Park and Resource Preservation
1918

With the New Year, the primary issue for me was the Grand Canyon. I had spent many hours in the past year on the problem, but now I vowed to put the same kind of energy into this as I had in trying to have a park service created. It was essential, not only on general principles but to give Mather's morale a real boost. To make this incomparable chasm a national park was a long and difficult project.

It began on January 5, 1886, when Benjamin Harrison, then United States senator from Indiana, introduced a bill in Congress to make Grand Canyon a national park. It failed to pass. As our first great conservationist president (1889-93), Harrison set aside 17,564,800 acres of Forest Reserve in 1893 and placed its administration in the Department of the Interior. The Grand Canyon area was part of this.

In 1905 all the Forest Reserves were transferred from the Interior Department to the Agriculture Department. In 1906 the Antiquities Act was passed, enabling presidents to establish national monuments without the consent of Congress. In the same year President Theodore Roosevelt used this power to proclaim Grand Canyon a national monument, which he placed in the newly created Forest Service of the Department of Agriculture. In 1917 this was the status quo, the base from which the Park Service launched its attack.

At that time, Secretary of Agriculture David F. Houston was agreeable to a transfer of the Grand Canyon to Interior, but while not openly

opposing the move, he was doing nothing to speed it along. His favorite trick was to say "yes" but stall or block us by haggling over boundaries. Mather and I had caught on to him and were determined not to let him keep us in limbo this time. But it turned out that a bigger stumbling block was Ralph Cameron and his claims in, around, and down the Grand Canyon.

Lured by accounts of adventure in the "Wild West" and visions of money-making schemes, Cameron and his brothers left Maine around 1880 and rode as far as the rails in the Southwest could take them at the time—Flagstaff, Arizona. They went into the sheep-herding business. Shortly afterward they visited the Grand Canyon and visualized its potential as a profitable tourist trap—the Niagara Falls of the West!

So the Camerons, plus some acquaintances around Coconino County, quickly filed claims along the South Rim of the canyon and down into the chasm. By the time the Grand Canyon was made a national monument in 1906, they had over one hundred lode, placer, and millsite claims from Grand View Point to Hermit Creek, the finest scenic area on the South Rim.

They wasted no time in working a few mining spots and improving an ancient Havasupai Indian trail from the rim to the Colorado River, calling it the Cameron Trail (later known as Bright Angel Trail). They took dead aim at the tourists, charging them one dollar each for use of the trail, whether on foot or on mule back. If they rode to the bottom of the canyon, there was an additional fee for the mules. Here the poor, stranded tourists were usually hit by their "guide" with another "four-bits" demand in order to get back up to the rim.

Halfway down, on their Indian Gardens claim, the Camerons set up a ramshackle place called a "hotel," which had the only drinkable water available. They even charged for the "comfort stations" along the way. What a deal, and it was all theirs!

But only until the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railroad appeared on the scene. By an act of Congress, a small company had been granted a right-of-way for a rail line from Williams to the Grand Canyon. It had also been granted rights for the Cameron—Bright Angel Trail to the Colorado River. However, the project failed financially, when rails were completed only halfway from Williams.

The Santa Fe bought it out and finished the line. At the terminus on the South Rim, they constructed a railroad station and El Tovar, a large, luxurious, rustic-style hotel to be operated by the famous Fred Harvey

Company. At the turn of the century, conflict between the Santa Fe Railroad and Ralph Cameron was inevitable.

Ralph Cameron was a master politician, manipulator, and artful dodger. He threw up splintery shacks by the Santa Fe railroad station and put up signs on his claims nearby (one of which read "The Buttinski Mine"). The Santa Fe loudly complained to the United States government. The Forest Service was sympathetic and sided with the railroad. After a lengthy legal fight, the quarrel reached the Supreme Court, which canceled the Cameron claims. In 1906 Cameron's franchise for the Bright Angel Trail expired, and it reverted to Coconino County.

Did that make any difference? Not to Cameron. By now he had entered politics and was a member of the county's Board of Supervisors and controlled it. All these roadblocks were just flies in the ointment to Cameron. He blithely carried on as though the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow was beckoning him and nothing could get in the way of his plans.

Cameron next applied for a permit to build a scenic railway along the South Rim. Not only was it denied, but the Santa Fe was given permission to build roads, trails, and tourist facilities in that area. Cameron quickly hit on another scheme to fix those opposed to him. He used his claims, which bisected the Santa Fe's proposed road, to halt construction every time the road bumped into them. So here was a fine macadam road abruptly halting at a Cameron claim, turning into a dusty rut in summer and a murky mess in winter. Continuing on the other side, it became macadam once more until it met the next Cameron claim.

Now Cameron planned to set up a company to extract gold from the sands of the river. He crowed, "I have always said that I would make more money out of the Grand Canyon than any other man." But this scheme also failed for the simple reason that he didn't have title to the land.

Cameron shrugged and instantly became involved in a new scheme. He would dam the Colorado River and make a fortune from hydroelectric power. Someone said, "He could charm a bird out of a tree." I guess he did, because almost immediately he had a "pigeon," a fellow named C. Frank Doebler. Together they formed the Hydraulic Properties Company. Of course, they had tide neither to the land where they planned to build the dam nor to the mighty Colorado River. The United States government hadn't given permission to do anything. To Ralph Cameron there was no problem he felt he couldn't fix.

Cameron had been the territorial delegate to Congress prior to Arizona's admission to the union in 1912. Now, in 1914, he decided he would simply run for governor. Of course, he would be elected. Then he would be in a position to make the dam a reality. But there was one stumbling block. He was defeated by George W. P. Hunt.

After many secret cabals, an agreement between the Santa Fe and Cameron interests was signed in 1916. Details remained vague and hidden in the mists. The railroad paid some forty thousand dollars to the Cameron group and thereby acquired all the claims along the South Rim and water rights at Indian Gardens. Somehow Cameron still kept the hydroelectric and mining rights as well as rights-of-way across claims deeded to the Santa Fe. Either the Santa Fe lawyers weren't careful enough or Cameron was too crafty for them. Representatives from various bureaus in the Interior and Agriculture Departments tried to unearth details of the deal, but they were efficiently buried. We never did learn the true facts.

It was at this point that the National Park Service was doing everything in its power to get control of Grand Canyon National Monument and turn it into a national park. But what sort of a mess were we faced with? There was opposition from stock growers wanting to have unlimited grazing rights. Reclamation and irrigation people were looking forward to future Colorado River dams. The Forest Service was trying to hang on to every foot of land they could. There were scores of legal problems, contradictory claims, and water problems.

Even though Indian Gardens was now in Santa Fe hands, Cameron's horses had polluted this sole source of clean water. Typhoid germs had been detected. His miserable, unsightly buildings, equipment, mining machinery, and other debris were scattered everywhere. His sheep and cattle had grazed both North and South Rims, almost wiping out the natural ground cover.

I was depressed and at a loss to know what could be done about it until we could get a bill through Congress to acquire jurisdiction. The laborious job would be to collar the key representatives and senators to introduce bills to make Grand Canyon National Monument a national park. Next the power brokers had to be assembled to settle differences and then see if the compromise bill could be passed by both houses.

Deep down I felt we were at a dead end until the war ended, but I was never one to quit when the goal was as vital as this one was. Mather desperately wanted this park. I felt it would be a tremendous boost to his

health and well-being if I could push it through, so I put in an enormous amount of time and energy on the project.

At the instigation of President Taft, bills had been introduced in the Congress in 1910 and 1911 but had died in committee. At the present time we had fine support from influential individuals, publications, and organizations, including the Sierra Club, the Appalachian Club, and national magazines. Powerful interests in Congress were with us. With the admission of Arizona as the forty-eighth state in 1912, impetus had picked up with the strong backing of its new representatives in Congress, Senator Henry Ashurst and Representative Carl Hayden. We had pinned hopes on the fact that these Democrats would receive support from President Wilson, but this was one president that didn't care a fig for conservation.

A bill to create the Grand Canyon National Park was presented to the Sixty-fourth Congress, but it adjourned on March 3, 1917, without passage. As soon as the new Sixty-fifth Congress was seated in April 1917, another bill was introduced. Nothing came of it either until the third session.

Talking over the problem with Secretary Lane, I suggested he get into the fight. He was rather gun-shy of openly advocating controversial measures since Hetch Hetchy, so I suggested he could send a forceful letter up to the Capitol. He agreed to do that. On February 5, 1918, Lane signed a letter I had drawn up for him and sent it to Senator H. L. Myers, chairman of the Public Lands Committee. It was a strong statement, which reviewed the outstanding features of the Grand Canyon and urgently pressed for national park status. Shortly thereafter, on May 16, 1918, the Senate passed the park bill.

Well, of course, that wasn't the end of it. There were snags in the House and further negotiations with the Forest Service. Finally agreement was reached with a revised boundary map drawn up with the help of Ashurst and Hayden. The revised bill got through both houses and, on February 26, 1919, was signed into law. Grand Canyon National Park was a reality.

It wasn't all joy and light, though, for it came into the National Park System with boundaries still so limited and with so many strings attached that our relief was also mixed with concern for the problems ahead. As it turned out, our fears were justified. Worse troubles lay ahead of us, troubles just beginning in 1920 when Ralph Cameron was elected United States senator from Arizona. I still shudder thinking about it, but that's a story all its own.

On the morning of February 15, 1918, I woke up feeling sick and quickly found myself quarantined with a treasonable case of German measles. Informed of my incapacity, Mather wrote a most unsympathetic letter to me. "It certainly was too bad that you had to be laid up just at this time and not even be able to get in touch with the office except by telephone." Along with the pleasure of my wife's company during my incarceration, I continued to work on Park Service business via my little portable typewriter.

When I returned to the office, Sieur de Monts National Monument in Maine was the most important issue. It was the first national park area east of the Mississippi, created only a year and a half before. This was very important to me. I firmly believed our service should encompass areas throughout the United States. There were so many exciting and beautiful regions in the East that should be preserved. People living there should not be forced to travel thousands of miles to enjoy a national park. There was also the practical side of the issue. Most of the population of America lived in the East, and more representatives in the Congress came from this section. I reasoned that they would therefore pay more attention to the National Park Service and its needs, financial and otherwise. Aside from all these considerations, this particular monument was close to my heart because of George Dorr.

Shortly after I joined the Interior Department in 1913, a distinguished-looking gentleman quietly and rather timidly entered the office. He introduced himself as George Dorr of Bar Harbor, Maine. He wished to see Secretary Lane. I told him that this was Mr. Miller's office, that both were away in the West, but that I was authorized to make appointments for the secretary. He looked like the Washington heat had worn him out, so I suggested he sit down while I went for a cool drink. I brought back a pitcher of water. He gratefully drank several glasses and then related his reasons for wishing to see Lane. It was a fascinating story.

George Dorr came from New England aristocracy. His mother's ancestors had accumulated vast wealth from the China trade. He had a home on Mount Desert Island in Maine. Fearful of unchecked development in this scenic area, he started a movement in 1900 to save the rugged land around his island and Seal Harbor. A few years later this led to the formation of an organization under the leadership of Dorr and Dr. Charles W. Eliot, president of Harvard University. It was designed to hold in trust land donated by local citizens. Its purpose was "that all in the future might find in it the pleasure, health and inspiration we have found;

to save it from the encroachments of commercialism; and to conserve the wild life, both plant and animal, whose native habitat it was." I copied those exact words from a letter Dorr showed me to explain the dream he and his friends had. I was most impressed by the man and the ideals for which he stood. I made an appointment for him to see Lane when he returned.

Apparently Lane was also impressed, as were many influential people in the government to whom I introduced Dorr. Sieur de Monts National Monument was proclaimed on July 8, 1916, and Dorr was named custodian. It was a notable event because it was the first national park area created entirely by private donations (except for tiny Muir Woods in California).

The Hancock County Trustees, who had been holding the gifts of land, turned everything over to the federal government, but the House Appropriations Committee under Fitzgerald ignored this new monument as it had all our other neglected monuments. No money was allocated for two more years. That was the condition of Sieur de Monts at the beginning of 1918.

Secretary Lane, along with his wife, had stayed with Dorr at his home in Maine the previous summer, had enjoyed the visit immensely, and had become a true champion of the monument. When Dorr came down to Washington to see about the financial problem, I suggested he bombard the new chairman of the Appropriations Committee, Swager Sherley. Let him understand the history of the monument and its needs, show him appeals from important and influential people.

I assured him that Secretary Lane and the National Park Service would do everything in their power to help. Dorr and I also agreed that, while we were at it, we could try to change the status of the monument to a national park as I was doing with Mukuntuweap in Utah.

Around May 1918, Dorr sent me a little booklet containing a dozen or so printed letters written to Sherley by an assortment of men, including Theodore Roosevelt. Everyone pleaded for the fifty-thousand-dollar appropriation Lane had requested for the monument. I guess we all knew Sieur de Monts was never going to get fifty thousand dollars, but, by golly, it did get ten thousand.

What's more, bills were introduced in the Congress early in 1918 to make it a national park. On February 26, 1919, President Wilson simultaneously signed bills creating Grand Canyon National Park and Lafayette National Park. The name change was to honor the famous Frenchman

who had fought alongside Washington in the Revolutionary War and for our soldiers who had recently served so bravely in France.

Dorr and I really didn't approve of the name, but we went along with it until I became director of the service in 1929. Then I pushed through the name we had chosen years before, Acadia National Park.

Shortly after I visited Mukuntuweap and trumpeted its beauty, newspapers and magazines joined me in promoting the idea of having it made a national park. Senator Reed Smoot of Utah took the first step toward that status by getting a bill through Congress in March 1918 that changed the name to Zion National Monument.

When I reported this news to Mather, he shot back a short but decisive note: "I know you, Horace! Don't go any further with this monument. There is to be no national park in the back of your mind until I see if it measures up."

Well, I ignored his warning, knowing he'd be as crazy about Zion as I was. I kept a low profile, but did everything I could to help the Utah congressional delegation. Their bill to create a greatly enlarged Zion National Park sailed through both the Senate and the House to become law in November 1919.

That same month Stephen Mather made his first trip to Utah's "Dixie." He was not only ecstatic about Zion but dazzled by its neighboring territory, Bryce Canyon. As a result he gave his wholehearted blessing to the new park, and within a few years Bryce also became a national park.

The foremost problem facing the Park Service in the early months of 1918 was a concerted effort by certain interests to make adverse use of the parks, excusing it as patriotism but, in reality, attempting to open them once and for all for commercial and money-making projects alien to the Park Service's organic act. Since the entry of the United States into the European conflict, this harassment had never let up.

As the war dragged on into the spring of 1918, pressure from the cattlemen and sheepmen, hunters, and water and power interests became more intense. One particularly nasty attack was contained in a western newspaper editorial, "Soldiers need meat to eat, not wild flowers!"

The Interior Department was flooded with all kinds of demands. Slaughter the Yellowstone elk herds. Kill the nearly extinct bison. Allow the organization of hunting parties to enter the parks to shoot wild animals for additional meat. And allow grazing everywhere.

Meeting unrelenting opposition, they switched the promotion of their agenda to the Food Administration, which operated under the capable and wise leadership of Herbert Hoover. First, he quashed the movement to suspend or modify the game laws by saying: "Any effort to weaken the present laws or in any way relax them in one locality would immediately lead to a demand for such relaxation of laws in all other localities, insuring a rapid breakdown of the whole legal structure of present game protection erected after efforts extending over numerous years."

This pretty well took care of some issues, but we were still faced with the grazing problem. There was a song going around the West. I think it was called "A Battle Cry of Feed 'Em," sung to the tune of the famous Civil War song. Out in Washington and Oregon I heard it, but with nasty lyrics that alluded to the national parks, grazing, and eating the wild animals. Feelings ran strong in the West.

Herbert Hoover saved us from further serious trouble. On January 9, 1918, he proved a staunch ally by issuing a memorandum: "The U. S. Food Administration concurs with the Department of the Interior that the Government's policy should be to decline absolutely all such requests." Unfortunately, even this wasn't completely able to halt the barrage of claims for resources in the parks.

I have already related how Walter Hansen saved Glacier and the Mountaineers Mount Rainier. Pressure from local newspapers did the same for Crater Lake. Yellowstone's organic act, with more than a little of our quiet, strong-armed tactics, carried it safely through. But still in 1918 requests drifted in for grazing cattle, sheep, or both in most of the great western national parks. They were fought fiercely and immediately by conservation groups, by magazine and newspaper writers, and locally by concerned individuals. As Emerson Hough wrote in *Forest and Stream* magazine: "I hate a goddamn sheep. I hate a ram. I hate a ewe. I hate a lamb. I hate their meat. I hate their tallow. I hate their hides. I hate their wool. I hate all goddamn sheep."

Although a lot of furor was created, we fortunately were able to hold the troublemakers at bay. I was absolutely adamant about wilderness intrusion by domesticated animals, and I firmly believe that our collective action during the war established a policy that remained unbroken into the future. Had we let our defense down in 1918, the national park areas might have been desecrated forever.

We had a great slogan someone put up in our Washington office at this time, a takeoff on John Philpot Curran's famous line. It went some-

thing like this: "Eternal vigilance is the price of don't let the bastards graze!"

Mr. Mather, who was out in California, kept sending me clippings about the grazing problems, although he offered no advice. He was sticking to his guns about not getting involved in park affairs. Happily, he had other interests and became immersed in the new Save-the-Redwoods League from the spring and on into the summer of 1918. Had he been involved in this grazing situation, it could perhaps have caused him too much mental stress.

In 1917 I had been asked to join Henry Fairfield Osborn, Madison Grant, and John C. Merriam for a tour of the land of the *Sequoia sempervirens*, the coast redwoods of northern California. To my everlasting regret, I had to beg off in order to continue my inspection tour of various parks and monuments. But these three men did travel the length and breadth of the redwood country. They were so impressed by the beauty of the old trees that they decided to form a society to buy groves for permanent preservation. They organized the Save-the-Redwoods League in 1918.

Mr. Mather had not forgotten this opportunity an official of the Park Service was forced to pass up. At the first chance he had, he made an inspection tour of this region in March 1918. He was horrified to see the destruction from massive clear cuts. Logging had been stepped up because of the war. The redwoods were even to be used for railroad ties.

When Mather heard this, he immediately contacted Osborn, who had been with him on the mountain trip in 1915, and offered his personal support as well as that of the Park Service. Mather wrote me from Santa Rosa: "Horace, it is stupefying to see what destruction man is capable of. I felt almost physically sick when viewing the mortal remains of these immortal trees."

Unable to be counted as "founders" of the Redwoods League, Mather and Congressman Billy Kent decided they would tour the region and see what help they could offer the fledgling organization. While they were cruising around the northern California redwood groves, they attended a meeting in Eureka to solicit contributions for the purchase of some choice redwoods. Typically, Mather got all excited about the prospect and spontaneously pledged fifteen thousand dollars. Then he enthusiastically pledged another fifteen thousand for Billy Kent, somewhat to Billy's dismay. Their donations plus appropriations from Humboldt County made possible the purchase of what was then known as Vance Bottom. It was deeded to the state of California in 1921.