



## *"I'm Coming Down to Washington"* 1918

*Mather spent the remainder of the summer of 1918 in California. With Huston Thompson, he explored the Kearsage Pass area of the Sierra, then went to Yosemite to dedicate the new power plant and the new Glacier Point Hotel. On September 9, Mather wrote me that he planned to come east, visit Chicago and his home in Darien, and then "come down to Washington."*

*Come down to Washington.* To read this was like Gabriel blowing his horn. My chief was well and could take over the service, and I would be free to go home to California to Grace. Hallelujah!

Before all these wonderful events could take place, I had to get out the annual report for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1918, a report ostensibly written by Stephen Mather to Secretary Lane. As I wrote Lindsley on the day I returned to my office, "The trip did me a world of good \_\_\_ I am getting down to the annual report and other matters of this kind that will occupy me for the next month, and, as I am director, assistant director, and chief clerk, you can well imagine that I am going to be rather busy."

Last year my report had emphasized the origin of the National Park Service, the state of the units it comprised, and an outline of our plans for its future. For the 1917-18 report, my main thrust was to show that the Park Service had not only survived the "war exigencies" but had produced "important achievements in the development of the national park and monument system." I emphasized the "statement of policy" (the creed) in an opening paragraph and then had a footnote that it was

printed in full in the appendix. Privately I took pride in the creed and gave myself full credit for it, but in the actual report Lane got all the credit.

When I finished the report and had Secretary Lane's approval, the biggest problem, left was Bob Yard. I didn't want to get involved in this and had avoided any decision until Mather could take charge, but fate was pushing an immediate decision. When Mather hired Yard and brought him to Washington, he was managing the magazine section of the *New York Herald*. Mather put him on the Geological Survey payroll at a dollar a month, so he could obtain an office in a government building and use the franking privilege. Gradually the government pay rose to three hundred dollars a year. Mather, of course, was augmenting this with six hundred a month. On July 1, 1918, however, the Congress passed a new law prohibiting the paying of government employees from private funds such as Mather did for Yard, certain clerks and secretaries, and of course myself.

This new law came about because Senator John D. Work of California was a Christian Scientist. He had discovered that the Bureau of Education was employing many experts for one dollar a month. They were being paid by the American Medical Association to write pamphlets on school hygiene and treatment of children for distribution in the schools as well as to give advice on prenatal care. So Work put an amendment on one of the appropriation bills to prohibit the payment of government employees from private funds. That meant you either took Mather's money and cut all ties with the government or kept your job but no longer accepted his monthly checks. The law was to be effective July 1, 1919.

When I received notification of the new law, I went to each of the office workers to whom Mather was paying a gratuity and explained the situation. I wanted to make sure they understood they had until July 1919 to receive his checks and make plans for the future. Most groaned but took it with a shrug of their shoulders.

Bob Yard was another proposition. I went over to his home, sat down with him out of earshot of his ladies, and carefully outlined the law. He was instantly hostile and said, "I won't leave. I'm too old to go back to magazine and newspaper work. Steve promised me a lifetime job, engaged me for life, and is obligated to take care of me financially to the end."

That was pretty blunt and positive, so I replied, "Well, any agreements you and Mr. Mather made are between the two of you. That's not my business. However, my business, as acting director, is to see that the law is obeyed. You have been heading the education and information section of

the National Park Service, have a government office, and enjoy federal privileges. All these must be relinquished by July 1, 1919. You have one year to make new arrangements."

He stared me down. I didn't want to hurt this old friend, but there was no alternative for him, so I tried to soften the blow by adding, "Bob, of course, you'll continue to receive your regular check from Mr. Mather's account until you two can have a talk, settle your problems, and receive new instructions from him. How's that?" Bob just sat there, sadly nodding his head and staring vacantly out the window.

After Mather returned to Washington, they had it out. The result was that Bob stuck to his position. Mather denied he had ever made any long-range commitment. The estrangement between the old friends flared to the point that Mather was ready to cut Yard off without a nickel. Fearful of Mather's fragile health, several of us who were close acquaintances of both men tried to cool the situation. Nothing worked.

Mather even sent me over to Horace McFarland of the American Civic Association with an offer to slip him thirty-six hundred dollars a year to put Yard on the association's payroll. The understanding was to be kept a secret from Bob. But McFarland had never liked Bob and didn't want him in his outfit, so he refused Mather's request.

Attempting to make an appearance of friendly separation, Mather was persuaded to praise Yard publicly for his national park publicity work and pay his salary (now \$650 a month) until the law went into effect in 1919. He also made a deal with Yard for a cash settlement of ten thousand dollars to start Bob's pet project, later known as the National Parks Association. When this organization was formed, Mather went so far as to lend it his name and prestige even though he wasn't happy. He feared it would directly compete with his friend McFarland's American Civic Association. However, at that time it seemed the only solution for placating Yard.

A few years later the two men parted forever. Mather became so angry with Yard's often rash criticism of Park Service policies, especially opposition to a Grand Teton National Park, that he withdrew his name and support from the National Parks Association.

Next I turned my attention to something to which I'd given a lot of thought. After this summer's tour of the parks, I had come to the conclusion that an architecture and landscape division should be created within the Park Service. We had finally been able to assume full jurisdiction over the roads in park areas. Mather and I had talked about this many times and

felt that roads in a national park should have exceptional consideration. Obviously, top priority would be given to construction and safety, but esthetic values came next. Within park areas this covered buildings, gateway entrances, overlooks for scenic vistas, and other architectural and visual components.

Consulting with several people, including Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., I set up a new landscape division, outlining its duties to plan, design, approve, and direct construction of all park structures by the government or the concessioners. I wanted to ensure that the natural scene be kept as close as possible to what it was when found and, from then on, kept unimpaired into the future.

As for the natural features of the parks, I stated that only the outstanding ones, which were the prime reasons for the creation of a park, would be considered for development. The remainder, usually seventy-five percent or more of the total, were to be reserved as wilderness areas.

One day a telegram arrived: "Horace. Get out the flags. Dust off my desk. I'm coming back. Ogden September 15. Chicago September 23. Washington September 25. In between have date in Darien for graveyard dedication on September 22. Hooray. Stephen Mather."

On September 25, 1918, Mather strode into the office. He looked marvelous with his white hair and brilliant blue eyes accentuated by a deep, healthy tan. I'd never seen him look better, so robust, so exhilarated, so charming. He settled right down to the job as though he had never been away. We spent the next few days catching up on park business, mainly items that I had been careful to keep from him, long-range problems, and controversial matters.

I had good news for him too. The previous day, September 24, Katmai National Monument had been created by proclamation of President Wilson. I had barely mentioned to Mather how Gilbert Grosvenor of the National Geographic Society and I had hatched a plan for Katmai. It is an example of how we got things done in 1918. Grosvenor merits ninety-nine percent of the credit for its success.

One day Grosvenor called me up and asked if I'd meet him for lunch. That would be fine. He appreciated good food, so we usually went to some fine restaurant. However, on this day when I walked into his office lunch was there—a large tray of sandwiches, some pie, and beverages. Across a huge oak conference table, a desk, and assorted open spaces were large Geographic Society maps, papers, and stacks of photographs. In an open arms sweep-of-the room gesture, he greeted me with: "Horace, look

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at all this. I have a new Park Service unit for you. This is Katmai National Park or, if you wish, the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes National Park!"

I already knew quite a bit about Katmai and about the eruption in June 1912 of Novarupta volcano, located on the Alaskan mainland close to the string of Aleutian Islands. The giant explosion had been ten times more powerful than the modern Mount St. Helens eruption. Shortly afterward, the National Geographic sent an expedition to the region, led by Robert Griggs. He reported: "The whole valley as far as the eye could reach was full of hundreds, no thousands, of smokes curling up from its fissured floor." He named it the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes. Grosvenor was deeply interested in the area and, in his January 1917 *National Geographic*, devoted almost the entire issue to Katmai.

Grosvenor had spoken to me about taking Katmai into the Park System, but at the time we had enough problems with Mount McKinley. To Congress, the whole Territory of Alaska was some far-off place like Mars. It was really only the forceful work of the Boone and Crockett Club members (one of whom was Theodore Roosevelt) that brought McKinley enough recognition to make it a park.

Also, we had already pushed Lassen from national monument to park status so that Billy Kent would support our Park Service organic act. In that same year we acquired more volcanoes when Hawaii was made a national park. We had taken a great deal of criticism for letting some of these become national parks. We weren't very pleased that Congress had created them while allowing certain obnoxious practices like mining and hunting in McKinley, summer homes in Hawaii, and railroad lines and reservoirs in Lassen. Of course, these developments had been planned and legislation was rolling before our Park Service was created, so we felt we didn't bear any shame. When new park areas were proposed and we noted that these practices and others even worse were included, however, we tried to wave a red flag. Where commercial interests were involved, it was really safer to avoid Congress and settle for a national monument.

I followed up with Grosvenor on the project. He had done a superb job of assembling maps and material, which he brought over to our offices in the Interior Department along with Robert Griggs, who knew and explained every inch of the proposed monument. We added experts from various bureaus in our department to the National Geographic people, and after several meetings we had a finished product. The boundaries, the financial issues, the expectations for wild life, and all other issues that the

members of Congress or the Interior Department might raise seemed to have been settled.

Then I asked Grosvenor: "Well, now what'll we do? This really isn't the best moment to ask for a national park."

Grosvenor replied: "As long as you are satisfied, Horace, leave the rest to me. We may not get a national park, but by George at least we'll get a national monument."

So I said: "You're undoubtedly right. Because McKinley was such a long, hard pull, I think we'll have to settle for Katmai as a national monument."

This project wasn't exactly typical. Most proposed areas came out a lot differently, or at least with a lot more worry, time, and trouble. But Katmai does show how a prime area, studied carefully, and presented almost as a *fait accompli*, could become a part of the Park Service. Especially when no one in the Congress had an ax to grind or was paying much attention.

We didn't take it up with anyone. Nobody cared much about it. We just did it. We got the Geological Survey to take their fine maps and convert them to official Interior maps. As an attorney, I drew up the legal proclamation, as I did almost all legal papers for our bureau. I had it checked out by the department's solicitor general, and then I presented it to Secretary Lane. He never asked a single question except whether it was worthy of being in the Park Service. I said, "Yes." So he approved the project and sent it over to President Wilson, who signed the proclamation making Katmai a national monument.

I should add here that President Woodrow Wilson was totally uninterested in conservation, national parks, or anything that pertained to the great outdoors. Whatever fine things occurred during his administration, like creation of a National Park Service, came through Secretary Franklin Lane. Neither of them should be counted as conservationists, but Lane let us have free rein for the most part and in general didn't care to interfere with our judgments. Wilson just wasn't a conservationist in any sense of the word.

Mather was understandably excited about Katmai. He loved mountains and he loved volcanoes. He immediately wrote out his own personal check to Grosvenor to help with further scientific work at the new monument. This also whetted his appetite to investigate the question of more park areas, especially the ones proposed in Colorado. Unfortunately, they all were connected with Enos Mills.

There had rarely been a peaceful day between Mills and the National Park Service since its creation. The quarrel became of vital importance in 1918.

Mills was one of the prime spokesmen and writers in the fledgling conservation movement and was in a position to wreak havoc on the Park Service. Earlier, he had been in the forefront in promoting a park bureau and had led the fight for the creation of Rocky Mountain National Park. After 1916, however, relations had gone downhill like a toboggan. His antagonism focused on his belief that our service was becoming just like the Forest Service, and his venom was aimed mainly at me. After all, there wasn't anyone else around in the Park Service to jump on. Many the time I gnashed my teeth but kept my temper while trying to placate him without giving in to his unreasonable demands.

In November 1917, when he was all riled up about the grazing situation, Mills used the national press to vilify our policies and egg us into a fight with the Forest Service. I tried the iron fist in a velvet glove:

I want you to know that I personally regard you as one of my best friends and that I also regard you as a most devoted friend to the cause of the national parks, and, furthermore, that I regard your accomplishments in the promotion of the national park movement as so important and far-reaching that only the lapse of time will afford opportunities to see them in their great proportions and value them correctly.... You may attack any forces whenever and wherever and in any manner that you choose . . . but it is ridiculous to even think of one executive department, or one of its bureaus, openly attacking another department or subdivision thereof, or even an individual officer of another department or bureau. It has therefore not been our policy to make any public references of any kind to the Department of Agriculture or to the Forest Service in regard to the national parks.

Mills paid no attention to my letter and others that followed. Instead he stepped up his attacks. In newspaper articles and letters, he stated that I had "sold out to the Forest Service." Evidence of this was manifest, he said, because of the slow progress in Colorado parks, especially Mount Evans, which lay in the middle of a national forest. Well, practically the whole western half of Colorado lay in some national forest, and we had already carved out quite a chunk for national park areas. With his monumental ego, Mills couldn't see any point of view except his own, couldn't

or didn't want to understand the problems we had all over the West with the Forest Service.

Finally the matter came to a head. Mills wrote Secretary Lane in May 1918, thanking him for a copy of "your National Park Platform," and saying, "This platform should be epoch making." Not knowing I had written the platform, he added, "The Acting Director is a menace to the entire cause of the National Parks." Lane replied on July 22: "You undoubtedly mean Assistant Director Albright. I can not quite understand why you consider him a menace to the national park cause; on the contrary, he has been a conscientious and indefatigable worker in every phase of Interior Department activity looking to the advancement of the parks."

Mills kept up the attack from that time on. In August 1918, while I was inspecting the Fall River Road in Rocky Mountain with a Denver parks committee and a few of our park people, including my own assistant, Arthur Demaray, Mills never stopped delivering a tirade against the Park Service and me. Here's a sample of his rhetoric: "Albright's a crook who has sold out to the Forest Service" to further his own "cheap political interests." Demaray recorded this and similar sentiments and sent them on to Washington.

Mather read the reports carefully. Then he grilled me on every aspect of the various park areas in question and Mills's feud with the Park Service and me. When he seemed to be satisfied that he had digested the facts, he said: "Horace, you've got to get out to Colorado immediately and clean this whole thing up. Not just Mills. He's like a nasty little mosquito buzzing around waiting to draw blood. But we can't let all these important men and organizations believe we are passing them by, ignoring them, cozying up to the Forest Service for our own ends. That Mount Evans question is primary. Go there. Investigate it and make a decision on it. In the meantime, I'll straighten Mills out."

I packed my suitcases and caught a night train out of Washington on September 30. It was a depressing, heartbreaking trip. The train was overcrowded, mainly with men in uniform going to troop reception centers. We were packed in like sardines, and because of the flu the railroad provided masks and insisted we wear them at all times. That was pretty frightening, but cold as it was I spent as much time as possible standing up in the fresh air between the cars.

When I arrived in Denver, I kept my train mask on, as the mayor had ordered every person in public to wear them. He also had forbidden the



assembly of more than five people, so meetings with the Chamber of Commerce, the Hotel Men's Association, the Tourist Bureau, and other groups scheduled for me had to be canceled. Instead, a tedious round of small conferences was held, often outdoors. The few inside scared me to death, for the disease was rampant in Denver.

However, it was vitally important that I meet with these groups. Denver was a beehive of activity with its so-called Denver Parks. Eleven thousand acres of them were easily and quickly accessible, and this didn't even count our Rocky Mountain National Park. Everyone from the governor to a shopkeeper seemed to be vitally interested in them, so of course we had to be too.

Trying to avoid crowds, I stayed with Roe and Jeanette Emery. Waiting for me was a copy of Mather's letter to Mills. In part it read: "Your astounding statement that Mr. Albright is a crook is particularly remarkable, coming from a man of your standing. Mr. Albright's record is as clean as a hound's tooth, and, in and out of season, he has given of himself without stint to the exacting duties of his office, carrying a particularly heavy burden during the period when my own illness threw everything on his shoulders. I simply will not stand by in silence and have slanderous statements of this kind go by without protest." Mather had a little note to me attached, which said, "I fixed Mills up with Lorimer [editor of the *Saturday Evening Post*]. If he doesn't be quiet, his income is going to suffer!"

Everywhere I went I heard more accounts of Mills and his comments about Albright, the Park Service, and now Mather. I inwardly boiled for hours. Finally that night, when I was as mad as a hornet, I typed out a letter to Mills. I intended to mail it as soon as I got out of Colorado, but I ended up reading it to him in person a few days later. My letter advised him that I knew all about his vitriolic attacks and added: "Evidently, in your opinion, Secretary Lane and Mr. Mather, under whom I have worked for years, are not as competent to pass on my fitness for this position as you are. I would not like you to believe that, under a few more pricks of your unjust and untruthful pen, I will get discouraged and quit. That is not my disposition nor my intention.... I shall see you there [Rocky Mountain], but not to ask advice, consent or instructions from you."

At about 14,260 feet, Mount Evans was the most prominent peak seen from Denver, though not so much different from any number of others along the Front Range of the Rockies. Its surrounding region

greatly resembled Rocky Mountain National Park. So why was Mather so desirous of adding it to that park or creating a separate one? I'm not sure. He loved Rocky Mountain and felt Mount Evans would enlarge the experience of visitors. Of course, the two would not be connected because a vast area would lie between them. But deep down, I knew he held Mills in high esteem, even being a bit afraid of him and the power of his pen.

From my standpoint, I wanted to go over the region carefully because I had serious doubts about it and wouldn't think of disputing my chief unless I had good reasons. With so many wonderful areas on our list for acquisition, like Greater Sequoia and Greater Yellowstone, I wasn't sure that duplication of this mountain scene and getting into another war with the Forest Service was worth it. Although the whole Mount Evans project was only eight percent of Pike National Forest, and with so much above timberline as to have no commercial value to speak of, you could bet that they'd still fight like cats over letting us have it.

Besides these considerations, the Denver backers wanted many other nearby areas in the Park Service, areas that mainly attracted people from Denver. These didn't really have a national appeal. I always was thinking of this factor, having had to beat back or discourage countless plans eager congressmen had for some little place in their district to help the local economy and pat themselves on the back come reelection time. I believed the Park Service should never be diluted with sites that did not measure up to the highest standards for all the people, that were not of national significance. As I put into the "creed" earlier that year, "The National Park system as now constituted should not be lowered in standard, dignity, and prestige by the inclusion of areas which express in less than the highest terms the particular class or kind of exhibit which they represent." Mount Evans wasn't in a lower class, and it was of national significance. But it was a question of duplication, being superfluous.

*From October 5 to 9 Superintendent Way, two experienced mountain climbers, and I reached the summit of Mount Evans and then explored various cirques and buttresses around the peak to work up a proposal for a national park. It was an extraordinary experience. I came to the conclusion that Mount Evans was definitely worth fighting for and should be made a national park, whether by extension of Rocky Mountain or on its own. I had gone up there a doubting Thomas and had come down completely sold on acquiring it. The only reservation I still had was the highway to the top of the mountain, which was already under construction. Nothing could be done about that anyway.*

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*From Mount Evans, I went on to Rocky Mountain National Park for a quick but thorough inspection, carefully avoiding Enos Mills until I was ready to leave for California.*

On my last day at Rocky Mountain, at about the last hour, I let Way inform Mills that if he came to the Park Service office I could arrange a short time to see him. Well, I think he must have done the one-minute mile from his place, for he rushed in with tie askew and panting like a hound after a fox. Of course, he was anything but gentle and contrite. He ranted on about the park, but mainly confined himself to chastising me for not paying attention to the Mount Evans region. He said I was in cahoots with the Forest Service to let them keep that area, and on and on.

I didn't have the time or the inclination to listen to much of this, so I cut him off with a few curt sentences about my recent trip up Mount Evans and the possibility of recommending its inclusion in our service. Then I read my letter addressed to him, as mentioned above. With that I picked up my coat, put on my hat, told Way we were leaving, and exited. Mills apparently was too stunned to open his mouth. He never got a chance to say a thing before we drove off to Denver.

I wrote Howard Hays a few days later, telling him about the meeting, and closed with, "I am done with the fellow unless he comes around with an apology." Well, he never did, but we lived to meet on more battle-grounds until 1922, when he died.

Earlier I quoted Roe Emery about Mills's death, but here's another remark to me from Jack La Gorce, an editor of the *National Geographic* magazine: "I cannot tell you how happy and pleased I am to hear of the death of Enos Mills, and I hope that he is in the nethermost of the seventy hells of Confucius for that's where he deserves to be."

I wrote back, "It is hardly necessary to tell you that I was considerably relieved when I heard that the undertaker was attending to him instead of a doctor."

All in all, Colorado had afforded a marvelous, worthwhile visit. However, I was very careful not to commit the Park Service about the Mount Evans region (known locally as the Denver National Park) until a final decision could be made in Washington. I stated in the Denver newspapers that I could not discuss the project except from my personal impressions, which were favorable, that I was here simply to observe and gather facts for a report to be given to Mather and Secretary Lane.

Shortly after this, a bill sanctioned by the Interior Department was introduced in the Congress but never made it out of committee. It was

smothered before a full vote could be taken. In a letter to the Denver Mountain Parks Commission in December 1918, I somewhat bitterly wrote: "The time has come when the choice must be made between the Forest Service and the Park Service in matters relating to recreation service, Henry Graves and his powerful lobby defeated the National Park Service efforts to get the Mount Evans area."