



FINDING AID

ROBERT CAHN PAPERS

1910-1987

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National Park Service
NPS History Collection
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HISTORY

Robert Cahn was born in Seattle, WA in 1917 and graduated from the University of Washington. He began his journalism career by writing a sports column for the "Christian Science Monitor" from 1936-1941. When World War II intervened, Cahn served in the U.S. Army. He fought in Europe and received a Bronze Star. In 1951, he married Patricia Lovelady.

Cahn continued his journalism career as a staff reporter for the "Seattle Star" and the "Pasadena Star News". He was also a correspondent for "Life" magazine. He served as senior editor of "Collier's" magazine and for two years was chief of its Los Angeles bureau. He spent four years as a freelance writer, contributing articles to the "Saturday Evening Post" and "Reader's Digest," among others. In 1961, Cahn became the Midwest editor of the "Saturday Evening Post."

In 1963 he became a White House reporter for the U.S. Information Agency wire service. In February 1965, he joined the "Christian Science Monitor's" Washington Bureau. In 1968, the "Christian Science Monitor" published a 16-part series by Cahn titled, "Will Success Spoil the National Parks?" The stories won Cahn the 1969 Pulitzer Prize in National Reporting for "his inquiry into the future of our national parks and the methods that may help to preserve them." In 1969, Cahn also received the U.S. Department of the Interior's Conservation Service Award, the Distinguished Service to Conservation Award from the National Wildlife Federation, and a citation from the Stokes Award Committee.

Beginning in 1970, Cahn took leave from his journalist position to serve on the President's Council on Environmental Quality, established under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). After leaving the Council in 1972, he returned to the "Christian Science Monitor" as environmental editor. During the 1970s, he also worked as field editor of "Audubon" magazine and as a special assistant to the president of the National Audubon Society. He wrote stories for "Reader's Digest," "Smithsonian," "World Monitor," "TV Guide," "Environment," "Sierra," and "Earth Work."

In 1972, Cahn met former National Park Service (NPS) Director Horace Albright at the Second World Conference on National Parks held in Yellowstone National Park. After two weeks spent together during the conference, the Cahn and Albright families became close friends. From 1979 to 1985, Cahn recorded his conversations with Albright regarding his experiences and memories associated with the history of the NPS. Although many publishers had encouraged Albright to write a book on the subject, he remained reticent to do so. In 1984 Cahn convinced Albright to allow the recordings and his recollections to be turned into a book. Albright collaborated with Cahn to create "The Birth of the National Park Service: The Founding Years, 1913-1933," by Horace M. Albright as told to Robert Cahn, published in 1985.

Cahn's other books included "Footprints on the Planet: A Search for an Environmental Ethic" and "American Photographers and the National Parks." He also organized and edited "An Environmental Agenda for the Future," which included pieces written by leaders of major U.S. environmental organizations. He served on the 1988-89 Commission on Research and Management Policy in the National Park System, and he was a member of the Commission on National Parks and Protected Areas of the World Conservation Union. Cahn taught environmental courses at the University of Colorado and lectured on the environment at the University of California at Berkeley. Cahn moved from Leesburg, VA to Boulder, CO in 1995. He died of pneumonia at his home on October 24, 1997.

Sources:

Albright, Horace M., and Robert Cahn, 1985. "The Birth of the National Park Service: The Founding Years 1913-1933." Howe Brothers.

"Environmental Journalist Robert Cahn Dies at 80", Washington Post.

https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/local/1997/10/28/environmental-journalist-robert-cahn-dies-at-80/1d2d915d-55c0-4e7b-bae3-1531303e573a/?utm_term=.1aac699c5146 (accessed 7/20/2017).

"Profile of Robert Cahn" by Saville Davis, 1977. The Journal of Environmental Education (Vol. 2, No. 4) <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00139254.1971.10801583?journalCode=vjee19> (accessed 7/20/2017).

Robert Cahn. <http://www.pulitzer.org/winners/robert-cahn> (accessed 7/20/2017).

Robert Cahn Obituary. New York Times: <http://www.nytimes.com/1997/10/30/us/robert-cahn-80-leading-writer-and-us-aide-on-environment.html> (accessed 7/17/2017).

SCOPE AND CONTENT

ROBERT CAHN PAPERS

1910-1987 (bulk dates:)

<i>CATALOG NUMBER</i>	HFCA 1829
<i>VOLUME</i>	2.2 LF
<i>DESCRIPTION</i>	Correspondence, research notes, recordings and transcripts of material related to development of the 1985 book "The Birth of the National Park Service: The Founding Years, 1913-1933" by Horace M. Albright as told to Robert Cahn.
<i>ORGANIZATION</i>	Organized into two series: Series I: Research Materials and Correspondence; Series II: Interviews with Horace M. Albright.
<i>PROVENANCE</i>	Donated to the National Park Service by Robert Cahn in two separate transactions (1992 and 1995).
<i>RESTRICTIONS</i>	Yes
<i>ASSOCIATED MATERIALS</i>	Assembled Historic Records of the NPS Collection (HFCA 1645) in the NPS History Collection; NPS Oral History Collection (HFCA 1817) in the NPS History Collection; Record Group 79 at the National Archives and Records Administration; Oral History Collection at the Bancroft Library, University of California at Berkeley; Jackson Hole Preservation Project Oral History Project at Columbia University's Center for Oral History; and Horace Marden Albright Papers at Charles E. Young Library, University of California at Los Angeles.

HIERARCHY

SERIES I: RESEARCH MATERIALS AND CORRESPONDENCE, 1910-1987 (bulk dates: 1910-1933)

SUBSERIES A: CORRESPONDENCE, 1910-1987

SUBSERIES B: RESEARCH MATERIALS, 1910-1987

SERIES II: INTERVIEWS WITH HORACE M. ALBRIGHT, 1979-1985

SUBSERIES A: INTERVIEW RECORDINGS, 1979-1985

SUBSERIES B: INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS, 1979-1984

SERIES DESCRIPTIONS

SERIES I: RESEARCH MATERIALS AND CORRESPONDENCE, 1910-1987 (bulk dates: 1910-1933)

Organized into two subseries: Subseries A: Correspondence; Subseries B: Research Materials

Research notes and correspondence related to the creation of the manuscript titled "The Birth of the National Park Service: the Founding Years, 1913-1933." Correspondence includes letters between Robert Cahn and Horace M. Albright, including Albright's corrections and revisions to chapters of the manuscript. Not all of Albright's editorial comments and revisions which add to the story were included in the finished book. Cahn's research files include copies of National Park Service (NPS) memoranda, publications, notes, and photographs. Includes copies of chapters from Horace Albright's 1940s unpublished manuscript about NPS Director Stephen T. Mather. Frank Taylor of the Saturday Evening Post worked with Albright on the Mather manuscript. Material also includes copies of some of Albright's hand-written material for the Mather book.

SUBSERIES A: CORRESPONDENCE, 1910-1987

Arranged alphabetically.

Correspondence between Horace Albright and Robert Cahn and Albright and Stephen T. Mather. Also includes copies of Albright's correspondence with notable figures such as Franklin K. Lane, John D. Rockefeller, and President Ronald Reagan. Correspondence with the Association of National Park Ranger's Maureen Finnerty is included.

SUBSERIES B: RESEARCH MATERIALS, 1910-1987

Arranged alphabetically.

Research material gathered by Robert Cahn while working on "The Birth of the National Park Service" manuscript with Horace Albright. Includes memoranda from park staff, lists of NPS managers, records gathered from the National Archives and Records Administration, copies of director's statements from both Mather and Albright, material on park rangers, and various legislative bills and political subjects.

SERIES II: INTERVIEWS WITH HORACE M. ALBRIGHT, 1979-1985

Horace M. Albright was born in Bishop, California on January 6, 1890. He attended the University of California, Berkeley, graduating in 1912. Albright married his college classmate, Grace Noble, with whom he had two children, Robert and Marian.

The Albrights moved to Washington, D.C. and while working as confidential secretary to Secretary of the Interior Franklin Lane, Albright attended night school at Georgetown University to attain his law degree. He was admitted to the bar in the District of Columbia and California. Albright quickly

rose from clerk to assistant solicitor and then secretary to Stephen T. Mather at the Department of the Interior.

During the summer of 1916, while Mather was away in the West, Albright attended meetings and discussions on the Park Service bill and saw it through to enactment. He was appointed assistant director of the National Park Service after its establishment on August 25, 1916. Four months later, Mather was hospitalized, and Albright, as acting director, organized the new bureau, set policies and procedures, and testified to Congress on behalf of NPS appropriation needs. Albright also wrote the so-called "creed" for the National Park Service, which appeared as a letter from Secretary Lane to Mather. Albright was acting director from 1917 to 1919. From 1919-1929, he served simultaneously as superintendent of Yellowstone National Park and as NPS assistant director, field. When Yellowstone was closed in the winter, his job was to oversee all national park areas west of the Mississippi River, as well as serve three or four months each year in the Washington Office.

In 1929 Albright was named director and instituted two far-reaching policies: expansion of national park areas throughout the states east of the Mississippi River and introduction of historic preservation into the National Park Service. In April 1933, President Franklin Roosevelt agreed to Albright's request for the transfer to the Park Service of national monuments from the Agriculture Department and military parks from the War Department. Having achieved most of his goals, Albright resigned from the NPS in 1933 to serve as vice president and later president of United States Potash Company. He retired in 1956. A life-long advocate for the NPS, Albright died in Van Nuys, California on March 28, 1987.

Source:

https://www.nps.gov/parkhistory/online_books/sontag/albright.htm (accessed 7/17/2017).

Organized into two subseries by format: Subseries A: Interview Recordings; Subseries B: Interview Transcripts.

Audio cassette tape recordings of conversations and interviews Robert Cahn conducted with Horace M. Albright. Includes transcripts where available but not all recordings have been transcribed. Includes copies of two cassette tapes of 1979 interview of Albright by Frances Gendlin for an article in "Sierra Club" magazine.

Topics covered include memories of Mather, Albright's experiences with Washington politics, the organization of the park service, rangers, and Albright's time as Yellowstone superintendent.

NPS History Collection does not have release forms from Horace M. Albright for these interviews. Recordings and transcripts may be used for research and non-commercial use only.

SUBSERIES A: INTERVIEW RECORDINGS, 1979-1985

Arranged numerically by HFC log number and thereunder chronologically.

Audio cassette tape recordings of interviews and conversations with Horace M. Albright.

SUBSERIES B: INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS, 1979-1984

Arranged into three groups--Assembled Transcripts, Transcripts, and Transcript Summaries--and thereunder arranged either numerically by "part" or chronologically.

Available transcripts of interviews and conversations with Horace M. Albright. The "assembled transcript" is a single lengthy transcript (with consecutive page numbers) compiled from multiple interviews. The interviews span from 1979 to 1981 and include some that are undated but the transcript is not chronological by interview date. However, the transcription "parts" as filed correspond to individual tapes. The summary transcripts are not verbatim. Some interviews have not yet been transcribed.

CONTAINER LIST

- SERIES I: BOX 01
RESEARCH
MATERIALS SUBSERIES A: CORRESPONDENCE
AND
CORRESPONDENCE
- Folder 01: Albright and Cahn Correspondence and Chapter Comments, 1976-1985
Folder 02: Albright and Mather Correspondence, 1918-1926
Folder 03: General Albright Correspondence, 1925-1985
Folder 04: General Correspondence, 1910-1923
- SUBSERIES B: RESEARCH MATERIAL
- Folder 05: Albright's Handwritten Material for Unpublished Book on Mather, undated
Folder 06: Albright's Research Notes, undated
Folder 07: Albright's Unpublished Book Chapters and Notes, 1943-1946
Folder 08: Congressional Hearings and Bills, 1916-1929
Folder 09: Department of Interior Press Releases, 1980
Folder 10: Director Statements: Albright, 1933, undated
Folder 11: Director Statements: Mather, 1919, undated
Folder 12: Evison "Concessions of the NPS" Chapter Copies, undated
Folder 13: "The Evolution of the NPS of the United States" Master Thesis by Paul Buck, 1921
Folder 14: List of Park Service Field Officers, 1933?
Folder 15: NARA Records of the Park Service, 1966
Folder 16: "National Park Service War Work" Administrative Record, 1941-1944
Folder 17: National Park to Park Highway Association Report of Convention, 1916
Folder 18: Notes from Columbia University Oral History Manuscript, undated
Folder 19: Park Service Memoranda, 1925-1933
Folder 20: Photographs of Albright at Celebration for Presidential Medal of Freedom, 1980
Folder 21: Proceedings of the National Parks Conference, 1917
Folder 22: Publications and Programs, 1937-1987
Folder 23: Ranger Research Material, 1965, undated
Folder 24: Secretary of Interior Reports, 1910-1918
Folder 25: Sierra Club Article "A Talk with Horace Albright," 1979
- SERIES II: SUBSERIES A: INTERVIEW RECORDINGS
INTERVIEWS
WITH HORACE MEDIA BOX 01

M. ALBRIGHT

Log #471, Log #1545 - Log #1582

MEDIA BOX 02

Log #1583 - Log #1587, Log #1664

SUBSERIES B: INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS

BOX 01

Folder 01: Assembled Transcript Part One, undated
Folder 02: Assembled Transcript Part Two, September 17, 1980
Folder 03: Assembled Transcript Part Three, October 28, 1980
Folder 04: Assembled Transcript Part Four, July 5, 1980?
Folder 05: Assembled Transcript Part Five, April 26, 1980
Folder 06: Assembled Transcript Part Six, undated
Folder 07: Assembled Transcript Part Seven, undated
Folder 08: Assembled Transcript Part Eight, December 4, 1979
Folder 09: Assembled Transcript Part Nine, undated
Folder 10: Assembled Transcript Part Ten, December 4, 1979
Folder 11: Assembled Transcript Part Eleven, November 12-13, 1980
Folder 12: Assembled Transcript Part Twelve, January 7, 1981
Folder 13: Assembled Transcript Part Thirteen, December 8, 1980

BOX 02

Folder 01: Transcripts: March 20, unknown year
Folder 02: Transcripts: March 22, unknown year
Folder 03: Transcripts: March 23, unknown year
Folder 04: Transcripts: June 23, unknown year
Folder 05: Transcripts: August 23, unknown year
Folder 06: Transcripts: October 4, unknown year
Folder 07: Transcripts: October 22-23, unknown year
Folder 08: Transcripts: October 23, unknown year
Folder 09: Transcripts: 1979 Sierra Club Interview
Folder 10: Transcripts: February 10, 1980
Folder 11: Transcripts: March 24, 1980
Folder 12: Transcripts: April 26, 1980
Folder 13: Transcripts: May 10, 1980
Folder 14: Transcripts: July 5, 1980
Folder 15: Transcripts: January 6, 1981
Folder 16: Transcripts: February 10, 1981
Folder 17: Transcripts: March 8, 1981
Folder 18: Transcripts: March 25, 1981
Folder 19: Transcripts: October 17, 1981

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- Folder 20: Transcripts: October 18, 1981
 - Folder 21: Transcripts: June 26, 1982
 - Folder 22: Transcripts: October 14-16, 1983
 - Folder 23: Transcripts: October 17-18, 1983
 - Folder 24: Transcripts: October 19, 1983
 - Folder 25: Transcripts: October 20, 1983
 - Folder 26: Transcripts: October 22-23, 1983
 - Folder 27: Transcripts: January 1, 1984
 - Folder 28: Transcripts: March 19, 1984
 - Folder 29: Transcripts: September 24, 1984
 - Folder 30: Transcripts: October 3, 1984
 - Folder 31: Transcripts: October 4-5, 1984
 - Folder 32: Transcripts: October 5, 1984
 - Folder 33: Transcripts: January 16, 1985
 - Folder 34: Transcripts: October 18-19, 1985
 - Folder 35: Transcripts: December 6-7, 1985
 - Folder 36: Transcripts: March 19, 1986
 - Folder 37: Transcripts: April 26, 1986
 - Folder 38: Transcript Summaries: October 23, unknown year
 - Folder 39: Transcript Summaries: January 3-24, 1981
 - Folder 40: Transcript Summaries: March 25, 1981
 - Folder 41: Transcript Summaries: October 3-5, 1984