



Greater Yellowstone *1918*

Back in California, I had only one or two days in Berkeley with my precious wife. She was blooming physically but joyfully, with the coming birth of our baby.

I spent most of the time on Sequoia and Yosemite matters, although I decided there was no need to visit the parks at this time. Yosemite was in good shape, due to the efficient administration of Superintendent Lewis. The concessioner mess was put on hold for Mather's return. On May 28 the new power plant had finally begun operation. On September 7 Secretary Lane and Mr. Mather formally christened it "The Henry Floy," in honor of its designer, Mather's recently deceased brother-in-law.

Mather had approved of a donation from the Sierra Club to install iron posts, threaded with steel cables, creating a trail to the top of Half Dome. This would replace an old unsafe rope-and-bolt device put in by a sailor back in the 1880s.

Getting rid of the old was fine, but I was afraid we were going to open a new kettle of worms. I always hated to interfere with a decision Mather had already made, but I decided to write him about this matter: "Mr. Mather, we are in agreement that the old Half Dome trail is dangerous and folks should be kept off it but I am afraid of something else. My fears are that a fine new one will encourage too many mountaineers and they will now want to go beyond the trail and begin all sorts of climbing on the face of Half Dome and other landmarks in Yosemite.

That, to me, would be a desecration of the natural wonders our visitors come to Yosemite to see."

I received no answer to my letter, and the new trail was constructed in 1918. Many decades later climbers with pitons and ropes crawled on Half Dome, El Capitan, and other granite cliffs of the Yosemite while tourists watched the spectacle.

One person I had to see in San Francisco was Ralph Merritt, federal food commissioner for California. I had received a letter from him on May 9 in which he thundered: "I am counting on you to see that as many cattle as possible are admitted to the national parks in order that we may have sufficient carry over to leave us enough stock for next year.... Let me know how many head you plan to let in to each one of the parks."

I replied that we had tried to be "accommodating" with the cattlemen, but that I didn't like their implied blackmail: "to assume an attitude of opposition to our 'Greater Sequoia Park project' if we didn't open the parks to grazing." I wanted to make sure Merritt understood that grazing was unacceptable as Park Service policy, except in minor circumstances—war or no war.

I stated my argument that we were opposed to grazing for many reasons. The prime one, of course, was that sheep completely, and cattle nearly, destroyed the floor-covering nature had laid down to protect the natural environment. Then there was the matter of steep mountain slopes up which whole herds of cattle scrambled and dug their way, tearing up laboriously and expensively laid out trails and dislodging rocks. Finally, the hikers and horseback packers had to pass up desirable camping sites because the cattle had used them as "nightstands," as Emerson Hough had called them in 1915.

Stephen Mather, with his incomparable charm and persuasiveness, had used all these arguments and probably a lot more when he had seen Merritt a short time before. It had gotten him nowhere, so if Mather hadn't succeeded, I had no confidence I could. It was a moot question in any case, for Merritt was away on vacation and I never saw him.

On July 12 I headed north to check out the major parks. My job was made easier by the fact that Mather had preceded me on his inspection tour of the Northwest. Traveling in his own chauffeured car, he had visited Yosemite, General Grant, Sequoia, Crater Lake, Mount Rainier, and Lassen. As I followed Mather's trail, I was satisfied that Crater Lake and Mount Rainier were in good shape. The work on the rim road around Crater Lake was superb.

At Mount Rainier Superintendent Dewitt Reaburn and others told me how grand Mather had looked, how decisive he had been, how quiet and steady he had seemed. The only downside was that he had tired easily, but that wasn't out of line considering his long illness. My spirits soared at the thought that my chief seemed to be pretty much his old self. His taking hold of even small matters was reassuring, and it lifted some of the burden from my shoulders.

Because of Mather's inspection of Mount Rainier, I could move on quickly to Glacier. Even here, I picked up a few extra days as this park was also in fine condition. The arrangements I had made last year about grazing were holding up with few complaints. The east side road was just about finished, and my negotiations with the Blackfeet during the spring had settled most of their complaints.

Timber cutting, mining, summer residences, and other practices contrary to park principles were allowed in the act creating Glacier in 1910. Eight years later Lane forbade the construction of new residences but allowed old ones to remain. These were finally outlawed in 1931.

Privately owned lands were a real problem, especially summer homes on Lake McDonald. There seemed to be no solution to these until the war's end, when some money could be appropriated.

Gradually exchanges of lands near roads or other attractions were made for lands outside the park—usually Forest Service lands. Always regarding us with jealousy and fear, the Forest Service fought back, but by an act of Congress in the 1920s the secretary of the interior was authorized to trade private lands in the park for lands anywhere in Montana.

In June 1918 Thomas J. Walsh of Montana was one of the most powerful senators in Washington, and he owned a house on Lake McDonald. A bit later on, his fellow senator Burton K. Wheeler became a neighbor with a summer cottage. Trying for years to rectify the original mistakes in Glacier's organic act, we always had a war with Walsh, not just in this park but in many others. I always said that when Enos Mills left the battlefield for the grave, Walsh took his place with me.

Now I went on to Yellowstone, where I was looking forward to a prolonged stay in my favorite park and to the time I would have to investigate the Jackson Hole-Teton situation. When I was younger and homesick and had a hard time getting to sleep, I would close my eyes and imagine my Owens Valley and old Mount Tom and the neighboring Sierras protecting Bishop. It was always comforting, as I suppose I felt

they were also protecting me. Once I had seen the Jackson Hole and its jagged, snow-topped peaks, serene valley, and lazy Snake River, I felt the same deep peace. But the fear was always with me that this beautiful spot might go the way mine had gone. Instead of having to provide water for thirsty Los Angeles, it could be ruined by commercialization and its water drained off for Idaho potato farmers.

Now when did the concept of adding the Teton area to Yellowstone occur, and whose idea was it? Well, Mather and I would have liked the honor, but the only credit we could claim was that we were the ones who finally forced action on it. The idea apparently germinated in the mind of General Philip Sheridan of Civil War fame. In 1882 he suggested that Yellowstone's size be nearly doubled in order to create a larger game sanctuary. No attention was shown to his idea or to various other proposals put forth from time to time.

Some interest was aroused in 1917 when a road was opened from Yellowstone down to Jackson Hole. It stretched twenty-six miles from the Snake River Ranger Station to Moran. Then in October of that year Emerson Hough, our old friend from Mather Mountain Party days, had sent me a manuscript of his that would appear on December 1, 1917, in the *Saturday Evening Post*. Its title was "Greater Yellowstone." Its themes were to preserve the elk herds and other animals from unlimited hunting, double the Yellowstone area for scenic enjoyment, and save Jackson Hole from timbering, mining, and other destructive practices. His punch line was "Greater Yellowstone; Greater Wyoming; above everything else, Greater America."

Hough's accompanying letter to me concluded: "Please let us get this thing through; that country ought to be a part of the Park."

And I replied, "It is not necessary for you to appeal to us for sympathy toward the idea of including the Jackson Hole country in Yellowstone Park. We have been boosting this project for two years."

So Hough deserves the honor of coining the phrase "Greater Yellowstone." I know I always used his words during the long fight to get the area into the National Park System. To this day it is still a rallying cry for conservationists when referring to areas outside the limits of Yellowstone.

Much as Mather and I had always been in agreement that this area must be acquired for the Park Service, he now instructed me not to waste my time on it because of the inherent opposition. He said: "Let it go for a while. Let things settle down after the war's upheaval." I rarely opposed

Mather, but I was the acting director, the person responsible for that service, with Mather assuring me time and again that I was to make all decisions. I did so at this time and was comfortable in proceeding with my plans for Jackson Hole.

When I had been here a year ago, I hadn't been able to get down there and had only gazed at the Tetons from Shoshone Point in Yellowstone, but I had made a strong statement in our annual report headed *The Tetons Should Be Added at Once*. Listed as necessary to the extension of Yellowstone were "the Teton range, Jackson Lake, all of the rugged scenic lands north of the Buffalo Fork of the Snake River, including the valleys of Pilgrim and Pacific Creeks to Two Ocean Pass." No piker, I added, "the canyons, lakes and forests of the Upper Yellowstone and the Thorofare Basin. Every foot of the area naturally belongs to Yellowstone Park."

A bill including this outline had been drawn up and introduced in the Congress by Wyoming's Senator Frank Mondell on April 24, 1918. Secretary Lane pushed it forward. Henry Graves, head of the Forest Service, reluctantly endorsed it, knowing he was relinquishing vast lands to the Park Service.

We attained one thing when, on July 8, 1918, as an aid to this pending legislation, President Wilson withdrew the land concerned from homestead entry, setting aside six hundred thousand acres of Teton National Forest.

Sadly, Mondell's bill was lost at the bottom of the Senate calendar, as it needed unanimous consent to climb to a spot where it could be considered before adjournment. Denial of this consent by Senator John Nugent of Idaho ended the park extension bill for 1918. Next the Forest Service switched positions after Wilson's executive order and became an antagonist, pulling the ranchers and cattlemen with it. Notwithstanding all this, the project seemed assured, and the bill would pass when the Sixty-fifth Congress reassembled for its third session in the fall.

To me this project was an example of the paradox within our Park Service organic act. We were charged to conserve the scenery, the natural and historic objects, and the wildlife. *But* at the same time we were to provide for the enjoyment of these by the people. *But* at the same time we were to leave them unimpaired for future generations. As one who had participated in the discussions and writing of that 1916 act, I remembered the difficulty of reconciling these opposite factors. We had finally come to the belief that, with rational, careful, and loving thought, it could be done.

Applying those principles to the Teton country, it went something like this. It should be an integrated whole with Yellowstone. A separate park wasn't considered at this time. The American people should be able to enjoy a totally different experience than the one that the original boundaries of Yellowstone offered. Aside from the natural wonders of geysers, a grand canyon, and hot springs, Yellowstone was a vast, untouched wilderness of lodgepole pine forest and rather ordinary mountains. In contrast, Jackson Hole was enhanced by its astounding Teton spires and jewel-like lakes, the imposing Gros Ventre range to the east, and the Hobacks to the south. Through the center flowed the aptly named Snake River, twisting and turning its way toward Idaho.

Along with this magnificent beauty, were we going to add something alien to Yellowstone's nearly pristine lands? Jackson Lake had long since been dammed where the Snake River exited southward. This had caused a ghastly eyesore of dead trees as far as the eye could reach and had polluted the water. There were ugly buildings at Moran, saloons near Jenny Lake, a rundown old town sprawling across the end of the valley, cattle everywhere.

Another consideration for Greater Yellowstone was the rounding out of the land to complete the watersheds, leaving nature alone, undirected and untouched. Already there had been talk about dams for Two Ocean and Emma Matilda Lakes. This would seriously interfere with the natural trails of the moose, bear, and the great herds of elk. The cattle ranchers of Jackson Hole counted on the friendly Forest Service to keep control over the great southern elk herd by bottling them up in restricted areas, leaving the rest for the grazing of their domesticated animals or good hunting.

To sum it up, the area was on its way to wanton commercialism and physical destruction if the Park Service didn't get it and get it soon. I wanted Jackson Hole saved, and I wanted Yellowstone not confined to a map of straight lines. This unity created by the natural courses of mountains, rivers, and animal migrations was my primary goal, along with preserving the Hole from commercial trashing.

The purposes of an inspection of Jackson Hole were to learn as much as possible to further Mondell's bill, to examine and get a thorough knowledge of the whole region, not just the part in which we were interested, and to get local support to accomplish our goal. What were the physical features? Roads? Towns? Who lived there? What was the economic situation? What about the animals, in particular the elk migration? How extensive were the water problems? What were the reclamation

features, the sorry-looking Jackson Lake and dam? Who was in favor of, who against the extension?

When I arrived in Yellowstone, I was met by Arthur Demaray from our Washington office, a talented draftsman who had earlier served in the Geological Survey. He had brought his wife and young daughter, Elise, with him. On the morning of August 3, they joined me and we set out for Jackson Hole, again staying at Ben Sheffield's in Moran.

When the Demarays were settled and under the wing of Ben Sheffield, I set off for Jackson at the southern end of the Hole. I'll tell you, it was a jolt. Sheffield had made out that it was a town. Well, a town is not a city, but a town should be more than a haphazard crisscross of rutted streets, a cluster of shaggy buildings, with no hint of respectability except for an old church. I passed up the local rector and scouted around for the newspaper office. There always was one of those if there were two people to read the paper, and an editor of a newspaper always knew more about a place than anyone else. On foot I covered the town and finally hit on a nondescript little square building. It was nothing to look at, but it sure had a splendid sign over the door: "Jackson's Hole Courier" in flowery nineteenth-century-style print.

I opened the door and walked in. I saw a fellow about my own age over in the corner and asked him who was in charge here.

He replied, "I am."

Rather surprised, I next inquired, "Well, where's the editor of the paper?"

He said, "I am."

Still not feeling comfortable about this rather abrupt young man, I asked, "Well, then where is the owner of this paper?"

Again the reply, "I am."

That seemed to cover all the bases, so I introduced myself and explained why I was in Jackson. He put out his hand and said, "Well, I'm Dick Winger. I'm not sure whether you are welcome around here as we don't take to the federal government interfering in our affairs. But sit down and tell me about your Greater Yellowstone." So that's how I met Winger. We became fast friends and associates for many years to come.

After I had gone over our ideas for Jackson Hole, Winger suggested he walk me around town and introduce me to some of the old timers. "You'll have to get along with them or you might as well high-tail it back to Yellowstone," he said. Then he put a sign on his door that he had gone to lunch and wheeled me into one old place after another to meet one

old duffer after another. When he introduced me, Winger let them assume I was just a casual visitor. He never mentioned my Washington job. In Wyoming you could be taking your life in your hands if you mentioned the W word. I'll bet their school history books even eliminated our first president.

Anyway, I tried to be extremely cautious, affable, and friendly with them, but gave out as little information as I could. I elicited their opinions about anything and everything from the war to the weather to the price of cattle, and of course how they felt about the future. What changes if any might come to Jackson Hole in the future? The answer was a menacing consensus. "Nobody better try to change this place." The statement proved prophetic. So the whole trip to Jackson bore no fruit at that time except for Winger's instant friendship and promise to keep in contact. Little did I know what an enormous plus that would be a few years ahead.

The next day Demaray and I spent four or five hours on horseback, covering the territory around Jenny and Leigh Lakes, which lie at the base of the Tetons. The local Forest Service man accompanied us. I don't remember his name, but he was tough and antagonistic. Of course, he knew who we were and could guess for what reason we were looking over his territory.

Maybe I've overdone this already, but let me give a little more background on the National Park Service versus the Forest Service. I don't think Mather and I ever had any idea of challenging the Forest Service for leadership of the conservation movement. We just wanted to round out the National Park System. We declined to consider Lake Tahoe, Mount Hood, Mount Baker, Mount Shasta, the Arkansas Ouchita Mountains, and many other beautiful areas because they did not measure up to what we regarded as national park standards or had too much commercial development or too many inholdings, or because the cost was prohibitive considering what the Congress would give us. Certainly Mather and I weren't trying for a power base, as we both planned to leave the government as soon as we could accomplish our initial job of organizing the Park Service on a firm and lasting basis, trying to build a system that would stand up for all time and not be in danger of absorption into some other bureau, probably the Forest Service.

Although we recognized that this branch was only ten years older than ours, it had acquired a reputation and a political clout through men like Theodore Roosevelt and Gifford Pinchot. If the latter had not been

fired by Taft in the Ballinger-Pinchot controversy of 1910-11, the Forest Service would probably have succeeded in swallowing the national parks before our bureau could have been created.

From the moment an independent Park Service was organized, the Forest Service was jealous of it and never failed to fight it whenever their land was involved. But look at it this way. For new parks or additions to old ones, the Park Service had few places to acquire land in the public domain unless it dipped into holdings of the Forest Service. They stood for use of anything within their borders: water, minerals, forests, and other commercially attractive enterprises. They allowed hunting, dams, summer homes, and unlimited roads for lumbering. Their beliefs contradicted all of ours.

I'll admit that Mather and I gave little thought and had less concern when reaching out for their land because we were so philosophically opposed to them. We genuinely believed we were preserving while they were destroying. The antagonism continues to this day.

Demaray and I spent that long day with the sullen Forest Service man. We accomplished a tremendous amount of fact-finding. Demaray's notes and pencil drawings were invaluable when we returned to Washington to push our agenda. Furthermore, our companion from the rival service was so angry underneath his frozen, surly exterior that he accidentally gave out a stream of information that we could and did use in the months ahead.

It was an unpleasant day in some respects, but a glorious one in others. If you have ever stood at Jenny Lake and looked across to Cascade Canyon weaving its sinuous way toward the summit of the Tetons, you will know the joy of being in a sacred place, designed by God to be protected forever. This may sound juvenile and presumptuous, but then I took it personally. I really felt I had a mission to preserve the Grand Tetons in the only way I knew, through the National Park Service.

Another day or so was spent alone with Demaray gathering data on the Jackson Lake mess, scouting out the Buffalo Fork region, and learning a great deal about the drift of the elk to the valley's winter refuge. No matter how much we had read about this area, we had been pretty ignorant. Now we felt we had a real store of useful knowledge to work with when we got back to Washington. So we packed up and returned to Yellowstone.

On August 12 I went up to Bozeman to meet our engineer, George Goodwin, and the Gallatin County commissioners. The Park Service was

now responsible for our own roads in Yellowstone after the army engineers were relieved of this duty on July 1. This meeting was to reach an agreement on a scenic highway through the Gallatin Canyon into the northwestern corner of Yellowstone. Mather had recently been in touch with these people, had given general approval to the project, but had left decisions to the commissioners.

Their plans met with my opposition. I was very precise in spelling out my overall policy on roads even though I knew it clashed with some of Mather's. He promoted the idea of improved "highways" to and in the parks to encourage more visitors. As the American people owned the national parks, I felt they deserved not only good roads but safe roads. These should be improved to eliminate dangerous grades and curves, with parapets erected, and, most of all, should be paved. This had been one of the reasons for establishing the landscape and engineering department.

I had already set a policy for roads to be limited to two lanes, only wide enough to safely accommodate ordinary cars and trucks, with parapets to be erected where necessary. This was a safety measure, but it was also my quirky opinion that it made tourists slow down enough to enjoy the parks more. Previously I had ordered no more wagons or stagecoaches after a nasty fight in Glacier in 1916, when a stagecoach company challenged us and demanded the right to compete with the auto coach service.

To the commissioners I especially emphasized the dangers of a highway near or in a national park. This encouraged a diversionary network of smaller roads in the parks and would result in an invasion of wilderness areas not intended to be trampled by crowds of tourists.

Worst of all in my mind was that highways spelled too many people. This is where Mather and I visualized the future quite differently. Mather never gave up on the idea that rail passengers would always make up a large segment of tourists. And furthermore, there never could be too many tourists for Stephen Mather. He wanted as many as possible to enjoy his "treasures."

Many of us who were in the younger generation, such as Howard Hays and Dusty Lewis, could already see that the automobile would create a huge increase in visitors, and we worried whether too many might overwhelm our parks in the future. There never was a quarrel on the topic because all of us loyally followed Mather's philosophy of encouraging tourists no matter how they got to the parks.

At this time, I was making the decisions, and I told the commissioners that for the time being, and probably the foreseeable future, Yellowstone

would get along just fine with General Chittenden's army roads. Improve them, yes, but we wouldn't encourage any more. All the wondrous sights were on Chittenden's loop route, which left the vast majority of the park in wilderness. That could be visited on horse or on foot.

On August 14 Chief Forester Henry Graves came to Bozeman to talk over an agreement on sharing costs for this Gallatin road from Bozeman to West Yellowstone, which would enter both the national forest and the national park. Our discussions were pleasant even when Graves questioned me closely about my trip to Jackson Hole, His man down there had written a rather nasty report, poor-mouthing Demaray and me. Among the nicer things he called us were "arrogant, snoopy, and high-handed." Fortunately, Graves knew me quite well, discounted the letter, and accepted my honest answers to his questions. In fact, later in the year, in discussions with Mather, he produced notes he had taken in Bozeman that had helped him decide not to openly oppose Mondell's extension bill.

On August 17 I climbed on a train at Cody, made a quick stopover in Denver, but avoided Chicago except for changing trains. When I arrived back in Washington on August 23, because of the flu epidemic, I walked all the way from the station to my apartment on California Street where it joined Columbia Road and Connecticut Avenue. Here was a statue of Civil War General George McClellan. Propped up against it was a sign warning, "Your cough may kill."

When I finally climbed the four flights to the Albright apartment and opened the door, my spirits plummeted. It was just a hot, musty, empty place with no beautiful Dacie-girl. No smell of her wonderful cooking. No laughter, no music from the piano. It was overwhelming to think I hadn't seen her in months and had no idea when I would see her again. Most of the time I put it to one side, but this night was tough and I really wondered if all our sacrifice was worth it.