

May 28, 1949

**MEMORANDUM for the Director.**

**This refers to your Informational Memorandum for All Field Offices, dated April 28, requesting a report of the most significant events of the 1949 fiscal year.**

**The following topics are presented on the sheets attached hereto.**

- 1. Private Holdings.**
- 2. Travel.**
- 3. Botanical Display.**
- 4. Mining.**

**Frank R. Givens,  
Superintendent.**

cc: Region Four (2)

Private Holdings.

Elimination of private holdings is still our biggest task although the threat of development of such holdings has been materially reduced by the very definite drop in real estate values.

The Service has completed the purchase of 18,836.64 acres of land from the Southern Pacific Co. The Curtis Land Exchange has been completed which eliminates 18,233.98 acres of Southern Pacific Land. Other land exchanges are in varying degrees of completion.

While the downward trend of real estate values has reduced threatened development of private lands within the Monument it has also reduced the desire to acquire public domain which has resulted in fewer exchange applications and, in some instances, the withdrawal of exchange applications that were 'in the mill'.

### **Travel.**

Two of the biggest travel months in the history of the Monument were March 1949 with 12191 visitors, and April 1949 with 10188 visitors. This might be significant in view of the rather widespread decline of business in resort and recreational areas.

Increased travel resulted in some very undesirable conditions such as the inadequacy of the Salton View parking area which accommodates only about seven cars, the very unsanitary conditions due to lack of toilet facilities and the scattering of debris due to lack of campground facilities.

Botanical Display.

The almost unprecedented snowfall of from two to three feet produced the best display of wildflowers in the Monument in at least ten years. The display undoubtedly accounts for some of the increased travel. A large number of photographers and scientific groups visited the Monument. Sawyer's Viewmaster sent a photographer to take pictures for a proposed series of reels for their Viewmaster. When and if the reels are placed on the market it will undoubtedly result in wide publicity for the area.

Mining.

Mining in the Monument, being a depression occupation for those who have nothing better to do, gained some momentum during the year. However, none of the mines are on a paying basis except possibly the Kaiser Iron Mine. But the owners of mining claims will continue to develop the claims in an effort to interest capital in buying or backing the venture. It behooves the Service to complete the cases of approximately 3700 claims in the western part of the Monument which have been adversely reported but which have not been completed by the Bureau of Land Management because of the lack of funds. Some of these claims, not being operated at present, may start operation in the future and then they may be very difficult to cancel out.

**July 7, 1949**

**MEMORANDUM for the Director.**

**With reference to your memorandum of April 25 this is to advise that there are no significant events which were not covered in the Superintendent's report dated May 28.**

**Frank R. Givens,  
Superintendent.**

**cc: Region Four (2)**

### **Private Land Acquisition**

During the fiscal year, a total of 9,790.04 acres of Southern Pacific land in the Monument was acquired in three land exchanges. This, combined with the 18,253 acre exchange and the 12,836 acre purchase in early 1949, makes a total of 40,860.51 acres of Southern Pacific acquired since January, 1949. A number of other exchanges, some quite sizable, are expected to be consummated in the immediate future.

All Southern Pacific land in the Monument is included in the land exchange applications. However, some of the exchanges will undoubtedly fail to be consummated for various reasons.

**Travel**

The April count of travel and camps was the largest for any month in the history of the Monument even though this has been our poorest flower season and we made every effort to advise visitors beforehand that they could expect no flowers.

Travel for April, 1950 showed a 22.8% increase over April, 1949 the latter being our best month for flowers in the history of the area and wide publicity was given.



Wildlife

With the exception of the desert tortoise, all wildlife is either increasing or at least holding even. Sheep and deer seem to be doing well with added protection. The desert tortoise is a victim of an advertising scheme since the town of Joshua Tree has instituted an annual turtle race. Despite our protective efforts, the tortoises have all but disappeared.

**Protection**

Even with the establishment of one seasonal ranger position, we are not keeping pace with the increased use of the area. However, we are making some headway by having at least one patrolman on duty every day. The knowledge that a patrolman is on duty, and might be expected at any moment, has a salutary effect.

**Public Relations**

Up until this year, this area had not received one cent for construction and the nearby communities wondered if it was worthwhile to support the Monument against the many proposals to encroach upon and destroy the area. This year our position was considerably strengthened by the expenditure of allotments for construction of road dikes and dips, toilets, camp tables and fireplaces, and water exploration. Of course, this reaction is of secondary importance to the main objective of providing adequate facilities for the Visitors. The Monument is just beginning to take on the appearance of a well kept National Park Service Area.

Interpretation

Our first public interpretative display, though very modest, gained considerable attention. As the National Park Service does not own a headquarters building and its rented facilities are inadequate, the Joshua Monument National Bank offered space and purchased a showcase for our use. We prepared exhibits, mainly on the prehistoric Pinta Indians, and hung a number of 30" X 24" scenic photographs on the wall of the new and modern bank building.