albright recalled, all the way to the Pacific Coast.[22] Mather dazzled the members of the party with his high-powered intensity as he set out systematically to educate himself about the parks. The party was largely drained of ideas and energy by the time it reached Berkeley. Albright, whose orders called for him "to render such stenographic or other assistance" as he could for Mather, absorbed a great deal of new and useful knowledge about the parks.[23]

The Berkeley conference convened on March 11, 1915. Mark Daniels, who, as General Superintendent and Landscape Engineer of the parks, normally headquartered in San Francisco, joined the group. Congressmen Denver S. Church, of Fresno, and J. Arthur Elston, of Berkeley, arrived. Representatives of the automobile clubs and the railroads, a healthy contingent from the Sierra Club, and nearly all of the park superintendents were there. The group gathered for two days on the University of California campus, holding wide-ranging discussions about the parks.[24] It was abundantly clear that most of the superintendents had been appointed for political reasons and that, as a group, they lacked both the ability and the zeal for effective national park work. The conferees slept at the Sigma Chi fraternity house, which the college boys had vacated out of deference to Mather, who was one of their most illustrious and well-heeled alumni. The third day's agenda called for a ceremonial visit to the Panama-Pacific Exposition in San Francisco.[25] Most of the national park group went to the Union Pacific pavilion as guests of the railroad and watched in fascination while "a mechanically controlled geyser" gave an "excellent imitation of. . . Old Faithful." Earlier, on their way to lunch, the delegates had walked past an exhibition that featured "bathing girls" in "abbreviated suits" doing the swan dive and basking in the sun. A number of the national park men, thoroughly indoctrinated in the subtleties of appreciating unadorned natural beauty, lingered to watch the shapely divers. Mather dispatched his trustworthy assistant to round up the stragglers and get them back in time for the afternoon sessions.[26]

Mather's Washington contingent returned to the East via Salt Lake City, Denver, and Chicago. All along the way they contacted "governors, mayors, civic leaders, mountain club officers, and good roads proponents" to whom they preached the "economic importance of the tourist business" and with whom they mapped strategy for the projected national parks publicity campaign.[27] Editors and publishers received Mather's special attention. His object was to make friends and to win converts to the idea that, if properly promoted and advertised, the parks would attract "tourist gold" to the West. Mather hoped that local editors and chambers of commerce would include the parks in their own promotional campaigns and that enthusiastic boosterism on the local level would help to "sell" the parks. It was on this trip that Mather's administrative style crystallized. Once a supersalesman for Twenty Mule Team Borax, he had decided that shrewd salesmanship would also work for the parks. A glad-hander and a promoter by nature, he became an indefatigable and exceptionally effective salesman for America's "great national playgrounds." Albright, though hardly a glad-hander, watched Mather

[22] Albright, "Robert Sterling Yard," p. 4, *ibid.*
[23] Franklin K. Lane to Albright, February 27, 1915, *ibid.*
[24] *Proceedings*, Third National Park Conference, Berkeley, March 11–13, 1915 (Washington, 1915); see also Shankland, *Steve Mather*, 60–63.
[25] *San Francisco Chronicle*, March 10 and 13, 1915.
[26] Albright, "Robert Sterling Yard," pp. 4–5, in the Albright Papers.
[27] *Ibid.*, p. 5.

operate, and within a short time he would himself become a smooth and persuasive public relations man for the national parks, though he ordinarily used a softer sell than Mather. In the aftermath of the Berkeley conference, it was Albright who made the gracious gesture of sending a gift to the boys in the Sigma Chi house to express appreciation for their hospitality: "an enlarged picture of Secretary Mather, framed in redwood from the Muir Woods. . . ."[28]

WITH the unerring instinct of a skillful promoter and the zest of a remarkably outgoing man, Mather next set out to make himself known to the most influential men in Washington. Here Albright could be helpful in a creative way. Only a few days after Mather arrived in town, Albright made arrangements for him to meet Huston Thompson, the Assistant Attorney General, who quickly became one of Mather's greatest admirers and ablest allies.[29] Albright also introduced his boss to his friends in Congress. Very soon Mather knew many members of both houses, including John E. Raker, William Kent, Carl Hayden, Addison T. Smith, Reed Smoot, and George Norris.[30]

Mather's promotional schemes multiplied at a remarkable rate during the first half of 1915. Drawing upon his personal contacts in eastern newspaper circles—he had once worked as a reporter on Dana's New York *Sun*—he set out to broaden his acquaintance among both newspaper and magazine editors. George Horace Lorimer, editor of the *Saturday Evening Post*, C. V. Van Anda, managing editor of the *New York Times*, and Arthur Brisbane, one of the top men in the Hearst chain, soon became genuine national park boosters and began publishing enthusiastic articles about the parks.[31] Another one of Mather's early publicity schemes, undoubtedly his most successful, came in July of that year when he invited a distinguished group of legislators, conservationists, writers, publishers,

Department of the Interior

*Arrow at lower left points to a man standing beneath a group of giant sequoias.*

and lecturers to be his guests on a camping trip through the High Sierra in California. He called on Bob Marshall of the Geological Survey, who had helped survey both Sequoia and Yosemite parks and was intimately acquainted with the Sierra country, to plan the trip. Albright was assigned to help in making the arrangements.[32] The object would be to show the distinguished gentlemen a good time while thoroughly imbuing them with the mystique of the national parks and persuading them to throw their weight behind the establishment of a National Park Service.

The planning phase of the trip moved swiftly. Marshall stitched together a superb itinerary which began at the Giant Forest on the edge of Sequoia Park and included stops at Redwood Meadow, Mineral King, Junction Meadows, Funston Meadows, Crabtree Mea-

[28] Albright to Leslie Albright, June 10, 1915, *ibid.*
[29] Albright to Huston Thompson, February 23, 1915, and Thompson to Albright, February 27, 1915, *ibid.*
[30] Interview with Horace M. Albright, March 26, 1964.
[31] Shankland, *Steve Mather*, 83–99, 181–182.
[32] Albright to W. G. Scott, June 12, 1915, in the Albright Papers.

dows, Mount Whitney, Horseshoe Meadows, and then down the east side of the Sierra into the Owens Valley. Albright assumed responsibility for planning the remainder of the trip from the little town of Lone Pine northward to Yosemite Park. He tentatively arranged an overnight stop in his home town of Bishop, then a drive north to Leevining, and on into the park via the scenic Tioga Road, a privately owned mining road that Mather had recently purchased and given to the Interior Department.[33] The prospect of playing host to such an illustrious group of men caught the imagination of the citizens of Bishop, who foresaw great benefits for the future development of the Owens Valley growing out of this trip. Albright wrote letter after letter to W. A. Chalfant, editor of the Inyo *Register*, and to W. G. Scott, executive secretary of the Inyo Good Roads Club, drumming up interest in the Mather party and working out tentative schedules.[34]

The party assembled in Visalia, California, "the gateway to Sequoia," on July 14, 1915, amid fanfare and excitement so great that the local papers temporarily shunted aside their articles about the war in Europe and Carranza's success in Mexico in favor of stories about the "Big Men" from Washington who planned to visit the "wonders" of the Sierra.[35] Although last-minute cancellations by Congressmen Denver Church and Swager Sherley pared down Mather's original guest list, the party still contained an impressive line-up of "Big Men," including Henry Fairfield Osborn, eminent scientist and head of the American Museum of Natural History, Emerson Hough, big-name writer and self-styled nature lover, Frederick H. Gillett, ranking Republican on the House Appropriations Committee and a future Speaker of the House, Gilbert H. Grosvenor, world traveler and editor of the *National Geographic*, E. O. McCormick, vice-president of the Southern Pacific Railroad, Peter Clark Macfarlane, popular novelist and magazine writer, W. F. McClure, State Engineer of California, Burton Holmes, one of the foremost professional lecturers in the country, Clyde L. Seavey, of the California State Board of Control, and Ben M. Maddox, owner and publisher of the *Visalia Times* and the *Tulare County Times*. Other guests were Henry Floy, Mather's brother-in-law, F. G. Johnstone, a Chicago attorney, Samuel E. Simmons, a physician, and Frank Depew, who was Holmes' camera man and assistant. Mather, Marshall, Daniels, and Albright rounded out the party.[36] The first evening a few prominent Visalians hosted a "very delightful Spanish banquet" in "Pablo Parlors," at which Mather had "some interesting things to say concerning park development" and the efforts that were "being made by Interior Department officials to popularize the national parks."[37] Early the next morning the Mather party departed by automobile for the Giant Forest in the High Sierra.

THE first breathtaking glimpse of the towering sequoias and the rock-strewn Sierra ridges gave promise of an unforgettable trip. With the stately redwoods standing guard, the campers ate "an excellent dinner" prepared by Tie Sing, the remarkable trail cook who accompanied the party to tend to the gentlemen's culinary needs.[38] Mather had spared no expense in outfitting his guests. Each man had a new sleeping bag and air mattress which combined to make a "classy and perfectly comfortable" wilderness bed.[39] There were horses to carry the men and mules to carry the supplies, which included a bountiful stock of fresh fruit, fresh eggs, and other delicacies. The first night in the mountains Albright ingratiated himself to Emerson Hough by inflating the mattress for him. Hough was a crusty and outspoken man whose tirades as well as his pen had made him famous, but he was on

[33] Albright to Scott, March 29 and June 12, 1915, *ibid.*

[34] Albright to W. A. Chalfant, June 10, 1915, and Chalfant to Albright, June 22, 1915, *ibid.*

[35] *Visalia Morning Delta*, July 14–17, 1915; *Tulare County Times*, July 15, 1915.

[36] Horace M. Albright, "The Mather Mountain Party," in *Westways*, LVI: 24 (June, 1964).

[37] *Tulare County Times*, July 15, 1915; *Visalia Morning Delta*, July 16, 1915.

[38] Letter from Ben M. Maddox, in *Tulare County Times*, July 22, 1915.

[39] *Loc. cit.*

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*Stephen T. Mather (far left) presides over one of the numerous wilderness banquets prepared by Tie Sing (standing), the trail cook who accompanied the distinguished members of the Mather mountain party in 1915.*

good behavior during this trek through the mountains. Whenever possible he would steal away to catch a few trout, or to rest. He thoroughly enjoyed himself and later remarked that it was "rare" to find "so wholly congenial a party. . . ."[40] Gilbert Grosvenor, who had never seen the High Sierra, insisted on bedding down that first night in the duff at the base of a redwood tree.[41]

On the morning of July 17, the party moved out into the wilderness, traveling easily and in deluxe style. The route Marshall had picked carried them to the headwaters of the East Fork of the Kaweah River, then across the 11,000-foot Franklin Pass into the Kern River watershed, down Rattlesnake Creek to Funston Meadow, up the Kern River, then to the summit of Mount Whitney, and out of the mountains at Lone Pine. The party decreased by two when Holmes and Macfarlane decided they did not want to continue after Mineral King, but the rest of the group stayed with it. On the way to Junction Meadows, the party stopped long enough to christen "Gillett Hot Springs" in honor of the Congressman from Massachusetts and future Speaker of the House, who had gone there "the previous afternoon to take a bath in the hot water."[42] Tie Sing's meals furnished the perfect ending to every day. As camp was pitched, he would construct a dining table, usually out of logs, and then, as one member of the party expressed it, "a linen table cloth shows up and there are real napkins for everybody." Tie Sing would put together his two collapsible stoves and calmly prepare, as at Whitney Meadow, "soup, lettuce salad, fried chicken, venison and gravy, potatoes, hot rolls, apple pie, cheese, tea, and coffee."[43] The box lunches he served on the trail were equally substantial. Several members of the party "who expected to reduce their weight on the trip" expressed their soulful but unconvincing disappointment.[44]

[40] Emerson Hough to Maddox, in *Tulare County Times*, August 5, 1915.
[41] Shankland, *Steve Mather*, 71.
[42] Letter from Maddox, in *Tulare County Times*, August 5, 1915.
[43] *Loc. cit.*
[44] *Loc. cit.*

*A photograph from the special issue of the* National Geographic *of April, 1916, wherein the editor, Gilbert Grosvenor, sought to focus national attention on the parks.*

As the youngest member of the party, Albright fell heir to many extra duties, such as pitching tents, setting up camp, and inflating dozens of air mattresses. Moreover, he was the only man present who could keep up with the tireless Mather, who usually demanded company as he rushed off to climb a canyon wall or explore a new trail after the others, slowed by fatigue, had decided it was time to sit by the fire and rest. The hearty travelers climbed to the summit of Mount Whitney, descending in a fierce hail and rain storm. Ten days after leaving the Giant Forest, the Mather party emerged from the mountains, saddle-sore and tired, at Lone Pine.[45]

Before leaving camp in the Giant Forest, Albright had written to Guy P. Doyle, a physician in Bishop and President of the Inyo Good Roads Club, that Mather and his prominent guests would arrive in Lone Pine about noon on July 27.[46] The trail party was precisely on time, "ready for a change of transportation" from horse back to automobile. Dr. Doyle's group provided the cars, and Bishop's leading citizens turned out to greet their distinguished visitors. After luncheon in Lone Pine, the group drove north through the little towns of Independence and Big Pine, arriving in Bishop in time for dinner. They received "a bomb salute" upon arrival. An informal reception at the Piñon Club, featuring a "projectoscope" which showed Sierra scenery, and an exhibit of photographs by A. A. Forbes, capped the day. After the reception, the guests met with a few "business people" and then retired early at the homes of Bishop residents who had volunteered to entertain them.[47]

Next morning, the townspeople of Bishop outdid themselves by treating the Mather party to a magnificent trout breakfast served in an open meadow at the base of the tall Sierra. "The table was along side a big stream," one member of the party wrote, "and was decorated with a profusion of wild flowers." The trout were displayed on a canvas near the fire, "where they could be inspected before they were cooked." The bill of fare included, in addition to trout, "cantaloupes, tomatoes, hot bisquits, Inyo honey, [and] surpassing coffee. . . ."[48] Henry Fairfield Osborn announced that "the trout breakfast alone was almost worth" the trip from New York.[49] In a few minutes the members of the party climbed into their automobiles and began the last stage of the scenic but tiring journey to Yosemite, driving north to Leevining and connecting there with the Tioga Road. On the long climb to Tioga Pass, Albright rode in an open Studebaker touring car. E. O. McCormick sat in the front seat next to the driver and Emerson Hough occupied the rear seat next to Albright. The precariously narrow road and the uninhibited driving of Will L. Smith, a Bishop merchant, left the three travelers petrified with fear. Albright remembered the driver "rising in his seat" to point out espe-

[45] Albright, "The Mather Mountain Party," 25; see also Henry Fairfield Osborn to Maddox, undated, in *Tulare County Times*, August 5, 1915.
[46] *Inyo Register*, July 22, 1915.
[47] *Ibid.*, July 29, 1915.
[48] Article by Maddox in *Tulare County Times*, August 5, 1915.
[49] *Inyo Register*, July 29, 1915.

cially beautiful vistas, "but never stopping the car." Every time the driver stood up, Albright wrenched open the back door and put his foot on the running board, ready to leap "when the car went over the cliff." Hough cowered beside him muttering, "Damn this scenery-lovin' S.O.B." McCormick was too frightened to say a word.[50] At the summit there was a brief ceremony dedicating the Tioga Road to public use, and then the party drove on to Tuolumne Meadows in Yosemite Park to rendezvous with the members of the Sierra Club, who were having their annual outing. The party broke up the next day, July 29, after having reached the Yosemite Valley itself.

THIS two-week tour of the mountains had far-reaching results for Albright, Mather, and the national parks. It convinced Grosvenor, Osborn, Hough, and to a lesser extent Holmes and Macfarlane—all men who could do yeoman duty in publicizing the parks—that getting a National Park Service Act through Congress was absolutely imperative. Furthermore, they agreed to support the expansion of Sequoia Park to include the canyons of the Kings River and Kern River. This country "is too big for any man or men to own," Hough later wrote. "It belongs to humanity, as it is, unchanged and never to know change."[51] Congressman Gillett, a powerful figure on the House Appropriations Committee, gained a very favorable impression of the national parks and began a warm friendship with Mather and Albright. Over the next few years, he extended much-needed political support to the National Park Service. As far as Mather and Albright were concerned, the trip infected them with a new enthusiasm for the national parks cause and gave them the solid satisfaction of knowing that their first big promotional effort had been a splendid success.

After the mountain party broke up, Mather and Albright left on an inspection tour of the national parks.[52] E. O. McCormick invited them to come with him in his private car as far as Seattle. The three old trail buddies stopped at Crater Lake and Medford, Oregon, where they talked parks to the local businessmen. On to Seattle and Mount Rainier the tour continued and then to Denver for the dedication of Rocky Mountain National Park, a ceremonial occasion that Enos A. Mills had arranged. Mills generally had the reputation of being "the father of Rocky Mountain Park." He was a noted outdoorsman, writer, and lecturer who made an unpredictable friend and a formidable enemy. From Denver, Mather and Albright turned north to Yellowstone and then to Glacier, where they spent three days crossing the continental divide. They headed back to Washington during the third week in September, more convinced than ever that a way had to be found to replace the political hacks then holding down most of the park superintendencies.[53] The parks also needed roads and tourist facilities, or "development," as Mather usually phrased it, much to the discomfort of the purists who later asserted that the national parks should be preserved untouched and relatively undeveloped. Mather held that the parks were "for the people." To deny them good roads or comfortable lodgings, he argued, was both unwise and unreasonable. Neither he nor Albright ever considered their extended campaign to increase the number of park visitors and accelerate park "development" at odds with the urge, which they shared in full measure, to preserve the extraordinary beauty of the parks. The political facts of life in 1915 and 1916 simply demanded that the parks be "used." Unless and until the American people started flocking to the national park reservations, Congress would refuse to appropriate adequate funds for the administration and protection of the parks.[54]

In the autumn of 1915 the volume of Mather's and Albright's correspondence increased

[50] The description of the hair-raising ride and the quotations are from Horace M. Albright, "The Mather Mountain Party of 1915," manuscript, pp. 6–7, in the Albright Papers.

[51] Hough to Maddox, in *Tulare County Times*, August 5, 1915.

[52] Assistant Secretary of the Interior to Albright, June 30, 1915, in the Albright Papers.

[53] *Rocky Mountain News*, September 5, 1915; Shankland, *Steve Mather*, 74–82.

[54] This philosophy ran throughout the *Annual Report of the Director of the National Park Service, 1917*, which was the first annual report of the NPS; see pp. 10–20. See also Albright, "Reminiscences," 67–69.

Courtesy Horace M. Albright

*Mather and Albright photographed in 1924 near Lewistown, Montana, while visiting with Charles W. Cook, last surviving member of the 1869 Yellowstone exploring party.*

rapidly, for they made it a policy to keep in touch with virtually all of the people they had met on their camping and inspection trips. Mather's relationship with Grosvenor was especially warm. The *National Geographic*, Grosvenor decided, would devote an entire issue to "A Tribute to the Scenic Grandeur and Unsurpassed Natural Resources of Our Own Country," hoping to give the parks a shot in the arm. Albright worked with Grosvenor and John Oliver LaGorce, assistant editor of the *Geographic*, in gathering pictures and preparing copy for the magazine.[55] LaGorce invited Albright to put his "fine Italian quill into operation" in future issues of the magazine, but Albright demurred. "My own Italian quill will not be sharpened while yours is in working order," he wrote, "besides I could not write a story" even if "hanging was. . . the penalty. . . for failure."[56] Emerson Hough, who wrote for the *Saturday Evening Post*, took a great interest in Albright immediately after the Mather mountain party, offering to entertain him in Chicago and asking him to run various errands in Washington. When Hough sent him a batch of pictures taken during the 1915 mountain trip, Albright replied: "I can't very well express my appreciation of your kindness. . . but perhaps I shall have a chance to blow your bed up next year if we happen to be out in the mountains together. . . ."[57]

Late in November of 1915, Albright and Mather sat down in Washington to take stock of what they had accomplished in the past year. It was astonishing how quickly the twelve months had passed. They were proud of what they had achieved in the way of publicizing the parks, but they felt dismayed and disappointed that so much remained to be done. After a long discussion, they agreed to stay on for another year, with the expectation of obtaining a Park Service Act from Congress and getting a national parks bureau firmly established.[58] During that first busy year, Mather developed a deep, fatherly affection for Albright, but, more important, his admiration for the young man's administrative ability steadily increased. Albright more than proved his worth as a valuable and versatile assistant. He could always be counted on, Mather knew, to work out the practical details of policy and to have at his fingertips an array of facts and figures about the parks. Mather clearly reigned as the leader and dominant member of the twosome, but Albright contributed creatively to Mather's success, and the more so as time went by.

After deciding to remain with the Interior Department for another year, Mather named Robert B. Marshall, whom he had tentatively selected as the first director of the proposed Park Service, to the job of Superintendent of National Parks. Mark Daniels had recently resigned to return full time to his work as a landscape architect.[59] With the coming of the new year, it was hoped, the time would be ripe for a new attempt to push through a bill creating a national park bureau. In the meantime, Mather and his assistant would have time to relax over the holidays.

[55] John Oliver LaGorce to Albright, October 6 and November 4, 1915, in the Albright Papers.

[56] Albright to LaGorce, November 4, 1915, *ibid.*

[57] Albright to Hough, October 7, 1915, *ibid.*

[58] Shankland, *Steve Mather*, 83; interview with Horace M. Albright, March 26, 1964.

[59] *Annual Report of the Superintendent of National Parks, 1916*, 4–5.

EARLY in 1916 Mather launched an all-out drive for legislation to establish a national parks bureau and, of course, Albright became deeply involved. Yard had worked at a man-killing pace through the summer and fall of 1915, writing articles, collecting materials about the parks, and issuing an endless stream of publicity releases. The Sixty-fourth Congress was better informed about the national parks than any previous Congress, thanks to his publicity work and Mather's unstinting public relations efforts. Now the task of drafting a suitable bill began. Mather, Albright, Marshall, and Yard from the Interior Department, and John Raker, William Kent, Huston Thompson, J. Horace McFarland, Frederick Law Olmsted, the renowned landscape architect, and Richard B. Watrous, McFarland's associate in the American Civic Association, met frequently at Yard's Washington apartment and Kent's Georgetown home in January and February of 1916. Enos Mills occasionally joined the group.[60] These strategy sessions produced a bill well calculated to please as many members of Congress as possible and, at the same time, to ensure adequate protection for the parks. Olmsted proposed the wording of the key section. "The service thus established," the bill stated, "shall promote and regulate" the use of the national parks "by such means and measures as conform to the fundamental purpose" of the parks, namely "to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life therein. . . by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations."[61]

Congressman Raker richly deserved the honor of introducing the bill, having already proposed a number of National Park Service bills. But, for tactical reasons, it was decided that William Kent, who was better-liked by the floor leaders of the House, should become the bill's official sponsor.[62] Once Kent formally introduced the bill, a well-timed wave of national parks publicity hit the newsstands. George Horace Lorimer arrayed the popular *Saturday Evening Post* on the side of the parks,[63] and Gilbert Grosvenor, just as he had promised, devoted an entire issue of the *National Geographic* to the scenic grandeur of the United States and especially of the national parks.[64] Albright saw to it that "copies were on the desks of every member of Congress."[65] Then Yard's magnificent *National Parks Portfolio*, published by Scribners and paid for mostly by the western railroads, appeared. A handsomely illustrated clothbound book covering all of the major parks, it was mailed free of charge to more than a quarter of a million people, carefully selected by a corps of clerks working under Albright's direction. "It was a job of mammoth proportions," Albright proudly recalled, "to wrap, address, and mail" all those books.[66] Needless to say, every member of Congress got a copy of the *Portfolio*. McFarland promptly threw the American Civic Association into the fight, and William E. Colby mustered the Sierra Club. It was a well-conceived and skillfully executed legislative drive.

The Kent Bill moved out of the House Public Lands Committee on schedule, although its sponsors had to agree to certain changes in order to satisfy Irvine L. Lenroot of Wisconsin, who insisted that the Washington office of the Park Service should be limited to $19,500 annually for salaries. The bill also included a provision authorizing the Secretary of the Interior to grant grazing privileges in the national parks.[67] With the valuable assistance of Edward T. Taylor of Colorado, Kent and Raker slipped the bill through the House on July 1.[68] Unfortunately, as the

[60] Albright, "Robert Sterling Yard," pp. 8–9, in the Albright Papers; Huth, *Nature and the American*, 189–191.

[61] The National Park Service Act appears in full in *Annual Report of the Superintendent of National Parks, 1916*, 81–82; Shankland, *Steve Mather*, 100–101.

[62] Ise, *Our National Park Policy*, 190; *Congressional Record*, 64 Cong., 1 Sess. (May 10, 1916), 7791.

[63] Editorial, "National Park Service," in the *Saturday Evening Post*, 188:26, (March 18, 1916); Herbert Quick, "Handling the Parks," *ibid.*, 188:16–17, 45, 48–49 (June 24, 1916).

[64] G. H. Grosvenor, "The Land of the Best," in the *National Geographic*, XXIX: 327–430 (April, 1916).

[65] Albright, "Robert Sterling Yard," p. 10, in the Albright Papers.

[66] *Ibid.*

[67] *Congressional Record*, 64 Cong., 1 Sess. (May 17, 1916), 8221; U.S. Congress, House, Hearings before the Public Lands Committee, "To Establish a National Park Service," 64 Cong., 1 Sess., April 5–6, 1916.

[68] *Congressional Record*, 64 Cong., 1 Sess. (July 1, 1916), 10363–10365.

session stretched into the summer, the bill got bogged down in election-year stalling and politicking. The Republican national convention met and nominated Charles Evans Hughes, an associate justice of the Supreme Court, to run for President. Then the Democrats convened, nominating Woodrow Wilson for a second term. Congress remained in session all the while, refusing to adjourn because of its uneasiness over the war in Europe and because of a great deal of unfinished business. Instead of adjourning, Congress simply recessed in fits and starts, according to an elaborate plan approved by the leadership of both houses.

Faced with this extraordinary calendar and the innumerable complications it caused, Mather decided that the situation was hopeless. He had already committed himself to a second camping trip in the High Sierra in the hope of converting still another group of prominent men to the national parks cause. He had also arranged to make a special motor tour of Yellowstone Park. So he headed west in July, determined to line up support for a new legislative campaign in the second session of the Sixty-fourth Congress, leaving Albright to look after the fate of the Kent Bill.[69]

THE young man from California proved how persistent and effective he could be in organizing and overseeing the last push to get the National Park Service bill enacted into law. He and Joseph J. Cotter, the Assistant Superintendent of National Parks, and the rest of the park service lobby, composed largely of McFarland's crew, kept the pressure on key members of Congress. Senator Reed Smoot of Utah piloted the Kent Bill through the Senate on August 5, seeing to it that an amendment was passed to strike out the provision authorizing grazing in the parks.[70] Having kept Smoot supplied with all the information he needed, Albright next had to coax the conferees to iron out the differences between the House and Senate versions of the bill, a task that promised to be unusually difficult. It was virtually impossible to get all of the conferees together because of the frequent three-day recesses. Albright therefore concentrated on the chairmen of the respective conference committees, Congressman Scott Ferris of Oklahoma and Senator Henry L. Myers of Montana.[71] By sheer persistence, he got them to work out a compromise and take it around to each individual conferee for approval. In the end, the Senate-House committee agreed to keep the grazing provision in the bill, except that no grazing would be allowed in Yellowstone. On August 15, the Senate approved the conference report.[72] At the last minute, Congressman William H. Stafford of Wisconsin, who opposed the creation of all new bureaus as a matter of principle, attempted to block the bill in the House. Albright, Raker, and Kent responded by counting noses. On the afternoon of August 22, Raker requested unanimous consent to consider H.R. 15522, the Kent Bill, and got the conference report adopted by a voice vote in spite of Stafford's opposition.[73] Assured of a favorable majority, the conspirators cancelled their contingency plans, which called for Stafford to be lured out to the golf course during the debate on the bill.[74]

As a final triumph, Albright persuaded the enrolling clerk at the Capitol to speed the enrolled bill to the White House, where Maurice C. Latta, the White House legislative clerk, agreed to place it before President Wilson for signature on August 25, 1916, three days ahead of schedule.[75] These special arrangements stemmed from Albright's pride in his own

[69] Albright, "Robert Sterling Yard," p. 11, in the Albright Papers; Shankland, *Steve Mather*, 102–103.

[70] *Congressional Record*, 64 Cong., 1 Sess. (August 5, 1916), 12150–12152.

[71] Joseph J. Cotter to R. B. Marshall, August 12, 1916, and telegram, Albright to Mather, August 14, 1916, NA, RG 79, General, Superintendent and Landscape Engnr.

[72] *Congressional Record*, 64 Cong., 1 Sess. (August 15, 1916), 12632.

[73] *Ibid.*, (August 22, 1916), 13004–13005.

[74] Shankland, *Steve Mather*, 103, claims that Stafford "had been enticed out on a golf course by a sly band of crypto-conservationists." Actually, Stafford was on the House floor during the entire final debate on the National Park Service Act, as the *Congressional Record* testifies.

[75] Albright to Maurice C. Latta, October 24, 1945, NA, RG 79, Admin. Director Albright. In this letter Albright reminisces about those special arrangements.

achievement and from his flair for the apt, dramatic touch. When Mather came down from the mountains on August 26, after two weeks in the wilderness, a splendid surprise awaited him at Visalia's Palace Hotel. "Park Service bill signed nine o'clock last night," Albright's telegram read, "have pen used by President in signing for you."[76] The National Park Service still keeps Albright's telegram and Wilson's pen as treasured souvenirs.

The ambitious plans of McFarland's national park lobby and the painstaking efforts of Mather and Albright culminated on that summer day in 1916. The aesthetic conservationists, having finally gained a foothold in the federal conservation program, knew that their point of view would be perpetuated and institutionalized in the agency of the National Park Service. Abandoning their plans to return to private life, Mather and Albright continued their collaboration as director and assistant director of the newly established bureau, enthusiastically participating in every phase of its organization and operation. They made steady progress in spreading the gospel of the national parks in the halls of Congress. They recruited able young men into the bureau's ranks, imbuing them with a distinctive *esprit de corps* and a firm dedication to the cause of natural beauty. They dramatcially improved the administration of the parks after finally ridding themselves of the army's interference. Thousands of Americans flocked to the "national playgrounds" and were thoroughly charmed by the splendid scenery and the courteous treatment they received. The bureau's appropriations began to climb. By the mid-1920's the National Park Service, though still in its formative years, had become one of the most respected conservation agencies in Washington, and the concept of preserving natural beauty had won clear recognition as a valid and important aspect of the federal conservation program.[77] The rise of the National Park Service marked the coming of age of aesthetic conservation in the United States.

[76] Telegram, Albright to Mather, August 26, 1916, photocopy in Shankland, *Steve Mather*, 51; Albright to George C. Purdy, August 28, 1916, in the Albright Papers.

[77] Swain, *Federal Conservation Policy*, 123–143, 169.

## Hesseltine Award Announced

THE first annual William Best Hesseltine Award for the best article to appear in the *Wisconsin Magazine of History* during the previous year has been announced by the judging panel. The winner is Edward H. Beardsley, assistant professor of history at the University of South Carolina, Columbia, for his article, "An Industry Revitalized: Harry Russell, Stephen Babcock, and the Cold Curing of Cheese," which appeared in the Winter, 1965–1966, issue.

This award, established in memory of the late president of the Society and distinguished University of Wisconsin historian, consists of $100. There is no deadline for submissions. Manuscripts and queries should be addressed to: Editor, *Wisconsin Magazine of History*, 816 State Street, Madison, Wisconsin 53706.