



Faces of the National Parks Service

Cara Moore

Cara Moore will spotlight some of the leaders of the National Parks Service using Official Personnel Folders (OPFs) of the Department of the Interior maintained by the National Archives and Records Administration at St. Louis, MO. Included will be a spotlight of the various projects and initiatives that were created in the initial years of the National Parks Service. OPFs from our archival holdings will provide detailed information concerning the early innovators in honor of the agency's 100th year.



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Cara Moore searches and provides access to the individual personnel records of former civil servants of the Federal government as an archives technician. She is also a Ph.D. student at Saint Louis University and volunteers with the National Blues Museum. In prior positions, Cara has worked in a variety of museums and positions. She has a Bachelors Degree in History from Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville, and a Masters Degree in History with a Post baccalaureate in Museum Studies from Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville.

Faces of the National Parks Service

A look at some of the earliest National Parks Service (NPS) employees using Official Personnel Folders (OPFs) at the National Archives St. Louis in honor of the 100th anniversary of the NPS

All images are from the Official Personnel Folders-[Department of the Interior. National Park Service.](#) RG 146: Records of the U.S. Civil Service Commission; National Archives, St. Louis, MO



Stephen Mather dos.1915-1929

- 9/23/1915 appointed as Assistant
 - Tasked to ‘straighten out Yosemite’
 - Started out on a tour of several National Parks over the summer of 1915 and continued into the fall
 - No precedent for the kind of work that Mather was doing and he set his per diem at \$4 per day to cover his expenses while surveying the current state of National Parks
 - Survey and personal interest as a naturalist gave him the necessary knowledge to introduce new plans and ideas to share the National Parks more widely with the public and to raise awareness

- 8/29/2016 Work secured the passage of the National Parks Service Bill
 - Had been pending in Congress for years while serving as an Assistant Director in the Department of the Interior
 - Renown for his knowledge of wildlife and natural preservation as well as tourism and public interest wellbeing
- 4/19/1916 Appointment as the first Director of the new National Parks Service
 - Charismatic personality allowed him to make lasting connections, kept up with all of the National Parks
 - Established previously non existent position and high standard for that post and the National Parks
 - Genuine affection is reflected in multiple letters written in to the President of the United States and the Director of the Department of the Interior that have been retained in his Official Personnel Folder (OPF)
 - Many appeals and endorsements written to the Director and the President on Mather's behalf in 1921 when his renewal for appointment came up. Letters came from professionals and the general public alike. Letters called Mather "absolutely unique in his ability" and the "decentest democrat"

- Attended various conferences on State Parks on behalf of the National Parks Service and visited Canadian National Parks for study
- Spoke at the Field Museum in Chicago and at universities
 - During Mather's employment he increased the annual attendance of National Parks, nationwide, from 356, 097 in 1916 to 1, 058, 455 by 1920 as reported by The Geysers to Glaciers Association of Montana
 - Made several personal monetary contributions to projects that enhanced the parks
- 1/1929 resigned due to declining health and passed away a year later
- While serving he created 7 new parks and at the time of resignation there were 2 more parks pending creation



Horace M Albright dos. 1913-1933

- Hired as Confidential Clerk to the Secretary of the Interior 6/2/1913
 - Previous experience includes; Forest Guide, Lumberman, Miner, and college educated TA and Laywer
- By 4/1915 working with Mather on projects related to the National Parks Service
- 5/1916 Moved to be the Assistant Attorney for the Dept. of the Interior
 - Handled legal matters, like the care of wild game in Yosemite

- 5/1917 Becomes the first appointed Assistant to the Director of the National Parks Service, the Director is Mather
- Albright's duties as Assistant to the Director engages his legal knowledge
 - He also covers for Mather during his times of illness
- 6/1919 Albright moves to serve as the Superintendent of Yellowstone National Park
- 3/1920 Additionally begins to serve as Field Assistant to the Director with no compensation
 - These duties have Albright attending various conferences of Superintendents and officials in fields related to the conversation and promotion of the NPS
 - Hosts Congressmen on tours of the Parks, this aids in getting Congress on the NPS side when they need new legislation/budgets passed
 - We know this from the detailed itineraries that were filed in his Official Personnel Folder (OPF)

- Due to increased demand and extension of services, a new position was created for Albright
- 8/1926 Albright becomes the first Assistant Director (Field)
 - Tasked with inspection of the parks and monuments, their operations and employees
 - Oversaw the addition of Sequoia National Park
- 1/3/1929 became acting Director in Mather's illness
 - Employees of the NPS wrote in, exclaiming their loyalty to the Mather/Albright administration and offered to take positions with lower pay in order to remain under Albright's leadership
- 1/11/1929 fully appointed to Director of NPS
 - At this point the NPS is second only to the Bureau of Indian Affairs in terms of size and importance
 - Continues tradition of continuous travel to Parks, Monuments, and Historic Sites
- 1933 attends as a representative and contributes to the organization, personnel, and project choices of the founding of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC)
- 7/1933 Resigns, but gets asked back intermittently as a Collaborator 1935-1973

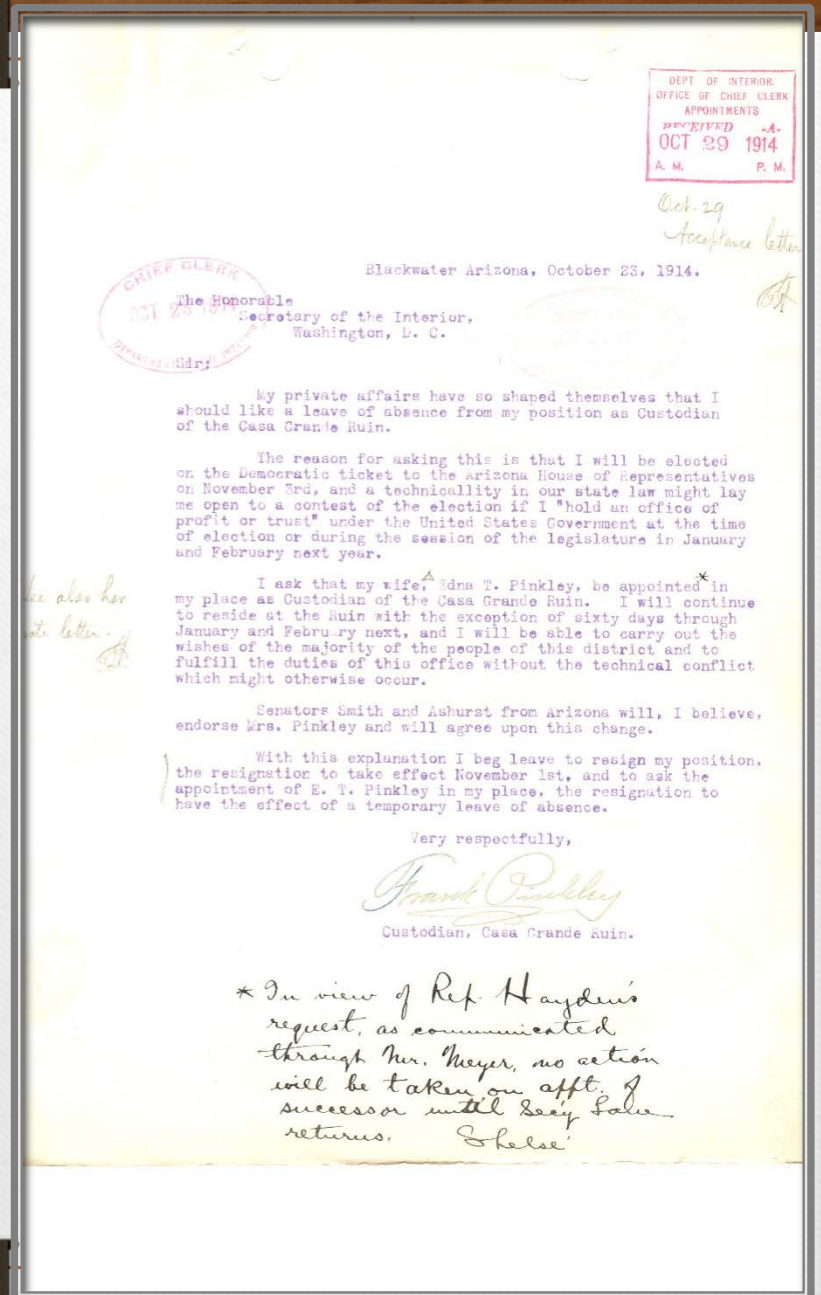


Frank “Boss” Pinkley dos. 1901-1940

- 12/1901 Only applicant to take over Custodianship of Casa Grande ruins when previous Custodian resigned
 - This early date saw the General Land Office in charge of the ruins
- During a 3 month absence in 1906, Pinkley’s father, Sam, stepped in to take cover
 - Truly a life long passion with family roots

- Between 1901-1913 at Casa Grande ruin
 - Dug a well
 - Erected buildings, sheds, corrals
 - At own expense (including self labor) just to improve at make inhabitable
 - Previously no neighbor, or water (!), for 3-4 miles
 - Increased projected building plan from 5 rooms to 105
 - Made recommendations to protect and roofed main ruin, evacuated lands, public outreach efforts
 - Kept proper paperwork and reports of land updates and visitor numbers
 - Worked with the Smithsonian to uncover further ruins
- 1914 brief resignation to run for House of Representatives in AZ
 - Wife, Edna T “E T” steps in as Custodian for 8 months
- 12/1915 Resigns to seek a position with upward movement

Frank suggests that his wife
would be a suitable
replacement in his absence.



- 1/1918 Reapplied, 4/1918 accepted as NPS employee
 - During salary negotiations works with Mather to submit development plans including; road plans to Casa Grande, publicity campaigns, public bulletins
- 12/1918 additional duties at Tumacacori National Monument in AZ
- 5/1919 “one man in the Service that we can depend upon for archaeological and historical work”- Albright in a discussion with Mather about “Pink’s” promotion opportunities
- Montezuma Castle National Monument added
 - “Expert on early missionary history”- Cammereer (Asst. Dir.) 6/1922
- 9/1922 sent to Yosemite conference on behalf of NPS as an expert
- 4/1928 promoted to title of ‘Superintendent’ of Southwest Monuments
 - Includes all in NM, AZ, CO and UT excepting 3 monuments
 - Total of 18 in 1932; 25 in 1934; 26 in 1939
 - 3 Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) camps are included, 600 people
- Died in office 2/1940, Monument at Salinas Pueblo Missions



NAME:

GERTRUDE S. COOPER

Gertrude S. Cooper dos. 1940-1945

- 7/16/1940 Appointment to Superintendent of Vanderbilt Mansion National Historical Site
 - 1st Superintendent in area
- Worked with War Department to keep Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) camp on site running
- 1941 Oversaw change of Old Pavilion to Inn
 - Open to public
 - Personally sent many social invites to visit

- Asked to be part of Women's Uniform Committee
- Called for Works Progress Administration (WPA) to participate in upkeep
 - Exhibits strong knowledge of workings of other government projects intended for national improvement
 - Utilizes existing projects and use of their services and already dedicated funds
 - Knowledge and capability of restoration allows for proactive outreach and anticipation of possible budget push backs
 - Uses networking to drive tourism
 - Creates expanded accessibility to Vanderbilt through innovative utilization of existing programs
- 1943 NPS attempts to move from Superintendent to Custodian (demotion in title and pay)
 - Details full duties performed
 - Comparative numbers provided for like Superintendents and contrary to duties of Custodian
 - Got raise that was asked for and retained title

- Next closest approximate position to Cooper in the East hosts about 7,000 tourists per year
- Opening of Vanderbilt in 1941 expects 300 visitor a month, 5, 612 actually attend
 - 20, 884 total per year average
 - Added concessions, greenhouse operations (briefly), trained consistently new Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) and Works Progress Administration (WPA) members as guides
- Expected 8 full time employees with 20-25 generally under Superintendent
 - Actual total comes to 94 with CCC and WPA members included
- 5/1945 Resigns

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
VANDERBILT MANSION NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE
HYDE PARK, NEW YORK

September 8, 1942

MEMORANDUM for the Acting Regional Director, Region One

There is enclosed Form 1-034, in duplicate, a request for annual leave amounting to twenty-three days from October ninth to November sixth, inclusive.

This request is something unusual as I do not believe any other Superintendent of the National Park Service has ever had the opportunity to request permission to be away from their post of duty to become a grandmother.

It will be appreciated if this application can receive your early attention, thereby enabling me to proceed with my plans to be with my daughter.

While on leave my address will be:

c/o Mrs. George C. Homans
72 Cypress Street
Brookline
Massachusetts

Gertrude S. Cooper
Superintendent

Mentionables

- Ansel Hall
 - Hired in as one of the first graduates of University in Forestry intended for direct career path into NPS
- Robert S. Yard
 - Geological Survey Director
- Dr. Adolph Murie
 - Biologist for the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC)

- Clare M. Hodges
 - 1st female ranger
 - Assigned to Yosemite by appointment from Mather
 - Served 5/1918-9/1918

Mr. Stephenson:

Note name:

Clare Marie Hodges.

MS

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

WASHINGTON



May 13, 1918.



May 14 note app. No further action needed

Dear Mr. Secretary:

I have the honor to recommend that appointment issue in favor of Miss Clark Hodges of California as ranger in Yosemite National Park at \$900 per annum, effective date of entrance on duty; temporary.

Authority: Sched. A, subdivision VIII, Section 22.

Cordially yours,

Stephen Mather

Director.

The Honorable,
The Secretary of the Interior.

- Isabelle Story dos. 1910-1962
 - 8/1910 probational appointment as copyist
 - 2/1911 transfer to clerk with Geological Survey
 - 7/1916 Clerk to Mather in NPS
 - 11/1926 Assistant Editor for NPS
 - 7/1930 Editor, NPS Division of Publications
 - 9/1934 Editor-in-Chief
 - Reassigned to Chief of Information
 - 1/1955 Retirement, but asked back as Consultant until 1962
 - Could say that her 'Skill with the quill was undeniable'-(*Shameless Hamilton shout out, Lin-Manuel Miranda is the man!*)

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
WASHINGTON

April 10, 1942.

ADDRESS ONLY
THE DIRECTOR, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Mrs. Dexter Cooper,
Vanderbilt Mansion National
Historic Site,
Hyde Park, New York.

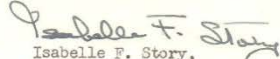
Dear Mrs. Cooper:

Hoping to see you last week, I postponed writing you, as I should otherwise have done immediately upon my return. I am very sorry not to have seen you and to have had the opportunity to meet your daughter "Boo."

My day at Vanderbilt was most interesting and instructive, and I greatly enjoyed the luncheon with you and your friends.

Your script of March 19, entitled "Walls Tell a Story," has been read with great interest. I like the way you approach the subject. The script is going into our Vanderbilt morgue as background material which would be of real use to our staff writers here.

With all good wishes and looking forward to seeing you soon--and meeting your daughter,

Very sincerely yours,

Isabelle F. Story,
Chief of Information.

Diversity mention

- Though the heralded Buffalo Soldiers, a black regiment, acted as some of the first rangers of Yosemite and many National Parks, these positions were held by the military. Charles Young was the first black supervisor in 1903.
- As my current available resources are prior to 1952, my topics are severely limited being a product of their times despite a desire to have a more diverse presentation. For example, we did not get a black Director to the National Parks Service until 1997 with Robert Stanton.

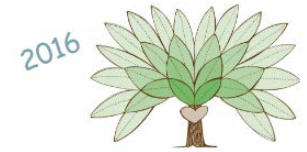
Additional Information about the St. Louis Archives

- Later records have been appraised to be permanent but have not been released by the Office of Personnel Management at this time.
- Currently the National Archives at St. Louis responds to requests for employees with service prior to 1952, which are open to the public. If service ends after 1952 they are not open to the public and only open to the employee, next of kin, or service agency. The National Personnel Records Center Annex responds to the latter requests. **If you are unsure of the end of service, please feel free to send us a request and we will find out for you!**

Written archival requests may be mailed :

National Archives & Records
Administration
ATTN: Archival Programs
P.O. Box 38757
St. Louis, MO 63138

Written non-archival requests
(**hand signed in cursive and dated**) may be mailed or faxed to:
National Personnel Records
Center, Annex
1411 Boulder Boulevard
Valmeyer, IL 62295



**Presenter didn't
get to your question?**

**You may email us at
*inquire@nara.gov***