



EMIGRANT TRAILS HALL OF FAME

OREGON-CALIFORNIA TRAILS ASSOCIATION

Horace M. Albright

Biography

- Born: 1890, Bishop, California
- Died: 1987, Van Nuys, California
- Married: Grace Noble, 1915
- Co-founder and second Director of the National Park Service
- Noted conservationist, author, attorney, trail preservation leader

Achievements

- Distinguished career with Department of the Interior, 1913-1933
- Executive, United States Potash Company, 1933-1956

After graduation from the University of California, Berkeley in 1912 Albright began his career at the Department of the Interior. He worked as an assistant to Interior Secretary Franklin Lane and obtained a law degree from George Washington University at night.

In 1915 he became an assistant solicitor in the Interior Department, assigned to national park affairs. He worked with Stephen Mather, the Assistant Secretary of the Interior in charge of national parks. They were key advocates of legislation to establish a bureau within the Interior Department to administer the government's parks and monuments, which were individually managed at that time. The National Park Service Organic Act, enacted in August 1916, established the National Park Service (NPS). Mather was appointed the first Director and Albright became Assistant Director. Albright served as Acting Director from 1917 to 1919, while Mather was ill.

In 1929 Albright succeeded Mather as Director. He persuaded President Herbert Hoover to exercise his authority under the Antiquities Act to declare various sites national monuments. In 1933 President Franklin Roosevelt granted Albright's request to transfer to NPS the national monuments administered by the Agriculture Department and the military parks, historic battlefields and monuments administered by the War Department.

Albright resigned in 1933 to become Vice President of United States Potash Company and later became its President. He remained active in conservation efforts throughout his life. In 1980 the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest civilian honor, was awarded to Albright by President Jimmy Carter.

Albright's books included *Oh, Ranger! A Book About the National Parks*; *The Birth of the National Parks: The Founding Years, 1913-33*; and *Creating the National Parks: The Missing Years*.

Albright's paternal grandmother was an Oregon Trail pioneer in 1854. He was keenly interested in trail preservation and was a leader in the Oregon Trail Memorial Association and American Pioneer Trails Association, where he was a colleague and close friend of William Henry Jackson. After Jackson's death in 1942 he served as Chairman of the Jackson Memorial Committee of APTA and worked with NPS in the creation of the Jackson Wing at Scotts Bluff National Monument.