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DR. HERMAN CAREY BUMPUS 1862-1943

By Carl P. Russell, Chief Naturalist, National Park Service*

On an April day in 1924, Superintendent W. B. Lewis of Yosemite National Park telephoned to the Park Naturalist at work in the then makeshift park museum to impart the good news that \$50,000.00 had been obtained by the American Association of Museums with which to build a new Yosemite museum. This news was exciting to the workers who had pioneered in the assembling of Yosemite educational material, but, actually, it was but part of the story; it gave no hint of the fact that the gift to Yosemite National Park was to be notably larger than \$50,000.00, nor did it indicate that with it would come a guide and mentor whose inspiring leadership would extend through two decades of park museum work and embrace the entire national park system.

Soon after the funds were obtained for the development of the Yosemite museum, Ansel F. Hall, then Chief Naturalist of the Na-

tional Park Service, drove into Yosemite Valley accompanied by Dr. H. C. Bumpus, representative of the American Association of Museums, under whose supervision and control the educational demonstration was to be made. Dr. Bumpus had been made Chairman of the Association's committee on outdoor education and from the beginning of the Yosemite Museum project, he took a deep personal interest in every detail of construction and exhibit planning. His was a true leadership, enhanced by his great capacity for friendships, and, although he did not remain in residence in Yosemite, or even in California, the work on the Yosemite Museum, which began in 1924 and continued through 1925, bore his unmistakable impress.

The new museum library and offices functioned in the fall of 1925, and the exhibit rooms were opened to the public in May, 1926. In the meantime, Dr. Bumpus and his com-

*Editor's Note: Dr. Russell served as Park Naturalist of Yosemite National Park from 1923 to 1929. It was during this period that the Yosemite Museum was built and equipped.

mittee had accomplished very practical results in building trailside museums at Bear Mountain Interstate Park, New York and in Grand Canyon National Park. The evidences of public appreciation and use of these experimental interpretive devices quickly convinced the Secretary of the Interior, the National Park Service, the American Association of Museums, and officials of the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial that park museums are effective instruments of definite value to the cause of conservation. On the strength of these results, additional funds were obtained by the American Association of Museums with which to develop a system of trailside museums in Yellowstone National Park. Dr. Bumpus continued to direct the planning and development of the expanding program. Four small focal point museums, a system of trailside exhibits, and extensive improvements in the central museum at park headquarters were finished under Dr. Bumpus' direction. His interest extended beyond the museums and trailside exhibits to include all phases of the interpretive program. The unique "Trailside Notes for the Motorist" were a product of his original thinking.

Although the direct financial support of the American Association of Museums in National Park Service interpretive work was discontinued in 1934, the active interest of Dr. Bumpus in the broad program of the entire Service continued. He

became chairman in 1931 of the Board to Advise the National Park Service on all Educational Matters and in 1936 was made chairman of the newly created Advisory Board on National Parks, Historic Sites, Buildings and Monuments. In that



capacity he played a prominent role in putting into effect the provisions of the Historic Sites Act of 1936. His background of rich experience in education, conservation practice, and administrative work enabled him to act with decision and utmost fairness to public interests and government alike. In 1940, for reasons of health, Dr. Bumpus resigned from the Advisory Board but continued active as a member of the National Parks Council of the American Planning and Civic Assoc-

ciation.

Dr. Bumpus was born in Buckfield, Maine, May 5, 1862. He died on June 21, 1943, in Pasadena, California, where for some months he had resided with his son, Dr. Hermon Carey Bumpus, Jr. Obituary appreciations have appeared in the Museum News, September 1, 1943; Planning and Civic Comment, July, 1943; and in the records of the Advisory Board on National Parks, June 21 and 22, 1943. His accomplishments in the educational field were many, and his activity in scientific organizations won for him a place of international leadership in research. He was one of the founders of the American Association of Museums and was its first president in 1906-1907, after which period he was continuously active with the organization as an officer or council member to the time of his death.

Such other organizations and agencies as the Marine Biological Laboratory, Woods Hole, Massachusetts, the International Fishery Congress, the American Society of Zoologists, the American Society of Prehistoric Research, the Laboratory of Anthropology, Santa Fe, and the Mt. Desert Biological Laboratory benefited from their inception through his initiative and far-sightedness. He distinguished himself in administrative work as Director of the American Museum, 1902-1911; Business Manager of the University of Wisconsin, 1911-1914; President of Tufts College, 1914-1919;

Consulting Director of the Buffalo Museum, 1925-1930; and as Secretary of the Corporation, Brown University, 1924-1929.

For many years Dr. Bumpus was an honorary member of the American Scenic and Historic Preservation Society, which society in April, 1941, awarded to him the Pugsley Gold Medal "for outstanding service in the field of national park education . . . the creation and popularization of the trailside museum, an institution of which he may be said to be one of the originators." In 1941, too, he received the Distinguished Service Award of the American Association of Museums in recognition of his leadership in the broad field of museum work and particularly of his achievements as chairman of the Association's Committee on Outdoor Education in which role he had directed the development of museums in Yosemite, Grand Canyon, and Yellowstone National Parks.

Pioneer museums in Mesa Verde, Yosemite, and Yellowstone National Parks existed for several years prior to 1924 when the American Association of Museums extended its first support to the Yosemite Museum program. It was in fact these earlier efforts which first awakened the interest of C. J. Hamlin, President of the American Association of Museums and Mr. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. The demonstration made in 1924-1934 by the Association under the direction of Dr. Bumpus was a direct step toward

the federal support for park museums, which began in the early 1930's; and during a ten-year period resulted in the development of more than one hundred trailside museums and historic house museums throughout the National Park System. Approximately seven million dollars have been invested in this educational endeavor since



the Yosemite Museum was opened to the public in 1926. The existing program of research and education in national parks is based squarely upon the firm foundation provided by these structures, for they provide the physical plant from which emanates the general program of park interpretive work. During the five-year period, 1938-1942, the average number of visitors to the areas of the National Park System has been 17 million each year. The great majority of these visitors have made use of the park museum and the programs of lectures and guided trips which center upon them. In the words of Dr. Bumpus, "the controlling fact governing the development of educational work in the national parks is that within these reservations multitudes are brought

directly in contact with striking examples of nature's handiwork. The real museum is outside the walls of the building and the purpose of the museum work is to render the out-of-doors intelligible. The committee desires to enable the tourist to weave into a common fabric what he reads in his guidebook, what he hears from the ranger naturalist, what he picks up from fellow tourists, and what he sees in the museums." This was his outlook in 1930 and it continues to be the objective of national park officials.

Dr. Bumpus was always self-effacing in recording the progress of his personal undertakings. An example of his fairness in crediting the work of others is to be seen in his appraisal of his committee's activity in the Yosemite Museum undertaking. In his report of 1926, he stated (the Yosemite project) "is one of several pieces of constructive work which the Association has done, but it has involved the cooperation of other organizations and of individuals, both within and outside our membership. The Yosemite Natural History Association has cooperated most zealously, the Sierra Club has lent its hand, the Superintendent of Yosemite, and other officers throughout the National Park Service have helped most unselfishly and most efficiently. We have merely had a hand in bringing to completion a cooperative project." Consistent with this modesty of claim is the text on the plaque at the door of the Yosemite Museum:

Built and Equipped
by Individuals and Organizations
Interested in Nature's Handiwork
THE YOSEMITE MUSEUM

was given to the public
in order that all visiting this majestic
Valley may know the story of its
Creation and Native Life.

1926

It was the great privilege of many naturalists, historians, and executives of the National Park Service to work closely with Dr. Humpus throughout the period of his activity in national parks. His kindly guidance, mature judgment, fairness, brilliant learning, and constant friendliness meant much to those associated with him. To a very

large number of museum workers, university officials, and conservationists throughout the land he was known as intimately and affectionately as he was to the National Park Service family. The generous friendship for fellow workers and unselfish devotion to the cause of conservation which he always extended endeared him to a veritable host of Americans. His work and his ideals live on for all who appreciate the nation's natural beauty spots and its cultural heritage. These native values have been made forever richer and more precious through his "common fabric of understanding."

DEVELOPMENT OF TRANSPORTATION TO YOSEMITE

By C. Frank Brockman, Park Naturalist

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Part III—Transportation Facilities in the Park

(Continued from last month's issue.)

Gabriel Sovulewski

Any history of the trails in Yosemite region would be incomplete if the activities of Gabriel Sovulewski remained unmentioned. Mr. Sovulewski, who served two five-year enlistments in Troop K, Fourth U. S. Cavalry, first came to the park in 1895 as a sergeant with the U. S. Army, serving under Captain Alex. Rodgers and Lieut. Col. S. B. M. Young who were the acting superintendents of the park in 1895, 1896 and 1897. With the exception of the

summer of 1899, when he served as packer for troops, his association with the park was severed until 1906 when he began a long and illustrious period of service in the area embracing both military and civilian administrations. Shortly after his return in 1906, as a civilian employee of the U. S. Army, he was made supervisor of all trail construction and road maintenance. He continued in a similar capacity, following the close of the period of military administration, until his retirement

in August 1936. Col. H. C. Benson, who served in Yosemite as a Lieutenant from 1895-1897 and who later, as Captain and Major, was acting superintendent from 1905-1908, calls attention to Sovulewski's activities in a letter, (copy in the Yosemite Museum file) dated June 23, 1924, outlining early history of the military administration of the park, as follows:

"... The successful working out of the trails and the continuation of developing them is due largely to the loyalty and hard work of Mr. Gabriel Sovulewski. Too much credit cannot be given to this man, for the development of Yosemite National Park; a faithful worker, a man who knew no hours and who never spared himself. He, for years, faithfully carried out the wishes and ideas of the officers under whose command he was serving and made it possible for the later building of trails when the Government saw fit to appropriate money for that purpose."

Those of the Yosemite organization who worked with this man, and who had the pleasure of knowing him intimately, will all agree that Col. Benson's tribute was justly deserved. Further indication of his ability, farsightedness and interest in Yosemite is evident by the fact that on several occasions he served as acting superintendent of the park. (See "The Story of Trail Building in Yosemite National Park" by Gabriel Sovulewski; Yosemite Nature Notes, April 1928.)

More Recent Trail Development

Beginning in 1905 the Interior Department of the Federal Government

appropriated special allotments for trail development and an active program of trail construction, relocation and improvement was undertaken. This was continued in succeeding years until by the end of 1910 the trail system of the park—with certain exceptions—was essentially as it is at the present time. Noteworthy new trails constructed in more recent years consist of the famous Tenaya zig-zags, constructed in 1911, and the route down the Tuolumne River from Glen Aulin to Pate Valley which makes accessible one of the most rugged and picturesque sections in the park, including the spectacular Muir Gorge. This work was begun in 1917 when the first segment of the route from Glen Aulin to Waterwheel Falls was completed. Work continued from time to time as funds were available until the connection with Pate Valley was effected in 1925. In 1918 the Babcock Lake Trail from Merced Lake to Vogelsang Pass was constructed, thus providing an alternate route to the latter point which is often used by hikers during those periods early in the season when Vogelsang Pass is blocked with snow. The Ten Lakes area was also made accessible from the Tioga Road at Yosemite Creek in the same year but perhaps the most noteworthy accomplishment, as far as trails are concerned, was the construction of the famous Ledge Trail from Camp Curry to Glacier Point. Previous to 1918 visitors had scrambled up the ledge and narrow chute, followed by this trail,

at considerable hazard to themselves and the completion of this route eliminated much of the danger connected with that effort. In 1919 Hardin Lake near the Tioga Road was connected with Pa'e Valley, this trail being extended up Piute Creek to Pleasant Valley in 1920, thus providing a north-south route across the rugged Tuolumne Canyon above Hetch Hetchy. The most recent addition to our trail system occurred in 1941 when a fine modern trail was completed from Ottoway Lakes over Red Peak Pass to Washburn Lake on the upper Merced River, thus making possible an extended hiking or pack trip through the scenic splendor in the southern section of the Clark Range to the south of Yosemite Valley.

High Sierra Camps

One of the most important aids to the enjoyment of the Yosemite "back country" are the High Sierra camps. These camps, where one may obtain comfortable accommodations and nourishing meals in tune with the out-of-doors, are located at strategic intervals along the famous 75-mile High Sierra Loop trail from Yosemite Valley. While the camp at Merced Lake was in operation as early as 1915, the famous loop of the present day dates from 1924, by which time several other camps had been established. The program was first advo-

cated in 1923 by W. B. Lewis, then superintendent of Yosemite National Park. In the fall of that same year C. P. Russell, then park naturalist, made a reconnaissance of the proposed route for the purpose of recommending sites for the necessary camps. In addition, T. A. Farrow of the Yosemite Park and Curry Company projected preliminary plans for the establishment of the necessary camp facilities and the project was undertaken in the following year. (*) Facilities have been constantly improved since that date until at the present time, with camps at Merced Lake, Vogelsang, Tuolumne Meadows, Glen Aulin and May Lake, hikers and riders are provided with facilities by means of which a representative section of the rugged Yosemite high country may be easily seen and enjoyed.

In closing, the activities of the Sierra Club of California in connection with trail development in Yosemite should also be noted. This organization, composed of men and women who are devoted to the out-of-doors, with a particular interest in the High Sierra region, and among who are numbered many individuals who have had a considerable influence on National Park policies, has been a vital factor in the development of trails in Yosemite and the encouragement of their use and enjoyment by the general public.

(*) See Bulletin No. 1, Yosemite Natural History Association, 1925, "Hikers' Camps of Yosemite National Park. A Guide With Maps" by C. P. Russell.

Also see "100 Years in Yosemite" by C. P. Russell; page 123.



TO SEQUOIAS AT CHRISTMAS
By Elizabeth H. Godfrey, NPS Staff

Ministers of peace and strength and calmness;
 Huge candles in rays of setting sun
 Defying all the scourge of elements,
 And flaming tongues, that lightning fires spun
 Amid their stalwart ranks, and left them scarred,
 While lesser trees fell groaning at their side
 The great survivors, as if forevermore
 Lived on serene, unmindful of the chard,
 Until like giants of the earth are they;
 And man, a passing pigmy in their stride,
 Comes to their shrine to learn a sacred lore
 To breathe within his soul; and takes away
 A peace and strength unknown to him before.

Monarchs of poise, endurance, beauty;
 Deep-mantled and hushed in the falling snow,
 Whisper the secrets of their peace
 Proclaimed by the angels long ago.



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Dan Anderson