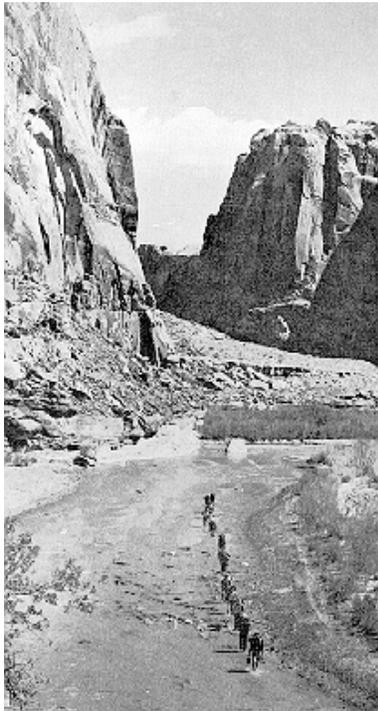


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Federal Park Policy in Utah:

The Escalante National Monument Controversy of 1935-1940

By Elmo R. Richardson\*



Campers hiking along the streambed of the Escalante River area included in the proposed Escalante National Monument. Utah Tourist & Publicity Council (Nelson Wadsworth)

[p.110] Utah was faced with a particularly difficult task during the depression years of the 1930's. Small in population though vast in area, the state had neither sufficient manpower nor a self-sustaining economy upon which to base a recovery program. Almost entirely dependent upon direct use of lands and resources, its economic development was, to a great extent, determined by federally administered forests, grazing and reclaimed lands, and Indian reservations. As the crisis deepened, it became obvious to the leaders and citizens of Utah that government at every level must encourage and maintain more intensive land and resource use. The conditions arising out of sparse population and an economy based upon access to the public domain would be primary considerations for both state and federal planners. Some of the specific programs that came out of the plethora of plans during these years were mutually satisfactory and beneficial to both state and federal interests. Other ideas, poorly conceived and ill-timed, produced only personal antagonisms and mutual distrust. Among the latter was the proposed Escalante National Monument, a plan for the development of a scenic and recreational area in southeastern Utah.

During the decades preceding the Depression, the National Park Service of the Department of the Interior had secured from Congress the creation of Zion and Bryce Canyon National Parks and, by Presidential proclamation, the establishment of six national monuments. With the exception of Zion, these withdrawals involved small amounts of land and preserved sites of striking geologic or archeologic value. During the Hoover administration, Secretary of the Interior Ray Lyman Wilbur sought approval of further tracts in the southern part of the state. Although his policy was particularly solicitous of state jurisdiction over the public domain, he decided that the slightly used land in that arid region could best be developed as part of the national park system. In March 1931 Park Service Director Horace Albright designated almost 30,000 acres west of Zion for reclassification and then asked Governor George H. Dern of Utah for his view of the suggestion making a nearby Kolob Canyon National Park. Because Dern could not examine the area in person, he consulted with citizens in the region and with the state's delegation in Congress. Learning that Senator William H. King opposed such a reservation and that the stockraisers who used part of the canyon for grazing especially needed the land, he declined to support Albright's plan. As a Democrat he might also have been unmoved because of his party's victory in [p.111] November 1932, and the matter was left hanging when he entered the cabinet of Franklin D. Roosevelt as secretary of war.<sup>1</sup>

Dern's successor was Henry H. Blood, also a Democrat, a spokesman for the most influential elements in the state and for the agrarian conservatives in his party. Significantly, he enjoyed the confidence of the new President and obtained for Utah substantial federal assistance in the fields of employment relief, drought control, and water development. When the Park Service reopened the question of Kolob Canyon in July 1935, however, they found him as reticent as Dern had been. In rejecting the national park idea, Blood followed the advice of J. M. McFarlane of the Utah State Board of Agriculture and

Representative W. K. Granger, who felt that the land should continue under the jurisdiction of the Grazing Division of the Interior Department which administered the newly passed Taylor Grazing Act.<sup>2</sup> This matter was a foretaste of the conflict of aims between state and federal administrations.

At the same time emergency legislation tied these two more closely together than they had ever been before. New schemes like the Civilian Conservation Corps were especially effective in assisting the economy and citizens of the state, and earned the praise of Utahns ranging from the governor on down to the residents of the small towns in "Dixie," Moab, and Escalante.<sup>3</sup> In 1935 the Utah State Senate responded to federal suggestions for co-ordinating recovery plans by creating a State Planning Board. This bureau was partly supported by Congressional appropriation and was designed to work with many federal offices, including the Natural Resources Committee headed by Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes. In 1936 when Congress directed Ickes to make a study of park, parkway, and recreation areas throughout the nation, he was able to draw upon the results of studies made by the planning boards of the states. By that time [p.112] Utah's Planning Board had completed a survey of the natural and commercial resources of the state, including a suggestion for immediate development of the tourist attractions along the Colorado and Green rivers which flowed through brilliant canyon lands in the southeastern corner of the state. The possibilities of a national park of 570 square miles in the "Wayne Wonderland" seemed especially appealing. When Governor Blood asked for the views of the Congressional delegation, most of them endorsed it heartily. "I believe it would be a fine thing," Senator Elbert D. Thomas replied, "if we could have another national park in Utah based upon this inspiring region." Consequently, a report issued by the Utah Planning Board in April 1936, declared that "an extension of authority, especially of the National Park Service, would be beneficial to the people of Utah." Aware of the fact that the state's share of tourist business was far less than those of the surrounding states, the Planning Board shared the current interest in cultivating that new source of income. But significantly the report added that initiative for the designation of park areas should be left in the hands of the local people.<sup>4</sup>

Under the bold and determined leadership of Secretary Ickes, the Interior Department contemplated an enlargement and intensification of the entire national park system. This plan called for the creation of such new parks as Grand Teton in Wyoming, Kings Canyon in California, and Olympic in Washington, and the enlargement of other reserves like Dinosaur National Monument on the Colorado-Utah border. In 1935 acting director of the Park Service, Arno Cammerer, first announced the details of a portion of the overall plan which included possible new national monuments in southeastern Utah. But Ickes' scheme soon ran up against the political and economic realities in the Western States, as well as the conflicting intentions of the Army Corps of Engineers for example, and the Natural Resources Committee which were anxious to secure such areas for water and power development sites. When the Interior Department presented its recreation plan to Congress, other departments joined western representatives in blocking what seemed to be an alarming extension of Interior's jurisdiction. Partly because of the protests of Representative [p.113] J. W. Robinson of Utah, the final bill merely called for a survey of recreational resources.<sup>5</sup>

The April report of the Utah State Planning Board reflected an interest in supporting the federal plan, but the specific conception of its chairman, Ray B. West, did not receive the support of the Park Service. Immediate development of southeastern Utah might be begun, he suggested, by construction of a network of highways connecting Mesa Verde National Park in nearby Colorado with Zion and Bryce, Natural Bridges National Monument, and "Wayne Wonderland" in Utah. The time seemed to be especially good because Congress was then considering an appropriation for park roads. Cammerer, however, advised West that the network would have to wait upon the completion of a full investigation in the field.<sup>6</sup> A short time later the Park Service informed the Utah officials that it hoped to fulfill the long-standing state and federal desire for recreational development of the Colorado River Canyon by establishing a new national monument along its course.



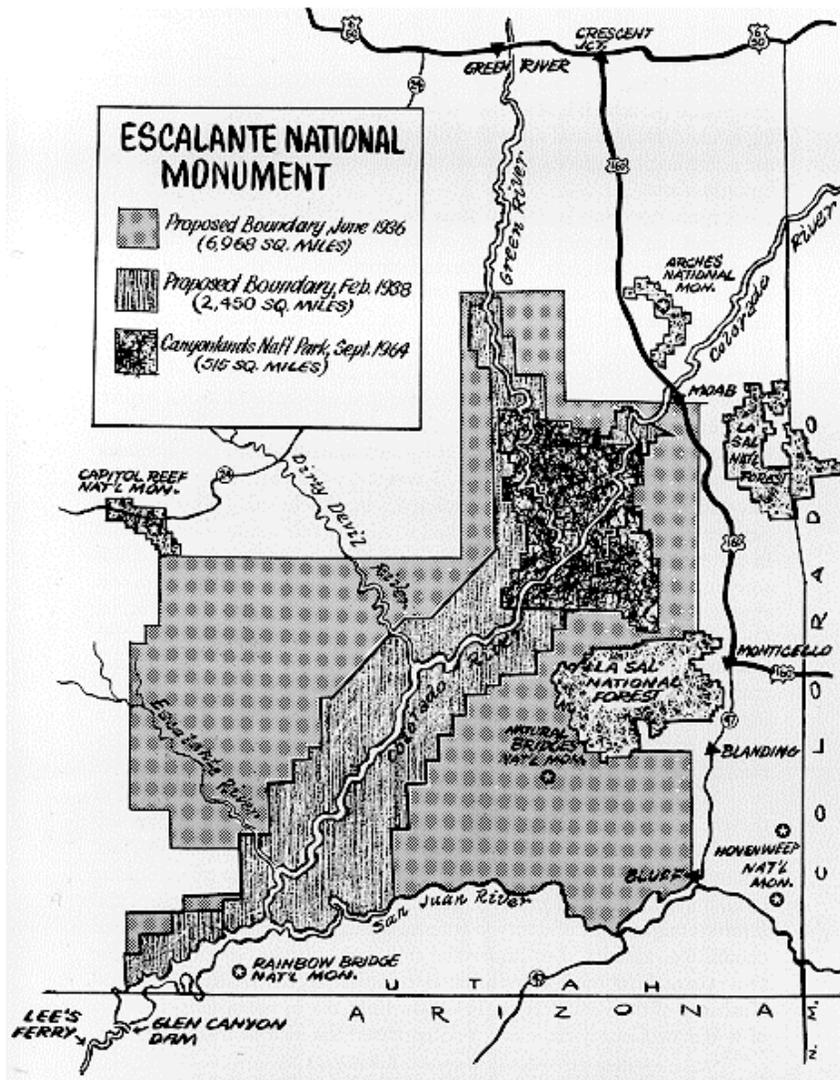
At this site on November 7, 1776, the Escalante party descended to the Colorado River cutting steps in the rocks. The party crossed the river and from this point returned on a southeasterly direction to Santa Fe, their point of origin. Utah State Historical Society

Drawing upon the findings of field investigations begun in 1935 on the request of Utahns interested in the proposed Wayne County national park, the Park Service designated an area of 6,968 square miles as the object of preliminary investigation. Extending 200 miles from the Colorado border to the Arizona border, the tract encompassed about eight per

cent of the total area of Utah. It contained what Cammerer later [p.114] described as "an amazing wilderness labyrinth" of stark, multicolored canyon walls, some of them rising almost directly from the bank of the river, others stretching back to the horizon for several miles. Included in the area were over 30,000 acres of patented land, 24,000 acres of state school lands, 151 unsurveyed townships, and parts of three federal grazing districts. The arid conditions of the soil cover supported only 463 families, but these raised an estimated 144,000 sheep, 26,000 cattle, and 2,600 horses.<sup>7</sup> Because it lay across the route of the Spanish priest who first explored the Four Corners region, it was to be called Escalante National Monument.

In response to Cammerer's request for a statement of sentiment in Utah toward the proposal, Governor Blood and the state's delegation in Congress asked the Park Service to permit the residents of the affected area to express their views in a public meeting. In May 1936 a public notice was sent out by both federal and state officials, and early the next month some 87 persons gathered at Price, the largest town adjacent to the area under study. More than half of them were from vast San Juan County which formed the southeast corner of the state. Most of the individuals present at the meeting were connected with cattle, sheep, and/or horse raising interests; a few were representatives of southern Utah civic clubs; and some were agents of the grazing districts administered under the Taylor Act. The Park Service sent Superintendents P. P. Patraw and Jesse Nusbaum from nearby Zion and Mesa Verde as well as David Madsen of the Wildlife Division. Chairman West of the Planning Board, who personally felt that local interests could be protected within the monument, planned to attend but fell critically ill just before the meeting convened. Another member of the Planning Board, George Staples, went in his place.<sup>8</sup>

The session was opened by a statement from J. Q. Peterson, regional grazer of the Grazing Division, who argued for retention of Taylor Act status for the area, and who had the support of most of the audience. Twenty-one thousand residents in the vicinity, he pointed out, would in some way be affected by closing of the range to grazing. Madsen of the [p.115] [p.116] Wildlife Division then tried to assure his fellow Utahns that the Interior Department had no wish to injure the economy of the region, but suggested that perhaps it had already reached a peak of development as grazing land. A recreational site would diversify that economy and still permit use according to capacity and need until ultimate non-use status could be brought about.



Escalante National Monument

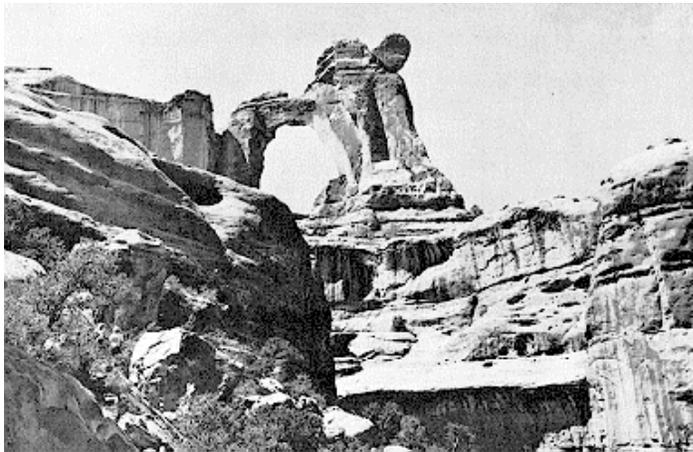
A prominent San Juan cattleman rose to reply to Madsen. "Secretary Ickes and the Park Service knew what they were doing when they sent Dave Madsen down here," he observed somewhat bitterly. "They realize that it's a pretty up-hill battle to convince the citizens of Utah and even the people of the United States of the scenic value of their properties." He acknowledged the possibility of tourist trade, and claimed to have supported the creation of Arches National Monument north of Moab, but he felt that tourism was overvalued and cited the fact that visitor spending at Zion had not substantially reduced the debt of Washington County. Moreover, he insisted that eastern tourists would find livestock as good an attraction as scenery. "I was sorry that Mr. Ickes made the inference that this area could be closed," he concluded. "This is still a democratic country and we proposed to discuss this matter and petition in the manner of democratic government and we don't believe the full story has been presented to Mr. Ickes. . . ." Similar statements from others expressed local annoyance and disappointment with the administration. One of them stated that federal regulation of the public domain was desirable, but the tourists did not want to see a bunch of bobcats and wildcats. Most of the residents were worried that the vast withdrawal of grazing lands would damage the market for cattle and sheep. "This is just a little harder rap than we can take without putting up a battle," a stockman concluded. "You can make it legal but you can never make it moral."<sup>9</sup>

After the assembly voted unanimously to oppose the withdrawal of the entire 6,968 square-mile tract under study, Staples of the Planning Board asked them to consider some modifications of the matter. Further discussion noted that there was room enough in the tract for all uses of the land, and that an adjustment of boundaries which would recognize local interests might be satisfactory to both state and federal planners. A special committee, appointed to undertake that task, met in November of the same year. After the Utahns listened to further arguments by Patraw and Nusbaum of the Park Service, F. G. Martines, one of the original sponsors of a Wayne County national park, endorsed the idea of the monument. [p.117] However, he pointed out that its size should be restricted to the few points that were accessible by road. Sumner Margetts, whom the new chairman of the State Planning Board, William Wallace, had sent to represent the state administration, not only

supported this idea but demanded that state jurisdiction over its own lands, as well as grazing rights, should be continued within the reserve. Greatly disappointed, Nusbaum replied that mineral exploration or other economic activities would defeat the whole purpose of a national monument. Trying to submit some kind of solution, the majority of the committee then suggested that boundary lines be drawn three miles from the center of the river on both sides, and that state, private, and interstate water-use agreements be retained within the monument—thus preserving both scenic and economic values. This resolution was adopted without the support of Margetts. Although the Park Service and Grazing Division officials did not vote, Nusbaum told the group that the Park Service would not accept such limitations.<sup>10</sup>

From this point in time two different views of the Escalante Monument issue emerged to become the source of a conflict of interests between state and federal officials. J. Q. Peterson, regional director of the Grazing Division, assured Governor Blood that the resolutions of the Price meeting were "safe and desirable." Chairman Wallace of the Planning Board apparently shared the doubts of his colleague, Margetts, but certainly saw that the sense of the later meeting in November emphasized the primacy of state interests in any boundary solution. Yet the Park Service chose to interpret these two meetings with undue optimism. Many months later in a report to Senator William King of Utah, Cammerer maintained that those assembled at Price had recognized the merits of a national monument even if they wanted to secure access rights and limit its boundaries to the margin of the canyon walls. Because of their protests at the time, the Park Service agreed to reduce the proposed tract to 2,450 square miles, forming a strip between three and 50 miles wide from the Arizona border to two points north of the junction of the Colorado and Green rivers. Moreover, Cammerer informed the senator that Nusbaum and Patraw had called on Governor Blood and found him to be far from hostile to the proposal. Indeed, he had "stated frankly that scenery and recreation were the most important economic assets of the State."<sup>11</sup>

[p.118] When the Utah officials learned of the Park Service's interpretation of local sentiment, they were sufficiently alarmed to undertake measures in their own defense. Obtaining a verbatim transcript of the Price session, Margetts sent copies to every state and federal administrator concerned with the monument proposal. From King, Blood obtained a map of the new tract boundaries and gave it to Margetts with instructions to prepare a detailed version for use by the Planning Board. The governor also made it clear that he had never made a statement about scenery and recreation such as Cammerer claimed. As he assured citizens of Moab, his administration was seeking "the greatest good to the greatest number, for the longest time."<sup>12</sup>



Angel Arch, in the Needles area, is in the recently created Canyonlands National Park. Utah Tourist & Publicity Council (Ward Roylance)

In April 1938 Margetts and E. H. Burdick, geologist for the Planning Board, presented the results of their study of the Escalante proposal to Wallace. There was no question, the report asserted, about state and private jurisdiction over the lands and waters included in the tract. Moreover, the Boulder Dam Act and the Natural Resources Committee assured [p.119] future development of several power sites along the Colorado and Green, sites whose potential output would total over a million horsepower. Far from being at the peak of economic development as the Park Service officials claimed, the area warranted further exploration for oil and other minerals. The reduction in size of the proposed tract did not alter the initial objection by the Utahns: even at 2,450 square miles the Escalante Monument would be second only to Yellowstone National Park in area. Such an enormous tract was not needed to preserve the canyon of the Colorado. Far from agreeing to this expanse, the report claimed the November committee had anticipated a reduction to one-half or one-third of that size. The withdrawal of this large portion of the state was "not a proper subject to be placed before any limited group for recommendations." Because Utah had not requested the creation of Escalante Monument and because the Park Service had not adequately assessed the problems involved in their proposal, the report called for public opposition to the scheme.<sup>13</sup>

Acting Director Arthur Demaray of the Park Service assured Congressman Robinson that no action would be taken on the proposal until the difficulties enumerated by Margetts could be ironed out to the satisfaction of all parties. That assurance, however, did not stifle a statewide discussion of the issue during the summer of 1938. Utahns were naturally anxious to defend their economic interests, but there was a surprising amount of sentiment for compromise. When 200 members of the Southern Utah Association of Civic Clubs met in Monticello in August, they went on record as favoring full development of the region, including the creation of a national monument. A federation of women's clubs in the same part of the state urged

Governor Blood to support Escalante if the federal government granted access to properties therein. Claiming to speak for others, a professor at Brigham Young University insisted that the power interests were responsible for making a political issue of the matter; the federal government, he believed, must hold those potential sites inviolable. Such sentiments seemed to T. H. Humpherys, state engineer and member of the Planning Board, to be part of a calculated effort to furnish the federal officials with an excuse to get the President to proclaim Escalante National Monument at once.<sup>14</sup>

[p.120] In October the Utah officials received support for their views when the Colorado River Basin States met in convention at Salt Lake City. The delegates there declared that the creation of any monument without the safeguard of local interests would adversely affect the material development of the West. Encouraged by this, Blood inquired of the Interior Department whether Humpherys' fear of a sudden proclamation was warranted. In reply, Ickes' first assistant secretary, E. K. Burlew, repeated the earlier promise of no action until further investigation. His assurance that the same access rights would be granted in Escalante National Monument as had just been granted in an addition to Dinosaur National Monument did not mention the fact that these rights were subject to pending legal interpretations of the Colorado River Compact and the Boulder Dam Act. While in Reno, Nevada, where the National Reclamation Association was meeting, Governor Blood tried to call Marvin McIntyre, Roosevelt's private secretary, but could not get him; he then called Burlew and found him to be "very cordial" and apparently anxious to secure the cooperation of the Utah officials. Later, in a letter accompanying a copy of the Escalante Monument proclamation, Burlew again assured him that neither present nor future economic interests would be retarded. The document provided for movement of livestock and protection of valid rights and claims. Moreover, if the Colorado Basin study showed the need for more reservoirs and power sites in the area, "such would not be prohibited."<sup>15</sup>

A reading of the proposed proclamation itself did not support Burlew's assurances. What it did state was merely that all existing laws as amended pertaining to ownership and use would have full force in Escalante National Monument. Yet a number of the more recent laws, especially those relating to power development, were obviously still subject to judicial interpretation. Moreover, the assistant secretary's certainty that the Colorado Basin study recommendations "would not be prohibited" did not appear in the document. Without waiting for Blood to reply, he sent it on to the President a few days later. In a covering letter Burlew vividly described the area and claimed that it was lacking in economic resources. This was the very thing which the Utahns insisted must be determined by further investigation—a study which could not be made once the monument was established. Finally, when the federal official sent a copy of the proclamation to Senator King, he badly mistook intention for reality when he claimed that the governor supported it. Thus, [p.121] the error of misrepresenting Blood's views as in February 1936 was repeated.<sup>16</sup>



Monument Valley one of the few significant scenic attractions of southeastern Utah which was not included in the Escalante National Monument. Utah State Historical Society

Henry Blood did not intend to have Utah's position on the issue distorted by the Interior Department. Asking Burlew for further time to study the proclamation, he had State Engineer Humpherys and the state attorney general prepare a full critique. A month later his letter to Secretary Ickes was directly based upon their arguments. Reiterating the facts of existing economic activities and the potential water and mineral development which other federal agencies acknowledged, he nevertheless recognized the Interior Department's overwhelming desire to have the national monument. The only alternative to further study, then, was the placing of specific safeguards into the proclamation itself. These, Blood insisted, should grant ingress and egress to range and water users and to [p.122] landowners whose property would be surrounded by the reserve. Future construction of roads, reservoirs, and erosion control projects by other federal agencies should also be permitted. To reinforce these demands Senator King went to the Interior Department and added the argument that the growth of civil unrest in Mexico made the rights of the Colorado River Basin States even more important.<sup>17</sup>

Utah's opposition to the proclamation came to a head during a time that was particularly adverse for Ickes. The secretary's favorite scheme of reorganizing the jurisdiction of many bureaus under a Department of Conservation was for a second time frustrated in Congress, in part because many westerners did not want him to administer the Forest Service. In addition the grand plan for an enlarged national park system had aroused the loud protests of economic interests and political leaders in the West. Perhaps because of the necessity of fighting these larger battles, the Interior Department did not want to alienate still another state. Consequently, Burlew and Cammerer informed Blood that they would not ask for the proclamation of Escalante National Monument until the Utah authorities could suggest a specific program for utilization of the resources in the area. In the meantime, however, they intended to continue field studies and public relations for the monument. As the influential Salt Lake Tribune noted, this decision was a victory for the governor and a testimonial to the effectiveness of the Utahns' protests.<sup>18</sup>

As far as the public could observe, there were signs that the controversy was cooling down. The state and the Bureau

of Reclamation contributed equally to finance a study of Colorado River water and power potential, an investigation which was to be finished by December of 1941. Newly elected Democratic Congressman Abe Murdock gave his personal attention to this project and brought it to the notice of President Roosevelt.<sup>19</sup> Behind the scenes, however, men of the Blood administration found further reason to disagree with the Park Service. In October 1939, T. H. Humpherys complained to Governor Blood that Superintendent Patraw [p.123] of Zion National Park was stifling a project to measure stream flow. After first granting permission, Patraw demanded that the findings be presented to his office so that, Humpherys believed, the data would not be used by the state to plan reservoirs within Zion National Park. It is not likely that such construction would have been allowed, but the state engineer was thinking of the way in which three potential sites in Echo Park had been ignored when that area was added to Dinosaur. Unwilling to trust the Park Service, he regarded the current visit of Department of the Interior officials to the Escalante National Monument tract as boding no good for the development of water resources there.<sup>20</sup>

During these same months, the views of Blood and his advisors were again confirmed by support from other western spokesmen. When the National Reclamation Association met in Denver in November, many delegates made common cause against the Interior Department's plans for greater jurisdiction in their states. The general resolution adopted at Reno the year before was now strengthened by the specification that no further parks or monuments in any of the 17 participating states should be created or enlarged without formal approval of the people and the governor of the state. When Colorado River Basin representatives met in the same city a few days later, Nusbaum of the Park Service sought to forestall another such declaration by defending the Interior Department's plans. The recreational assets of the Escalante tract, he maintained, could become "a significant factor in the economic development of the Basin. It may be possible that the water control and recreational factors can be developed coincidentally . . . [but] the relative importance of each should be determined. The exploitation and impairment of great, publicly owned resources for the sole purpose of reducing the cost of a water control project is questionable public policy," he advised the western delegates. "If important recreational resources are involved . . . , the additional expenditures required for the protection and development of those resources should be considered as a legitimate expenditure." This argument did not alter the contention of Blood and his followers that the Escalante Monument would compound the difficulties involved in any use of the Colorado River.<sup>21</sup>

The Utahns might well have been warned by Nusbaum's speech that the men of the Park Service had by no means abandoned their initial hope. [p.124] During that winter of 1939, they drafted a bill which would amend the Antiquities Act of 1906 whereby the President had been empowered to create national monuments by executive proclamation. This measure was a part of Secretary Ickes' program to enlarge the scope and use of federal reservations, and depended upon the West's long-standing desire to have Congress determine the establishment of such areas. The bill would exchange executive jurisdiction over national monuments for the power to create a new type of reserve, the national recreational area. While in Washington, D.C., in February 1940, Blood learned of the proposal and joined the state's Congressional delegation in a personal protest to Director Cammerer. The latter's explanation of the measure was apparently so tactful that the governor left the office confused on a very important point: he later reported that Burlew had promised that the recreation areas would "require legislative action by the Congress." Whether or not he had been misled by the assistant secretary is less important than the fact that he soon became convinced that the Interior Department was playing its own game. L. C. Montgomery, president of the Utah Cattle and Horse Growers Association, expressed what many other Utahns were concluding when he wrote that the recreation bill was nothing but "the same old ghost covered by a different sheet."<sup>22</sup>

In view of the growing mistrust shared by Utahns at home, the Park Service's bill was ill-timed. It now appeared that Burlew had violated his promise that nothing would be done on the matter without prior approval of the state leaders. By way of confirmation, the district forest supervisor at Ogden—reflecting in part his bureau's resentment toward the Department of the Interior's empire building—confided to Humpherys that the administration of the recreation area at Boulder Dam had not been satisfactory to California and Nevada. As a member of the Planning Board and secretary to the Utah State Water Commission, Humpherys' impression of Park Service methods quickly reached the governor's office. Instead of the proposed bill, he suggested a substitute which would require local approval for all executive proclamations of national monuments. Both the creation of Arches National Monument and the addition to Dinosaur National Monument, he claimed, had become effective without notice to state officials or residents. "I just cannot trust the Park officials," he told Blood. "We have too many examples in this state of double dealing by them."<sup>23</sup>

[p.125]



Columns of sandstone in Cedar Mesa are typical of the fantastic formations found in Canyonlands. Utah Tourist & Publicity Council (Parker Hamilton)

The response of Utah's Congressional delegation completed the almost solid front of protest. In the Senate, King swore that "if it is the purpose of the Department of the Interior to go forward with the original plan, I shall promptly indicate my opposition and do what I can to prevent the plan from being adopted." Senator Elbert D. Thomas was no less opposed, but tried to mollify both sides by suggesting a bill which would give the Interior Department jurisdiction over specific sites in order to carry out conservation operations. This hardly pleased Humpherys. For him, such an alternative was "about as vicious as the Escalante Recreational Area" and, by introducing it, Thomas was acting as the errand boy of the Park Service. In the House of Representatives, it was Robinson who effectively blocked consideration of the bill. By custom it was his right to introduce the bill affecting his district. Ickes, perhaps accepting Burlew's assumption that Utah officials approved the bill, asked Robinson to do so, but the congressman immediately declined. Instead, he announced that he would offer an amendment to the bill which would specifically grant access rights to [p.126] local users of the canyon lands, and confirm the applicability of water and power legislation to the river courses included in the monuments or recreation areas. After Ickes turned to Alvin DeRouen, chairman of the House Lands Committee to introduce the Park Service bill, Robinson correctly predicted that it would not come to the floor during that session.<sup>24</sup>

For a second time the federal officials arranged for a consultation with the Utahns, this time to secure their approval of the amendment to the Antiquities Act. In May 1940, the regional office of the Natural Resources Planning Board at Berkeley, California, was instructed to draw up materials for presentation to the Blood administration. The governor was unofficially informed that a meeting would soon be called and, so the planners claimed, he approved of the idea. In fact, he privately expressed his doubts about the purpose of the meeting and asked William R. Wallace, chairman of the Utah State Water Commission, to call an emergency session of his group. On May 21, these men drew up and unanimously passed a resolution repeating their belief that the Escalante area was rich in potential power development, condemning the Park Service for its duplicity, and recommending the defeat of its bill. Although Blood still hoped for an amended version of the legislation, he approved of the resolution and sent copies to Utah's senators and representatives. When the state executives met with representatives of the Natural Resources Planning Board in Salt Lake City on June 3, they did not mention the resolution nor allude to their action. Also present were Nusbaum of the Park Service; Peterson, Humpherys, and Margetts (who held the governor's proxy since he was out of the state); delegates from Idaho and Wyoming; and at least 50 Utah stockmen. Disgusted with what seemed a prearranged agenda, and perhaps feeling smug about the secret resolution, Humpherys listened to the federal officials' talks but had no comments to make in reply. Ironically, they in turn assumed that his reticence and that of the other state officials present indicated general approval of the Park Service policy and that it marked the end to the Utahns' "aggressive campaign."<sup>25</sup>

Such hope was immediately shattered. Two days after the meeting, T. H. Humpherys made a radio broadcast to the people of Utah in which he denounced the session as deceptive, detrimental, and futile. Wallace [p.127] followed up this attack with a letter to Roosevelt himself. Why, he complained, could not this "running fight" between state and federal administrations be replaced by cooperation: "Surely state officials, good Americans, are just as anxious to put the natural resources of our country to the highest possible use as our federal officials. Why should federal officials seemingly ignore the necessities of the State of Utah in their anxieties to create a monument or recreational area named 'Escalante' which would forever prevent this region from producing the greatest benefit to Utah and the nation." Wallace urged the President to join

Governor Blood in appointing a special committee representing all interests which could analyze the controversial issue and bring about a solution to the impasse. The letter may also have served to delay further action by the Park Service; a few days after it was sent, Blood wrote to all of the Utahns in Congress to find out if anything was being done surreptitiously. "Some morning we may wake up and find that . . . the Escalante Monument has been created by Presidential proclamation, and then it will be too late to forestall what we in Utah think would be a calamity." Robinson hastened to assure him that, even if the President issued such an order, Congress could nullify it. Senator Key Pittman of Nevada, however, had "received much discouragement from high sources" for supporting Robinson's amendment to the recreation area bill. To find out what was going on in the Interior Department, King and Murdock called on Burlew and Demaray and were assured that no withdrawal would be made at that time. The two federal officials again promised that the monument would not interfere with power, mining, or irrigation development or with the jurisdiction of the state. Surprisingly, they also claimed that Blood and two of Utah's congressmen supported the recreation area bill. These assurances convinced neither visitor, however, and they quickly wrote to the governor urging him to bring the matter directly to Ickes and Roosevelt.<sup>26</sup> Before Blood could write to either official, the White House replied. Perhaps acting without his governor's knowledge, Senator Thomas had sent a copy of the May 21 resolution to the President in July in order to register his approval of that protest. When this letter and its enclosure was forwarded to the Interior Department, Burlew learned of the stiff opinions of the Utah Water Commissioners for the first time. Branding the resolution as "confused and antagonistic," he drew up draft replies to both [p.128] Wallace and Thomas which he sent to the President's aide, Edwin Watson. The state officials, he asserted, meant to have "their desires gratified above all else," even to the extent of denying that they had been consulted or had approved of the recreation area suggestion. Sent out over the President's signature, the letters firmly stated that the Interior Department was attempting to strike a true balance between state and federal planning for the utilization of the Colorado River Basin, while recognizing the existing rights and anticipated advantages of the people of Utah as well as the general public. Therefore, there was no need for a special committee as Wallace had suggested.<sup>27</sup>



Pictographs, petroglyphs, and Indian ruins are found in numerous places throughout the proposed Escalante National Monument. Utah Tourist & Publicity Council

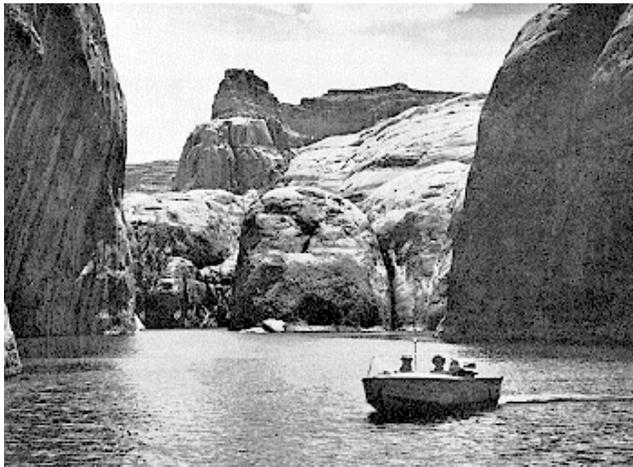
Burlew sent copies of the entire correspondence between the Utahns and the federal executives to Thomas, who forwarded them to the [p.129] governor, but Blood was not awed by the copies of the letters from the White House. Calling upon Humpherys for assistance, he prepared a reply in the form of a letter to Senator King. In it, he turned the charge of falsehood back upon the Interior Department and the Park Service which had been "entirely incorrect" in their interpretation of opinion in Utah. Recapitulating the long history of misrepresentations and broken promises, he recalled that Cammerer had seemed to agree to their demands for access rights during the consultation in February. In view of the Park Service's reputation in Utah and other states, however, the vagueness of the proposed proclamation and the new bill was hardly reassuring. Putting his finger directly on Utah's principal worry, he wrote: "Perhaps the most important concern in the present situation is connected with the power possibilities. . . . It is entirely probable that if the control of this area is turned over to the Park Service, the three year delay recently experienced by Denver in connection with the Big Thompson project [adjacent to Rocky Mountain National Park] would be repeated. . . ." Finally, Blood promised that Utahns would continue to take "active and vigorous opposition" to any proposal seeking to place the Colorado River tract under control of the Park Service unless the whole issue were thoroughly discussed by the state legislature and by Congress.<sup>28</sup>

When Senator King sent a copy of the letter to Ickes, the secretary answered the threat with one of his own. In a reply to King, he pointed out that the Interior Department had tried several times to carry out the consultation desired by both the state and the federal government. For its trouble it had been met with reticence and discourtesy on the part of Commissioner Humpherys. In addition, Congressman Robinson had first promised to support the Antiquities Act amendment, had then made an about-face, and was now opposing its passage. "I am left," Ickes announced in his exasperation, "with the alternative of asking that a monument be set up in this area or of abandoning the area entirely. . . ." These words merely served to revive the ghost of an executive coup to create Escalante Monument. A few weeks later, in August, the Salt Lake Tribune published an account by its Washington, D.C., correspondent, Republican Harry J. Brown, that the secretary was holding a threat over the heads of the Utah delegation in order to secure their support for the House bill. The governor

immediately telephoned Thomas, but the senator discounted the story and promised to talk to Ickes and Burlew again. Blood remarked that both Humpherys and the director of the Grazing Service [p.130] thought the controversy could be adjusted amicably, and Thomas agreed. At the same time Robinson went over to the Interior Department and had "quite a warm session" with the secretary. Confident that Congress could block a coup proclamation and encouraged by Blood that "if we have to go to the President we will," the legislator found Ickes "not in the mood to make any definite promises." The latter felt that he had already yielded to the demands of the Utahns in every particular—even agreeing to let Robinson attach his amendments to the bill. He could only interpret the continuing hostility as evidence that the state leaders really opposed the Escalante Monument itself. Robinson reported to the governor that the secretary had again ominously warned that "it might be his duty to adopt any methods within his power to accomplish what he feels is his duty." In the meantime, however, Demaray at the Park Service told the Utahn that no proclamation was being prepared and that no action would be taken for some months.<sup>29</sup>

Blood recognized the fact that the issue was still in his own hands, and he meant to keep it there as long as the air was filled with speculation, distrust, and threats. After consulting with his advisors and with local federal officials, he wrote to the secretary of the interior to offer a means of straightening out the tangled knot of Escalante Monument. The state fully recognized the value of the national park system, he began, but because its own resources were limited, any future withdrawals perforce must permit utilization of the affected area and not restrict access to these resources. Because such arrangements were not usually permitted by existing regulations, the pending bill was not an acceptable guarantee. If Ickes would prepare a new one, he suggested, the Utah delegation would discuss it and submit it to both houses of Congress. Anticipating acceptance of this idea, Blood then had his Water Commission draw up a list of objections to the pending measure which could be used in shaping a new one. The latter, he decided, should make it clear that recreational use was subordinate to economic use, should recognize the state's jurisdiction over water sources included in the area, and should limit Park Service activities to proper care and management only.<sup>30</sup>

It was not very likely that the Interior Department would have accepted such demanding modifications of Park Service policy anywhere, [p.131] not to mention Utah, even if they had acted upon Blood's suggestion. Ickes continued to say that he would welcome an open hearing on the pending bill, but Robinson was opposed to its passage at all. In the aftermath of the elections that November, disappointed Republican journalist Brown again claimed that the secretary was preparing a proclamation, reasoning that the public would eventually come to realize what he was striving to do for them. Senator-elect Murdock was momentarily frightened by Brown's articles and wired the President to make a public statement that no such action would be taken without further conferences between state and federal officials. A week later Roosevelt's secretary pointedly replied that the White House had discontinued such personal messages because of the unusually heavy volume of business during the defense program. If Ickes had forced the issue there is little likelihood that he could have effectively [p. 132] overcome the feelings that had built up during the preceding four years. Indeed, it was the secretary himself who was at the heart of the distrust many Utahns had for the Interior Department and the Park Service. As a businessman of Moab wrote to Blood: "You are well acquainted with the type of individual Ickes is . . . once he makes up his mind he will not stop at anything regardless of the effect his action will have upon others. I believe that [he] is the worst type of an individual to have in public office. . . ." The federal officials must have viewed the adamant opposition of the Utahns in the same spirit.<sup>31</sup>



Lake Powell, created by the Glen Canyon Dam on the Colorado, offers recreation, but has covered many scenic, historic, and archeological sites which the Escalante National Monument was designed to protect. Utah Tourist & Publicity Council (Hal Rumel)

Governor Blood was not a candidate for re-election in 1940, but he greatly feared that the Escalante Monument controversy would aid the enemies of his party in that contest. As he told Thomas, he wanted to make somebody in the Roosevelt administration realize that a sudden proclamation might bring serious political repercussions. After a series of confidential conferences, perhaps between Thomas and Ickes, and several telephone calls from Robinson to the secretary, the Interior Department promised to do nothing until after the election. Then, if there were no further obstacles, Secretary Ickes would have a bill drafted which would include Robinson's mandatory access provisions. As it happened, the decisive

obstacle to that solution was the outcome of the gubernatorial election in November. Succeeding Blood was Herbert B. Maw, Democrat, a man whose primary interest in resource policy was the development of mineral, power, and reservoir sites in the Colorado River Basin. Because the growing national defense program enhanced the need for such development, the matter of Escalante could no longer be considered. In 1942 even Secretary Ickes indicated his willingness to endorse the development of power sites at several points along the Green and Colorado rivers.<sup>32</sup> It was exactly 20 years after this that the Department of the Interior reopened the subject of a recreational area when it submitted a proposal for a Canyonlands National Park.<sup>\*\*</sup> Consisting of a tract of 480 square miles—less than a fourth the area of the proposed Escalante National Monument—at the junction of the two rivers, it would be established on the basis of multiple-use, a concept that was still in the experimental stage in the 1930's. That [p.133] intention and the fact that two decades of water and power development have gone forward in the region could provide the basis for greater mutual satisfaction between state and federal interests.<sup>33</sup>

In proposing such an enormous tract for the Escalante Monument, the federal officials let their enthusiasm for the general national park program overreach considerations of real need. But aside from the question of practical planning, the controversy with Utah was unnecessary as well as unfortunate. The officers and many residents of the state were initially receptive to federal development of recreation in the area, but they were equally hopeful of further economic enterprise, especially mineral exploration and water power. While other bureaus of the federal government confirmed the potential of the Colorado River Basin, the National Park Service discounted it. In their consultations with Utahns and in their preparation of a proclamation, the Interior Department officials did not exercise the necessary political skill. Each group acted upon mistaken assumptions about the motives of the other; neither of them cleared up these misunderstandings; and personal antipathies transformed every move into seeming duplicity. Perhaps both sides were equally guilty of assuming that the virtue of their desire was self-evident.

Endnotes

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1R. L. Wilbur to W. King, June 28, 1932, H. Albright to G. Dern, December 10, 28, 1932; Dern to G. O. Larson (copy), March 30, 1932; P. P. Patraw to H. Blood, February 2, 1933, State of Utah, Governors' Papers (George H. Dern [1925-1933] and Henry H. Blood [1933-1940]), Park Commission File and P. P. Patraw File. The manuscript material cited as Governors' Papers and the files of the Independent Commissions are located in the Utah State Archives, Salt Lake City.

2E. Watson to F. D. Roosevelt (memo.), January 16, 1941; H. Blood to Roosevelt (telegram), November 17, 1933; Roosevelt to Blood, October 23, 1936, Franklin D. Roosevelt Papers, Henry Blood Folder 3806, Personal Political File (Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York). Blood to W. K. Granger, May 22, 1935; L. M. Jones to J. M. McFarlane, July 30, 1935, Governors' Papers (Blood), Park Commission File. Kolob Canyon was designated Zion National Monument in 1937 and in 1956 was added to the Park itself. John Ise, *Our National Park Policy* (Baltimore, 1961), 409.

3H. Blood to W. King, et al. (telegram), March 5, 1934; "Statement of . . . Blood . . . on Benefits of C.C.C. . . ." [1934]; L. C. Christiansen to Blood, October 9, 1936; Blood to W. Persons, August 17, 1937, Governors' Papers (Blood), Civilian Conservation Corps File; Moab Times-Independent, February 6, 1936. During the 1930's there were between 10 and 30 annual camps in Utah, most of them working on projects under the supervision of the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation and the Grazing Division of the U.S. Department of the Interior.

4"Radio Talk to be Delivered by I. W. Trimbel . . .", "A State Plan for Utah: Progress Report, April 15, 1935" (mimeograph copy), 159-74 and Fig. 32, Independent Commissions, Utah State Planning Board (1931-1940), Administration File. A. Cammerer to E. Gammeter, December 7, 1933 (memo., description of proposed Wayne County National Park); E. Thomas to H. Blood, February 3, 1934; A. Demaray to W. King, February 9, 1934, Governors' Papers (Blood), Park Commission File. Suggestions for a Four Corners and a Navajo National Monument were never acted upon. At this time (1935) there were already seven national monuments in southeastern Utah. S. R. DeBoer, "A Preliminary State Plan for the Development of Scenic and Recreational Resources in Utah" (mimeograph copy), April 15, 1936, State Planning Board, Administration File.

5Edger B. Nixon, comp. and ed., *Franklin D. Roosevelt and Conservation* (Hyde Park 1957), I, 386-87 and fn.

6A. Cammerer to R. West, April 14, 1936; West to J. W. Robinson, April 9, 1936; West to H. Blood, May 1, 1936; West to A. Demaray, April 8, 1936, State Planning Board (1935-1941), Parks and Recreation, Reports, Escalante National Monument File.

7A. Cammerer to H. Blood, March 21, 1938, Governors' Papers (Blood), Escalante National Monument File. "Proposed Escalante National Monument, April 1936" (typescript), State Planning Board (1935-1941), Parks and Recreation, Reports, Proposed Escalante National Monument File.

8H. Blood to W. King, July 18, 1940, Governors' Papers (Blood), Escalante National Monument File. Call for a meeting in Price, Utah, by J. Q. Peterson, May 21, 1936; W. Wallace to Peterson, July 20, 1936; Peterson to State Planning Board, June 22, 1936; resolutions adopted at Price, June 9, 1936 (copy), C. P. Seeley to S. Margetts, December 15, 1937, and minutes of Price meeting, enclosure, State Planning Board (1935-1941), Parks and Recreation, Reports, Escalante National Monument File.

9Minutes of the Price meeting, enclosure in C. P. Seeley to S. Margetts, December 15, 1937, State Planning Board (1935-1941), Parks and Recreation, Reports, Escalante National Monument File.

10C. P. Seeley to F. Carpenter, December 10, 1937, State Planning Board (1935-1941), Parks and Recreation, Reports, Escalante National Monument File.

11J. Q. Peterson to H. Blood, ca. July 1936, A. Cammerer to W. King (copy), February 11, 1938, State Planning Board (1935-1941), Parks and Recreation, Reports, Escalante National Monument File. In 1937 Capitol Reef National Monument

was created in the northwest corner of the larger proposed tract, doubtlessly pleasing Utahns who had long-supported a Wayne County national park.

12H. Blood to A. Cammerer (copy), January 13, 1938, W. King to Blood, February 17 1938; S. Margetts to Blood, April 29, 1938; Blood to Margetts, February 17, April 29, 1938; Blood to M. Melich, February 28, 1938, State Planning Board (1935-1941), Parks and Recreation, Reports, Escalante National Monument File.

13"Proposal to Create the Escalante National Monument, April 29, 1938" (typescript with map), State Planning Board (1935-1941), Parks and Recreation, Reports, Escalante National Monument File.

14J. W. Robinson to H. Blood, February 11, 1938; T. H. Humpherys to Blood (memo. and enclosure), August 22, 1938; E. Halls to Blood, September 15, 1938; M. Taylor to Blood, November 3, 1938; D. E. Beck to W. King (copy), December 12, 1938, Governors' Papers (Blood), Escalante National Monument File.

15E. Burlaw to H. Blood (telegram) and Blood to T. H. Humpherys, October 14, 1938; Burlaw to Blood, October 17, 1938, Governors' Papers (Blood), Escalante National Monument File. Ise, National Park Policy, 476-77.

16E. Burlaw to H. Blood, received October 17, 1938, to F. D. Roosevelt, received October 19, 1938; W. King to Blood, October 22, 1938, Franklin D. Roosevelt Papers, 6-P File.

17G. A. Giles to H. Blood, November 5, 1938; Blood to H. Ickes, November 15, 1938; Blood to Thomas, November 16, 1938; W. King to Blood, December 10, 23, 1938, Governors' Papers (Blood), Escalante National Monument File. Salt Lake Tribune, November 23, 1938.

18A. Demaray to H. Ickes (memo.), July 10, 1938, United States National Park Service, Social-Economic Branch, Escalante File (National Archives, Washington, D.C.). A. Cammerer to W. King (copy), December 20, 1938; O. Chapman to H. Blood, December 10, 1938, Governors' Papers (Blood), Escalante National Monument File. Salt Lake Tribune, November 18, 30, 1938.

19C. Eliot to R. Forester, July 12, 1939; A. Murdock to F. D. Roosevelt, June 27, 1939; Roosevelt to Murdock, July 13, 1939, Franklin D. Roosevelt Papers, 482-A File. In 1941 the Bureau of Reclamation's study was used by the Park Service in its investigation of recreational possibilities of the Colorado River Basin as part of a comprehensive plan for the full utilization of water resources in the region. This plan was delayed by World War II and was not issued until 1946.

20T. H. Humpherys to H. Blood (memo.), October 11, 1939, Governors' Papers (Blood), Escalante National Monument File.

21Resolutions adopted by the 8th Annual Meeting and Convention of the National Reclamation Association (Denver, 1939), 9. A. Cammerer to H. Blood, February 1, 1940, Blood to Cammerer, February 8, 1930, Governors' Papers (Blood), Escalante National Monument File.

22H. Blood to L. C. Montgomery, February 24, 1940; Montgomery to Blood, February 21 1940, Governors' Papers (Blood), Escalante National Monument File.

23L. Montgomery to H. Blood, February 21, 1940; T. H. Humpherys to W. Hinckley, August 8, 1940, and to Blood, May 24, 1940, Governors' Papers (Blood), Escalante National Monument File.

24W. King to H. Blood, June 6, 1940; T. H. Humpherys to Blood, June 24, 1940; J. W. Robinson to Blood, May 30, 1940, Governors' Papers (Blood), Escalante National Monument File. Salt Lake Tribune, August 11, 1940.

25T. H. Humpherys to H. Blood, May 24, 1940, and (memo.), July 11, 1940; B. Woods to J. Nusbaum (copy), July 11, 1940, Governors' Papers (Blood), Escalante National Monument File. E. Burlaw to E. Watson, July 9, 1940, Franklin D. Roosevelt Papers, 6-P File.

26E. Burlaw to E. Thomas, July 13, 1940; Burlaw to E. Watson, July 13, 1940; F. D. Roosevelt to Thomas, July 15, 1940, Franklin D. Roosevelt Papers, 6-P File. W. King to W. Wallace June 24, 1940; King to Blood, July 2, 1940; J. W. Robinson to Blood, July 5, 1940; T. H. Humpherys to Blood (memo.), July 11, 1940; "Resume of correspondence . . . , " Governors' Papers (Blood), Escalante National Monument File.

27E. Burlaw to E. Watson, July 9, 1940; Roosevelt to W. Wallace, July 10, 1940, Franklin D. Roosevelt Papers, 6-P File. Roosevelt to E. Thomas (copy), July 15, 1940, Governors' Papers (Blood), Escalante National Monument File.

28H. Blood to W. King, July 18, 1940, Governors' Papers (Blood), Escalante National Monument File.

29H. Ickes to W. King (copy), July 24, 1940; H. Blood to A. Murdock, July 25, 1940; J. W. Robinson to H. Blood, August 14, 1940, Governors' Papers (Blood), Escalante National Monument File. Salt Lake Tribune, August 17, 1940.

30H. Blood to H. Ickes, August 16, 1940; E. J. Skeen to Blood (memo.), September 16, 1940; Blood to J. W. Robinson (telegram), September 11, 1940; Robinson to Blood (telegram) September 12, 1940; Blood to W. Wirtz, September 13, 1940; and corrected printed copy of bill, Governors' Papers (Blood), Escalante National Monument File.

31A. Murdock to F. D. Roosevelt (telegram), November 25, 1940; S. Early to Murdock, December 3, 1940, Franklin D. Roosevelt Papers, 928 File. Salt Lake Tribune, November 26, 1940. M. Melich to H. Blood, August 21, 1940, Governors' Papers (Blood), Escalante National Monument File.

32Memo. of telephone conversation, J. W. Robinson and H. Blood, 2 P.M., August 12, 1940; unidentified, undated manuscript notes, partially in shorthand, partially illegible, ca. September, 1940, Governors' Papers (Blood), Escalante National Monument File. H. Ickes to H. Maw, March 6, 1942, Governors' Papers (Herbert B. Maw [1941-1948]), Abe Murdock File.

\*\*Ed. Note: Canyonlands National Park, comprising 515 square miles, was signed into law by President L. B. Johnson on September 12, 1964.

33Report of the Committee on a Proposed Canyon Lands National Park in San Juan, Wayne and Garfield Counties, Utah, March, 1962 ([Salt Lake City, 1962]).

Charles A. Povlovich, Jr., Editor, "Will Dewey in Utah," pp. 134-140