

## Getting Along: The Significance of Cooperation in the Development of Zion National Park

By WAYNE K. HINTON

**F**rom the clashes of today over environmental issues relating to national parks and monuments, it would be easy to gain a distorted perspective on the historical attitudes among southern Utahns toward the creation and protection of Utah's scenic wonders that are today a part of the national parks and monuments system. Indeed, intense debate on and hostility toward the creation of national parks and monuments have not always been the order of the day in southern Utah. To the contrary, the historical record indicates that the setting aside of Zion National Park in 1919 and its early development actually resulted from cooperative efforts by residents of southern Utah communities; administrators in the National Park Service; corporate leaders of the Union Pacific and Los Angeles and Salt Lake railroads; conservationists; leaders of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormon church); and government officials, including Utah's congressional delegation led by Senator Reed Smoot.

From 1858, when Mormon pioneer Nephi Johnson became the first known Euro-American to enter Mukuntuweep Canyon in

*View from Zion's West Rim: Utah  
Writer's Project photo.*

Wayne K. Hinton is a history professor and history department chair at Southern Utah University, Cedar City.

southwestern Utah, the scenery inspired respect among the white settlers. Within five years, Isaac Behunin became the first settler residing in what he called “Little Zion Canyon.” This name persisted among local southern Utah settlers even after President Brigham Young of the Mormon church visited in 1870 and emphatically proclaimed that this was “not Zion.” Even so, Brigham Young believed, “the Rio Virgen [*sic*] scenes were probably unsurpassed anywhere for wild romantic grandeur.”<sup>1</sup> Beginning in the 1870s, noted explorers of the American West such as John Wesley Powell, G. K. Gilbert, Clarence Dutton, Thomas Moran, and Frederick Dellenbaugh confirmed to the nation that Little Zion Canyon was indeed awe-inspiring and uniquely beautiful.<sup>2</sup>

At the turn of the nineteenth century, a desire to protect areas of scenic grandeur from the ravages of commercial exploitation and a belief that scenic areas benefited the health and well-being of mankind led to a movement for a United States parks system. In 1900 Congressman John F. Lacey of Iowa introduced legislation to establish an administrative agency known as the National Park Bureau. His bill went nowhere. However, another preservation proposal offered by Lacey in 1906, known as the Antiquities Act, passed Congress. This act provided for the preservation of objects of historic or scientific interest that are situated upon lands owned or controlled by the federal government—and it allowed for the creation of national monuments to protect these objects. Congress left the choice of sites to be set aside solely to the President.<sup>3</sup>

In 1908 eight southern Utah ranchers applied for a survey of lands near Little Zion Canyon in eastern Washington County. Utah governor John C. Cutler in turn applied to the commissioner of the U.S. General Land Office, who appointed Leo K. Snow of St. George, Utah, to undertake the survey. Snow’s subsequent description of the deep and rugged terrain proved eye-catching. “From a point about one and one-half miles south of the Eighth Standard Parallel South, a view can be had of this canon [*sic*], surpassed in grandeur only by a similar view of the Grand Canon [*sic*] of the Colorado.”<sup>4</sup> The report persuaded President William Howard Taft to set aside on July 31, 1909, some 15,840 acres in Little Zion Canyon as Mukuntuweep National Monument. About one-half mile in width and eight miles in length, the monument included only the canyon proper.<sup>5</sup>

Despite the Antiquities Act and the prior existence of federal parks and monuments, there was no government agency to provide permanent

<sup>1</sup> Impressions of Zion, Brigham Young (1870), Historical File, Box 1, Zion National Park Historical Collection (hereafter Zion NP), Zion National Park Archives.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, John Wesley Powell (1875), J. E. Colburn (1873), G. K. Gilbert (1875), Clarence Dutton (1880), Thomas Moran (1900), Frederick S. Dellenbaugh (1903), and Timeline of Zion National Park, Zion NP.

<sup>3</sup> Alfred Runte, *National Parks: The American Experience* (3rd ed.; Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), 71.

<sup>4</sup> Leo K. Snow, General Description, Utah Field Notes, Vol. 162, 1908, 60, Zion NP.

<sup>5</sup> William Howard Taft, Mukuntuweep Proclamation, July 31, 1909, Zion NP.



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administrative safeguards or continuity of decision-making for the set-aside areas. *Road in Zion in 1917, at Temple of the Sun.*

Illustrative of the confused and indefinite administration were the two or three visits made annually to Mukuntuweep by agents of the General Land Office. Because there were no closer facilities, they stayed at a hotel in Hurricane twenty-five miles from the monument or with farm families in Springdale. Their trips from Hurricane to the monument were made with hired teams and wagons.<sup>6</sup>

The “informal reports” that the agents submitted to the Washington office of the Department of Interior detailed a hard, rough trip getting to the monument. Roadways, culverts, and bridges, such as existed, were only sporadically maintained by Washington County. Even though all who visited the canyon were impressed that “nature seems to have made this canyon a fine gallery of stupendous proportions,” few tourists came. The number of visitors was projected to increase if roads and accommodations became available or were improved; however, few, if any, reports asked for improvements. Usually, the agents concluded that “there is no occasion for the government to expend any money on this monument at this time.”<sup>7</sup>

Unkempt conditions within the monument led residents of Springdale to write the General Land Office in 1911, complaining of large amounts of unsightly driftwood lying in the river and along its banks. Some requested

<sup>6</sup> G. E. Hair to General Land Office, Washington, D.C., May 9, 1914, Zion NP.

<sup>7</sup> Report of Special Agent T. E. Hunt to General Land Office Commissioner, Washington, D.C., July 12, 1916, Zion NP.

permission to use the wood for fuel. Allowing residents to remove the wood, they argued, would clear the stream and help prevent damming during floods. Besides cleaning the canyon of fallen timber without expense to the government, it would supply residents with excellent, easily obtained fuel. Over the next four years, the General Land Office allowed residents, upon application, to remove dead wood. County road supervisors also removed wood and brush along the old wagon road traversing the canyon. This they used as revetment material along the river embankment to prevent the Virgin River from undermining and washing out the road. These minimal activities were undertaken without cost to the federal government, but they provided little or no actual protection for the monument.<sup>8</sup>

It was obvious to some residents, such as county health officer Rebecca Dennett of Rockville, that the monument was being seriously neglected. She complained to the General Land Office of pigs running loose in the canyon, destroying scenery and vegetation, and polluting the river. The response to her was that the loose pigs did violate monument rules, and therefore she was authorized to inform the owners to remove their pigs.<sup>9</sup>

Partly due to such neglect of the nation's parks and monuments, in 1910 the American Civic Association, a preservationist organization, pressured Interior Secretary Richard A. Ballinger to again propose the creation of an administrative agency for national parks and monuments. A draft bill, written with major input from members of the American Civic Association, including particularly Frederick Law Olmsted, was drawn up. In 1911 Reed Smoot, Mormon apostle and United States senator from Utah, introduced this Park Bureau bill on Capitol Hill. Smoot's interest in the bill stemmed mainly from his membership on the Senate Public Lands and Survey Committee and his positions as vice-president of the Western Pacific Railroad and as a director of the San Pedro, Los Angeles and Salt Lake Railroad, which would become part of the Union Pacific Company.<sup>10</sup>

When the bill bogged down in Congress, due mainly to opposition from other government agencies, park proponents renamed the proposed park organization the National Park Service. As the bill remained stalled in Congress, railroad officials formed a close alliance with park and preservation advocates. Railroad executives, always seeking profits, believed that tourism would follow the creation of a National Park Service and thereby increase travel by railroad. In their minds, this rationale provided a solid economic justification for the existence of parks. For preservationists, railroad travel promotions seemed a more dignified exploitation of scenic country than dams, mines, grazing, and timber operations were. Lobbying

<sup>8</sup> Report of Special Agent T. E. Hunt to Mr. R. B. Marshall, November 3, 1916, Zion NP.

<sup>9</sup> Rebecca Dennett to Department of Interior, Washington, D.C., September 24, 1916, Zion NP; R. B. Marshall to Rebecca Dennett, October 9, 1916, Zion NP.

<sup>10</sup> Runte, 98, 99; Reed Smoot biographical overview, Box 1, Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library (HBLL), Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

by both groups heightened public awareness of the opportunities that parks and monuments provided for marketing America's scenery. Extensive testimony on behalf of the bill finally brought success; the National Park Service bill passed Congress and was signed by President Woodrow Wilson on August 25, 1916. However, the newborn agency had little staff or money until May 1917, when the first appropriation was made.

Before director Stephen Mather could begin to organize the Park Service, he became seriously ill on January 4, 1917; he remained incapacitated until the end of the summer and did not resume his duties as director until the spring of 1918. In his absence, Horace M. Albright, who was appointed assistant director on April 19, 1917, became acting director and began organizing the Park Service.<sup>11</sup>

Meanwhile, occasional publicity and promotional trips focused some public attention on Mukuntuweep and served to either awaken or enliven the interest of southern Utah residents in the scenic and economic potential of the monument as well as the inadequacies of existing roads. Mormon bishop David Hirschi of Rockville became president of the Five-County Grand Canyon Highway Association, which included Beaver, Iron, Kane, and Washington counties in Utah and Coconino County in Arizona. The first objective was to work for improved roads. During the winter of 1914-15 this organization persuaded Hurricane to give \$2,000, La Verkin \$500, Toquerville \$1,000, and Cedar City \$1,200 for roads.<sup>12</sup>

Shortly thereafter, D. S. Spencer of the Union Pacific Railroad visited the monument. Before leaving Utah he received a promise from Governor William Spry that Spry would do everything possible to hasten road development if the railroad would undertake to promote tourist traffic. That fall, Douglas White of the railroad company helped to organize the Arrowhead Trails Association to develop and promote an automobile route from Los Angeles to Salt Lake City.<sup>13</sup> Because of poor roads and long distances, Mukuntuweep had remained almost inaccessible to all but the most adventuresome travelers. However, the activities of the Arrowhead Trails Association brought important results. Road improvements were made from the most important railroad town in Iron County, Lund, located northwest of the monument. Improvement of the Arrowhead Trails Highway from Salt Lake City through southern Utah to California also helped make the monument more accessible to motorists. Another result of the association's activities was that on September 8, 1916, federal money in the amount of \$15,000 was appropriated for a road to extend five miles into Mukuntuweep Canyon.<sup>14</sup> From Lund to the end of the monument

<sup>11</sup> Memo, Horace M. Albright to Mr. Chatelain, August 4, 1933, 2, Zion NP.

<sup>12</sup> Wayne Hinton, "Zion and Vicinity Road Development," MS in possession of the author.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 6. See also Edward Leo Lyman, "The Arrowhead Trails Highway: The Beginnings of Utah's Other Route to the Pacific Coast," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 67 (Summer 1999), 242-64.

<sup>14</sup> Report of the Director of the National Park Service to the Secretary of Interior for the Fiscal Year ending June 30, 1918, Zion NP; Albright to Chatelain, 2.

road was a trip of 102 miles that took seven hours to accomplish. Within the monument itself there were only a few existing roads and trails, all of which required extensive improvement, but as yet there was little money available in the frugal Park Service budget for development.<sup>15</sup>

For several decades, local stockmen had customarily grazed cattle within the canyon. In 1917, however, Acting Director Albright refused to renew grazing permits at Mukuntuweep because it had come to look like "a cattle pen." Formerly beautiful spots had become scarcely fit for use by the public because they had so long been used for winter grazing.<sup>16</sup> On August 12, 1918, Walter Ruesch assumed duties as the first custodian of the monument. That fall he oversaw the construction of a woven wire fence at the entrance of the monument to keep livestock from trespassing. To help guarantee cooperation of local stockmen, Bishop Hirschi called a meeting to gain their understanding and assistance. The stockmen yielded to the new order "with cheerful willingness." Soon, a marked improvement was evident in the recovery of ferns, grasses, and wildflowers.<sup>17</sup>

Perhaps as important as the ecological improvement brought by the cessation of grazing was the fact that residents of the "whole country" gave the National Park Service "a hearty welcome" by doing all they could to provide comfort and accommodation for the visitors descending upon their once-remote country. Even those who for years had used some of the valley lands for farming yielded without complaint to orders excluding them from commercial use of government lands within the monument. Others began to consider fair offers to sell their holdings inside the canyon to the Park Service.<sup>18</sup>

Despite limitations imposed by America's entry into World War I in April 1917, the number of visitors at Mukuntuweep grew slightly. However, until the war ended on November 11, 1918, government regulations prohibited the Los Angeles and Salt Lake Railroad from advertising the monument. Patronage by railroad travelers remained disappointing, and even visitation by motorists was less than expected. A major problem limiting travel to the

<sup>15</sup> Albright to Chatelain, 2.

<sup>16</sup> Horace M. Albright to Isaac Langston, October 1, 1917, Zion NP.

<sup>17</sup> Report of the Director of the National Park Service to the Secretary of Interior for the Fiscal Year ending June 30, 1918, Zion NP. Walter Ruesch had been appointed monument custodian in the fall of 1917, when Horace Albright visited southern Utah. Before he left, Bishop Hirschi introduced him to Ruesch, who was in charge of the tools, plows, and other implements purchased for the monument road construction. Albright was looking for someone local to look after the monument and asked the bishop about Ruesch. Bishop Hirschi praised Ruesch as a fine man: he was honest and hard-working; he could be trusted with property or anything else; and if he was told to do something, he would do it. He was indeed a fine man, but he had "one terrible habit." Over and over the bishop spoke of "the terrible habit." Finally, almost afraid of what the answer might be, Albright asked what it was. Bishop Hirschi replied, "He swears something awful." The delightedly relieved Albright appointed the swearing Walter Ruesch the first custodian of the monument. See Horace M. Albright to Mr. Chatelain, memo, August 4, 1933, ZNP.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.* No one's land was condemned, and there was no organized voice against losing grazing privileges, although some individual grazers complained until Bishop Hirschi convinced them to cooperate. Farming and ranching in southern Utah were so unprofitable between 1910 and 1915 that many farms and ranches in the vicinity of Zion had already been abandoned.

***The Wylie Camp at Mukuntuweep,  
operated by entrepreneur  
William Wylie, opened in 1917.***



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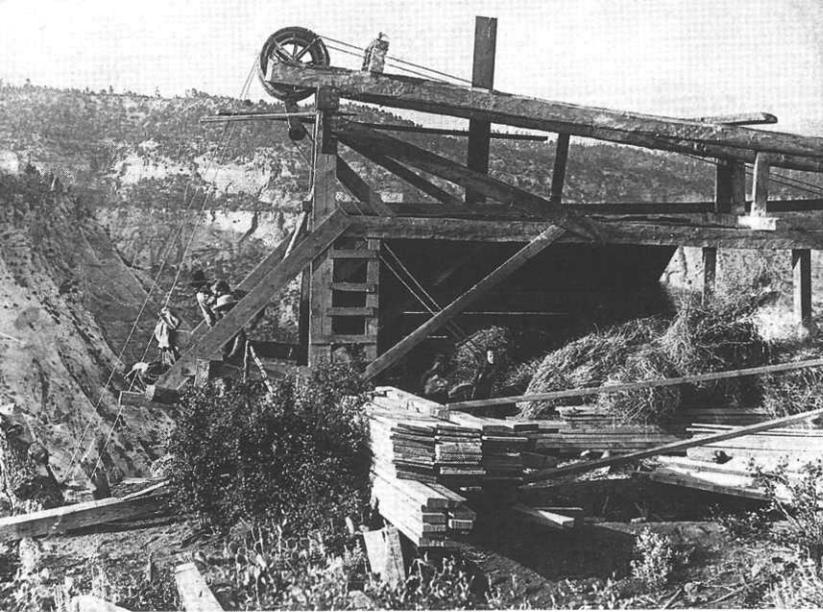
monument was that the approach road over the thirty miles from Anderson's Junction (the Anderson family home and ranch were located six miles north of La Verkin, at the point where the road to Mukuntuweep forked from the Arrowhead Trails Highway) had settled since construction and stood in need of extensive repairs. Its deteriorated condition discouraged travel.<sup>19</sup> Still, the railroad, the Park Service, and local citizens hoped that with war's end significant increases in visitation would occur. Realistically, however, it would take several years of a well-organized publicity campaign for news of the area's beauty to spread widely. Only Utahns and a few "professional people" who could afford the time, money, and inconvenience made the trip. The several prominent artists and photographers who had found their way to the canyon to depict the monument scenes could, at best, provide only a small part of the required publicity.<sup>20</sup>

In 1917, before the government had placed restrictions on publicity, officials of the Los Angeles and Salt Lake Railroad Company had drawn William W. Wylie into what in retrospect may have been a premature plan to establish camps at both Mukuntuweep and at the North Rim of the Grand Canyon. Wylie had developed the first removable tent camp, consisting of ten-board floors over which canvas cabin-tents, primitive in appointment and furnishings, were set up and taken down as needed. At Yellowstone, Wylie followed up his removable camp with a more permanent camp system called the Wylie Way, which included walks made of planks, a central assembly hall, and a dining room. The railroad company advanced funds to Wylie to establish camps at Mukuntuweep and the Grand Canyon, and it gave to Gronway and Chauncey Parry of Cedar City funds to incorporate the National Park Transportation and Camping Company. A concession contract was officially granted by the Park Service on September 6, 1917, extending to January 1, 1922.<sup>21</sup> Wylie's Camp opened for the first time on June 8, 1917, and remained open that first year only until October 18. The Parry Brothers bought two seven-passenger National Touring Cars for their concession. Both they and local citizens hoped that these activities would bring significant advances in the numbers of visitors to the monument.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Annual Report of the Director, September 24, 1920, Zion NP.

<sup>21</sup> Albright to Chatelain, 3; Secretary of Interior Franklin K. Lane to Senator Henry Myers, Chairman of Committee on Public Lands, U.S. Senate, December 27, 1919, Zion NP.



COURTESY OF ZION NATIONAL PARK ARCHIVES

***The cable works on Cable Mountain. The system, which lowered lumber to the canyon floor, operated from 1904 until 1926.***

During the spring of 1917 Douglas White, general passenger agent of the Los Angeles and Salt Lake Railroad, began an extensive correspondence with Park Service officials to promote development of the Mukuntuweep National Monument. While White was in Washington, D.C., working on finalizing the Wylie Camp permit, he and Horace Albright became acquaintances and friends. That September, at White's invitation, Albright went to Los Angeles to travel by rail with White to Utah. They left the train at Lund and went by automobile to Cedar City, where they were met by state senator Henry W. Lunt and a local rancher, Richard A. Thorley. Thorley, who knew the backcountry well and had a deep appreciation for the beauty of Zion, hoped that tourism and improved roads would stimulate the southern Utah economy. Often leading officials to outstanding scenic sites and providing descriptions of the beauties of Zion, Thorley would become a great help in Albright's campaign to establish Zion National Park.<sup>22</sup>

The party spent the night in Cedar City. The next morning Chauncey Parry drove them in one of the Parry Brothers National Touring Cars over a road Albright described as being "perfectly terrible." The party was joined at Rockville by Bishop Hirschi. That afternoon they arrived at the Wylie Camp. From there the men hiked as far up Mukuntuweep Canyon as possible and watched in some fascination as the cable operation conveyed timber from the rim of Cable Mountain to the floor of the canyon.<sup>23</sup> The party also hiked partway up the Virgin River Narrows and watched a rising full moon light the canyon walls. Albright admitted to being "overwhelmed by

<sup>22</sup> Albright to Chatelain, 2, and Albright to P. P. Patraw, dayletter, June 19, 1933, R.G. 79, NPS Central Classified File 1933-39, 868-885-1, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

<sup>23</sup> The Cable Mountain Draw Works was designed and constructed by David Flanagan of Springdale, Utah. It consisted of a braced wooden head frame structure fitted with cables to lower lumber from the summit of Cable Mountain down a 2,000-foot vertical cliff to the canyon floor. The loading area was thirty by sixteen feet, and a drum set fourteen feet above the platform rotated the cable. This structure was held up by supports and framing. Pulleys were used in conjunction with snubbing posts set in the ground at the base of the cliff to separate the endless cable and to provide tracking width for the cable as it carried the lumber on a trolley device from the cliff top above. This cable began operation in 1904; it was sold by Flanagan to Alfred Stout and O. D. Gifford in 1906 and operated until its abandonment in 1926. In 1930 the cable was removed.

the loveliness of the valley and the beauty of the canyon.” He was sure it was of national park caliber.<sup>24</sup>

Albright traveled from the monument to Salt Lake City, where he met with Governor Simon Bamberger and also granted an interview to the *Salt Lake Tribune*, which led to his striking up an important friendship with John F. Fitzpatrick, editor of the paper. Some park officials regarded the *Tribune* as “the most important newspaper in the state.” It was significant that Fitzpatrick became a Zion supporter “without peer anywhere.”<sup>25</sup> Albright indicated to both the governor and the newspaper reporters that if the state would provide a decent highway connecting the southern border of the monument with the Arrowhead Trails Highway, Congress would maintain a first-class highway within the reserve. He emphasized that if the state did its part to provide and maintain a suitable approach road, he could guarantee Utah a prominent place among the wonder-possessing tourism states of the nation.<sup>26</sup>

Director Mather was resting from his illness at Lake Tahoe when Albright wired him of his visit to Mukuntuweep Monument and urged the director to visit Little Zion Canyon for himself. His report of the scenery was so glowing that the incredulous Mather wrote back that he thought Albright must have fallen into the hands of some slick chamber of commerce director who had sold him a bill of goods, or he had been intoxicated with some very potent drink. Mather had never heard tell of any such country as Albright described and was at a loss to explain what could have come over his assistant.<sup>27</sup>

Inspired by his visit, Albright spent time during the winter of 1917–18 reading the Geological Survey reports of southern Utah. This reading convinced him the monument could be and needed to be enlarged beyond its original 15,840 acres to take in other nearby canyons such as Oak Creek and Pine Creek and the high plateaus above, including the Western Rim. At Albright’s urging, Mather prepared a request asking President Wilson to enlarge the monument. By February 1918 Robert Sterling Yard, a railroad officer and a member of the American Civic Association, added to the request by asking that the name of the monument be changed from Mukuntuweep to Zion Canyon National Monument. He argued that all the local people called it Zion, and promoters, especially railroad officials, were impatient with the Mukuntuweep name. Yard wondered why a name change could not easily be coupled with the request to enlarge the monument.<sup>28</sup> In March, after Albright and Douglas White secured the approval of Interior Secretary Franklin K. Lane and the Utah congressional delegation,

<sup>24</sup> Albright to Chatelain, 3.

<sup>25</sup> Eviend T. Scoyen, interview by Lucy C. Schiefer about his experiences as first superintendent of Zion National Park, Springdale, Utah, January 28, 1971, 26, Zion NP; Albright to Chatelain, 4.

<sup>26</sup> *Salt Lake Tribune*, September 9, 1917.

<sup>27</sup> Albright to Chatelain, 1.

<sup>28</sup> Robert Sterling Yard to Stephen Mather, memorandum, February 20, 1918, ZNP.

Albright drew up a proclamation that was signed by Woodrow Wilson on March 18, 1918, enlarging the monument from its original 15,840 acres to 76,800 acres and changing the name to Zion National Monument.<sup>29</sup>

With the enlarged boundary and name change, officials focused their attention on obtaining national park status. On November 18, 1918, Horace Albright sent Senator Reed Smoot a draft bill in partial fulfillment of Director Mather's personal assurance of an early consideration of Zion for national park status. A third section was added later at the director's suggestion to allow the Secretary of Interior to acquire school sections within the park, since there were a number of such sections that would greatly interfere with the administration of a park. Indeed, the state owned 480 acres of school sections within the addition, of which 320 acres had been sold pending final approval by the Department of Interior. The bill proposed to exchange other lands for the school sections, including those whose sales were pending, and to negotiate to buy at fair market value eighty acres of patented private lands within the new boundary. In lieu of its holdings within the park, Utah would be allowed to acquire selected public domain lands outside the boundary.<sup>30</sup>

Unfortunately, the monument had retained several nonconforming uses that would have to be mitigated if park status were to be realized. During some summers sheep had grazed in the monument. Supposedly, sheep were precluded from monuments, and there was no chance that they could ever graze in a national park. There was also the extensive Cable Mountain lumber operation, which Park Service officials regarded as the major user and abuser of the new road within the monument. Additionally, the Arrowhead Hotel in St. George had put up some objectionable and unsightly signs inside the monument, including some particularly offensive ones painted on rocks proclaiming the Arrowhead Hotel to be the choice of discriminating travelers. These signs would have to be removed.<sup>31</sup>

Senator Smoot's bill establishing Zion National Park was passed by Congress; President Woodrow Wilson signed it on November 20, 1919.<sup>32</sup> The annual Conference of National Park Superintendents, held that

<sup>29</sup> Woodrow Wilson to the Secretary of Interior, letter of transmittal, March 8, 1918.

<sup>30</sup> Horace Albright to Reed Smoot, November 18, 1918, Zion NP.

<sup>31</sup> Horace Albright to Walter Ruesch, September 9, 1918, Zion NP.

<sup>32</sup> Woodrow Wilson to Secretary Lane, November 20, 1919, Zion NP. The close cooperation among local residents, state agencies, and federal officials in the early development of Zion National Park is in sharp contrast to the proposal to create Capitol Reef National Park and even in contrast to responses to proposed additions to Zion in 1936. Everyone seemed to be enthusiastic about the idea of Zion National Park.

A typical newspaper response appeared in the *Salt Lake Tribune* of September 25, 1916, which termed Zion "God's Gallery of Art" and expressed admiration for the natural wonders that abound in Utah's Dixie.

While Senator Smoot did have a business interest in western railroads and may have stood to benefit financially from increased tourism, his genuine interest in conservation is well-documented. Thomas Alexander asserts that "the U. S. Forest Service and National Park Service had no better friend in Congress than Reed Smoot." See Thomas G. Alexander, *Utah: The Right Place* (Salt Lake City: Gibbs Smith, 1995), 425.



COURTESY ZION NATIONAL PARK ARCHIVES

**National Park Service director  
Stephen Mather on the West Rim  
Trail.**

November in Denver and at Rocky Mountain National Park, was concluding as news arrived of the approval of Zion as a national park. NPS director Mather had approved the application for national park status without ever visiting southern Utah. Since monument custodian Walter Ruesch was attending the conference representing Zion, Mather decided to accompany him home to see what he had supported sight unseen. Inspector Herbert Gleason, a fine photographer and writer, also went along to record views and impressions. Stephen Mather immediately fell in love with Zion and began giving his enthusiastic personal attention to its development.<sup>33</sup>

The dedication of Zion as a national park on September 15, 1920, coincided with the conclusion of the National Governor's

Conference held in Salt Lake City. It was hoped that state governors would attend the dedication, be favorably impressed, and share their positive impressions with people in their home states. Several governors did attend to hear speeches by Governor Simon Bamberger, former governor William Spry, Mormon church president Heber J. Grant, Senator Reed Smoot, and Stephen Mather. Some speakers addressed the need for road improvements. Many eulogized the Mormon pioneers, expressed admiration for the natural wonders of the park, and communicated their optimism that the new park would be a powerful factor in the economic development of the state, particularly for southern Utah.<sup>34</sup>

Despite disappointing park attendance during 1919, a situation that was attributed to the influenza epidemic, Union Pacific was already requesting Park Service authorization to build a hotel within the park<sup>35</sup> and to operate an expanded transportation service between the North Rim of the Grand Canyon and Zion. The railroad had begun extensive advertising, which included attractively illustrated booklets. Park Service personnel were also optimistic about the "splendid spirit of cooperation" displayed by the state of Utah in building replacement roads and bridges and about the state's willing cancellation of advertised sales of school section lands within the park boundaries.<sup>36</sup>

In his enthusiasm for the park, NPS director Stephen Mather returned

<sup>33</sup> Albright to Chatelain.

<sup>34</sup> John Barton Payne, Secretary of Interior, to Stephen Mather, September 15, 1920, Zion NP.

<sup>35</sup> Park officials preferred cabins to a lodge, however.

<sup>36</sup> Report of the Director of the National Park Service to the Secretary of Interior for Fiscal Year July 1, 1919 to June 30, 1920; John Barton Payne to Reed Smoot, August 15, 1920, Zion NP.



to Zion regularly; in fact, between 1919 and 1929 he made at least one trip annually. In the process, he developed a personal fondness and respect for the Mormon residents of the area and successfully won their confidence and esteem.<sup>37</sup> As part of his 1921 visit, he brought Emerson Hough, a *Saturday Evening Post* writer, and Edmund Heller, a famed naturalist, in the hope that they would share his enthusiasm and help spread the news about Zion's beauty. While on this trip, Mather's party traveled to the North Rim of the Grand Canyon, and the director began planning for a tourist circle linking Zion, Bryce, Cedar Breaks, and the North Rim. As the party stopped at Pipe Springs in northern Arizona, a site that had formerly been a Mormon fort and cattle ranch, Mather fell in love with the place and arranged to buy it from Charles Heaton for \$5,250 in order to provide an additional component of the developing tourist circle. The purchase of Pipe Springs was made by donations from sixteen individuals and organizations, without any federally appropriated money being expended. Mather and Mormon church president Heber J. Grant each gave \$500; the Union Pacific Railroad, the Mormon church, and Jonathan Heaton and Sons contributed \$1,000 each.<sup>38</sup> Pipe Springs was declared a national monument by President Warren G. Harding on May 31, 1923; it came under the administrative authority of Zion National Park.<sup>39</sup>

*Zion National Park entrance,  
c. 1925. The sign says,  
"CHECKING STATION, PLEASE  
REGISTER."*

<sup>37</sup> Albright to Chatelain.

<sup>38</sup> Memorandum from Management Assistant, Pipe Springs National Monument, to General Superintendent, Southern Utah Group, August 14, 1969, LS-4, Water Matters, Pipe Springs, 1969, Zion National Park Water Matters Collection, Zion NP.

<sup>39</sup> Albright to Chatelain.

As Mather won the confidence of the Mormon people, he became a close friend of LDS bishops Richard S. McAllister of Kanab, David Hirschi of Rockville, and O. D. Gifford of Springdale. Through the bishops he encouraged local support for the park and the training of young people. Mather believed that if there was ever to be a big park operation at Zion the local people had to understand what a major national park was, and they needed to gain the sophistication necessary for hosting large numbers of visitors. In order to demonstrate how a major national park operated and what residents might expect, he encouraged the bishops to organize a contest among the young women, ages seventeen through nineteen, of Kane and eastern Washington counties. The young women competed in their knowledge of Mormon scriptures, and the twenty who knew selected scriptures best were treated to a two-week trip to Yellowstone National Park with all expenses paid from Director Mather's own pocket. After that, whenever Director Mather and Assistant Director Albright visited Zion, the winners of the trip sought them out to express appreciation. Albright felt assured that the young women's experience benefited the park through their newly acquired fund of knowledge about parks.<sup>40</sup>

Not only did Mather respect the Mormons of southern Utah but he also rather successfully indoctrinated other Park Service personnel with a favorable attitude. When Eviend T. Scoyen was appointed the first superintendent of Zion, Mather assured him of the cooperation of the Mormon people and of his own respect for and interest in the people and the country. The director referred to the support that he and the Park Service had received. For instance, since there were no paved roads in Washington County when the park was established, local citizens headed up committees to lobby the State Road Commission for paving. Randall Jones of Cedar City was particularly influential with Road Commission members on behalf of southern Utah; he also helped convince the Union Pacific Railroad and a subsidiary, Utah Parks Company, to undertake important improvements and developments. In 1923 the Utah Parks Company became the Zion Park concessioner, and it continued in that role until 1972.

Jones, a fine photographer, ran a photographic studio in Cedar City. The Union Pacific Company hired him to take his own exquisite collection of slides, which in the days before kodachrome he colored himself, to the East and give slideshows advertising Zion National Park and southern Utah. Jones also worked effectively in cooperation with Mather and others in gaining an agreement among Kane County, Washington County, the state of Utah, and the federal government to bring about construction of the Zion–Mt. Carmel Tunnel and Highway that seemed so important for any future development of tourism at Zion.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, and Scoyen interview, 3.

<sup>41</sup> E. T. Scoyen to Director, August 1, 1928, Zion NP.



COURTESY ZION NATIONAL PARK ARCHIVES

*Walter Reusch and Lucy Denman presenting the “key” to the park to Governor George Dern on Opening Day in 1925. This event celebrated the completion of the Zion Lodge. Dern’s speech praised recent achievements: the completion of a railroad spur, newly built highways, the operation of Union Pacific motor buses, new lodging facilities, and Union Pacific’s publicity efforts.*

Later, when Scoyen was asked to identify the most influential park supporters, he listed Randall Jones as the most important person in southern Utah and called him “the Apostle of the Utah Parks.” He also identified several Mormon leaders: Heber J. Grant, president of the church; Anthony W. Ivins, counselor in the First Presidency; George Albert Smith of the Quorum of Twelve Apostles; and former bishop and current state legislator David Hirschi.<sup>42</sup>

Following the examples of Mather and Albright, Scoyen, despite some initial reticence, developed good relations with local Mormons. His initial apprehension was revealed when a clerk-stenographer position came open. Scoyen asked the Service for a young man who could start at the bottom of a park development program and work up. He cautioned that living conditions near Zion were not on a par with other parks and that southern Utah was “not a very desirable place for a single man, or a man who has a family with children of school age.”<sup>43</sup>

Part of Scoyen’s concern about appointing a man with school children was due to the absence of an elementary school at Springdale. For years, citizens had repeatedly requested a school. The reply of the Washington County school board had always been that there was no money available.

<sup>42</sup> E. T. Scoyen to Thos. S. Allen, Jr., November 18, 1930, Zion, NP, and Scoyen interview, 11.

<sup>43</sup> E. T. Scoyen to Director, August 1, 1928, Zion NP.

Scoyen added his input, reminding the school board that Springdale was at the entrance to Zion National Park, where thousands of people would soon come, creating a need for additional employees whose children would need a school.

From somewhere, the board came up with half the money for a building if the local residents would donate the necessary labor to complete the school. Scoyen let it be known that "...if the trucks and the concrete mixers and things like that, up in the Park, happen to get down to Springdale for the weekend, why I don't believe I'll see them." The equipment was taken to town each weekend, and people worked from dawn to dark hauling gravel, mixing concrete, and building until finally the schoolhouse was completed. Later, the same arrangement helped build the Springdale LDS chapel.<sup>44</sup>

Scoyen also found cooperation in negotiations with local farmers who had holdings within Zion that were needed by the Park Service to consolidate park properties. Those who owned property in the park were generally happy to sell to the government. The price was fair, and as one put it, "When you think of the work on those ditches up there...that was enough to give anybody the idea they should move. Slide after slide off those mountains would come down and the water would go out of the ditch."<sup>45</sup>

There were a few obstacles. The Crawford family owned the land where the park headquarters is now located. An apparently amicable agreement was reached on a sale, but suddenly Brother Louis Crawford told Scoyen, "We've been talking about it, and we can't sell you that property." Scoyen was bewildered because the conditions and the price seemed right. Crawford explained that "Brigham Young called us to settle here, and we can't go until we are released." Scoyen, respecting this attitude, went to Salt Lake City to talk with Heber J. Grant, who Scoyen knew was "tremendously interested," and he also knew that President Grant believed the park needed this land. Grant said, "Well, I'll tell you, Mr. Scoyen, I'll take under consideration the problem of releasing them." When he shortly thereafter granted a release to the Crawfords, they gladly completed the sale.<sup>46</sup>

In addition to being able to sell properties to the Park Service for a fair market value, there were other benefits that accrued to the local people. The construction of the Zion–Mt. Carmel Tunnel and Highway, which was regarded as essential to tourism development by both local residents and Park Service officials, was begun in 1927 and finished in 1930. The cost of building the 5,200-foot-long tunnel totaled approximately \$2 million. The construction employed up to 210 men, many from local communities. At the same time, an additional fifty-one men were employed at the park on improvements to the administrative area, the water system, the sewage system, and the campgrounds.

<sup>44</sup> Scoyen interview, 21.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

**East entrance of the Zion/  
Mt. Carmel Tunnel and the  
bridge crossing the Pine Creek  
Drainage.**



COURTESY ZION NATIONAL PARK ARCHIVES

In order to realize its full economic and tourism potential, the park also needed adequate lodge facilities and more effective advertising. During 1923 and 1924 the Union Pacific Company and its subsidiary Utah Parks Company spent \$1,713,000 for improvements directly or indirectly related to park development. A thirty-five-mile railroad from Lund to Cedar City was completed in 1923 at a cost of \$950,000. A modern passenger station cost another \$75,000, and the purchase and completion of Hotel El Escalante in Cedar City cost \$265,000. A lodge and forty-six cabins were constructed at Zion for \$83,000, and an associated water system cost \$5,000. A bus garage in Cedar City and forty eleven-passenger auto-stages bought to convey visitors to Bryce, Cedar Breaks, the North Rim, Pipe Springs, and Zion cost \$235,000. National advertising expenses for 1923 to 1924 were \$100,000 for ads in the *Saturday Evening Post*, *Literary Digest*, and other national magazines, periodicals, and newspapers, and for the publication of an elaborately illustrated booklet on Zion.<sup>47</sup>

Despite the investments, or maybe because of them, Park Service officials increasingly criticized the Union Pacific's role at Zion. They complained that the railroad looked upon private motorists as pests. Because of its tie to the railroad, the Utah Parks Company advertised only for railroad traffic, and it discriminated in housing accommodations and dining reservations against visitors who came independent of Utah Parks Company bus tours.

In fact, the railroad did not advertise at all in California because ads there would tend to attract only private motorists rather than rail passengers. It seemed impossible to jar railroad officers from their shortsighted attitude and get them to accept the viewpoint that money spent by motorists was as good as that spent by rail passengers. There were three departments within Union Pacific's organizational structure; this structure created a lack of coordination and even some friction among the departments. From the Park Service perspective, a better format was desirable. Park officials hoped for a circumstance in which the Utah Parks Company might be something

<sup>47</sup> Los Angeles and Salt Lake Railroad Company to Congressman Louis C. Crompton, December 29, 1924, Zion NP.



more than just “a plaything” for high officials of Union Pacific. There was hope on the part of Park Service administrators that a “divorce” might sever the Utah Parks Company from any direct relationship to the railroad. This, however, did not happen, and the company continued to concentrate solely on building passenger traffic for the Union Pacific. For Park Service officials there was entirely “too much railroad” in Utah Parks Company management for its own good.<sup>48</sup>

***Union Pacific touring buses at the Zion National Park Lodge during the 1920s.***

Over the next forty years the association between Park Service and Union Pacific officials deteriorated further. By 1960 the independence afforded to travelers by automobile cut into railroad passenger travel and bus tours significantly. Social and economic changes led the Utah Parks Company in 1969 to begin an attempt to sell their concessioner contract, but Congress would not agree to a sale until 1972.

Besides the Union Pacific and Utah Parks Company expenditures, the federal government between 1919 and 1941 spent a total of \$684,190 for the administration, protection, and maintenance of Zion; \$3,500,479 for road and trail construction, maintenance, and improvement; and \$6,292 for fire protection and prevention. During the Great Depression of the 1930s, another \$322,682 was expended in the park on Civilian Conservation Corps projects. The Public Works Administration spent another \$315,334, and other public relief agencies spent \$194,584 on Zion Park projects. Total

<sup>48</sup> Memorandum from E. T. Scoyen to Director, May 12, 1928, Zion NP.

federal expenditures at Zion National Park over the first twenty-two years of its existence were \$5,024,261, much of it spent locally for purchases and wages.<sup>49</sup> No one could legitimately deny the importance of this infusion of federal money into the local economy.

The number of visits to the park rose from 3,963 in 1920 to 8,400 in 1924, to 21,694 in 1926, and up to 30,916 in 1928. With the completion of the Zion–Mt. Carmel Tunnel and Highway in 1930, visits increased to 55,297. The numbers continued to climb, despite the financial hardships of the Great Depression, to 68,801 in 1934, 124,393 in 1936, and 149,805 in 1938. In 1941, before World War II travel restrictions and gasoline rationing seriously cut into travel, there were 190,016 visits to Zion National Park.<sup>50</sup>

The cooperation among local Mormons in Iron, Kane, and Washington counties; city, county, and state governments; the federal government; and corporate America in the form of Union Pacific and its subsidiary, the Utah Parks Company, had paid enormous dividends for the preservation, development, and visitation of Zion—as it had for all of southern Utah’s economic progress and its social and cultural development. In 1915 the 1,000 visitors to Mukuntuweep National Monument found no hotels or public accommodations. They either had to stay at a “fair hotel” in Hurricane, twenty-five miles away, or with farm families in Rockville or Springdale. There was little protection of the scenery in the monument at that time, and there were several nonconforming uses that were ecologically detrimental. Southern Utah had few roads of any kind and no paved roads. The nearest railroad was 102 miles away. In 1941, however, the 190,000 visitors found more than adequate accommodations in the park and at Springdale. There were several new and paved roads, including the Zion–Mt. Carmel Tunnel and Highway, and the railroad had been extended from Lund to Cedar City. There was an elementary school in Springdale. The park was well-preserved and administered. These were profound changes. The creation of Zion National Park and the subsequent tourism development provided the basis for the establishment of an important industry and a major payroll that have proven to be valuable assets to economic and social life in southern Utah communities.

The attitude of the local people is well illustrated through an event that occurred the last night Superintendent Scoyen spent at Zion. About 10 p.m. there was music accompanied by a tinkling sound and then a loud shout on the front porch of his cabin. Scoyen and his wife emerged to find a throng of people from Springdale gathered there to say a fond goodbye to the first superintendent of the park, who had overseen so much of the early development of Zion. They sang songs and read poems, including one written especially for the occasion by Moses Gifford, about the apprecia-

<sup>49</sup> RG 79 NPS Central Classified File, 1933-1949, Zion National Park, 204-07-01, Box 1887, Document A, Resources of the State of Utah.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*

tion of the local people for the superintendent and his wife.<sup>51</sup>

Although he had arrived at Zion with some concern about local relations, Scoyen left with nearly the same level of appreciation for the Mormon people that Stephen Mather and Horace Albright had developed. These men, who were so important in the early history of Zion, had developed a genuine fondness for the local people and their cooperative spirit. Horace Albright perhaps said it best: "Cooperation of the local people was cheerfully extended.... Orders were issued...and were generally obeyed.... I shall always remember with keenest delight my early association with those good Mormon people, who, without knowing what a national park was, cooperated so fully..."<sup>52</sup> Indeed, it can be truthfully said that all Americans benefited from the extensive cooperation, if for no other reason than because the scenic wonders of southern Utah seemed to be preserved for future generations.

Local residents, painfully aware of their remote location in the upriver towns of eastern Washington County, had come to realize by the early twentieth century that they had a commodity—scenery—that had marketable value if they could develop transportation links to overcome the inaccessibility. Through a united cooperative effort a park was created, roads were provided, and tourism was slowly but effectively promoted. The result today exceeds the wildest expectations of any of the early promoters of Zion National Park.

The post-World War II conditions brought an enlarged middle class, which meant more people with the time, means, and desire to travel. Visiting the scenic wonders of the American West became fashionable. Automobile ownership expanded dramatically, and air travel increased significantly. Where southern Utahns had once hoped for visitors from Pennsylvania or New York, international visitation has become so great that waiters at the Zion Lodge, tongue in cheek, express gratitude for visitors who speak English. At the beginning of the twenty-first century the love affair of tourists with Zion National Park has become so obsessive that both the quality of visits and the ecology of the park are threatened. In an effort to mitigate some negative effects of 3,000,000 visitors a year, the Park Service instituted on May 23, 2000, a shuttle system into the park. Officials hope the shuttle will improve the park experience and reduce degradation of the park environment.

The successful selling of Zion's scenery exceeded the hopes of the small-town Mormons of southern Utah and that of park advocates. The challenge appears to have come full circle since 1916—or perhaps, more truthfully, it remains the same: to conserve the scenery and to provide enjoyment in a manner that will leave the park unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations. It may well turn out that too many visitors is a much bigger challenge than remoteness and few visitors.

<sup>51</sup> Scoyen interview, 22.

<sup>52</sup> Albright to Chatelain.