



Washington, D. C. *1913-14*

My train trip across the continent of the United States kept me spellbound at the immensity, diversity, and complexity of this vast, beautiful country. Arriving in Washington on the morning of May 31, 1913, I checked my suitcase at the station, bought a guidebook, stopped off to have my one and only suit cleaned and pressed while I sat with a rug over me, and then headed for the Interior Department in the Old Patent Office Building between Seventh and Ninth and F and G Streets.

A few minutes after nine I presented myself at the office of the secretary of the interior, Franklin K. Lane. His fine, large office was on the corner of the building, on the first floor. After being welcomed by Secretary Lane and introduced to the appointment clerk, Ronne Shelse, I was sworn into my office as confidential clerk to the secretary and informed that my salary was sixteen hundred dollars per year. I was stunned, as I had understood from Miller that I would get only twelve hundred. This was an astronomical boost for me.

Overwhelmed by this surprise salary, I promptly lost two days' pay by not working that day, Saturday, and thereby forfeiting pay for Sunday also. But I had to find a place to live. I had passed the Young Men's Christian Association on the way to the Interior Department. So when I left the office, I headed back there and was lucky enough to get a room on the sixth floor in a relatively new wing at just sixteen dollars a month. A new acquaintance here advised me of a nearby rooming house owned

by a Mrs. Travis that provided breakfast and dinner for thirty-five dollars a month. There were plenty of quick-food places for lunch where a sandwich, a piece of pie, and some milk could be picked up for twenty-five cents.

Through the summer of 1913 I fulfilled a wide assortment of jobs. I was a real jack of all trades. My position as confidential clerk to the secretary called for me to do anything that he or Assistant to the Secretary Miller requested. And for the first month I had to fend for myself, as Dr. Miller did not check in for work until July 1. Miller's and my office was connected with Lane's and his secretary's—not directly, but with doors to each. So I moved the furniture to facilitate our work, organized files, and then read everything available about areas of Miller's responsibility.

When Miller did arrive, he quickly found that his job of overseeing national parks, eleemosynary institutions such as St. Elizabeth's Hospital for the Insane, the territories of Alaska and Hawaii, and the departmental inspectors wasn't all that interesting. He found a lifesaver in Bertrand Acker. This Wonderful individual was an assistant attorney assigned to head the Miscellaneous Section of the Chief Clerk's Office, the division of the Interior Department charged with procurement of supplies, payment of vouchers and salaries, and supervision of mails, files, and personnel. Among other things, Acker had to watch over the bonding of disbursing agents, prepare the annual report of the department, and oversee the national parks and monuments.

Acker was devoted and faithful to the interests of the parks, although they were a loosely grouped bag of miscellaneous units. He was a terrific worker, a master of department procedure, and a strict conformist to principles and practices of administration. It was he who, over the years, had worked out the contracts for operation of park concessions and had developed the rules and regulations for the care and protection of these parks. When projects were submitted to the secretary that seemed to Acker to be out of line with basic principles laid down by Congress for the protection of parks, he promptly killed them if possible.

So when Miller quickly showed his interest in few things except the parks (and no detailed work with those), Acker was fortunately standing beside him and was allowed to continue his work as before, shaping policy and advising on matters of legislation. One important thing that Miller did was to appear with J. Horace McFarland before the Public Lands Commission. They made a fine presentation for a national parks bureau, but as usual it was premature.

As Miller pulled away from his Interior Department job to advise on economic matters, most of his work devolved on me. And I in turn became a devoted student of W. B. Acker. He was a kind, thoughtful, intelligent person who grounded me in departmental affairs, encouraged me to attend law school, and was always ready to help when I was overwhelmed by work or ignorance.

In 1913 the Interior Department was small. I did everything imaginable, covering a wide range of items scattered over the forty-eight states and the territories. We had only eight departmental inspectors, troubleshooters, to keep an eye on these areas. However, many troubles arose that didn't call for one of these inspectors but did call for me to make decisions about them. One of these was a stagecoach robbery in Yellowstone National Park. I spent two days reading up on the park and meeting with personnel from the War Department to settle this problem. The park was in the Interior Department, whereas the army supervised and protected it. I always remembered this as my first real contact with a national park.

In a small way I was involved in the Hetch Hetchy controversy. Secretary Lane had been city attorney of San Francisco and had fought for a grant of rights to the Hetch Hetchy Valley, which was a magnificent, deep, glacier-carved gorge through which flowed the Tuolumne River. It had many features similar to Yosemite Valley—granite walls, waterfalls, unique domes and spires. John Muir called it another Yosemite, or more often a "yosernite," a term he used for all these glacier-cut gorges, including those of the Kings and Kern Rivers. Secretaries of the interior from 1900 on had consistently refused to grant rights to dam Hetch Hetchy to provide water for San Francisco.

Franklin Lane's appointment to the cabinet was made specifically for the purpose of pushing this project through, the so-called Raker-Pittman Bill. There was tremendous opposition from John Muir and the Sierra Club, newspapers, magazines, and just plain citizens who realized that the loss of Hetch Hetchy would be irreparable. Letters came into Lane's office by the thousands and had to be answered. I, along with several other secretaries, had to learn to counterfeit Lane's signature and sign letters in reply, trying to explain why the grant should be made or saying "careful attention" would be given to the protest. I hated this job, for I was in sympathy with the protests. However, Lane and the Congress prevailed, and President Wilson signed the grant into law on December 13, 1913.

It is possible that something good came out of this because Lane now gave some attention to national parks. These were floating orphans in the department, not attached to any bureau. Bills had appeared in Congress time and again to create a bureau to administer them, but were ignored or died in committee. Congressman John Raker had again introduced a bill in 1913, and Lane suggested that Miller be responsible for dealing with members of Congress to try to get this bill passed. Miller did testify, talk to a few friends, and entertain a few at dinner parties, but the legwork was assigned to me. He said it was good experience for me to get acquainted with representatives and learn how to lobby at the Capitol.

So the first thing I did was to learn about national parks. With the help of W. B. Acker, I quickly absorbed a vast fund of knowledge in this field. When I felt I was ready to tackle the Capitol, I spent long hours up there, meeting the proper congressmen, trying to interest them in this legislation. National parks didn't arouse much enthusiasm, and the Raker Bill died in both the 62d and 63d Congresses (March 1911-March 1915).

Sometimes when Secretary Lane's private secretary was sick or away, I had to fill in there. Once I almost got into a real pickle. Lane called me into his office. He was furious over some editorial in a California newspaper that had blasted him. He said to me, "Get a notebook and take a letter." I hesitated and stammered out that I could type quite well, but I wasn't much of a stenographer. He said he didn't care—just write down what he said.

So he reeled off this letter to the editor, and it was a real tirade. When I got to typing it up that night, I found my notes were a complete jumble. From what I could remember and what I could pick up in my shorthand, I felt the letter was just no good, too nasty. I used as much as possible and substituted a few thoughts. In the morning I typed it up on his letter-head and presented it to him. He read it over.

Scowling, he said, "Albright, I don't think this is the way I dictated this letter."

I replied, "Well, it isn't exactly, Mr. Secretary. I did the best I could, but I told you I wasn't much of a stenographer. I couldn't make all of it out from my notes." He kept looking at the letter, frowning and muttering to himself, apparently puzzled about what he had really said. I stood there, trembling all over. At last he put me out of my misery by reaching for a pen and signing it without another word.

Washington summers were close to unbearable. While the civil servants labored on through the hot and humid days, the high officials fled to cooler climes. Knowing

little about areas over which they had jurisdiction, Secretary Lane, Adolph Miller, and their wives went west to inspect national parks, reclamation projects, and Indian reservations. At a parade in California, Lane suffered a severe attack of angina and had to remain there for some time. Miller returned alone. I always thought that Lane never seemed really well after that experience.

Actually, the summer was a blessing for me. It gave me a breather. On Sundays, my one day off from work, I did a great deal of sightseeing. Being a nut on history, I toured the Civil War forts and all the museums and famous buildings around Washington. Then I walked the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal. It took me three Sundays to complete the whole route. Then I tramped over the battlefields of Manassas and other nearby Virginia and Maryland scenes of the 1812 and Civil War fighting. I took the overnight cruise to Mount Vernon. I used my pass to the Library of Congress to read and read and read. With everything I did, I found new interests, so I needed more books to find information about them.

Although the weather was close to unbearable, I religiously followed the daily routine I imposed on myself shortly after arriving in Washington. I rarely got to bed before midnight, but I was up around 6:00 A.M. With my friend Neil Judd, an archaeologist at the Smithsonian, I ran down to the tennis courts, played tennis for an hour, ran back to the YMCA, had a shower, and breakfasted at Mrs. Travis's rooming house. Afterward I walked a mile from Twentieth and G Streets to Seventh and F and was in my office promptly at 9:00 A.M. At lunch I walked to Fifteenth and F for a glass of milk and a piece of pie.

Usually I had time to spare during my lunch hour, so one of my favorite things was to stop at the Geological Survey in the Iron Front Building to chat with some old explorer. As there was no retirement age in those days, I could usually find some wonderful characters of eighty or so still working. I learned an enormous amount of history and geography from their tales of nineteenth-century days.

With all my busy schedule, I never forgot Grace Noble. I got a letter off to her nearly every day telling her of my exciting experiences. We were corresponding regularly now. Once I dared ask if she were engaged. She replied: "I'm not engaged, have never been engaged, and don't know that I ever will be engaged!" She later told me that when she wrote that, she practically proposed to me. Her words certainly gave me hope that maybe I had a chance to win her myself.

The one drawback in leaving Berkeley was giving up on law school. During the summer, I decided I had a firm enough grip on my job at the Interior Department to go back to law school. I investigated all my local

options and found that Georgetown University fit my needs. It did not have the new Harvard case book system as did the University of California, but it had the advantage of instruction by some of the finest lawyers and judges in the Washington area. Classes were held five nights a week until about 9:00 or 9:30 P.M. I could take the courses only a few blocks from the office. And thank goodness, for many times my work would keep me until a few minutes before class. Then I would sprint that short distance, sink into my seat, and listen to my stomach growl. No dinner again. Although I knew I had my work cut out for me, I believed it was worth it to get that degree, so I signed up for the winter term.

Between work at the office and increased time spent at the Capitol on the national park problem, law school at night, and extra duties Miller requested, I found my six hours (or less) of sleep a night was my only respite. That first year in Washington I had practically no social life. There simply wasn't time for it, although some had to be squeezed into the twenty-four hours. The Millers were a very social couple and entertained a great deal. Often they found they had an extra lady on their hands and knew exactly where to find a spare bachelor to be her partner at dinner. Miller had given me his old formal dress outfit, so I didn't even have that excuse. But fine cuisine was served and the guests were interesting and many times proved useful in the future.

One man whom I saw several times there was Franklin D. Roosevelt, the assistant secretary of the navy. He always escorted a beautiful woman, not his wife. She was never really identified. Seventy years later I read an article in *American Heritage* about the great love of his life, Lucy Rutherford. And sure enough, there was a picture of this lovely lady of long ago.

Once Roosevelt came into the office to call on Lane. I was temporary secretary to Lane that day, and while Roosevelt waited to see him, we had a nice conversation. He told me that he had come to see Lane about the "Franklin Club," which was composed of men named Franklin—Franklin Houston, the secretary of agriculture; Franklin Lane; himself; and another man whose name I have forgotten. They got together to play poker or other card games.

Shortly after Adolph Miller returned from the West in the fall of 1913, President Wilson called on him to help formulate the Federal Reserve system. During most of the time until the bill creating the Federal Reserve Board was passed in December 1913, Miller was away from our office, and the burden of extra work for me was difficult to handle.

However, I learned a great deal in a very short time, and it was invaluable to me a year hence.

When Miller was appointed to the new board in June 1914, he resigned from the Interior Department and asked me to come with him. I truly did not like finances and banking, and anyway I was planning to return to California to practice law as soon as I graduated from Georgetown.

Of course, with Miller's exit, I was most uncertain about my own job. I had a frank talk with the secretary and found him to be very warm and concerned about me. He suggested that I continue all my normal work, and, with my law school training, I could now start working along with the solicitor of the Interior Department. It was a big boost for me, and I found I had more and more work in both old and new fields.

The year 1914 was eventful and confusing. There was always interesting work at the Interior Department. There were tempting offers to join prestigious law firms in San Francisco as soon as I received my law degree. Best of all, Secretary Lane promised me a long-awaited vacation to California. Before leaving on that, I graduated from Georgetown University and passed my Washington bar exams. I also took and passed the California bar in Los Angeles and then headed for San Francisco, where my primary objective was to convince Grace Noble that she should marry me.

After a visit with my dad in Bishop, I arrived in Berkeley on July 26. Knowing that Grace would be at church on this Sunday morning, I went to visit my mother, who wasn't too pleased that I was anxious to see a special girl she had not chosen.

Many sly questions and some delicate probing by my mother followed every one of my futile phone calls to Grace. Early on, she had picked out brides for each of her sons. Obviously, I was totally unconcerned about Bessie Fish, her choice for me. A few years hence Leslie also slid past her to pick Marie Bradford, a college classmate. Dewey actually did get engaged to her choice but managed to get that called off while in the army. He married a different girl too.

When one of my calls to Grace was suddenly answered, all I could say was, "Hello, I'm here."

She laughingly replied, "And I'm here—why don't you come here, too!" Of course, I was out the door in minutes. Grace was everything and more that I had been dreaming about for a year. Her beauty, her gaiety, her intelligence—everything about her was enchanting. We were spontaneously glad to see each other, and it seemed as though we had known

each other for years instead of one single evening. Our correspondence had opened up gates of friendship and rapport.

From that time until August 9, we spent every moment together except when Grace had to teach school. I used these hours to investigate job opportunities and visit my family as well as Will Colby and other friends. Together, Grace and I went to the theater, had long talks over dinners, and enjoyed an incredibly wonderful day at Muir Woods.

At Muir Woods, the beautiful stand of redwood *Sequoia sempervirans* was saved from being flooded for a proposed reservoir by Congressman William Kent. He bought the three hundred acres and donated it to the federal government in 1907. President Theodore Roosevelt proclaimed it a national monument the next year. In my efforts at the Capitol regarding the park service, I had gotten to know Kent very well. He was an ardent conservationist and had several times been a sponsor of bills to create the park service, all up to now unsuccessful. Looking back on that day, I knew I wanted to report to Kent that I had seen his gift, but I suppose I was also unconsciously testing Grace, wanting to see what sort of an outdoor girl she was. She passed the test with flying colors.

I called for her very early in the morning and discovered another plus. She was right on time and waiting for me, dressed for the day's outing in a nice suit and sturdy walking shoes. She had a superfluous fancy hat on, but that only added to her charming appearance. We took the ferry across San Francisco Bay to Marin County and then the Mount Tamalpais and Muir Woods Railroad to the monument. This took about two hours altogether. The monument was nestled in a sheltered canyon on the lower western flank of Mount Tamalpais. We wandered through the magnificent grove of trees, and Grace got her first experience of Horace Albright on a sightseeing expedition. In other words, we had to see the *whole area* while I read her excerpts from my guidebook. She seemed engrossed in my words, the flora, and the trees.

I was having such a marvelous time that I quite forgot about time. Around noon it was getting warm, and she gently hinted that she could use something to drink. So we went back to a little food stand where I bought some sandwiches, pickles, and milk and walked back to a bench under the trees to eat our picnic. It was a complete failure, for the sandwiches were dry and rather smelly, the milk was sour, and Grace didn't like pickles.

That ended the Muir Woods part of the day, and we returned to Berkeley the way we had come. We were rather silent coming back on the

ferry. I, of course, thought I had made a mess of things and was sure I had at least one strike against me. Grace told me later that her silence was simply starvation and sore feet.

On August 6, seeing my time in California drawing to a close, I suddenly realized that, before I left, I must ask Grace to marry me. I had to have her consent. So I went over to Alameda, brought Grace back to Berkeley, and took her to a lovely little restaurant for dinner. There was a full moon as we walked up to the campus and strolled along talking for quite some time. When the path led us to the western edge of the campus near the eucalyptus grove, we stood on the little bridge over a stream that flowed along through the trees. I was so nervous I was shaking with the fear that when I proposed she would procrastinate and not reply or worse still turn me down. I don't even remember this, but Grace said that I began quoting poetry, starting with Longfellow's "The Bridge" ("I stood on the bridge at midnight," etc.) and continuing with "Horatio at the Bridge," and a few more.

Finally I simply blurted out that I adored her and asked her to be my wife. She hesitated momentarily (an eternity for me, for I guess I was holding my breath), and then she accepted and threw her arms around my neck and I got *my first* kiss! After we were married, I asked her why she had hesitated. She said, "I guess it flashed through my mind—do I want this man to be the father of my children?"

On August 9 the weather was foggy and bleak and so were Grace and I. She skipped church, and we spent the whole day together. We tried to discuss our future, but it was terribly uncertain. We knew we had a long engagement ahead of us. The primary reason was financial, because I had no money to support a wife. In fact, I didn't know what sort of a position I would have when I left the Interior Department, which I meant to do in the not too distant future. I planned to practice law, but I didn't know where. Behind all this was my growing concern that a war would intervene.

While I was on this vacation, World War I had broken out in Europe. The Archduke Franz Ferdinand had been assassinated in Sarajevo on June 28. Armies mobilized, ultimatums were exchanged, the world held its breath, and finally on August 4 Germany invaded Belgium, which precipitated declarations of war by England, France, and other nations. Although President Wilson immediately tried to reassure Americans that we would not get into a European conflict, I had a dreadful feeling we might end

up in it too. With my military background, I'd surely be in the forefront of those to be called into the army. Of course, I never mentioned this to Grace. So we left it that she would continue teaching school, and I'd stay in Washington until I decided on my future.

Then it was a difficult good-bye, with many "I love you"s and promises to write every day (and we rarely missed). I took a taxi to the station and boarded the Western Pacific train at 8:10 P.M.

Leaving my lovely new fiancee was terrible, and it was quite a let-down to get back to Washington. I found my responsibilities and workload had doubled. Although my title and salary remained the same, Secretary Lane, knowing of my admission to both the District of Columbia and California bars, extended my "clerking" to features involving the law and legislation. Of course, I always had the responsibility of Miller's work, as the assistant to the secretary position had not been filled and it seemed that it probably never would be.

One of the first things I did, in a personal way, was to borrow money. I had never done this before, but I had to get Grace an engagement ring. Not only did she need one before she could announce our engagement, but I guess I was always afraid someone would come along and steal her away from me while I was in Washington. It wasn't easy to acquire this loan. Most of my friends were every bit as poor as I, but someone, not I, told Huston Thompson about my problem. He assured me that he was good for whatever I needed and urged me to get "as beautiful a ring as your Grace is beautiful." I couldn't have found one like that, but I bought a lovely plain gold ring with one reasonably sized diamond in a so-called Tiffany setting. I must add that I repaid the entire amount of \$275 before Christmas to Thompson, a real friend. But when you add in her October 23 birthday present, a small gold pendant and chain, you will see why I didn't eat very often.

As to my work at the Interior Department, there was a new authority in the national parks section. Early in 1914 Miller decided to set up an office with a small staff in the West to inspect the parks, plan for their development, make estimates of costs for improvements, and purchase supplies. He selected Mark Daniels to head it.

Daniels was a University of California graduate in landscape engineering, 1905. He had later taken some graduate work in landscape architecture at Harvard. Miller was very interested in this subject, and, faced with the need for professional help with his new home and grounds at

2320 S Street in Washington, he inquired about a landscape architect. A friend suggested Daniels. Miller asked him to come to Washington. He not only arrived promptly, but he made an instant and profound impression on Miller. Daniels was a very smooth and personable young man, a fine speaker, a wealthy man-about-town type who had his own lucrative architectural firm of Daniels & Wilhelm in San Francisco.

The cost of the new parks office was to be prorated against the appropriations for the various parks. Each park received a separate appropriation from Congress rather than a single one for the Interior Department to dole out. Daniels, as general superintendent and landscape engineer of national parks, went back to San Francisco, set up his field office in the Mondnock Building on Market Street, hired a competent assistant, R. R. Young, and a staff of clerks. With these men, among whom was a part-time employee, Dan Hull, he planned needed buildings, gateways, and other facilities. Hull later proved a very valuable engineer in the National Park Service.

The only real contribution Daniels made was the design of the Park Service uniform. He started with the basic Forest Service outfit, threw in a little feeling of the military uniform, changed a little bit of this and that to jazz it up, and added new decorative features. He forgot about the hat, so everyone wore about what he pleased.

However, Daniels's failings were many. He alienated powerful men like Louis Hill of the Great Northern Railway, and he instituted the most complicated accounting system anyone had ever devised. Even trained government accountants shook their head in puzzlement and disbelief as they tried to understand the value assigned to stacks of pipes for possible use in the future, trees that might or might not be cut to construct a building, etc.

Actually, I had little or no contact with Daniels until Mather arrived. The truth was that no one person was exclusively concerned with the business of national parks until much later.

Knowing the time I had allocated myself to remain at the Interior Department, I now had to give serious thought to my next career move. My main objective was always to return to California to get into mining and water rights law, but I chafed at the idea of joining a firm such as Lindley's. One night, on the spur of the moment, I wrote Beverly Clendenin, a classmate, and suggested that when he finished law school, we should form a partnership to practice together in California. His instant reply was yes.

On January 14, 1915, I wrote back:

You don't know what a world of good it did me to receive your letter during the holidays, just when I was about as blue and homesick as it is possible for a man to get and still endure the agonies of it all.... I am delighted to know that you have given my proposition to form a partnership favorable consideration. Now, Clen, it seems to me that we should decide definitely, in the very near future, just when we will begin our practice.... I think I can arrange to be there August 1, but I may go through the national parks with Assistant Secretary Stephen T. Mather, '87, who has just been appointed to fill Professor Miller's old position. He has requested me to act as his private secretary for a time, and I think I will go with him.... It will be a relief to work with Secretary Mather, and if I can get a trip through the Northwest and back home again, it will be worth my while to take up my old duties again as he wants me to do. The Secretary has told Mr. Mather that he is agreeable to my leaving here, inasmuch as I am determined to leave the whole Department in a short while anyway.... In case I do go with Mr. Mather, I shall not be able to reach Berkeley much before August 1st, and, of course, I could not go right on to the southland immediately. Someone in Berkeley will demand a week or two at least... but I will be ready on September 1st for sure.

Of course, these plans for the future were derailed forever by the second most important event in my life (naturally Grace was the first). If you believed in astrology, it could be said that the stars ordained that the paths of Stephen Tyng Mather and Horace Marden Albright were destined to cross.