



## *Summer in the Parks* 1917

It was the beautiful, clear sunny morning of June 29 when my train slowly eased its way up the Yellowstone River Canyon to Gardiner, the northern entrance to Yellowstone National Park. I had to admit that it already had become my favorite park.

Chester Lindsley met me at the station and took me to headquarters at Mammoth. He had been acting supervisor of Yellowstone since the army had pulled out the preceding October. Now, with "Fitzgerald's Revenge," the army would return to power with 450 men of the Seventh Cavalry replacing our 50 civilian rangers on July 1. The troops remained until November 1, 1918, and they turned out to be a sorry lot. Most were new draftees, not the former fine disciplined men of the prewar army. They were rotated so often they never even got to know the park. Of course, a few rangers had been hired back by the army as scouts. But that didn't alleviate Lindsley's sorrow. As we climbed up the hill to Mammoth, I tried to cheer him by saying that the reason I was here was to ease this "strictly temporary" changeover.

First I directed that Lindsley and Interior Department personnel were to occupy what we considered the best buildings at Mammoth Hot Springs. As an attorney, I scrutinized every word of every federal law and every directive coming from the War Department. I found some nice loopholes. The Interior Department could keep tide to all the buildings and objects within and without, the horses, and essential utility systems.

It appeared as though the troops were there at our convenience. We had to leave the upkeep of roads and the protection of the park to the commander of the Western Army Department.

With the tourist season opening and thousands of visitors pouring in, the government quickly heard a lot about valuable fighting men "frolicking" in a national park. The complaints contributed quite a bit to the eventual ouster of the troops by the rescinding clause of the Sundry Civil Bill of 1918.

One day a delegation from Montana and Wyoming came to the office to discuss the animal situation. The incredibly hard winters of the past few years had produced two results for the wild animals in Yellowstone. First, within the park there was a serious loss of elk, antelope, and deer to starvation. Second, as they drifted outside the park looking for forage, open season for hunting also resulted in a serious death toll. Their numbers were sharply reduced—antelope to the point of feared extinction.

In those days we really hadn't the time, money, or ability to make close scientific studies of the problem, but we did know that a few of the major predators somehow had survived despite the merciless hunting of mountain lions, wolves, and coyotes during the military occupation of Yellowstone.

This policy had been initiated at the behest of cattlemen and sheepmen during the administration of Theodore Roosevelt and carried out rather ruthlessly until shortly before we entered the picture. In fact, John Goff, the president's chief guide when he made western hunting trips, was given a four-year contract in 1905 to go to Yellowstone and "destroy the mountain lion, lynx, and bobcats that have been killing the deer and elk." He was allowed to keep all pelts (worth thousands of dollars), besides his pay as a forest ranger. Needless to say, there were few if any mountain lions or wolves left by 1916. It had been federal policy to placate the ranchers around the outskirts of the park as well as give the soldiers stationed there the opportunity to obtain hunting trophies and furs.

My sessions with the American Game Association, the lessons of Henry Fairfield Osborn and other scientists, the Boone and Crockett Club, and friends in the Biological Survey had taught me a great deal about keeping nature in balance, the necessity of maintaining all species of wildlife. It just plain went against my grain to wantonly slay animals in the wild.

However, Mather and I did not see eye to eye on this question. He felt the tourists loved to see wild animals, the more the merrier, and he envisaged herds of elk and antelope—the "gentle ones," as he called them.

He also loved bears for their entertainment qualities and somehow did not group them with the "vicious killers," as he called the predators.

It was an issue on which Mather finally let me have my way. Not too long after I became superintendent of Yellowstone, I stopped all killing except for coyotes when they became too numerous around antelope. Even then, I decided on a case-by-case basis, and few were eliminated.

I didn't put up a brick wall between myself and these men who came to see me in July 1917. I understood their fear of predators devastating their domestic animals, and I also understood the power of their representatives in Washington. My stand was that the army was once more the protective agent in Yellowstone. The Park Service had no power to enforce any policy on predators. That threw the ball to the army, and, knowing how long it took them to make a decision, I didn't worry.

But I added: "I have made our Park Service policy quite clear. The killing of wild animals, except predatory animals when absolutely necessary, is strictly forbidden. It is impracticable to kill off all predators. The balance of nature must be maintained." Later that year I made it a point to reiterate this policy in the National Park Service annual report.

In Yellowstone, with this group, my words were met with a hostile, stony silence, but nothing more was discussed. I was to have many a tussle over this issue when I had to face the problem on a daily basis as superintendent of Yellowstone after 1919.

Another serious problem was that there was no overall group responsible for management of the park; we had a real scarcity of responsible personnel. Lindsley was very upset by the fact that tourists were causing wholesale damage in the park, throwing objects into hot springs or geysers, breaking off chunks of algae-colored formations, and stealing blocks of obsidian from the famous cliff. I spoke to the military commander and asked him to instruct his men to arrest anyone caught in vandalism or theft. I also had Lindsley erect signs at every important point warning of fines or imprisonment for these criminal acts.

The concession agreement Mather had hammered out took effect in the summer of 1917. His idea of a "principal concessioner" providing a range of services under National Park Service regulations was proving to be sound. It worked out especially well when he combined Child's hotel company with a monopoly in transportation. The profit from the transportation would offset the hotel losses. Child had enthusiastically put out the capital to purchase first-class motor cars, replacing the defunct horse-and-carriage system.

In theory, Child's operational plans were perfect (as was proved later), but for now the war and the decrease in tourists wreaked havoc with his financial condition. The cost of his fleet of motor cars almost sank him, and he had to turn to the railroads serving Yellowstone for help. I urgently asked Child to hang on. Though difficult at times, he understood our aims and did a good job—we knew him and how to get along with him. For now he was preferable to new concessioners.

The only facet I had real doubts about was the boat concession on Yellowstone Lake. After Mather's initial enthusiasm, he later decided it was superfluous because of the motorized road transportation. I gradually came around to the thought that the boats were a marvelous scenic and exhilarating experience, although very expensive to operate. However, I never questioned Mather's decision, and they went the way of the dinosaur shortly after the general reorganization of the concessions.

The problem arising from the discontinuance of stage transportation was that everywhere you looked, there were piles of outmoded coaches, horse trappings, and other debris. As a side issue, there were abandoned camps, old stables, and disintegrating tent cities.

Mather had favored removing all old buildings that had housed tourists except for the modern hotels, and I went along with him until I received special instructions on July 3. In this letter he told me that he had reconsidered on the Fountain Hotel, found it "useless," and wanted it destroyed. The Fountain Hotel had been built in 1891 at a cost of more than \$100,000 and could accommodate 350 guests per night. Only a little over twenty-five years old, it was considered "modern" in that it had hot water, electricity, and steam heat. Furthermore, it was nicely located and had the dubious honor of being known as "the bear hotel." It was here that all bears interested in gourmet garbage were fed the accumulation of the hotel leftovers before sundown. This was quite a tourist attraction and later spread to other "bear pit" lunch stations around the park. The problem of the Fountain had to wait, mainly because I wanted to talk Mather out of destroying it if I could. (I didn't.)

The present dilemma was: who was to clean up all the messy debris? The soldiers had little else to do, so they were put to work, but performed so poorly and half-heartedly that nothing much was accomplished until the National Park Service rangers in uniform were back.

The rangers were hard-working, knew what to do, and did it promptly and efficiently. People respected them and, for the most part, obeyed them. I have always thought that the competence, dedication, and

pride of these early scouts-turned-rangers were the bedrock on which the esprit de corps of all future rangers was built and for which they are still famous.

Mather had always stated that his policy was to keep the Park Service small. That, plus the fact that our appropriations were minute, had led him to call on other agencies of government to do work for us. Now out in the park I met a fellow from the Bureau of Fisheries checking out the restocking of trout streams. He was a most interesting Norwegian scientist who gave me quite a lecture on stocking only native-type fish. He was upset that some officials in his department had been toying with the idea of taking fish alien to this environment (because of their size or other reason) and placing them in Yellowstone waters. It was known that early in the century Great Lakes fish had been introduced into Lewis Lake along with several other smaller lakes, with disastrous results.

The Fisheries man was perplexed as to why there were so few fish in the Yellowstone waters. I told him that the previous winter Emerson Hough, the *Saturday Evening Post* writer, had brought to my attention that fishermen outside the park were catching fish in enormous quantities from park waters and selling them to the hotel company at three cents a pound, really stripping various lakes and streams. I had immediately ordered that no Yellowstone fish could be used in any of the hotels, lodges, and camps, actually inserting this clause into the 1917 concession contracts. Even though I knew little or nothing about fish at this point—except how to catch them in Sierra mountain streams—I listened carefully to my friend from Norway, took notes on his ideas, and often used them in the future.

Once I had settled the most pressing problems, I had about one and a half days left to work on the idea of adding the Jackson Hole with its soaring Teton Mountains to Yellowstone or, if that was unacceptable, creating a Grand Teton National Park as a separate entity. I never got over my initial wonder at the unmatched beauty of that valley and its awesome, jagged peaks. It was just a natural to add to Yellowstone, a park lacking in this type of alpine beauty. However, the stubborn opposition of the Forest Service to giving up a foot of its territory, the skeptical attitude of the Hole's residents, and the lack of any Wyoming political power behind us temporarily doused the plan with cold water.

The ranching community didn't trust the new Park Service. They approved of their present situation with unlimited cattle grazing privileges on Forest Service land. They were aware of the new Park Service

and its policy of "no use." Others feared losing tax-paying land to the federal government. In a sparsely settled state like Wyoming, the politicians fell in behind the opposition. It didn't look good.

My final official act in Yellowstone was to issue a directive designating Major E. M. Leary, commanding First Squadron, Seventh Cavalry, as superintendent of the park and Chester Lindsley as acting supervisor, National Park Service. I added that "nothing herein contained shall be construed to change the official status or duties of Mr. Chester A. Lindsley, the acting supervisor." I made sure we were firmly entrenched in Yellowstone affairs even though we no longer had full command.

The last thing I did in Yellowstone was to send a wire to Dr. Weisenburg. Before I got off into an area where I would be hard to reach, I wanted the latest medical update on Mr. Mather's health. The doctor reported back that he had talked to Mather in Darien that very day and found that all was going well. His lingering problems were suspicion, mainly of certain people, lack of self-confidence, and quick exhaustion. Mather still felt that he was incapable of handling the Park Service and was still very fearful of a recurrence of the mental, nervous, and physical breakdown he had suffered in January.

I again got the warning that nothing was to upset Mather. Under no circumstances was he to be presented with any problems or bad news. "Make Mather feel he has a finger in the pie but don't let him have a real taste of it." Weisenburg emphasized that although Mather was making slow improvement, his condition was like walking a tightrope. He could inch along to full recovery, or he could easily fall off into the dangerous suicidal depression if he began worrying and feeling stressful once more.

So I continued writing my chief short letters containing little tidbits of information, amusing incidents, touches of gossip about the locals, and suggestions and questions about plans for his western trip. My desire was to have him informed about each park as I moved around and yet never let on about a real problem—just let him feel that all was serene with the Park Service.

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It was a rather subdued and lonely park that greeted me when I got off the train at Belton, headquarters for Glacier. The Great Northern Railway had bravely opened most of its fine hotels and chalets, knowing full well that the war and the government's discouragement of travel for pleasure would produce a serious loss in revenue. We in the Park Service

took the approach that the war gave all of us, concessioners and administrators, a breathing spell to lay out plans for the future and shore up our operations. This sounds just fine except for two things. As usual we had the usual stingy appropriations to work with, and Senator Walsh's man, Walter W. Payne, had replaced our man, George Goodwin, as supervisor.

The two senators, Walsh and Henry L. Myers, appointed the men to operate the park, alternating first one and then the other. About this time Senator Myers told me: "Don't ask me to appoint or recommend any more people for rangers. Every time I recommend one, I make nine enemies. You do it yourself and make your own enemies."

Of course, Senator Walsh never did let go until 1920, when the Republicans took over the administration. Most of his choices were pretty awful. I remember one of Walsh's rangers had to be put on patrol along the railroad tracks to keep him from getting lost, and sometimes another ranger had to be sent to accompany him so he wouldn't get run over by a train.

As it turned out, Walsh's choice of Payne was really quite good. It truly surprised me to find a man who, although knowing little of national park operations, was very intelligent, attentive, and ready to do his best.

Well, Payne was the only good news from Walsh. I've said it before and I'll say it again. I thoroughly detested Walsh. Anyone could hate him on general principles, for he was ruthless, inconsiderate, and displayed no kindness to anyone about anything. I had any number of reasons for my feelings, not just because he was so indifferent or belligerent toward our conservation goals, but because I felt he had been a part of Mather's breakdown. He had thrown every monkey wrench he could into Mather's attempt to organize the concessions in Yellowstone. Mather felt Walsh somehow had a personal vendetta against him. Walsh had practically flung down the gauntlet with "any concessioner has a right to operate in Yellowstone." And Mather's passionate belief was one concession per operation.

As for myself, I found in Glacier that I was dogged at every turn by "Walsh wants this, Walsh wants that." This stubborn, cantankerous senator was like a red flag to the Albright bull. Roads were the most important projects that Mather and I had decided on for Glacier. And here I bumped head-on into Walsh. The most needed road was to hug the side of Lake McDonald to the Lewis Hotel and thence to the head of trails crossing to the east side. Even though the power of the Great Northern and Louie Hill was behind our plans, Walsh was stubbornly fighting us.

I was pretty sure the reason was that he owned a summer place on Lake McDonald. He had maneuvered a law (against general principles of the Park Service) to exempt from condemnation any private lands in the park. He simply wanted to be sure he didn't get evicted as well as insuring that the public would leave him in peace and privacy.

This was a general and long-running problem. My immediate problem was Walsh's connection with the Penwell Sheep Company. This was a rather sleazy outfit that wanted to run stock in Glacier for the patriotic reason of "helping feed our boys." Secretary Lane had so far been fairly noncommittal on details, but he had given Walsh the general nod of approval and had told me to work out a deal with the sheepmen. I had found these fellows arrogant and adamant. So it was funny how I accidentally found a solution to the problem.

I was in the lobby of the Glacier Park Hotel one night and overheard a couple of men praising the beauty of the park. The more I listened, the more I thought of the imminent destruction of the beautiful meadows and wildflowers over which they were rapturizing. Almost without thinking, I commented, "Well, it won't look like this after the sheep are allowed to eat it all up for a sack of silver."

I was surprised to find these two men immediately interested in my statement. They introduced themselves as Bruce Kramer of Butte, vice-chairman of the Democratic National Committee, and Walter Hansen, a powerful man in the Montana meat-packing business. They wanted to know what my grouching was all about. After a complete rundown on the problem, Hansen suggested that I grant him a permit for a small herd to graze on some isolated chunk of land of my choice, and thus all other applications for grazing could be denied.

Leasing was completed. It sounded tricky, especially as Kramer was a power in the Democratic Party and might go to Walsh with the whole plot. Not to mention a leak back to my boss, Lane. Kramer assured me that he "couldn't remember a thing that was said between Hansen and myself," and I felt I really had no choice but to gamble on his word. So that was the way the Glacier grazing situation was taken care of. Late in the summer of 1918, Hansen unloaded a carload or so of cattle in the southern end of the park. After the war ended a few months later, every head of Hansen's cattle was removed, leaving Glacier unharmed.

My four days in Glacier were insufficient, but I had to move on to other park areas.



One sparkling day in Seattle, after a morning meeting with civic officials and state engineers, I was entertained at a luncheon and then taken on a tour of the city and environs. The new boulevards were proudly displayed and, at one particularly lovely vista facing east, the car was stopped. Silence reigned while we took in the beauty of Mount Baker on the horizon. A gentleman broke our contemplation by asking: "Mr. Albright, what might be your greatest wish for the state of Washington? Another national park like Mount Baker?"

Without thinking, I quickly replied, "I want Mount Olympus National Monument in the National Park Service." This was startling, as these men obviously were Baker boosters, plus the fact that the national monument was in the Forest Service. It had started out as a forest reserve in 1897 by executive order of President Cleveland. It went through a metamorphosis of sections being returned to the public domain for use of lumbermen and land speculators. Then came a proposed national park in 1904 and finally a proclamation of national monument status in 1909. However, commercial interests never gave up, and with war in Europe President Wilson was persuaded to reduce the monument by almost one-half to aid mining and lumbering. Shortly afterward, this area was almost totally stripped of timber. Someone called it "the rape of Olympus."

Later that afternoon, as we drove over toward Puget Sound, I saw a portion of the damage and was horrified. I made a mental note to start a push in the Congress to pry this area from the Forest Service, and I did accomplish that aim in 1933.

However, on this day in 1917, I perhaps foolishly talked too much. Several of my companions had fingers in the lumber pie in the Olympus area, and unknowingly I made some future enemies. They came back to haunt me as I pushed for Olympic to be made a national park. Naturally my outspoken comment was relayed back to Forest Service officials. This just made fodder for more suspicion, rivalry, and dislike by the "senior service," already leery of us.

I'm the first to admit that Stephen Mather and I weren't overly concerned about their attitude. We didn't dislike the Forest Service. We didn't try to get into conflict, but we were free-thinking, pragmatic, and aggressive. And most of all, we deeply believed that all their national monuments plus a lot of other lands in their jurisdiction should be released to our bureau because we were *conservationists* and *preservationists*. They were users.

In Seattle and later in Tacoma there were numerous meetings with state, civic, commercial, concessioner, and recreational groups. Sometimes I was overwhelmed with the responsibility of handling these powerful groups without a single person with whom I could consult.

Some nights, when I was tired and confused over some problem, I'd sit in my hotel room and write fanciful letters to Mr. Mather. I'd pretend to discuss various matters with him. Then I'd read them back and try to imagine what his answers to me would be. It truly helped me to do what I felt Mather would approve of. I was learning, learning, learning all the time, with confidence and knowledge growing by standing on my own two feet and making decisions that I hoped were right.

Our meetings were all concerned with Mount Rainier National Park: proposed roads, concessions, grazing. I felt I'd have to go to the moon to get away from this last nasty problem, and Mount Rainier presented the worst one yet.

This was an absolutely pristine park. No domestic animals had ever grazed here. This was all the more reason the sheepmen felt their animals could be well fed. I was blunt and adamant. "No grazing in any Northwest park."

Then some fellow suddenly brought up the one point I had so far carefully avoided. The organic act creating the Park Service did not specifically exclude grazing. We had been forced to let this pass, for it was a demand of William Kent, one of the bill's prime backers. Only Yellowstone had been excluded.

Before I could answer this attack, another man added that President Wilson had a herd of sheep grazing on the White House lawn. If it was good enough for Wilson, it ought to be good enough for the Park Service. This was a sticky moment, and I brazened it out. "Listen, gentlemen, just because grazing was not specifically forbidden doesn't mean that grazing is going to be allowed. And furthermore, just because there has been grazing of domestic animals in the parks in the past doesn't mean we're ever going to allow grazing in the future. So I hope you clearly understand that there will be no grazing."

My words were met by stony silence. Don't think I wasn't doing some quaking inside, although Dewitt Reaburn, supervisor of Mount Rainier, told me I seemed as cold and immovable as an iceberg. I was thinking how my words would get back to Lane and what his reaction would be. Amazingly enough, the only repercussion I heard was a critical article in

the *Tacoma News-Ledger* of November 4, 1917, stating that wild posies weren't as vital as mutton.

The pressure from State Agriculture Commissioner E. P. Benson to let sheep graze finally grew so enormous that members of the Mountaineers Club, real friends of the park, made a dramatic gesture. They offered golf clubs and lawns all over the Puget Sound area on which sheep and cattle could enjoy their meals instead of eating Rainier's wild flowers and mountain meadows. Even that didn't stop Benson. Along with the grazers and powerful local politicians, he kept pursuing the issue right up to Herbert Hoover, the national food director.

I spent July 14 and 15 roving around Mount Rainier with Supervisor Reaburn, a fine, knowledgeable fellow. We filled the days inspecting possible new trail sites, renovation of facilities at Longmire, and road work completed or projected. We then had a marvelous trip to the new Paradise Inn.

Almost 5,500 feet up the southern slopes of Mount Rainier lay this beautiful valley. The Indians knew it as Saghahie Illah, the Land of Peace. The white people called it Paradise. Where the old Camp of the Clouds had sprawled in the valley, there now stood a picturesque, rustic-style hotel, even in July halfburied in snow up to ten feet deep in places. Inside, the stunning lobby rose to a mezzanine and reached heavenward to its pointed apex. Giant cedar logs, felled by a fire that burned the slopes of Rainier in 1885, were salvaged for the woodwork. The logs were hand-hewn by an old German carpenter working throughout the winter of 1915—16. In his spare time he created many pieces of furniture and a marvelous grandfather's clock that was placed near the great stone fireplace in the lobby. A few years later it was found necessary to add a wing of ninety-two rooms, and then the camp city disappeared.

After Reaburn and I had inspected the inn, the stables, and blueprints for some additional construction, he challenged me to a hike and the famous "Paradise sport of kings." I inquired in vain what that was, but he kept grinning and saying, "C'mon, Mr. Albright, change into these boots, weatherproof pants, and ski jacket, and I'll show you."

I did as directed, and off we hiked up the hill, plowing through the deep snow. After maybe twenty minutes, Reaburn suddenly stopped and proclaimed that we had reached the place. Here we stared down a rather steep couloir, long and sloping. "Now all you do to get back to the inn is sit down and slide."

"Slide? On what?"

"Well, you may have noticed that the seat of your pants is waxed. That's what you slide on. They're called 'tin britches,' and what you're going to do is called 'nature coasting.'"

Without giving any additional information, Reaburn sat down, shoved himself off, and whizzed away down the snowy slope. Afraid of being left alone on the mountain, I followed immediately. And what an experience! The snow here was more firm and produced a ride not far from a toboggan run. It was exhilarating, marvelous fun. Skimming along, I laughed and shouted, and then *pow*.

I guess I got overly exuberant and lost my balance, catapulting head first into the snow. I was still laughing so hard I couldn't get up and nearly scared poor Reaburn to death. He had pulled over to keep an eye on me, so when I tumbled, he came rushing up. He said later that he was afraid he'd killed his boss. With our "nature coasting" finished, we hiked slowly back to the inn.

*My inspection schedule was interrupted by one incident after another. There was an emergency trip to Yosemite when Desmond abandoned his concessions and disappeared to Alaska. There was the crisis of replacing an incompetent supervisor in Crater Lake with Alex Sparrow. Then I attended the Bohemian Club's Hi-jinks at their Russian River camp. This led to invaluable contacts for the Park Service. It also resulted in my having to pass up a golden opportunity to accompany John C. Merriam and Madison Grant on an exploratory trip through the northern redwood country that resulted in the establishment of the Save-the-Redwoods League.*

*During this time, Mather was regaining his health and taking his first steps into the real world. Accompanied by friends and George McClain of our Washington office, who replaced a male nurse, he had a great time at Sieur de Monts National Monument in Maine and prepared for his trip to the West.*

Ever since our mountain trip in 1915, Mather and I had been deeply committed to adding the magnificent back country of the Sierra Nevada to Sequoia. We envisaged combining Sequoia and General Grant National Parks with thousands of acres of wild, mountainous country, the canyons of the Kings and Kern Rivers, and the crest of the Sierra, including the summit of Mount Whitney, the highest mountain in the continental United States. This would create the largest national park outside Yellowstone. Then if we could regain the lost Yosemite region around the Minarets, the two great parks would almost meet. At least they'd be connected by the John Muir Trail across the crest of the Sierra.

We were knowledgeable enough to realize we had at least two strikes against us. First were the commercial interests: lumbering, power, grazing, and worst of all the city of Los Angeles and its eternal thirst for water. Second was the Forest Service. The latter was the most dangerous because it could use the former as allies in fighting the Park Service.

My days in Sequoia were divided between evaluation of our land extension, inholdings, roads, and the usual planning and financial problems that were rampant in every park. I returned to Yosemite on August 11. I knew I'd be stuck here for some time, so I wired Grace to catch a train and join me. The concession problem here was haunting me and had to be settled immediately, as I had received word from Mr. Mather that he was leaving for the West. I had already become a bit apprehensive about Mr. Mather, for his letters ceased after one from Chicago outlining his trip west. But happily he turned up in Glacier in fine spirits.

In Yosemite on August 15 Supervisor Lewis, several of his staff, and I made a horseback trip up to Tuolumne Meadows. As we rode off, I thanked my lucky stars that there were men like this for a park with so much trouble. After all, Yosemite was Stephen Mather's favorite and therefore needed the best. And the best the National Park Service had for a supervisor was Washington B. Lewis, better known as "Dusty" (probably because he was always covered with dust from his dried-up roads). He was an absolute gem, very intelligent, and a brilliant engineer. His main forte was his incisive knowledge of people and ability to get along with anyone. Fortunately he had agreed, at my insistence, not to enlist in the army. Yosemite needed him a great deal worse than the army needed one more uniformed body.

Another asset he had was his wife, Bernice. She resembled my tall, slim brunette wife, matching her in high spirits, laughter, and friendly charm. Bernice and Grace had taken to each other instantly, becoming great friends. The ladies had gladly stayed behind at the Lewis's home while their men set off for the high Sierra country.

The purpose of our visit to the Tuolumne was to check out the camping facilities, but of more importance was the opportunity to discuss plans for Yosemite and Sequoia with our allies in the Sierra Club. Prior to this, I had long discussions with Will Colby in San Francisco and also with a number of conservationists at a Bohemian Club gathering. They all had been enthusiastic and had given me assurance that they would help us carry out the ideas Mather and I had promoted. To our group at

Tuolumne, I reiterated the vision of a sweeping Sierra wilderness park extending northward well toward Yosemite.

A new bill was moving through the Congress, but without much hope of passage. Between the war and the opposition of local commercial interests and Congressman Denver Church, I inwardly felt there was little chance of success, but I kept up an optimistic front, enthusiastically preaching that our efforts should not be wasted at this time. Mather had tried to lure Church into the mountain party of 1915 to "educate" him to our views, but he refused the invitation. Now I urged that we strengthen our support in the San Joaquin Valley and formulate postwar battle plans to enlarge Sequoia and retrieve the section of Yosemite that had been removed back in 1905-6.

Looking back on that evening, it's hard to see how those dreams went down the drain for so many long years. Most of us were so young, so optimistic, so positive that we just couldn't lose. It's hard to realize that Kings Canyon National Park didn't come into being until 1940 and that the Minarets section of Yosemite remains to this day under Forest Service jurisdiction.

I then turned to the concession problem in Yosemite. The Desmond Company was a dangerous whirlpool of financial and administrative chaos.

Earlier in the summer, to avoid bankruptcy, I had ordered the closing of Desmond's upper park lodges and the cessation of many services in the valley. The company's reputation was ruined, so I even had the name changed to the Yosemite Park Company. The earlier loan of seventeen thousand dollars and the sixty-percent assessment on all stockholders had been of no use. It had only increased the stake that Mather had in this shady venture.

I had felt from the beginning that it was possibly illegal for him to be involved in a concession licensed by the government. If not, it was surely a conflict of interest. I was fearful of going to Interior's solicitor general to get a definitive legal opinion. Everything hinged on whether, or how soon, it might be dragged into the open. This now seemed not only possible, but inevitable. If a scandal erupted, it could be fatal to Mather's recovery and a terrible blot on the Park Service itself.

A short time later I met Mr. Mather in San Francisco. Although I was overjoyed to see him so physically healthy, his nervous condition appeared when we tried to discuss problems in Mount Rainier and Yosemite.

However, he also recognized the problem and cut our discussion short, saying: "Horace, I'm not up to these difficulties. You have been absorbing them for months and must solve them yourself or with your advisors. Give me a little more time. Then we can talk them over together for decisions. Carry on as you have been doing. Please don't feel I'm letting you down. I just need more time."

He was so magnificent in appreciation of his own difficulties that I was close to tears. All I could do was reassure him that everyone was pulling his oar, would carry on as he would wish us to do, that his Park Service was thriving according to his ideals.

Grace and I stayed in Yosemite until the end of August. I put in many hours with Mother Curry and son Foster, who was pushing his plan to buy out the Desmond Company. I was pretty sure he couldn't get the financial wherewithal. Just in case he could pull off this miracle, I wanted to make it clear beforehand that I couldn't approve of it without Mr. Mather's consent, and he was not well enough to make that decision at this time.

It wasn't all work and no play for the Albright and Lewis families. The girls had been having a great time together. One wonderful excursion for us all was a horseback trip to the Merced Wawona grove of sequoia trees to the south. It was a languid summer day, with easy riding through the beautiful forests, enjoying panoramic views and savoring the cool quiet of upland Wawona, some distance from the floor of the valley.

As usual, Dusty and I got to playing around. The party had dismounted to have refreshments and take a bit of rest. Our wives wandered off to a nearby stream to see if it ended as a waterfall to the valley. Dusty plucked some feathery stalks and stuffed them around his hat, totally covering it. He wrapped one of the extra saddle blankets around himself. Then he crept up on Grace and Bernice, suddenly letting out a wild Indian war whoop and scaring the very devil out of them. Bernice shrieked and promptly slid into the stream. My girl instantly swung with her leather bag, socked him full in the face, and was pulling out her long, venomous hat pin for a final thrust when she recognized her foe. While we husbands waited for a bawling out, our wives lay on the ground helplessly laughing. What a sight—Bernice wet and muddied, Dusty nursing a red and puffy cheek, and Grace still clutching her wicked weapon.

Then it was back to San Francisco early in September. I had several meetings with Will Colby about the Sequoia extension and the Yosemite recession and concession situations. I valued this man's intelligent, realistic

analysis of our park problems and his readiness to help through his position with the Sierra Club. He and I came to the basic agreement that, although the enlargement of the parks should be kept before important members of Congress and bills introduced if possible, there probably was no way any major effort could be accomplished before the war ended.

A showdown with the Desmond Company was also avoided. I spent too many precious hours in San Francisco with Desmond Company officials. With A. B. C. Dohrmann I cajoled, pleaded, and finally played on his sympathies (Mather's illness) to wring a promise from him that he would try to clean up the operations in Yosemite, manage the finances, and keep the company on an even keel until Mather was well enough to make some decisions about it. I felt I had no right to do anything more than regulate the concession according to existing government policy. Surely I, on behalf of the Park Service, couldn't get myself mixed into the financial and operational end of it when Mather's possible conflict of interest was so deep. Again wait and see.

Before leaving San Francisco to join Douglas White for my first visit to Utah's national park areas, I wrote a long letter to Joe Cotter in Washington. It reveals my state of mind as I struggled with the many challenges of "laying the foundations."

I tell you, Joe, the thing that weighs the heaviest on me is policy making. Organizing this new Service, with few precedents to go by and no one but myself to make decisions is a terrible burden. I always try to think what Mr. Mather would want, but he's not around now and lord knows when he will be. So I'm on my own. I think of myself as an explorer in unknown territory. Each idea I have must be tested, each fork of the trail must be examined. Or maybe it's like constructing a house. I'm at the stage where I am laying the foundations. They are what everything else is built upon. I have no blueprints and no architect. Only the ideals and principles for which the Park Service was created—to preserve, intact, the heritage we were bequeathed. The devil of the thing is the conflicting principles in our organic act. How can we interpret the unrestricted use of the parks for the public and still retain them totally intact for the future? So it comes down to when I make a decision, I lay another brick for the foundation but must always be concerned that it does not impair the construction of the building as it rises. These bricks are setting the principles and precedents for the Service to follow in the years ahead.