

DEATH VALLEY NATIONAL MONUMENT

ANNUAL REPORT 1940

INTRODUCTION

The year was notable for an increase in visitors of 37.5%, 80842 persons having entered the Monument during the travel year. The mild winter and properly spaced rains brought forth the most profuse display of desert flowers within memory of living man and undoubtedly helped to raise the travel into the Monument.

On the construction side no new roads were built, but continuous improvement of the existing system was carried out.

By far the greatest activity was in replacing temporary flimsy structures with permanent adobe buildings and expanding the housing to meet new requirements.

ADMINISTRATIVE

Clerical and storekeeper positions were all filled during the year and a much smoother working organization has resulted. It is felt, however, that due to the lack of Roads and Trails allotments for the 1941 fiscal year, the assistant storekeeper position will probably have to be vacated for lack of funds, which will be a serious handicap.

It was hoped that the ranger force could be revised so that the two six months' positions could be made year round, but limited appropriations made this impossible; and, in fact, it became necessary to transfer one of the two year-round Park Rangers

to the Naturalist Division to bring expenses within the limits. This will further handicap the already short handed ranger force.

In the Naturalist Division lack of funds prevented filling the six months' seasonal position. The Acting Park Naturalist was granted **ten** months' leave without pay, making it possible to transfer one ranger to the Naturalist force in his absence, thereby relieving ranger funds.

MAINTENANCE AND NEW CONSTRUCTION

There were considerable cloudburst difficulties late in the year 1939 requiring a large amount of pavement clearing, but monetary damage was small considering the violence of the storms. Balances in the Roads and Trails post construction accounts were practically exhausted in reoiling and widening heavily traveled sections.

Only one new oiling job was undertaken, that of oiling Jubilee Pass from the Monument Boundary to Ashford Mills.

Funds were held over for reoiling and widening the important Furnace Creek entrance road until several proposed re-alignment sections could be graded and thus obviate wasting oil on the sections to be abandoned.

PHYSICAL IMPROVEMENTS

Four new small residence cabins were completed and occupied at Park Village and two at Wildrose. Two more will be required at Wildrose early in 1941.

The stone comfort station at Emigrant Junction was

completed, and a stone residence for checking ranger started but not completed.

At the Utility Area two small adobe generator houses and a blacksmith shop were completed. A new incinerator is well along toward completion.

The new garage and machine shop was erected to the plate height and should be completed before Christmas, 1940.

Six CCC truck shelters were erected by the army at Cow Creek and three at Wildrose.

MISCELLANEOUS

Water investigation at Wildrose and Emigrant Spring were successful and increased supplies made available at both places. Diversion in both instances was done with old salvaged pipe which will require replacement.

C. C. C.

As usual, two CCC companies occupied the Cow Creek twin camp for approximately seven months and one company the Wildrose Camp for five months.

The work program was extremely varied, and enrollees were trained in most of the skilled or semi-skilled work they are likely to encounter in future life.

EDUCATIONAL

For the first time the position of seasonal naturalist was established and filled. The man secured was of high intelligence and fine personality, and the nightly lectures and guided trips were immensely popular.

The program was hampered by lack of any museum facilities and inconvenience of using an operator's private building for a lecture hall.

Legal actions are extremely slow and non-productive of results. An injunction was secured against Nevares but a further suit must be instituted for damage and return of the water to its former channels, which even if won may well delay restoration of the water for a long time.

In the case of the Pacific Coast Borax Company, it probably will not be necessary to resort to court action; but unless our own undeveloped water be made available before they acquire same, the Monument will be dependent on them for future supply.