

National Park Service (NPS) History Collection

NPS Oral History Collection (HFCA 1817)
Herbert Evison's National Park Service Oral History Project, 1952-1999



Hon. Louis C. Cramton
September 10, 1962

Interview conducted by S. Herbert Evison
Transcribed by Unknown
Digitized by Catherine Alameddin

This digital transcript contains updated pagination, formatting, and editing for accessibility and compliance with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act. Interview content has not been altered.
The original typed transcript is preserved in the NPS History Collection.

The National Park Service does not have a release form for this interview. Access is provided for research and accessibility via assistive technology purposes only. Individuals are responsible for ensuring that their use complies with copyright laws.

NPS History Collection
Harpers Ferry Center
PO Box 50
Harpers Ferry, WV 25425
HFC_Archivist@nps.gov

The Hon. Louis C. Cramton
September 10, 1962

[START OF INTERVIEW]

Herbert Evison: This is Herbert Evison, and I am talking this morning from a large living room in a home in Lapeer, Michigan. About two-fifths of the room is bordered by bookcases filled with books from the floor to the rather high ceiling. (Mrs. Cramton - Eleven feet eight.) This is the home of the Hon. Louis C. Cramton, who was a member of Congress from 1913 to 1931 and who thereafter was special attorney to the Secretary of the Interior for two years. Mr. Cramton was probably the best Congressional friend the National Park Service and the National Park System ever had. The list of actions for which he was responsible that benefited the National Park System or the National Park Service in one way or other would be too long even to put on both sides of this tape. But right alongside of me, at a red-topped card table, is Mr. Cramton himself; and I am going to start out by asking him what it was that first got him interested in the national parks.

Louis Cramton: It has been very interesting and very kind of you, Mr. Evison, to come here and to speak in such generous terms of my work in Washington, especially with the national parks. About two year ago I lost my hearing, which obliged me to retire entirely from official life and from my law practice; and so, after living a very active life, always planning something, I now have reached a stage, a place, where I cannot plan something to be done by me; and in that difficulty as to the future, it is very nice to me to occasionally have my past catch up with me in such delightful fashion as this. And so, Mr. Evison, during my official service in Washington as member of Congress from 1913 to 1931, and as special attorney to the Secretary of Interior in 1931 and 1932, of outstanding interest to me was my considerable contact with our national park system and with the first Director, Stephen T. Mather, and Horace M. Albright.

Louis Cramton: When I entered Congress in 1913, I was not fortunate in getting a committee that I desired but was placed on the House Committee on Public Lands, of no special interest to me since Michigan and my district had no public lands, and I knew so little about their problems. Finally, one bill came before that Committee that did interest me. It was a proposal to establish the Theodore Roosevelt National Park in the Kings Canyon area in California, which appealed to me because I had been politically what was then known as a Progressive and a follower of Teddy, though I did not follow him into the Bull Moose party. And the bill gave me my first contact with Stephen T. Mather, with whom I was later to be privileged to have such an interesting association. As a result, I was for the bill, and as

it did not receive support of the Committee, I made and filed a minority report favoring it.

Louis Cramton: In 1918 my party secured control of the House and I was given a place on the Committee on Appropriations. In 1920 the Federal Budget System was adopted, and to comply with it the House Rules gave all appropriating jurisdiction to that Committee and its chairman, the Hon. Martin Madden of Chicago, organized the committee, creating the several subcommittees according to the various departments of the government. He made me chairman of the subcommittee in charge of the bill for the Department of Interior, including the National Park Service, which in 1916 had first been organized with Mr. Mather as the Director and Horace M. Albright as his right-hand man and superintendent of Yellowstone National Park.

Louis Cramton: These men won my fullest confidence, and I became interested in their problems and was very glad to have a part with them in the promotion of the preservation and enjoyment of our nation's great scenic and historic reservations. Stephen T. Mather was possibly the most charming man I have ever known, a man of considerable wealth. His great interest in life was the care and development of the great areas of grand scenery included in the nation's park system, I felt that his judgment as to scenic values was infallible and that he was remarkably gifted as an administrator, as he was carefully building a service based not at all on political or personal influences but solely on efficiency, not yet under Civil Service rules, but free from political influence; it was unique among government organizations. I often commented to him on the fact that in his administration of his parks he was more economical in the spending of the money of the government than he was of his own, – \$25- or \$30,000 for a rangers' lodge in Yosemite, or financial encouragement of artists who in oil or watercolor recorded the beauty of prime scenes in the parks.

Louis Cramton: His right hand was a fellow Californian, Horace M. Albright, who succeeded him as Director and who was equally gifted as an administrator. It was a privilege to be placed where I could officially work with them in their great work of conservation.

Herbert Evison: Mr. Cramton, at the time of Mr. Mather's retirement you made a speech about him in the House, and one sentence of that is probably more quoted than any other that you ever uttered. I think it would be very interesting to have on this tape in your own voice some of that speech on Mr. Mather, so will you go ahead and read some of it?

Louis Cramton: I recall very well the day that I went into the House as the House met at 12 o'clock, and right after the opening of the session I was recognized and

made this speech, some portion of which I am happy to read to you in response to your request. I said:

Louis Cramton: “Mr. Speaker and Gentlemen of the House: Word has been carried to the country that Stephen T. Mather, the first Director of the National Park Service, has by reason of serious ill health been obliged to resign that position and his successor has been appointed and taken office. That word has caused the greatest of regret on the part of every member of this House, just as it has in the heart of nature lovers throughout the country.”

Louis Cramton: Before I conclude the speech let me read this, that you have made a special reference to:

Louis Cramton: “It has been Stephen T. Mather’s great opportunity in these past twelve years to lay the foundations of the Park Service, to define and develop the policies under which, for centuries to come, these national park areas shall be conserved unimpaired for future generations while enjoyed by the present generation. As he has builded so wisely his work will stand, there will never come an end to the good that he has done. Can any man desire a more wonderful career?”

Louis Cramton: Now, in that speech, if I may take your time, I had this. “My contact with him through my committee work has been of the closest nature in the last eight or nine years and I have felt that expression should be given here, even in my humble way, in recognition of his outstanding service to the country, as the head and the inspiration of the National Park Service.”

Louis Cramton: “For many years national parks have been set aside for the preservation of outstanding scenic areas but were administered in a most desultory way. In 1915 Franklin K. Lane, a great Secretary of the Interior, demonstrated that capacity, greatness and breadth of view when he disregarded party lines and appointed Stephen T. Mather, not of his party, as the head of the newly created Park Service. In 1915 Secretary Lane had brought Mr. Mather to Washington by appointment as Assistant to the Secretary. At that time the administration of the national parks was chiefly by the Army, but insofar as there was any jurisdiction in the Interior Department it was brought together in Mr. Mather. Chief aide and legal advisor was Horace M. Albright, who had come to Washington for the purpose of following up his college work by researches in mining and land law, and became an Assistant Attorney in the Interior Department, dealing chiefly with national park matters.”

Louis Cramton: “Stephen T. Mather was a native of California, a graduate of the University of California, whose postgraduate work was on the staff of the New York Sun from ‘87 to ‘93. In ‘94 he became interested in the borax industry, where the fortune was accumulated which he had drawn upon so

lavishly for the public good. Up to 1915 he had been actively engaged in the administration of his business interests, but this did not prevent him from realizing the importance of outdoor recreation, and as a member of the Sierra Club he explored the mountains of California, came in touch with many conservationists of note. Under Mr. Mather's efficient leadership, the national park work was coordinated and expanded, and in a year and a half legislation had been secured creating the National Park Service as a separate bureau of the Department of the Interior. Several months later, when funds became available for actually establishing the bureau, Mr. Mather was appointed its first Director. In the days of struggle before the creation of the bureau and for many years after, when funds for civilian bureaus were necessarily limited because of war and post-war expenses, Mr. Mather gave freely of his personal funds in many ways benefitting the national park system. In one park a road was purchased with private funds raised through his efforts, largely with his own personal funds. In another, land for an administration site was purchased by him and donated to the government. He spent thousands of dollars of his private fortune in the purchase of private lands within the parks; by his example, through his untiring efforts, secured many thousands more from other private sources. Just how much he has spent helping the people of America to enjoy the national parks will never be known, for he has been very reticent about this; but the sum that is known is an impressive one. By no means the least factor in Mr. Mather's success in coordinating, developing and administering the National Park Service has been his uncanny ability to pick the right man for a particular job; and the loyalty to the cause as represented by the chief has caused many a park superintendent and other officers to give up opportunities for larger financial returns to stick to the park game, as they call it. Working for Mr. Mather has been a game, in the truest sense of the word. I have, in my service of many years on a committee of appropriations, come into rather close contact with many branches of the government service in Washington and in the field. Nowhere have I seen such uniform devotion to the highest ideals of service to the country, such unselfish teamwork, such esprit de corps as in the National Park Service, as organized and built up under Stephen T. Mather. Confidence in Mr. Mather's administration led private individuals and corporations to invest large sums in the installation of public utilities in the major parks. It is doubtful if any other man in the critical early days of the Service could have obtained quite the same satisfactory results. Sufficient credit is not given to the public-spirited men who have organized and developed the needed utilities for the parks."

Louis Cramton: "In December 1921 hearings were held on the first Interior Department appropriations bill, all the appropriations for all the activities of that

Department in Washington and elsewhere being then for the first time, under the operation of the newly adopted budget system, brought in one bill. Before that I had been in contact with the work of the National Park Service in a general way through visits to some of the parks; since that time my contact with the National Park Service and with the labors of Stephen T. Mather as the chief and inspiration, have been close. My contact with him has been intimate, and as a natural consequence my confidence in him and my admiration for his work has become unlimited, for his wonderful personality and splendid ideas have won me and inspired me, as they have all with whom he has come in contact. The opportunity given me by my committee work to cooperate with him has been one of the privileges and great pleasures in my Congressional career.”

Louis Cramton: “In the Congress where from time to time we find it necessary to criticize the conduct of public officials, it is well that we should also for a few moments stop in our work to pay tribute to this outstanding figure in the public service who has sacrificed his money, his health, his time, his opportunity for wealth, in order that he might promote that which will mean so much to the people of this country in the future.”

Herbert Evison: If I remember rightly, Mr. Cramton, you were responsible very largely for the government’s acquisition of the Bright Angel Trail in Grand Canyon, and I think you made a speech in that connection that had a paragraph or two in it that I liked and that I think you prize. I wonder if you wouldn’t give me a little on that situation.

Louis Cramton: Well, Mr. Evison, you now refer possibly to the most interesting affair of my congressional career – the acquisition of Bright Angel Trail and the elimination of the Cameron claims from the Grand Canyon. My deep interest in the great scenic areas was best expressed by me in my speech in the House March 3, 1924, in which I was urging the purchase of Bright Angel Trail in Grand Canyon Park (the speech as reported at Page 3489 of Vol. 65 of the Congressional Record.)

Louis Cramton: I may say in connection with that, in explanation, I had become so enthusiastic in support of Mr. Mather that when, in the Senate, a speech had been made by a Senator Cameron in which he spoke roughly about Mather and his work, I was extremely angry. It came about in connection with a proposal for the elimination from the Grand Canyon National Park of some claims by one Ralph Cameron, who happened to be Senator Cameron of Arizona.

Louis Cramton: This man Cameron had acquired some interests in the Grand Canyon in the early days and claimed to have a number of mineral claims filed, and

he became a terrible nuisance to the administration of the park. Down at the foot of Bright Angel Trail was a little place called Indian Gardens, where there was an opportunity to furnish good water and rest and relief to those who were riding the trail going down through the Canyon; but this man Cameron had taken possession, would not permit the National Park Service to give any service to the public at Bright Angel Trail or at Indian Gardens.

Louis Cramton: As a result of that and Mr. Mather's protests about it, when I was on one of my western inspection trips accompanied by the senior minority member of my committee, Mr. Carter of Oklahoma, we arranged with Congressman Hayden of Arizona for a conference; and may I say that in my ten years as chairman, Carl Hayden, the congressman from Arizona, who of course had much to do with my committee because he had in his district Indians, national parks, reclamation, – I had found him a wonderful man to work with, never demagogic but a great man to work with. And on this occasion, he had arranged for a meeting with members of the board of supervisors of Coconino County, for the Grand Canyon Park is located in Coconino County.

Louis Cramton: At that time the County had secured the title to Bright Angel Trail, the principal trail for visitors to use in going down into the Canyon. Mr. Hayden arranged for this meeting of my colleague and myself with the supervisor of the County, at which time I made an offer to them. To get to the Grand Canyon Park by car from the Santa Fe Trail at the town of Main was about 75 or 80 miles over a very tough road. And I made an offer to the supervisors that if they would give a deed of the Bright Angel Trail to the government, we would appropriate \$100,000 to build a highway from Main to the Grand Canyon Park. The supervisors concluded they would accept that proposition, they would under those terms deed the Trail to the government.

Louis Cramton: And at the next session of Congress, in March 1924, when the appropriations bill was up, Mr. Hayden offered an amendment in the House providing for that appropriation upon the transfer of that Trail to the government. And it was when that bill went to the Senate that this man Cameron, Senator Cameron, went to the committee on appropriations of the Senate with all kinds of lies about the situation, claiming that we didn't need any money from the Park Service for that road, that the Forest Service was ready to spend \$750,000 to build the necessary road – all of which was a lie, no foundation. And with his false representations he induced the Senate Committee to strike the Hayden amendment out of my bill. And when the bill came back to the House with that provision stricken out, and on the heels of this tough language about Mather by

Senator Cameron, I was very much enraged; I had become so enthusiastic in my support and my so very great confidence in Mather.

Louis Cramton: I was handicapped by the rules of the House and the rules of the Congress; a member of one House must not speak against a member of the other House. Of course, Cameron disregarded that rule when he talked about me, but I was very careful in the speech which I made; roused as I was, I was very careful not to say anything about Senator Cameron, but I did say quite a lot about Ralph Cameron. And that speech, – I don't think I ever in Congress made as much effort as I did in the preparation of that speech. I recall the delivery of it, when Mr. Mather, poor man, sat up there in the gallery listening to me.

Louis Cramton: As I began that speech on the third of March 1924, I resorted to poetry to a remarkable extent. I first quoted quite a poem from Thackeray that had very recently reached publication, and then I quoted from Wordsworth, a marvelous poem of Wordsworth about the beauties of nature; and then came my expression of my feeling about the national parks, I think more fully and frankly than it was ever given at any other time. Now here is what I had to say about the national parks:

Louis Cramton: “To no land has nature been more kind than ours, as it rolls mile upon mile, forest and meadow, lake, river, and waterfalls, mountain and desert waste, from ocean to ocean; and in all history no people has been more appreciative of the beauties of nature, or has more sought ‘communion with her visible forms,’ to hear her speak her various language.” (I am using somewhat the language of the poets I quoted.) “Playgrounds abound, and a movement for their acquisition and maintenance is rapidly extending, through a constantly widening program of park areas, local, state and national that which is most distinctive, most appealing in its opportunity ‘to look on nature,’ or most effective in its power to rouse in man the ‘sense sublime,’ or to ‘glide into his darker musings with a mild and healing sympathy that steals away the sharpness ‘ere he is aware.’ – These places are being secured for the free public use of all our people for all time to come.”

Louis Cramton: “The park of other lands and other times was a monopolized exponent of human selfishness, with ‘keep out’ signs facing the multitudes. The American public park idea is unique, and its crowning glory is the national park system. Therein are being enshrined nature’s masterpieces, their beauties and wonders to be preserved and protected for the common use of all our people for all time to come, whether it be preeminent in the glory of its trees, or a lake of unrivaled blue, of glaciers, or majestic peaks massing one upon another with eternal snow upon them, or one rising in solitary grandeur above a principality; of wild plant, and animal life, of

waterfalls that thrill and arouse while they subdue, or of eroded chasms and precipices colored by nature with beauty that defies the imagination, whatever it offers to delight the human eye is offered freely and unselfishly to all alike.”

Louis Cramton: “Paraphrasing Longfellow, ‘Whatever fortune is denied me, you cannot rob me of green nature’s grace,’ and in the Nature’s playgrounds and scenic reservations communion with nature chastens and subdues the ego; it conduces to unselfishness and willingness to serve and sacrifice; it modifies the will to exploit, to monopolize; it clears the vision as to relative values of temporary gain against the eternal. And yet there are those who can go about amidst these things with unseeing eyes and feel none of this. There are those who can only see the people who come to see, not that which they come to see, who see the chance to exploit and fail to see the chance to serve.”

Louis Cramton: “I have been permitted glimpses, all too brief, of nearly all our national parks, including the Grand Canyon of the Colorado, which is the theme of my remarks here today. The Supreme Court of the United States in the case of Cameron vs. the United States and 252nd United States Supreme Court awards, page 456, said of it:”

Louis Cramton: ““It is the greatest eroded canyon in the United States, if not in the world. It is over a mile in depth; has attracted wide attention among explorers and scientists; affords an unexampled field for geologic study; it is regarded as one of the great natural wonders; and annually draws to its borders thousands of visitors.””

Louis Cramton: Then in that speech I went on to meet all of the misrepresentations of Senator Cameron, always speaking of him as Ralph Cameron. The action of the House that day was a refusal to agree to the Senate amendment. That sent the bill back to the Senate. It went through that process five or six times, going to the Senate, the Senate amending by striking out the Hayden amendment, coming back to the House for report, the House refusing to agree; and ultimately the Senate did recede, and the Hayden amendment went into law and the government acquired the Bright Angel Trail. But there were those claims that Cameron claimed to have down in the foot of the canyon.

Louis Cramton: Well, his action in the Senate annoyed me so that I went to the bottom of things. I went to that Supreme Court case, that decision of the Supreme Court of the United States, and I ran the matter down and I found this to be the case:

Louis Cramton: When a man files a mining claim, he has that application on file and every year is supposed to do a certain amount of work on his claims to develop

mineral in his claims. Cameron had had his claims a number of years, had never developed any mineral because there wasn't any mineral there. So finally, at the request of Mr. Mather, in his attempt to get the nuisance out of the canyon, Governor Spry, the Commissioner of the Land Office, called up those Cameron claims and made a decision that there wasn't any mineral there and that the claims were invalid. Well, then Cameron says, "You can't do that to me; I haven't asked you to pass on those claims; you can't act on them until I ask for a patent."

Louis Cramton: So, he went on up to the Secretary of Interior, and I want to say this for Albert Fall, the Secretary of Interior at that time, about whom so little good has been said: I have two things that I mark down to his credit. First, on these claims of Cameron, although he was a Senator of the United States, Albert Fall, who had been a Senator, did not hesitate to sustain the Land Office in holding the claims were invalid. And my second credit for Albert Fall is the fact that all through his service as Secretary of the Interior he never permitted politics to enter into the Park Service. They had the effort in Oklahoma; they wanted political appointments in the Service, but Fall would not stand for it. But on this, Fall having decided that the claims were invalid, Cameron appealed to the courts and he went from one court to another and finally landed in the Supreme Court of the United States, and then in the 252nd United States supreme Court reports they held that his claims were invalid, and they went on and said that the Interior Department could put him out of the canyon at any time. Well, that had been a couple of years before, but he still was in the canyon, and I was so much interested I called up the office of the Attorney General, Daugherty, and asked what they were doing about Cameron under that Supreme Court decision. "Why," they said, "we are not doing anything. The Interior Department hasn't asked us to do anything."

Louis Cramton: So, then I wrote a letter to Secretary Work, a very fine Secretary. Well, at that time I was chairman of the Committee that handled all the appropriations for the Interior Department and so I was a man of some influence with the Secretary of Interior, and when Secretary work received that letter, he could see that it was a letter I had intended could be published if necessary. He at once wrote to me, "We'll get busy, and we'll call on the Attorney General to get Cameron out of there." And he did; he took it up.

Louis Cramton: But then developed the most remarkable situation that you can imagine. This man Senator Cameron had control of all official life in Arizona: the Land Office, the District Attorney were under his thumb, and even the Federal judge in that district was under Cameron's thumb, so that no progress could be made in any proceeding that was intended to get

Cameron out of there. And so it went until Daugherty resigned as Attorney General and President Coolidge named another man, Mr. Stone. Stone had been Attorney General two or three weeks when I got an appointment with him. I went down there, and I told him about the Cameron claims, and I remember I said to him, "Now, Mr. Attorney General, you don't know me. I can understand how a man would lie when he thinks he can get away with it, when you can't prove that it is a lie, but I can't understand a United States Senator being willing to lie when it is a matter of record and when we can prove that it is a lie; I don't understand. You don't know me; you may wonder that I talk this way about a United States Senator."

Louis Cramton: "Oh," the Attorney General said, "I haven't been here very long, but I think some fellows up there would steal the capitol if they thought they could get away with it." And so that was my interview with Stone.

Louis Cramton: And he, whatever action he took, nothing happened for a little time, and then – Stone had been Dean of the Law School at Columbia; a lawyer in Phoenix who had been a student under him was on a little vacation tour with his wife and came to Washington. And while he was in Washington, he thought he'd like to call upon his old dean. So, he called upon his dean. I greatly regret I cannot remember that man's name.¹ After he had had his visit with the dean, the Attorney General finally said, "Now, Mr. So-and-so, what do you know about the Cameron claims?" Well, this man knew all about them; he told the Attorney General just what I had told him. And then, after a little, the Attorney general said to this attorney, "Would you accept an appointment as a deputy district attorney?" "Certainly." "Then I want you to handle those claims and get that man out of there."

Louis Cramton: Well, then, here's a remarkable thing. This man made his reports to me; he had been told by the attorney general that he was going to be appointed; that ought to have been enough. But he had to go down to the office of the deputy attorney general, Mr. Holland, to get his papers. Mr. Holland didn't seem to know he had been appointed; he questioned him and quizzed him for a long time and finally did conclude that he could be appointed. He got his papers for him and gave them to this man; and then the gentleman, with his papers in his hand, was leaving the office of the attorney general and Mr. Holland, the deputy attorney general, said, "Now, Mr. So-and-so, I hope you will remember that Senator Cameron is a good friend of ours."

Louis Cramton: Now that was the situation; but this man was not influenced by that. He went back there and proceeded in the courts to get Cameron out. And then a remarkable thing happened. As I have said, the federal judge before whom he had to go was under the thumb of Cameron; but that judge was

¹ Harold Baxter

for a little time unable to act. He was ill, or what; for some reason, he could not act, and another judge was brought in – Judge Bourquem from Montana, was brought in to sit in that court. And when this gentleman came up before Judge Bourquem, Judge Bourquem made his decision and threw Cameron out of the Grand Canyon; and that was the end of Cameron in the Grand Canyon.

Louis Cramton: I think it must have been in 1923 that I made a trip down through Utah in my committee work, visiting for the first time Cedar Breaks, Zion, and Bryce Canyon, and on down to the Colorado River. When I visited Bryce Canyon, I was so impressed by it that, after we'd had our dinner, I went out and took a seat on the edge of the canyon where I could look across the canyon and see the changing light, as it grew dark. And finally, the moon came up. As I watched and saw the changing light, I wrote down my impressions, the only time in my life that I ever attempted anything like it. And the next morning at daylight I was up again and back to my post there by the canyon and watched the changing lights as the sun came up over the canyon. And afterwards, after I got back to Washington, the American Highway Association asked me for a speech, and I gave them what I had written, my impressions of Bryce Canyon, and that went on the radio in the early days of radio; and the Congressman from that district put it in the Congressional Record, and it can be found there some time in 1923. All right, so much of my speech making about the parks.

Louis Cramton: I have said something about the wonderful organization which Mr. Mather built up. I knew a number of those men; I regret my memory doesn't bring all their names back to me; but outstanding men in that early Park Service organization, of course there was Horace Albright, who was his right hand and was just another Mather in every way; Dusty Lewis, of Yosemite; Roger Toll; Colonel John White of Sequoia; Tomlinson of Mt. Rainier; Tom Boles, of Carlsbad; Jess Nusbaum, of Mesa Verde; Arthur Demaray, Arno Cammerer, who were to succeed Albright as directors.

Louis Cramton: One thing I want to mention about Mather – his enthusiasm for his work. That was best illustrated to me by my experience with Isle Royale National Park. That's in Michigan, but I didn't know anything about Isle Royale and had never been interested in it; but Mr. Mather made a visit to Isle Royale; he came back just the most enthusiastic man you can imagine. He had an armful of pictures he had taken, especially of moose in the island, and so forth, and he invited some of us down to the Interior Department to see all those pictures and he told us about Isle Royale and his idea that that ought to be a national park. Now here he was in my state, urging me to establish a national park. Well, I went along with him. The bill was drawn; I introduced it – at my suggestion Senator Vandenburg

introduced it in the Senate; that bill became law. Isle Royale became a national park through the enthusiasm purely of Stephen Mather.

Louis Cramton: And I remember the delightful humor of this man Mather. Zion of course was very new as a national park when I was handling its appropriations, but one thing I did was to okay two million dollars for the building of a tunnel which would enable a short-cut highway from Zion to Bryce. When that highway was built and when it was dedicated, Mr. Mather attended; I had been invited to attend the dedication but for some reason was not able to do so; and when next I saw Mr. Mather, I can still see him sitting there and laughing as he said, "And I suggested they should call it the Cramton Bore."

Louis Cramton: I have given you something about my speech in the House at the time of the retirement of Mather, but about the end of my congressional service, some years after Mather had passed away, I asked Horace Albright, the head of the Park Service, to have a bill drawn to establish a Mather Memorial. Horace was pretty busy with things and it was some little delay before the bill was drawn; it was almost the end of the session, and the night before they were to adjourn, it was my – I was serving in a lame duck session – Congress was to adjourn on the fourth of March, and this was the night before that Mrs. Albright brought that bill to me.

Louis Cramton: I introduced it in the House, and at my suggestion she took it over to the Senate, and old Peter Norbeck, Senator Norbeck, introduced it in the Senate. Well, about 11 o'clock next day we were in session in the House; you couldn't attempt legislation, you know, – and I had a phone call from Peter Norbeck from the Senate, and he phoned me, "Our bill is passed." I said, "What bill?" "Why, the Mather Memorial." And this Peter Norbeck, in the Senate, – you could do things you couldn't in the House. Without having that bill referred to a committee, without having the bill printed or anything, he had gotten the Senate to pass that bill to establish a Mather Memorial. And it came over to me the next morning.

Louis Cramton: The next morning the House met at 10 o'clock; the last day of the session we would be in session until 12, and nothing was to be done in the House except receive bills as they came back from the Senate or from the President; but under those conditions this bill, the Mather Memorial, was reported by the clerk as having been received from the Senate. I got recognition from Speaker Longworth, he was so generous as to recognize me. I think possibly the fact that it was my last day in Congress may have had something to do with it, but he recognized me, and I called up that bill and we passed it then without it ever going to committee in the House; it passed and became law and was signed that day by the President, introduced on the third day of March and became law on the fourth of

March. Except for some war emergency bills of the greatest importance, no bill ever passed Congress any quicker than that Mather Memorial.

Louis Cramton: Something about Horace Albright, who succeeded Mr. Mather as director: He was just another Mather. He had been responsible for a great deal of Mr. Mather's success; he knew all of the Mather ideas and program, and he carried on just as Mather would have done if he had been there. A remarkable personality and one of the best friends to me that a man ever had. My experience with Albright came at one time in connection with the establishment of the Colonial National Monument, which became ultimately the Colonial National Park. Horace Albright was then the Director of the Park Service. He had a close friendship with Will Carson, the head of the Conservation Commission of Virginia, and a remarkable man of wealth, very much like Mather; and Carson wanted to see a park established to honor Jamestown and Yorktown, and Horace Albright was working with him. Some of us were taken down to Williamsburg and to visit these spots. I was permitted to think, as we sat there in the Wyeth house after we had made the rounds of Jamestown and Yorktown – I was permitted to think that I was suggesting something new when I said, "This ought to be a colonial national park, for here at Jamestown is where the colonial period began and Yorktown is where it ended, with Williamsburg, this great colonial capital, in between." As a matter of fact, that wasn't entirely a new idea; Albright had it already; he and Carson had been talking about it. And we went ahead with it.

Louis Cramton: A bill was drawn to establish a national monument; and when it was drawn, I told them that a member of Congress from that district, from Virginia, should introduce it; but Carson insisted that I should introduce it; he had the idea that a man from Michigan might give it more prestige than one from Virginia. And so, I did introduce it, and we had quite a time getting it through.

Louis Cramton: I have shown you the cartoon that appeared in the Richmond paper when it was first introduced; the triplets there are just commencing to make a noise, and as we tried to get the bill through there were some people in Williamsburg didn't think they wanted a whole lot of tourists coming in there and they opposed the bill; and so this cartoonist in Richmond had another cartoon, showed the Cramton bill a great old railroad locomotive coming down the tracks and stopped by these people in Richmond; and then the next cartoon showed Albright bringing a bunch of Pocahontases, as the Committee on Public Lands of the House and their wives went down to be entertained at Williamsburg. And so, it finally became law; there was a last cartoon showing me along with Carson. All those original cartoons I was given by the artist who learned I was interested in them; I

had them framed, and a year or two ago I gave them to the Park Service and they are now, I think, hanging in the headquarters down at Yorktown.

Louis Cramton: Another contact with Albright was one that had some embarrassment for me. A bunch of women headed by a Mrs. Rust in Washington had organized an organization to restore Wakefield, the birthplace of Washington, on the Potomac. It was going to cost quite an amount of money, and they had come to an agreement with John D. Rockefeller, Jr. that if they would raise, I think \$70,000, he would pay the balance. They had raised all the money they could and they couldn't reach the figure, so they came in with the request of the federal government to furnish the money that was needed to meet Mr. Rockefeller's gift.

Louis Cramton: Well, Albright, Director of the Park Service, and Dr. Chorley, representing Rockefeller at Williamsburg, were anxious to have the birthplace be the property of the United States government rather than this organization of women. Mr. Rockefeller didn't know just what would happen to it maybe some time in the future; he thought it would be better if the government owned it. And so, the situation was that he didn't want to put up the rest of the money unless the government was going to own it.

Louis Cramton: In the meantime, the bill passed the Senate making an appropriation of money that would take care of it. That came up in the House on the unanimous consent calendar. I had agreed to go along with Dr. Chorley and Albright. I could not tell the House what the situation was, that was confidential, so I had to object to the passage of a bill appropriating money to rebuild the birthplace of Washington. But I did object, and then Albright went to work, got his bill drawn for the appropriation of money by the Federal government, the birthplace to be the property of the Federal government, and to be administered by the Park Service with this organization of ladies as an advisory board. Mrs. Rust and the ladies were pleased with it, and the bill went through the House, piloted through by the congressman from that district, and became law.

Louis Cramton: As I have said, Albright was a great friend to me, and when I was defeated for renomination to Congress, and was leaving Congress, it was his influence with the Secretary of Interior that induced the Secretary to give me an appointment as special attorney to the Secretary of Interior, and as such I served for a time. And while serving in that position some of my work came through suggestions from Albright, things that he wanted. One of them was a history of Yellowstone National Park, because as the first of the national parks it was there that national park policies were first worked out. I wrote that history of Yellowstone, and, to my surprise, after it was completed it was printed in the government printing office.

- Louis Cramton: And then another job that Albright got me into at that time was a history of the Interior Department. At that time there were quite a bit of questions between the Agriculture Department's Forest Service and the Interior Department, especially the Park Service, as to where their jurisdiction should be. And so, I was asked to draw up a history of the Interior Department, which I did, and which was published, not published as a book but as just a Department pamphlet.
- Louis Cramton: One gift that Albright had was apparently to find good jobs for me to do, and I think he was responsible for the last task that the Secretary of Interior gave me. They were building Hoover Dam and a great reservoir was to result when the dam was completed. It would begin up in the Grand Canyon and come on down to the dam. And Mr. Albright foresaw that that meant there was to be a new field for recreation, and he wanted a study made of that field, and I was asked to make that study, and I made the study.
- Louis Cramton: In company with Roger Toll and the highway commissioner of Arizona and others, we contacted the Colorado River wherever it was easily accessible – you see along the Colorado there were here and there great gashes in the land, called washes, places that make it very difficult maybe for some miles to get down to the river conveniently. But we contacted the river wherever we could, going miles and miles of rough highway, all the way down to the dam; and when we reached the dam we took a plane and we had a view of the area from the plane. And then I filed my report, a copy of which I was recently privileged to get from the Park Service.
- Louis Cramton: After I filed the report, a bill was drawn by the Department and recommended by the Secretary to carry into effect the recommendations which I had made. I recall one interesting incident in connection with that. As the bill was introduced – it may have been introduced by the Senator from Nevada, McCarran – I recall that McCarran, the Democrat, had no use at all for the Republican Interior Department. He didn't think anything good could come out of that Department, and I recall how surprised he was when I went to see him in behalf of this bill, which meant to make this great recreation area in Nevada. I visited the dam a few years ago and saw Lake Mead – I have Doctor Mead's picture hanging on the wall up in my hall – and I found, it seemed to me, they'd done pretty much what I hoped would be done.
- Louis Cramton: There was one thing that I pointed out I think, in my report – the difficulty they would have would be the fact that from time to time the margin of the reservoir might vary several hundred feet, because of the difference in the amount of water in the reservoir; but when I visited there I found they take

care of that by putting wheels under their equipment and it is moved back and forth as is necessary.

Louis Cramton: Now, Mr. Evison, if I may, I may just break away from the National Park Service for a moment and step out a little on my own. One matter that I had something to do with which is of the same character, but the Park Service had nothing to do with it – was the restoration of Arlington, the old home of General Lee; a matter of which I am very proud, that I secured the restoration of Arlington. It had been my custom, in visiting Washington, to take my guests maybe over to Arlington, take them to the interior of that fine residential structure. The exterior was just as it had been in the old days, but the interior was just vacant; just a few hair wreaths hanging up here and there. And it was always such a disappointment to me, and I intended to do something, and finally I got around to do it.

Louis Cramton: I had a resolution drawn for the restoration of Arlington, of Lee Mansion; and I think it's rather interesting for you to know how that resolution was drawn. The business end of it, the practical working of it, was drawn by Colonel Sherrill, who, of course, had to do with such matters; but the "whereases," in which we explained about the connection of Lee with the mansion I felt had to be done very carefully; I felt that you could not patronize Virginians. It had been the home of Lee, and if anyone was to be honored by it, it had to be General Lee, and I wanted to recognize that fact. And so, I asked my friend Tyler Page, the clerk of the House and the author of The American Creed, to write for me the "whereases," the introductory part of that resolution. And that's the resolution, drawn by Tyler Page and Colonel Sherrill; and then I was anxious to have that bill passed and become law without any controversy. I thought if it did it could have some effect in helping sentiment between the North and South.

Louis Cramton: This H.J. Res. 264 was introduced in 1924. It went to the committee on the Library, where all such resolutions went. At that time, that was the one committee in which the House and Senate joined in one committee, – a joint committee. And on that committee in the Senate at that time – the chairman of it – was Senator Pepper of Philadelphia. Senator Fess was a member and Senator McKellar. Fess of Ohio and McKellar of Tennessee and Broussard of Louisiana.

Louis Cramton: In the House, Robert Luce of Massachusetts, Bacon of New York, Hull of Illinois, Park of Georgia, and Gilbert of Kentucky. I asked for a hearing before the committee, and when I went there, Senator Pepper presided. I remember that Robert Luce was there; and as I made my statement to them – and I think that I would like to read to you; I have a copy of the printed hearings before that committee on the 28th of May 1924. Now, I

will give you my statement, what I had in mind when I was introducing that resolution which incidentally would honor General Lee. I said:

Louis Cramton: “To be very brief, I urge this resolution, first, in order that the interior of the mansion might be put in a more suitable condition; instead of nakedness and barrenness in those old rooms, there will be the atmosphere of the old days; second, it would preserve for posterity a period in our history, the living conditions, I may say – (Mt. Vernon will forever perpetuate the living conditions of the Washington period,) in America’s history. The restoration of the Lee mansion, as I have suggested, would forever perpetuate the living conditions of that period in our history. Third, it would be a well-deserved tribute, and would constitute a standing memorial to a noted American, an American who occupies a very high place in our history and in the hearts of our people.”

Louis Cramton: “I am myself the son of a Union soldier who came from Michigan and who served for four years under Custer and Sheridan in the cavalry. It happened that his service was mainly in this part of the country. General Lee was the outstanding military leader of the Confederacy; not only have I felt that there was a propriety in the son of a Union soldier offering this tribute to the military leader of the Confederacy, to Robert Lee as an individual, but I am satisfied, growing out of discussions I have had with many in the past, that I fully and fairly represent the sentiment of the North in offering that. Last and fourth, such action would be a long-due recognition by the country, North and South, that the bitterness of other days is entirely gone.”

Louis Cramton: Now, may I say just a little about that resolution, if you desire. It was reported by the committee, and in the House, I put it on the unanimous consent calendar. I didn’t want any controversy about it, but I was very much worried, because there was one member of the House, a Mr. Stevens from Cincinnati, who was opposed to the resolution; to him, Lee was a rebel, that’s all there was to it, he was a rebel; he didn’t want to honor him. But I tell you this is a fact; I don’t know how it happened, but when they were calling the roll of bills on the unanimous consent calendar, shortly before my resolution was reached, Mr. Stevens was called to the telephone, and when he came back the resolution had passed the House and it became law; it was passed, was signed by President Coolidge.

Herbert Evison: Now you’re sure you didn’t have anything to do with that telephone call?

Louis Cramton: No, nothing at all. Now, if you like, the rest of this.

Herbert Evison: Capper-Cramton Act?

- Louis Cramton: No, I think a little more of this. After it became law, it was attacked by some of the GAR who were still living, and by the organization of women's Relief Corps, and I think that disturbed Coolidge some so that he wasn't in a hurry about sending in an estimate. My father was living, and I recall talking with him about the resolution. I think possibly it was the last time I was to see him; I know that after I had told him about it and about the criticism by the GAR, Relief Corps, father said, "Well, you know, I always thought General Lee was a great American. More than that, I think he was the smartest general on either side." Now that was the background of my bringing up.
- Louis Cramton: And one more thing: We finally got an estimate for it, and the War Department took it up; two men, Colonel Nash and Mr. Lessenring had the job, and they did a remarkable job, not making it as a museum but a home of the best type of the pre-Civil War period. And just one thing happened: After it became law, about that time, the president of the Daughters of the Confederacy made a speech attacking Lincoln. A newspaper, the Columbia State, at Columbia, S. C., at that time had an editorial in which they criticized that speech attacking LLincoln, but they said much more appropriate and in harmony with the spirit of the time was this resolution of mine. There you are.
- Louis Cramton: Now one other thing which the National Park Service had only long-range connection with was what came to be known as the Capper-Cramton Law, for the park system of the National Capital and its environs. That bill resulted from my contacts with Col. U. S. Grant III, who was then the executive officer of the National Capital Park and Planning Commission. Mr. Albright, of course, was an ex-officio member of that commission. Otherwise, the Park Service had nothing to do with this bill.
- Louis Cramton: One day Colonel Grant was in my office; I recall very well, as he stood there, I said to him, "Colonel, the National Capital Park and Planning Commission has made a lot of plans, but nothing has ever been done with them. Do you suppose if we drew a bill and we put into one bill every plan of the National Capital Park and Planning Commission, we'd make it big enough so everybody would be for it? Maybe we could put it through."
- Louis Cramton: So, he had a bill drawn; it was brought up and I introduced. it. I'm sorry to say I cannot recall just how much I personally had to do with the text of that bill; whether the George Washington Memorial Parkway was my suggestion or was in the bill. But that was an important feature of it, – the George Washington Memorial Parkway.
- Louis Cramton: Something I want to say about that. After the bill was introduced and was pending in the House, – as introduced it provided that the parkway should

take both banks of the Potomac from Mount Vernon to Great Falls – I caused an amendment to be adopted, providing for the acquisition of the lower end of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal to be a part of the parkway. To my mind, that was an extension of the parkway up to Point of Rocks, where I understood it was going. Recently I have learned that the Park Service have had their own interpretation; they chopped off about thirty miles of my parkway canal situation. But as a matter of fact, I can emphasize that at that time, for the first time, an attempt was made for recreation use of the old Chesapeake and Ohio Canal.

Louis Cramton: Now one other feature of the Capper-Cramton Act, that I really do think I was responsible for, was the extension of Rock Creek Park up into Maryland. I used to drive often in the park, and as you drove up through that delightful park, when you came to the District line, that was the end of the park; but Rock Creek continued, and the valley continued, just as lovely as before. And so, in that bill it was provided – and I really think this was my suggestion – for the extension of Rock Creek (Park) up into Maryland. At that time, when this business of suburbia was just starting, the building of communities outside the District was beginning; and they were beginning to build up along Rock Creek; and if you permitted that to happen, why you were going to make it quite impossible to extend the park. So, the bill provided for a loan, as I remember, of maybe \$6,000,000 – I may be wrong as to the amount – the Federal Government would put up some \$6,000,000 for the purchase of land adjacent to Rock Creek up into Maryland. And the land would be bought and put in the park; and then the real estate men in Maryland would go ahead with their development along the edge of that, and as they settled it, they'd tax those newcomers, and those taxes would pay back the government what we loaned to them.

Louis Cramton: And that happened; and Rock Creek Park has been extended for many miles up there, – just very delightful. And I want to say at this time in recognition; I was very fortunate at that time in the cooperation which I was able to get from what I suppose were the political authorities over in Maryland – Colonel Brooke Lee, or some such name. They cooperated fully; they were very much in favor of what we were doing, and we had a wonderful cooperation. At the time, we were not able to get the same cooperation from Virginia; but I think more recently they are getting that.

Herbert Evison: That is right.

Herbert Evison: Well, Mr. Cramton, we have covered a lot of ground this morning, and I can't tell you how obliged I am that you have been willing to give all this thought and all this time to your reminiscences. This tape that I have of

your ideas and your experiences is already, in my opinion, a priceless piece of property. Thank you very very much for it.

[END OF INTERVIEW]