

TERENCE YOUNG

‘a contradiction in democratic government’:
W. J. TRENT, JR.,

AND THE STRUGGLE TO DESEGREGATE NATIONAL PARK CAMPGROUNDS

ABSTRACT

Camping began in the nineteenth century as an elite form of pilgrimage to the wild, but the arrival of inexpensive automobiles in the early twentieth century greatly expanded camping's social diversity. The change was not universally embraced, especially when African Americans were involved, and the issue came to a head during the 1930s after two racially segregated national parks were opened in southern states. As complaints flowed in, William J. Trent, Jr., became adviser for Negro affairs to Interior Secretary Harold L. Ickes. He had no special interest in the outdoors or national parks, but Trent championed increased African American access to the parks and an end to discrimination in them. NPS leadership resisted Trent's efforts until Secretary Ickes ordered them to create one nonsegregated demonstration area in Shenandoah National Park in 1939. The policy was extended to other areas in 1941 and the next year, with World War II shifting into high gear, campground and other forms of segregation were ended throughout the park system.

ON JANUARY 3, 1939, William J. Trent, Jr., adviser on Negro affairs to Interior Secretary Harold L. Ickes, fired off a memorandum to the secretary. Trent had just learned that the U.S. national park superintendents would be meeting near his office in Washington, D.C., from January 5 to January 10 and he requested the secretary's permission to attend so that he could raise an issue that the National Park Service had only recently confronted—racial segregation. “It is urgent,” Trent argued, “that the question of the participation of Negro citizens in all of the benefits of the National Park Program be discussed fully and frankly.” At the time, camping opportunities for black Americans ranged from limited to nonexistent in many national parks and

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Trent felt the restrictions inappropriate. A change in policy, he recognized, might mean "separate but equal facilities" in some sections of the country and "full use ... without hindrance" in others, but it was, he concluded, "fundamental that citizens regardless of color shall participate in all of the benefits and accept all the responsibilities of any governmental program."¹

Until the 1930s, national park racism had generally consisted of the ejection of indigenous peoples from such places as Yellowstone National Park and a conscious, but unpublicized policy of discouraging visits by African Americans. The latter were, in the opinion of administration, "conspicuous ... objected to by other visitors ... [and] impossible to serve." As a consequence, the park superintendents had decided at their 1922 conference that "we cannot openly discriminate against them, [but] they should be told that the parks have no facilities for taking care of them."² Most national parks had been located in the West before the 1930s, but Congress created several new ones in the Jim Crow South during this decade and the issue of African American campers in them was prompting a more public controversy because this leisure activity carries a deep cultural significance in America.³

People have camped for millennia, of course, but during the early nineteenth century Americans began to enjoy camping as a leisure activity. Initially, camping had been treated as the necessary support for fishing or hunting trips, but William H. H. Murray argued for the reverse of this relationship in his 1869 book, *Adventures in the Wilderness; Or, Camp Life in the Adirondacks*. For the first time, an author encouraged Americans to camp as a form of leisure itself and Murray's readers made his book an immediate and overwhelming success even as thousands of them traveled into the Adirondacks to enjoy the wild as campers.⁴

People heartily embraced *Adventures in the Wilderness* for a variety of reasons, but prominent among those was Murray's presentation of camping as a form of pilgrimage as well as a type of leisure.⁵ Since the country's founding, Americans had understood themselves to be an agrarian and rural people who looked skeptically upon cities. The reality, however, changed rapidly after the Civil War as the nation industrialized and urbanized. This spatial and economic reorganization threatened many Americans' identity, prompting some of these urbanized anti-urbanists to follow the prescriptions of Murray and his successors. They sought renewal by "heading out" of profane cities and everyday lives to camp in nature, which they perceived as a sacred place, a generative source of timeless truths, and their legitimate, if temporary, home. Young campers were said to develop their sense of national identity and American values by recapturing the experiences of their cultural forebears. Older campers purportedly recovered and restored their sense of national identity and individual well-being. In particular, camping was frequently understood by its promoters and practitioners to recall the challenging frontier experience that was said to have forged the nation by turning immigrants into Americans. In the wild, campers were supposed to collectively and individually discover or restore such American ideals as freedom, community, democracy, self-reliance, and self-confidence by "roughing it" in a

mobile social order reminiscent of the pioneers. In a fashion similar to many peoples elsewhere, Americans adopted a form of pilgrimage to reinforce their national sense of belonging.⁶

Being a form of national pilgrimage, camping's popularity was more than a season or two's fad or a regional fashion, so it grew in popularity and diffused spatially over the following decades. Between 1869 and 1910, most campers were white, male, and from the professional and entrepreneurial middle classes, although a significant number of women and upper-class Americans also camped. Moreover, most camping trips lasted but several days to a week because few could get the time off from work and even fewer received paid holidays.⁷ Of those who did camp, few ventured beyond twenty-five miles; they would camp on any nonurban landscape with trees and, ideally, a stream or body of water. The wealthy, of course, shattered these temporal and spatial limits since they could afford to travel extensively and commit long periods to consumption rather than production. Nonetheless, weight, bulk, time, and financial limits kept the number of campers small before 1910. Most camping trips went unrecorded during these decades, but we can get a sense of its scale by noting that all ten U.S. national parks recorded only a meager 31,000 visitors during 1906. The number of campers, however, increased dramatically over the next three decades, with the national parks hosting 335,000 visitors—most of whom camped—in 1915, 920,000 in 1920, 2,775,000 in 1930, and 7,358,000 in 1940.⁸

The proximate cause for this skyrocketing influx of visitors was the automobile, which transformed the nature of camping. Cars made it possible to carry a family plus large amounts of camping equipment and supplies over great distances. Autos had been around for years, of course, but their manufacture evolved rapidly during the 1910s and 1920s, especially after Henry Ford entered the field. Ford had introduced his \$600 Model N vehicle in 1906, when the average automobile cost \$3,290. Then, two years later, his company released the Model T. Despite its slightly higher price of \$825, The Model T became, in James J. Flink's words, "the low-priced car for the masses anticipated since the turn of the century" as the cost rapidly declined. Each year the company so pressed to reduce its production costs that by 1916 a new Model T runabout sold for as little as \$345. Automobile sales exploded, and as a consequence of their growing ubiquity, the cost of a motor camping vacation decreased markedly.⁹ According to one *Sunset Magazine* article, "the total outlay" for a three-person, 2,500-mile, thirty-day auto journey from Ohio to Puget Sound was only \$142.96, or less than \$1.50 per day per person. "It was," the middle-class author claimed, "cheaper than staying home."¹⁰

The 1920s and 1930s also witnessed a growth in the number of Americans receiving paid vacations. By 1900, paid holidays typically were given to managers, foremen, clerical staff, and senior craft workers and had become a sign of white-collar status. They tended, however, to be denied to production workers, who being wage earners rather than salaried, were unable to make up at no cost to their employer the work that had accumulated while they were away. Moreover, since they were not "brain workers," their employers did not seem to think they would

need any long stretches of free time. Consequently, only 5 percent of American wage workers benefitted from a paid vacation in 1920. Some of the more skilled laborers were able to win this benefit during the decade and the overall number of production workers with paid vacations rose to 10 percent by 1930. It was, however, still small in comparison to the 85 percent of salaried, middle-class employees who enjoyed this benefit at the time. The 1930s, by contrast, were much better for wage laborers. After an initial decline in the number of workers with paid vacations, the number rose rapidly with about 50 percent of wage earners receiving the benefit by 1940.¹¹

With camping's relatively low entry costs, working-class families, especially those with paid vacations, wholeheartedly embraced it. Even though their numbers remained relatively low through the 1930s, the increased diversity prompted cultural observers to praise camping's broadened demographics and democratization, especially those who saw it as promoting national values and a national identity over class and regional ones. A correspondent in the *Literary Digest* for August 30, 1924, was typical. He was particularly taken by the democratic attitude and sense of social equality that he encountered among the autocampers at Yellowstone National Park. Strolling through a camping area, he described the scene in warm and positive terms. "Hub to hub stood parked the rattly old 'lizzie' of a sign-painter from Toledo, and the relatively shiny new seven-passenger touring car of a retired real estate man from Los Angeles." Back in the city these campers' homes would hardly have been adjacent, but here in the campground, and "just for to-night, they and their families were to be neighbors." Tomorrow, each would depart for some new destination, never to meet again, but the short duration of their propinquity could not override their mutual sense of being socially equal campers together in a sacred place. Furthermore, place differences as much as class differences abated at a motor campground, intimated the writer. Here "people from every section come together in a new friendliness, which grows out of the discovery that all these other folks, be they East or West or North or South, are pretty good people and, after all, Americans just like you and me."¹²

Despite the correspondent's enthusiastic report about Yellowstone camping, not everyone was welcomed as the increased diversity rubbed some campers the wrong way. R. L. Duffus reported in the *New York Times Sunday Magazine* for September 1, 1929, that the growing number of middle- and working-class campers and other tourists grated on some of the wealthier ones. "The increasing numbers who go on vacations must go somewhere. Naturally they go to places they have heard of" like Yosemite, The Garden of the Gods and the Adirondacks. Their arrival, however, did not generate paeans about democracy but sneers of disdain from some of those who had once dominated these destinations. "Vacationing having ceased to be aristocratic and exclusive," his informants told Duffus, "it becomes more difficult to find an aristocratic and exclusive place in which to practice it."¹³

It was not, however, just camping's growing class differences that could generate negative responses; race was also an issue. African Americans in particular were frequently unwanted. During the 1920s, some African Americans,

like their white counterparts, had grown wealthier and embraced a variety of short and extended recreations, including such nature-based activities as relaxing at the beach, swimming, picnicking, fishing, hiking, participating in the Boy Scouts and Camp Fire Girls, enrolling at summer camps, and family camping.¹⁴ One black recreationist called these “ideal forms of recreation for city people” while another argued that urban African Americans, again like their white counterparts, needed such diverting leisure activities “if ill health and crime are not to result.”¹⁵ Often these activities were enjoyed at private resorts located in or near the participants’ home towns and other times at more distant ones in Port Monmouth, New Jersey, Idlewild, Michigan, near Denver, Colorado, and elsewhere. By contrast, when African Americans wished to engage in outdoor activities at the public facilities supported by their taxes, they frequently found them to be segregated and generally inadequate. Efforts were made to change these situations, for instance, a variety of black individuals and groups attempted to use the public beaches of Fort Lauderdale, Florida, in summer 1927, but such challenges were typically blocked by white authorities and the participants directed elsewhere.¹⁶

This recreational inequity was further extended into the public arena and became the basis for an extended dispute when Great Smoky Mountains National Park opened astride the North Carolina-Tennessee border in 1934 and Shenandoah National Park opened in Virginia during 1935 as the Park Service realized its long-term goal of eastern national parks nearer the centers of national population.¹⁷ Unlike the western national parks, which Congress had carved from existing federal holdings, the lands for the new parks had been purchased from individuals and businesses. Unprepared to buy land where possible and to condemn it where necessary, the Park Service had negotiated an arrangement where the states of Virginia, North Carolina, and Tennessee would acquire the land and then donate it to the federal government for the parks. A radical and time-consuming approach, it generated numerous confrontations and lengthy deliberations about the policies to be practiced in the new parks. In particular, the Service wanted natural areas to be as wild as possible, which meant hundreds of residents would have to be relocated, but the states acquiesced on this point.¹⁸ The states, for their part, wanted local regulations and laws to apply inside the parks where appropriate, to which the Service agreed since it had similar arrangements with other states.¹⁹ This accord, however, meant that Shenandoah and Great Smokies parks would have to include racially segregated facilities because Jim Crow was the law in Virginia, North Carolina, and Tennessee.²⁰

The appeal of auto travel and camping expanded rapidly across America during the 1930s so picnic areas and auto campgrounds were among the first facilities constructed in the new southern national parks. Popular with both black and white Americans, they quickly became the sites for race-related controversies as the National Park Service (NPS) created segregated amenities. The comments that the agency received about these facilities, nearly all of which were negative, can be divided into two groups. The first consisted of complaints focusing on the extension of racial segregation into parks controlled by the federal government. Some critiques came from citizens such as L. E. Wilson, who on an “enjoyable”

September 1936 drive through the “beautiful” new Shenandoah Park had been offended to find racially segregated restrooms. “This is a National Park,” he wrote the Interior Department’s Secretary Harold L. Ickes, “and should show no race separation at all. I think we have a right to know whether we may expect your Department to condone this practice or not.” Responding for Secretary Ickes and NPS Director Arno B. Cammerer, the Service’s associate director, Arthur E. Demaray, attempted to assure Wilson that racially segregated restrooms and other facilities did not mean that the remainder of the park was segregated. “Under no consideration,” offered Demaray, “does the National Park Service regard such separate facilities as any evidence of or intention towards race separation in the park.” Moreover, the quality of the separate facilities was to be the same for both races and, he noted, that the Park Service was not doing anything unusual but simply providing for “white and colored people to the extent only as is necessary to conform with the generally accepted customs long established in Virginia.”²¹

Despite Demaray’s assurances, a similar complaint was soon lodged by a political colleague of Ickes, Walter White, Secretary of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. Founded in 1909, the NAACP at first had focused its efforts on a campaign to outlaw lynching nationally, but during the 1920s had begun to struggle for the right of African Americans to vote in political primaries and against segregation in education. Until this time, the organization had not taken a position on any national park policy, but the extension of racial segregation into the parks crossed a line that could not pass without a response. In a January 1937 letter, White advised the Interior secretary that newspapers were reporting that six “recreational colonies” were to be built for whites in Shenandoah National Park and one for African Americans. “We are writing,” White stated, “to inquire if these accounts, which indicate the establishment of a Jim-crow project on Federal territory, are correct.” Racial segregation was widespread and legal in southern states, which is where the NAACP most often fought it, but not at the federal level, with major exceptions being the military and the District of Columbia. If the news accounts were true, White declared, the NAACP did not wish simply to complain, but to also “go on record as most vigorously protesting against the inauguration of such a policy.” Any additional embrace of racial segregation by the national government was anathema to the organization and would only set back the NAACP’s efforts to end it.²²

Out of respect for Walter White and his position, Ickes himself responded, but he did not directly address White’s complaint. Instead, he opened his reply by first noting that “everyone, regardless of creed, color, or race, who conforms to the rules and regulations, is invited to visit the national parks and monuments.” At the same time, he informed White, “it has long been the policy” of the national parks “to conform generally to the State customs with regard to accommodation of visitors.” In keeping with this policy, yes, he admitted, the plans for Shenandoah National Park did include racially separate facilities because it is the custom of Virginia, the state where the park is located, and they “will be developed along the lines desired by the visitors.” This dissatisfying letter would not be the last exchange about racial segregation between the NAACP, the NPS and the

Department of the Interior.²³

The second group of complaints received by the NPS was less general, focusing specifically on the segregation surrounding park amenities, especially campgrounds. Great Smoky Mountains National Park opened officially in June 1934, but even before its inauguration, Superintendent J. Ross Eakin had received a request for a meeting from an African American camping enthusiast who wished to ascertain whether he and his fellow campers would have a place to do so. Writing in September 1933, William P. Gamble of Knoxville, Tennessee, informed Eakin that he and a “delegation of colored men” wanted to discuss the construction of a campground for “colored people” in the rapidly developing park. Undoubtedly concerned that the southern national park might end up like many municipal, regional, and state parks in the South—for whites only—Gamble and his colleagues sought to ensure that the new park would be open to African Americans too, even if the campground were racially segregated. Eakin, however, rebuffed their visit as premature and unnecessary. “You may rest assured that this will be provided for at some future time,” he soothed, “but plans for the park at this time are so indefinite nothing would come of a conference.”²⁴

Although William Gamble apparently never responded to Superintendent Eakin’s dismissive letter, T. Arnold Hill, acting executive secretary of the National Urban League, again raised the issue of national park campgrounds and other recreational facilities for African Americans in a June 1935 letter to an old, but influential acquaintance and one of Eakin’s superiors, Secretary Ickes. “Few needs of the great mass of Southern Negroes are so completely underserved as those of recreation,” he informed the secretary. Nearly everywhere in the South they were unable to enjoy municipal, regional, and other parks. The federal government, however, was now creating recreational opportunities so Hill proposed that “park projects [be] planned for states in the deep South that will definitely take care of the needs of Negroes—which will offer camping, hiking and picnicking sites.” Moreover, federal provision for these activities was justified because they would give African Americans much needed opportunities to counteract the evils of urban life. “The masses in such cities as Atlanta, Birmingham, Montgomery, New Orleans and similar localities,” he asserted, would finally have “a chance to build themselves physically and to enjoy the natural beauties of their states to a degree which is now denied them.”²⁵

Hill had known Ickes professionally for many years when he mailed this missive because the former had taken a post in 1917 with the Urban League in Chicago where Ickes lived and worked as a progressive lawyer. Moreover, Ickes was a member of the NAACP and had been president of its Chicago chapter from 1922 to 1924. Undoubtedly the men’s paths had crossed many times and Hill must have felt that he would receive a sympathetic hearing by the secretary. Before the month was out, Theodore A. Walters, an Ickes assistant who was “acting secretary” while his superior traveled, responded to Hill. On the one hand, he began, “the recreational needs of the negroes in Southern States ... is a social problem which has my sympathy.” On the other hand, Walters continued, there was little the federal government could do for the problem as a whole. Nonetheless, he promised

to refer the matter to the director of the National Park Service, "who will give it proper consideration and write you at a later date." Although Walters's reply was copied to an assistant park service director, Conrad Wirth, no evidence indicates that Director Cammerer ever contacted Hill.²⁶

During this same period, criticisms about the dearth of camping facilities for African Americans also rolled in from Interior Department staffers, most notably Robert C. Weaver, Secretary Ickes's current adviser on Negro affairs. In a July 1, 1936, memorandum to NPS Director Cammerer, Weaver asked that the Park Service "take some definite stand" about its failure "to include camping facilities for Negroes in National Parks." Weaver recently had received a letter from a man in Memphis, Tennessee, who had complained about the lack of campgrounds for African Americans. Moreover, "the same issue has been raised in Georgia" where "requests have come in for the opening of said facilities to Negroes in that State." Deflecting Weaver's pointed critique, Cammerer replied that the Tennessee complaint was not really about a national park but a recreational demonstration area (RDA) near Memphis. However, he admitted, since the project was under the supervision of the NPS, "I will have it looked into."²⁷

Six weeks later, Cammerer had not gotten back to Weaver and the latter conveyed his frustration with the Park Service to Secretary Ickes. While talking with "the men in charge" of campground construction, Weaver informed the secretary, he had learned that the National Park Service was no longer building the camping facilities they had planned for blacks at the RDAs. Apparently the "topographic nature" of some sites had prevented "an expansion of facilities to include Negro participation" but more importantly, they claimed that the service had run out of money before any campgrounds could be built. They told Weaver that campground construction funds had been cut and he concluded that the "proposed Negro camp facilities seemed to have borne the brunt of the reduction, and they were eliminated." Despite the flimsiness of this excuse, the NPS's failure to provide for African American campers is unsurprising because Arno Cammerer was neither a progressive nor a welcoming director. Instead, on the repeated occasions when the subject of African American campgrounds was broached, he insisted that demand should drive the provision of black facilities, even when his immediate subordinates recognized that their presence would stimulate demand. According to Cammerer's mean-spirited and unrealistic logic, once African American campers began to arrive at national parks but had to be turned away because no segregated campground existed for their use, or even less likely, began to use whites-only campgrounds, the Service would build them their own facilities.²⁸

No one, however, mentioned the undemocratic and socially inequitable nature of camper segregation before Charles S. Johnson. A sociologist and director of the Social Science Department at Fisk University, Johnson wrote Director Cammerer on April 23, 1937 to inquire what the Park Service's policy would be concerning camping and other recreational activities by African Americans at Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Does the agency, he asked, "feel it within the scope of its authority to insist upon the participation of all elements of the population?"

After lengthy consultations both among and with his principal assistants—Arthur E. Demaray, Julian H. Salomon, Thomas Vint, and Conrad Wirth—Cammerer replied to Johnson on May 27 that, “we have attempted to provide park facilities for all people on exactly the same basis, regardless of race.” In practice, he admitted, this policy had led so far to only one designated, but unbuilt campground for African Americans at Shenandoah National Park as well as a “probable” and similar arrangement at Great Smokies. However, Cammerer assured Johnson, their construction would follow “the demand of people for them.” Johnson’s response was a model of diplomacy and insistence. He thanked the director for his letter and assured him that he understood the Park Service’s policies, but he added that “it is our hope and expectation that the National [Park] Service can render an important aid to the people by strongly suggesting the desirability of the inclusion of groups which are frequently neglected.” In July 1937, one month after the receipt of Johnson’s last letter, Cammerer finally ordered construction of the first black picnic ground and auto campground at Lewis Mountain in Shenandoah National Park. Although he seems to have inferred Johnson’s larger point, Cammerer was unwilling to follow. Rather than approaching Secretary Ickes about the issue and supporting Johnson’s plea that it was the “duty of a benevolent government” to recognize the social impediments that kept African American protests circumspect and that left African American campers excluded, Cammerer embraced segregation. “There will be some criticism by colored people against segregation,” Cammerer admitted to his principal assistant, Arthur E. Demaray. “But I think we would be subject to more criticism by the colored people as well as the white people if we put them in with the white people.”²⁹

The Lewis Mountain campground in Shenandoah National Park, the only such facility for blacks in all the southern national parks, was still undergoing development when William J. Trent, Jr., became Secretary Harold Ickes’s new adviser on Negro affairs in July 1938. A 1932 graduate of the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania, Trent was teaching and the acting dean of Education at Bennett College in Greensboro, North Carolina, when he was tapped by Robert C. Weaver to succeed him in the adviser’s post. Long-time friends and associates, both men held advanced degrees in economics and had each married into the same family. In 1936, Trent had served as the assistant administrator to the regional director of a national employment survey run by Weaver. When Weaver was preparing to move from the Interior Secretary’s office to the federal housing department, he recommended to Ickes that Trent take over the post. Trent readily accepted the offer when it arrived and he immediately jumped into his new position by recommending speaker engagements for Secretary Ickes, by arranging the secretary’s travel to national parks and other Interior Department sites across the country, and by coordinating with his counterparts at other agencies.³⁰

Prominent among Trent’s new Washington peers was Mary McLeod Bethune at the National Youth Administration. A friend of Eleanor Roosevelt, she would work repeatedly with Trent on recreation issues in national parks and elsewhere (see Figure 1). Furthermore, Bethune had been the impetus behind the creation of Washington’s “Black Cabinet” in 1935, an unofficial group of approximately

Figure 1. In the Middle of Things.



From the collection of Judy Scales-Trent.

Eleanor Roosevelt was instrumental in bringing antisegregationist leader Mary McLeod Bethune, left, to Washington, D.C. As director of Negro Affairs at the National Youth Administration and “chair” of the Black Cabinet, Bethune befriended W. J. Trent, Jr., center, and encouraged his nascent interest in outdoor recreation for African Americans.

forty-five African American professionals, many of whom were “racial advisers” in the federal government. The cabinet kept no minutes and met irregularly,

but nonetheless provided a forum where race problems could be addressed and potential solutions suggested. Robert Weaver was a charter member of the Black Cabinet and he welcomed Trent into the group as an active member too.³¹

Trent's position in Secretary Ickes's office was a broad one that drew on his economics training and educational experience. According to Trent, his primary concern was "securing maximum Negro participation in the programs under the jurisdiction of the Department of the Interior and the Public Works Administration. This involves integration of Negroes into the activities conducted by these two governmental agencies," which covered employment financed by them, services provided by them, and the agency employees themselves. He was not hired to battle racial segregation or to focus narrowly on national parks, recreation, and camping. Moreover, he did not enter the post with a "special interest in the outdoors" even though he was a member of the NAACP and the Urban League, both of which had recently expressed displeasure about segregated parks, and even though he and his father enjoyed hunting together. Nevertheless, Trent's interest, understanding, and efforts to end national park segregation and to support African American camping and related recreational activities would increase over the next three years.³²

William Trent's interest in outdoor recreation and parks began shortly after he started his new post. Within his first month, he met with the Park Service's Julian Salomon, who worked on youth camps and state parks, and with Herb Evison, who worked with the states on parks. At about the same time, Secretary Ickes also prompted Trent to become more engaged with parks, and camping in particular, when he directed his adviser "to make a thorough study of the camping needs of Negroes and make recommendations to him." The primary focus of Trent's research was organized camping for young people, but it pressed him to look more deeply into the relationship between youth, American ideals, and spending time in a natural environment. He came away from these investigations with a richer understanding of camping and related activities and a positive attitude toward them. In an article he composed about African American camps for the magazine *The National Educational Outlook Among Negroes*, Trent linked camping, a form of outdoor recreation, to education and the development of Americans. "Formerly education and recreation were considered separate and distinct phases of a child's development," he began. Now, however, they were known to reinforce each other and it was clear to him that "in the field of recreation, there is no agency more stimulating to adolescent development than organized camping."³³

In December 1938, during the same week that Trent mailed his manuscript, he also sent Bethune a reply to one of her communications. Her federal agency, the National Youth Administration, had sponsored a "National Conference on the Problems of the Negro and Negro Youth" during 1937 and she had sent its recommendations to President Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Forwarded to the Interior Department for a response, most of the recommendations related to equal access to jobs, project funding, and federal support for hospitals for African Americans. One recommendation, however, dealt with an issue of increasing importance to Trent: "That all facilities, services, and privileges in national parks,

forests and other centers be made available to Negroes without discrimination." Trent's communication informed Bethune that he had read the conference's recommendations and subsequently had begun "a comprehensive study" of the issue in order to make his own recommendations. This research was underway when, around New Years Day 1939, Trent discovered that the National Park Service's superintendents were about to meet in Washington, D.C. His request to attend and to discuss the issue of racial segregation was quickly approved by Secretary Ickes and the Park Service itself. On Saturday, January 7, Trent gave an impassioned presentation to the assembled superintendents.³⁴

Trent prefaced his talk with a statement: "the main job now [is] to establish policies with regard to Negro inclusion in National Parks and to see that they [are] carried out as established." Having made this point distinct, Trent turned to his appeal for equal recreational opportunities for African Americans by relating to his listeners that he understood how "the National Park [Service] has a dual function to perform." Referring to the mission outlined in the 1916 Organic Act, he noted with little interpretation that the Park Service was charged first to conserve the natural features of a national park. When he turned to its second charge, however, he neatly interpreted the act's original "provide for the enjoyment" of the parks as making the park system "accessible to and comfortable for the visiting public." This second function, built on the assumption that the parks were for everyone, "is my primary focus," he declared. Turning to his topic, Trent noted that any facilities in a park had to be inexpensive or they would be unavailable to the poor, among whom, he pointed out, were the largest percentage of African Americans. They could little afford expensive recreation, and Trent the educator and youth supporter knew that they needed recreation, so national park facilities, he announced, could be "just the solution to their recreational problems" but for the fact that "some very important difficulties [stand] in the way."³⁵

In order that the superintendents not misunderstand, he made it clear that several of these difficulties were under their control. First, Trent pointed out that African Americans initially had been excluded from the Park Service's recreational demonstration areas and therefore had not obtained the organized camping areas that Trent had so recently praised in his magazine article. Luckily, Secretary Ickes and his staff had become aware of the exclusion and countermanded it. Clearly, he told the superintendents, "We must be continually alert in order that the program as laid down will be carried out." Second, the NPS had started to plan its facilities at the emerging Cape Hatteras National Seashore and other recreation-oriented protected areas, which Trent believed could provide all urban dwellers with relief. The Service was soliciting the public's thoughts and Trent stressed that it was "essential that all groups of peoples be included in the program." When properly carried out, he suggested, broad participation "will result in the establishment of a policy of providing the same facilities for Negroes in all National Parks." Third, Trent moved his discussion beyond the South to illustrate that the problem was not confined to that region. A group of African American campers, he revealed, had applied for a permit to stay at Yellowstone National Park, but a "National Park official" did not wish to grant it. Of course, Trent noted, "no individual group

can be denied certain types of privileges in parks on account of race, creed or color.” However, “subterfuge” could be used. Since the official could not overtly discriminate, he simply “filled up the entire summer schedule of the park with dummy groups [which] shut out this Negro applicant.” Was this official later embarrassed or remorseful for his act of discrimination? Hardly, related Trent; he “had considered it a fine joke.”³⁶

Finally, Trent rejected NPS Director Cammerer’s approach toward the construction of black recreational facilities in the segregated southern parks. Usually, Trent noted, when it was suggested that the Park Service needed to build campgrounds and other amenities for African Americans, “the first reply is—‘when there is sufficient demand by Negroes for facilities in these areas, then they will be provided.’ By implication the following statement might be added—‘Meanwhile we will continue to construct various types of facilities for the use of white citizens because we know that the demand will be increased once the facilities are provided.’ A better example of inconsistency cannot be imagined!” thundered Trent. And yet, despite his frustration with this hypocrisy, Trent’s goal was not to support separate but equal campgrounds. Instead, he pointed toward social equality and racial integration by suggesting that the “whites-only” signs come down in the southern parks. If the agency wanted proof that blacks wished to camp and picnic, he declared, “I say open the facilities—the demand will be there.” Furthermore, he argued, discriminatory practices in the national parks only advanced “the continued oppression of minority groups. ... The Federal Government should not lend itself to discriminating against or segregating any race or religious group. To do such,” he offered, “allows a contradiction in democratic government.” Segregated campers could not participate fully in its socially equalizing and integrating experience when they were kept isolated. Instead of supporting discrimination, he urged, the Park Service should take the lead and “insist that local social patterns be continually liberalized.” This positive social change, he concluded, would occur if only the Park Service would embrace “a policy of non-discrimination and non-segregation in federal park areas.” In addition, he promised, “if such policies be put into practice faithfully and with sincerity of effort ... interracial relations might be improved” and an American identity, rather than a black or a white one, might begin to emerge.³⁷

Despite the truth, fairness and passion of Trent’s appeal for nondiscrimination and nonsegregation in national parks, the superintendents retained their conservative policy. In the ensuing dialogue, NPS Director Arno Cammerer ignored Trent’s critique, tacitly supported segregation and once again maintained that demand had to precede supply. “Projects,” he insisted, “could not be established until the demand grew for them.” Little, he knew, would therefore happen because Great Smoky Mountains National Park, the one southern park that had reported racial statistics to him in the last year, had received only 1,109 African American visitors, which were approximately 0.15 percent of its annual total. James R. Lassiter, superintendent of Shenandoah National Park and a Virginia native, further cemented Cammerer’s unwelcoming stance when he declared that the statistics his park had gathered (and apparently not shared with the director’s

office), indicated that only 0.5 percent of Shenandoah's visitors had been African American during the last three years. Like Cammerer, Lassiter implied that these visitor numbers demonstrated that it was pointless to build segregated facilities for African Americans at this time. On the heels of this discussion, and with no voices raised in opposition, the superintendents decided against the elimination of segregation. Instead, they recommended that when "providing accommodation for Negroes in National Park Service areas, the control, type and extent of accommodations conform to existing State laws, established customs of adjacent communities, and Negro travel demands." Nevertheless, their conformist policy would soon be challenged from another quarter.³⁸

A few days following Trent's ardent plea to the park superintendents, a legal analysis of the racial segregation policy at Shenandoah National Park was completed for Nathan Margold, the Interior Department's solicitor. Margold's request for this analysis is unsurprising because before he was hired by Secretary Ickes, Margold had been the author of the NAACP's 1933 study that detailed the inequality of "separate but equal" educational resources and became the foundation for the long fight against segregation laws. The analysis, which was developed by Phineas Indritz, a recent graduate of the University of Chicago's law school and a newly hired lawyer at the Interior Department, called the National Park Service's response to the racial complaints received from such individuals as L. E. Wilson "evasive," and it highlighted the fact that Shenandoah National Park was "not maintained by funds of the State of Virginia but by congressional appropriations derived from the taxation of all the people of the United States." Moreover, Indritz was concerned about the long-term impact of the policy, which probably was the same outcome feared by the NAACP. "Once segregation is established in any service or accommodation, it may become increasingly difficult to eradicate it." His recommendation, consequently, fell in line with that of Walter White and Trent—racial segregation in the national parks should be "completely abandoned."³⁹

Margold reviewed Indritz's provocative memorandum and then consulted "with various leaders of thought in such matters," including Trent. Subsequent to these deliberations, Margold informed Secretary Ickes that although segregation was legal and constitutional when facilities were equal, according to the reports he had received, they were not so at Shenandoah. "It appears that the facilities for colored people are not as numerous, as adequate, as appealing or as well cared for as are those available for whites." More importantly, however, Margold argued that Shenandoah National Park need not be segregated at all. "The United States has exclusive jurisdiction over the Park and, in its management of that Park, is not bound by either laws or customs of the State of Virginia. Likewise, it would be legal and proper under existing concession contracts to require by appropriate rule or regulation, that park operators remove all traces of race segregation." Consequently, Margold recommended to Ickes that the practice of racial segregation be eliminated "even though the National Park Service feels strongly" that the policy continue.⁴⁰

Ickes, however, was uncomfortable with both Trent's and Margold's

recommendations. A cabinet member in a Democratic administration that was reluctant to support civil rights matters actively, he had to think about the political repercussions from such a policy change. Congressional seniority rules had made southern Democrats the chairmen or strategically located members of most Senate and House committees, so proposals for civil rights legislation made the White House nervous. As President Roosevelt had explained to the NAACP's Walter White in 1935 after the latter had asked the president to support proposed anti-lynching legislation, "If I come out for the ... bill now, [the Southerners] will block every [subsequent] bill I ask Congress to pass to keep America from collapsing. I just can't take that risk." Given this political climate, Ickes pursued two approaches. On the one hand, he notified Associate Director Demaray that the National Park Service "must insist upon early provision for Negro Accommodations equal to facilities for white persons." If segregation was to be park policy, the facilities had to be made racially equitable as quickly as possible. On the other hand, Ickes decided to broach the subject of integration with Virginia's senators, but was cautious because of his recent tangles over racial and other issues with one of them, Carter Glass. The senator was a deeply conservative Democrat who, in contrast to Ickes, supported racial segregation. Their differences had simmered for years, but then came to a head when Ickes gave a speech advocating "a fair deal for everyone, regardless of race, creed or color, and educational opportunities on the same basis" at the NAACP's 1936 convention in Baltimore. This controversial presentation was followed by another at Raleigh, North Carolina, where Ickes questioned why Maryland's U.S. Senator Millard Tydings was holding up the appointment of two African Americans to high posts in the U.S. Virgin Islands. This pair of critiques ignited Glass, who denounced Ickes during a volatile radio broadcast on March 29, 1937, saying the secretary had "openly advocated ... the repeal of all segregation laws."⁴¹

Although Ickes dismissed Glass's radio address as ineffective, he still must have been thinking about the senator's animosity when he ordered his first assistant secretary, E. K. Burlew, to contact Glass and Virginia's other Democratic senator, Harry F. Byrd, to ask for their responses to the complaints lodged against segregation at Shenandoah National Park and the proposal to eliminate all forms of segregation in the park. Letters were mailed on March 6, 1939, and on March 7 Senator Glass sent his brief and dark response. "It is obvious you are familiar with the segregation laws," he replied to Burlew. "I completely approve these laws; and if the Interior Department desires to disregard them ... it will have to take full responsibility for any such remarkable proceeding." Two days later, Byrd's equally adamant reply arrived. "I have had no complaints ... with regard to the segregation of negro visitors in the Shenandoah National Park," declared the senator. Suggesting that any complaints were from suspicious individuals and that he would deal with them, Byrd asked that the secretary tell him "the source of the numerous and well formulated protests that you state have been made to you." Taken aback by these two responses, Burlew consulted with Trent, who recommended that the assistant secretary not limit his queries to the two Virginia senators. Instead, Trent encouraged Burlew to seek a greater diversity of white

opinions and he gave him a list of "informed Virginians" to question about the issue. The assistant secretary, however, decided that the discussion had caused disturbance enough and so recommended an early meeting between Secretary Ickes and Associate Director Demaray of the Park Service to settle the issue. One was scheduled for March 24, but before it occurred, William Trent would once more weigh in to the secretary about national park discrimination.⁴²

A guardian of African American equity and opportunity, Trent continually worked to ensure that the Interior Department's actions were even-handed and that the public understood the programs and services it made available to them. After his January 7, 1939, presentation, where he had argued against segregation and for more recreational opportunities for African Americans in the national parks, Trent again supported two related issues of growing importance to him—African American summer camps and youth recreation. Beginning on January 12, Trent participated in the second "Conference on the Problems of the Negro and Negro Youth," where he expressed his deep concern about the need to support education and recreation for young people. Once again organized by his colleague at the National Youth Administration, Mary McLeod Bethune, this venue prompted Trent to think more about the general value of recreation.

Then, a month later, Trent completed a second article about African American camps. In this piece, Trent did not advocate for non-discrimination and nonsegregation, but for the more immediately available goal of enhanced opportunities. He described to his readers, especially those in the South, how they could create campgrounds for their children. African American groups, he explained, had a chance to organize youth summer camps through a cooperative project with the National Park Service. The agency's RDAs were intended to develop sites "to meet one of the pressing recreational needs of the day"—inexpensive camps for youths. The Park Service would purchase the land and build the camping facilities, Trent continued, so the expense of construction was not an issue, but the NPS would do so only when an incorporated group sponsored one. Since campgrounds of every sort were segregated in the South, "It is up to Negro groups," he encouraged readers, to "so organize that they can meet the minimum standards required of sponsoring agencies" and thus win one of these camps for their community. In his previous article, Trent had argued that camping was valuable, so in this one he laid out the conditions for a group's success and a clear set of procedures for securing a camp. When he came to the conclusion, however, Trent must have been thinking about NPS Director Arno Cammerer, who he knew to be reluctant to provide black facilities without "sufficient demand." "Within the next few years," Trent explained, "two national parks and two parkways will be completely developed by the National Park Service in the Southern section of the United States. ... In all of these sites recreational areas are proposed. ... It is important in this connection that groups interested in this phase of the National Park program make plans to utilize these areas and make recommendations as to how best the Negro citizen might be served by these areas." Local and state agencies, Trent warned, were not going to treat African Americans equitably until studies established that they would use recreational facilities. Consequently, Trent

informed readers, the federal government was creating the RDAs as an attempt “to stimulate interest in and show the need for recreational facilities for all citizens regardless of color.” He urged that African Americans should organize and sponsor an RDA summer camp to “provide the necessary local pressure so that Negroes ... will have adequate recreational facilities” at all scales.⁴³

On March 17, 1939, approximately one month after Trent completed his second manuscript and one week before Secretary Ickes was set to meet with Associate Park Director Demaray, he sent a memorandum about national park equity to the Secretary. Trent recently had learned that subsequent to his January presentation, the NPS superintendents had agreed to produce racially segregated campgrounds, picnic areas, and other facilities wherever it was the local practice. Trent undoubtedly was disappointed and he strongly opposed this decision, again calling it “contrary to general democratic principles.” If the National Park Service followed southern customs, he argued, it would involve them “in serious discriminatory practices.” In step with Solicitor Margold’s argument, Trent noted that wherever racially separate facilities were required, it was also the law that they be equal facilities. “It is obvious,” he stated unequivocally, “that no such equality obtains” in the national parks. As an alternative, Trent suggested that the public reaction to a change in social policy “can never be ascertained a priori.” National park visitors might not be upset or even care that nonsegregated restrooms, campgrounds, and other facilities were the rule. Therefore, he recommended that all picnic areas and campgrounds at Shenandoah National Park be “undesignated; i.e., open to all persons who desire to use them,” and that all the existing racial designation signs be eliminated (see figures 2 and 3). If his recommendations were followed, Trent concluded, the National Park Service would move closer to its “ultimate aim” — “to provide for all citizens, without segregation or discrimination, use of all facilities.”⁴⁴

Respecting Trent’s analysis and concerned about national park segregation, Secretary Ickes invited his adviser to the March 24 meeting with Associate Director Demaray. Both men presented their positions, but to their mutual surprise, Ickes rejected their recommendations to follow a third path. On the one hand, the secretary ordered that racial segregation be “generally” enforced in national parks throughout the southern states. He did not wish the parks to become “jurisdictional islands” within the states. On the other hand, the secretary supported the liberalizing notion espoused by Trent, ordering that one “large ... most conveniently located” picnic area be nonsegregated and “open to all comers” at Shenandoah National Park. “No signs indicating race segregation within the picnic grounds or in the comfort stations are to be permitted within this area” so that it would act as a demonstration of racial integration to visitors. Finally, Ickes “sharply and distinctly disapproved” Park Service Director Cammerer’s position that facilities for African Americans should only be built after demand was apparent. Instead, Ickes “emphatically stated” that the service “must provide equal facilities proportionate to [current] travel and that Negro facilities must be increased as use increased.”⁴⁵

Figure 2. For Whites Only.

National Park Service, RG 79, Appendix 2, 2nd subseries, Box 1650, "Shenandoah, Lands (General), Camp Sites," National Archives, College Park, MD.

Norma E. Boyd, legislative chairman, National Non-Partisan Council on Public Affairs of Alpha Kappa Alpha Society, enclosed this photograph in an April 1, 1941, letter to Assistant Interior Secretary E. K. Burlew. She asked for the removal of this sign, the one shown in Figure 3, and every other segregationist sign from Shenandoah National Park because they were "fundamentally opposed to the spirit of constitutional democracy. The horror aroused by the medieval practices of Nazi Germany is eloquent evidence of American disapproval of governmental distinctions based on race, creed or color."

Within two weeks, Ickes's instructions had brought a variety of changes to Shenandoah National Park. The previously whites-only "Sexton Knoll" area had all its racial segregation signs removed, was thrown open to all visitors and was renamed "Pinnacles Picnic Ground." The Lewis Mountain area, which already had been designated the one site exclusively for African Americans, but which still only included automobile parking spaces and fireplaces, not tables or campsites, had been upgraded to "a complete picnic ground," which meant it was to include the park's campground and other amenities. Consequently, a concessionaire "soon will begin construction of a building similar to the ones at [whites-only facilities] where foods, soft drinks, and confections will be sold." The Lewis Mountain campground took a bit longer, but nevertheless was complete within one year.⁴⁶

Soon after Ickes's partial embrace of Trent's position, the adviser's employment situation changed. In July 1939, having worked in the secretary of the Interior's office for one year, Trent was transferred to the Federal Works Agency to become the adviser on Negro affairs at the Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works. In his new position, Trent became responsible for the monitoring and enforcement of racial equity in the construction and use of the many houses, schools, and hospitals being built under federal contracts. Trent's new post

Figure 3. Lewis Mountain Negro Area.

NPS photo, Shenandoah National Park.

Shenandoah National Park had four areas with campgrounds before it was desegregated, but Lewis Mountain included the only one ever designated for African Americans.

eliminated his ties to the national parks and camping, but it diminished neither the positive impression he had left with the public nor his own fervor to end segregation in the parks. In October 1939, Henry S. Percival of the Colored Professional and Business Men's Club invited Trent to assist the black community of Greenville, South Carolina, to obtain land for an RDA. Clemson College had some surplus land available and the club was spearheading an effort to claim it for a park. Trent replied that he would be pleased to speak with them when he was next in the area, but unfortunately, the effort collapsed during November when the Ku Klux Klan "took over control" of the city and began persecuting African Americans.⁴⁷

Trent, who was a focused and dedicated worker, returned to his housing duties, but he could not leave the park segregation issue alone. In February 1940, Trent sent Interior Secretary Ickes a three-page memorandum recounting the developments that had led to the creation of the nonsegregated Pinnacles Picnic area at Shenandoah National Park. In particular, Trent noted that it had been his impression during the March 1939 meeting when this policy had been decided that the transformation of the one picnic area "was being taken to determine whether or not there would be any serious friction between the groups using the area. I was of the opinion, also, that if the reaction to this step was favorable, more of the restricted areas would be made available to all people regardless of race."

Furthermore, he continued, the possibility that the policy might be expanded to additional areas had been implied in a May 1939 letter from the secretary to Walter White of the NAACP. Ickes had informed the latter that the other areas in the park would not necessarily have to remain segregated, but would be so only "*for the present*" (emphasis in the original). "To date," concluded Trent, "I have heard of no untoward incidents resulting from the opening of the Pinnacles Picnic Ground to all groups" so perhaps, he suggested, the time had come to integrate some additional picnicking and camping areas in the park. He admitted that the superintendent of Shenandoah would have to be consulted to confirm his impression, but if there had been no incidents, "I hope that it will be possible to remove other restrictions" before the park opened for the 1940 season. If the secretary would take this next step, Trent assured Ickes, he would not be alone. "I am sure," confided Trent, "that Negroes would be grateful to you for any action that you might take to relieve them of the disabilities imposed by racial barriers and restrictions." In response, Ickes contacted the superintendent about conditions at Shenandoah, but after reading his discouraging reply, decided against any change at the park. "The situation," he recounted to Trent, "requires careful and tactful handling." Consequently, "until the present plan is tried out for a longer period, it will be unwise to make any change in the present authorization."⁴⁸

The campground at the blacks-only Lewis Mountain area of Shenandoah National Park was completed in time for the 1940 season and then the situation remained largely static for a year. Trent continued to work at the newly renamed Federal Works Agency, where he both occasionally received requests from the public to end national park segregation and occasionally fired off his own missives against it to Secretary Ickes and his staff. Even so, a larger lesson was being learned—Trent had been correct about the unpredictability of social change. Frequent, numerous complaints were lodged about the continuing racial segregation at most of Shenandoah National Park's facilities, including one writer who, like Trent, denounced it as "an inexcusable violation of the letter and spirit of democracy," but no one complained about the nonsegregated Pinnacles Picnic Ground.⁴⁹ Secretary Ickes, however, remained cautious, generally sticking to his policy. Nonetheless, he said nothing when his chief assistant, E. K. Burlew, with Trent's support, persuaded Cammerer's successor at the National Park Service, Newton B. Drury, to extend the nonsegregation "experiment" to all of Shenandoah's picnic grounds in spring 1941. Burlew was able to persuade Drury to change the park's policy because a January 1941 study had revealed that only about 1 percent of Shenandoah National Park's visitors during 1939 and 1940 had been African American and that only a handful of complaints had been lodged during the 1940 season when the various whites-only picnic areas occasionally had been used by African Americans. Despite this positive move, Drury and Burlew (and undoubtedly Ickes as well) retained some wariness. Shenandoah's four campgrounds and its other accommodations, they decided, were to remain segregated, and fearing a public backlash, they ordered that "no publicity or statements will be given out locally regarding this decision." As before, no written complaints were received

by the Park Service about the elimination of the segregated picnic areas or the creation of nonsegregated ones.⁵⁰

This progressive change in policy might have continued to expand slowly over the next several years, but as with so many other social issues, World War II overwhelmed racial segregation in the national parks. In early April 1942, as the United States marshaled its natural and human resources for a prolonged fight, Archibald MacLeish, director of the U.S. Government's Office of Facts and Figures, sent Harold Ickes a confidential memorandum about "Negro morale." A recent investigation by his department's Bureau of Intelligence had revealed a poor situation, which he and the other members of the Committee on War Information viewed as one of "extreme seriousness." Consequently, MacLeish was contacting the secretary and other high-ranking federal officials in the hope that "such action as can be taken within the federal government to alleviate existing tensions may be taken as rapidly as possible." The Committee recommended a variety of informational steps to be taken by the federal government, but, MacLeish reported, "words should be supplemented by action." In particular, he declared, "Every effort should be made to advance as far as possible, under war conditions, the Negro's aspirations to be freed from discriminatory restrictions." Eliminating inequity would be more difficult than issuing propaganda, he admitted, but doing so, "is clearly the most effective" action to be taken. In conclusion, MacLeish asked Ickes to "send me your views as to what steps, if any, your department feels it can take, or has already taken, with respect to this problem."⁵¹

Unsurprisingly, Ickes had Burlew meet with Trent to discuss the Interior Department's response to MacLeish's inquiry. On May 19, 1942, Trent sent Burlew his thoughts in a memorandum that called for a variety of actions, including "improving employment opportunities for Negroes" and for the secretary to speak more frequently before African American organizations. Trent, however, had not lost his interest in camping and outdoor recreation so he also insisted that national park segregation had to end. "You will recall," Trent reminded Burlew, that during earlier meetings on the subject "the Secretary was of the opinion ... that he was not inclined to want to set up 'jurisdictional islands' in the various states." African Americans, however, feel differently, he insisted. They believe "the Federal Government does have a responsibility in such matters and should exert its authority to destroy racial barriers within the confines of its jurisdiction." Consequently, Trent recommended that the secretary "issue a directive to all National Park Superintendents in the south and southeast informing them that hereafter there are to be no segregated areas in National Parks." Such a change would be exactly the type of action that Archibald MacLeish had suggested would achieve the greatest improvement in African American opinion about the war.⁵²

Two days later, on May 21, Ickes replied to MacLeish's April letter. In it he discussed his hiring of three "Advisers on Negro Affairs," including W. J. Trent, Jr., and several other efforts his office had made to improve the condition of African American life. Prominent among the latter was the issue of national park discrimination. "For several years," offered Ickes, "I have been working with

leaders of the Negro race in Washington to open up national park and monument areas in the Southern States to Negroes. In the Shenandoah National Park we experimented with several picnic areas and have had no serious complaint." As a consequence, Ickes had decided to embrace Trent's recommendation and to inform MacLeish of such. "I expect to extend this non-discriminatory policy to other areas as rapidly as possible." Although Ickes did not commit to a timetable for the policy change, he had Burlew send a copy of Trent's recommendations and Ickes's reply to the MacLeish letter to NPS Director Drury with a memorandum asking the latter to "have a review made at an early date with reference to national parks and monuments in the Southern States to extend the non-discriminatory practice which we inaugurated in the Shenandoah National Park." Drury rapidly contacted the regional director for the southern national parks, the superintendent of the Blue Ridge Parkway, and the superintendents at Shenandoah, Great Smoky Mountains, and Mammoth Cave National Parks to ascertain their views on the situation. What, he asked each, are "your observations on this general subject of extending non-segregation practices to Service areas in the southern states?" Three weeks later, Drury had an answer for the secretary.⁵³

On June 12, 1942, Park Service Director Drury personally handed First Assistant Secretary of the Interior Burlew a memorandum stating that nonsegregation was close to being de facto policy in national park campgrounds and other recreational facilities throughout the South. "The signs designating picnic and campgrounds for Negroes and whites have been removed" at the Shenandoah Park. At Mammoth Cave in Kentucky, "the campground and picnic area are open to whites and Negroes alike" and all personnel and concessionaire employees were informed that "Negro visitors were not to be segregated" in any way. Again, Trent's insight proved correct and Drury could note that, "This arrangement has resulted in no criticism." No segregation signs were placed at the picnic or campground areas at Great Smoky Mountains and although restrooms at Newfound Gap and Forney Ridge "have separate toilets designated for Negroes inside the building," they have "a common entrance" on the outside. The only site where any segregation appeared was along the Blue Ridge Parkway. No segregation signs were present at any picnic areas or campgrounds, but paradoxically, three new picnic areas were under construction at Bluff Park, North Carolina, with one being for whites, one for blacks and one for joint use. Also, at Pine Spur near Roanoke, Virginia, a "special campground" was being constructed for "the large Negro population" that lived nearby. Tying up these loose ends, Drury sent a final memorandum on the subject on June 15, 1942, to the regional director for southern national parks to inform him that it was his task "to make certain that the policy of the Department on the nonsegregation of Negroes is carried out in the southern areas administered by the National Park Service." He was responsible, Drury implied, to eliminate the segregated parkway facilities rapidly because racial segregation had finally come to an end in the parks.⁵⁴

CAMPING BEGAN in the nineteenth century as an elite form of pilgrimage to the wild. In wilderness, campers could discover and restore such American values as

freedom, community, and democracy, which were part of the collective national identity purportedly forged on the frontier. The arrival of inexpensive automobiles in the early twentieth century greatly increased the number of campers and expanded camping's social diversity, but the change was not universally embraced, especially when African Americans were involved. The issue came to a head during the 1930s after two national parks were opened in southern states with racially segregated campgrounds and other facilities. The public never wrote to the National Park Service or to the Department of the Interior to praise park segregation, but both agencies received multiple inquiries and complaints, most notably from the NAACP, about this form of discrimination and about their failure to develop campgrounds for African Americans. National Park Service Director Arno B. Cammerer, who was unsympathetic, resisted changing his agency's policy. Instead, he repeatedly claimed that the parks were open to everyone and that black campground construction would follow "the demand of people for them." At the same time, the Park Service built more white campgrounds than were immediately needed in anticipation of still more campers.

Only one black campground, Lewis Mountain in Shenandoah National Park, had been tagged for construction in all the southern national parks when William J. Trent, Jr., became adviser for Negro affairs to Interior Secretary Harold L. Ickes in July 1938. Ickes hired Trent, who was an economist, to enhance African American participation in all Interior Department programs and projects. Trent came to the agency without any special interest in the outdoors or the national parks, but became a central figure in the struggle to increase African American access to national parks and to end discrimination in them. Trent's efforts were cautiously supported by Secretary Ickes, and more strongly by Interior Solicitor Nathan Margold and others, but Trent emerged as the primary institutional voice for change.

Trent's efforts to transform the national parks began with a presentation to its superintendents in January 1939. He argued that the parks were for all Americans, that campgrounds had to be built before demand was established, and that the best way to assure that his first two points occurred was to eliminate racial segregation throughout the parks. Calling the segregation of campgrounds and other national park facilities "a contradiction in democratic government," Trent urged the Service to treat all visitors equally. Park leadership rejected his critique and continued with segregation until Secretary Ickes, who had been persuaded by Trent to make some changes, ordered the Service to create a nonsegregated demonstration area in Shenandoah National Park. As Trent predicted might happen, no written complaints were received about the racial mixing at this demonstration area, so the policy was extended in 1941. When World War II came, the federal government became concerned about the morale of African Americans, which provided the final impetus to end campground and other forms of national park segregation in June 1942.

When National Park Service Director Drury ordered the southern regional director to eliminate segregation, he cautioned the latter to say nothing to the public and to let their superiors make any announcements. If the nonsegregation

of national park campgrounds was to become news, they would let it come out of the Department of the Interior. This outcome was good news to Trent who had spent years encouraging African Americans to organize and support recreational demonstration areas, promoting camps for black youths, and pushing back racial discrimination and segregation in the campgrounds of southern national parks. Trent did not begin his journey consciously, but he embraced it as the social and cultural importance became clear. During his lifetime, Trent never took up camping himself, but his lack of personal interest did not prevent him from being at the forefront of the successful fight to make it available to more African Americans. As a consequence, they could, if they wished, make a pilgrimage to wild nature along with white Americans and together attempt to reinforce their common American values and their shared national identity.

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NOTES

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1. W. J. Trent, Jr., to Harold L. Ickes, January 3, 1939, National Park Service, RG 79, Appendix 2, 2nd subseries [hereafter NPS-2], Box 10, 0-1.1 - "Parks General, Conference ... 1939" Pt. 1 File, National Archives, College Park, MD, [hereafter NA], 1.
2. On displacement of indigenous populations, see Robert H. Keller and Michael E. Turek, *American Indians and National Parks* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1998); Mark David Spence, *Dispossessing the Wilderness: Indian Removal and the Making of the National Parks* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999); and Philip Burnham, *Indian Country, God's Country* (Covelo, CA: Island Press, 2000). The superintendents' statement is quoted in Marguerite S. Shaffer, *See America First: Tourism and National Identity, 1880-1940* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2001), 126.
3. Congress also authorized the National Park Service to create a multitude of "recreational demonstration areas" (RDA) with the various states during the 1930s and it transferred the National Military Parks from the War Department to the National Park Service in 1933. In the South, RDAs were often racially segregated. See William O'Brien, "The Strange Career of a Florida State Park: Uncovering a Jim Crow Past" *Historical Geography* 35 (2007): 160-84. Civilian Conservation Corps camps were also racially segregated when the work was performed in southern states. See Owen Cole,

- The African-American Experience in the Civilian Conservation Corps* (Tallahassee: University Press of Florida, 1999), Neil Maher, *Nature's New Deal: The Civilian Conservation Corps and the Roots of the American Environmental Movement* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008); and Timothy B. Smith, "Black Soldiers and the CCC at Shiloh National Military Park," *CRM: The Journal of Heritage Stewardship* 3 (2006): 73-84.
4. For more on Murray and his impact, see Warder H. Cadbury, "Introduction" in *Adventures in the Wilderness*, by William H. H. Murray, ed. William K. Verner (Syracuse: Adirondack Museum/Syracuse University Press, 1989); David Strauss, "Toward a Consumer Culture: 'Adirondack Murray' and the Wilderness Vacation," *American Quarterly* 39 (1987): 270-86; and Philip Terrie, *Contested Terrain: A New History of Nature and People in the Adirondacks* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1997).
 5. For additional reasons why Murray's book was a success, see Cadbury, "Introduction"; and Strauss, "Toward a Consumer Culture."
 6. I use the term "pilgrimage" as a metaphor, not as the description of a religious practice. In this more generic sense, a pilgrim can be understood as someone who was in society, traveled out of it in pursuit of some goal, and then returned to society changed. As metaphor, pilgrimage has been used to explain a variety of leisure travel, including theme park visits, summer vacations, and tourism. See Alexander Moore, "Walt Disney World: Bounded Ritual Space and the Playful Pilgrimage Center," *Anthropological Quarterly* 53 (1980): 207-18; Susan Sessions Rugh, *Are We There Yet? The Golden Age of American Family Vacations* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2008); Nelson H. H. Graburn, "Tourism: The Sacred Journey," in *Hosts and Guests: The Anthropology of Tourism*, 2nd ed., ed. V. L. Smith (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989), 21-36; and John F. Sears, *Sacred Places: American Tourist Attractions in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989). Rugh and Sears both argued that the nature tourists who camped at such places as Yosemite and Yellowstone were engaged in pilgrimage. Thomas R. Dunlap, *Faith in Nature: Environmentalism as Religious Quest* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2004), similarly argued that visits to wilderness are often pilgrimages. On the larger role and meaning of pilgrimage in American life, see Gwen Kennedy Neville, *Kinship and Pilgrimage: Rituals of Reunion in American Protestant Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987). For more on pilgrimage in general, see: Victor W. Turner and Edith Turner, *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978); and John Eade and Michael J. Sallnow, eds. *Contesting the Sacred: The Anthropology of Christian Pilgrimage* (New York: Routledge, 1991). William Cronon, "The Trouble with Wilderness; Or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature," in *Uncommon Ground: Toward Reinventing Nature*, ed. William Cronon (New York: W.W. Norton, 1995), 69-90, argued that Americans view wilderness, not cities, as their legitimate home.
 7. Most of the personal accounts from this period remain unpublished, but a few have appeared in print. See, for example, Ansel Judd Northrup, *Camps and Tramps in the Adirondacks, and Grayling Fishing in Northern Michigan: A Record of Summer Vacations in the Wilderness* (Syracuse: Davis, Bardeen and Co., 1880); and Mary B. Richards, *Camping Out in the Yellowstone*, ed. William B. Slaughter (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1994). See Gary Cross, *Time and Money: The Making of Consumer Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1993) on the length of vacations.
 8. The systemwide visitor numbers are from *Statistical History of the United States from Colonial Times to the Present* (Stamford, CT: Fairfield Publishers, 1965), 222. The number of individuals is not recorded, only the visits, which could include the same person entering repeatedly. Peter J. Schmitt, *Back to Nature: The Arcadian Myth in Urban America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), 162, notes that

- 51,506 visited Yellowstone in 1922 and all but 1,500 camped. These last slept in hotels. Stanford E. Demars, *The Tourist in Yosemite, 1855-1985* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1991), 101, writes that during the 1920s it was common for Yosemite valley's public campgrounds to accommodate 5,000 to 7,000 a night compared to a total of 2,800 combined in hotels and hotel camps.
9. The automobile prices are from Daniel M. G. Raff and Manuel Trajtenberg, "Quality-Adjusted Prices for the American Automobile Industry: 1906-1940," in *The Economics of New Goods*, ed. Timothy F. Bresnahan and Robert J. Gordon (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 77. James J. Flink, *The Automobile Age* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1990), 33. At the other extreme, the 1910 Packard 30 limousine cost \$5,450, Flink, *Automobile*, 35, 37. The 1906 per capita annual personal income for the United States was \$236, but it rose to \$301 in 1908 and to \$331 in 1916, *Statistical History*, 7,139. See also Cindy S. Aron, *Working at Play: A History of Vacations in the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 209, on auto availability.
 10. "The Cost of a Transcontinental Auto Journey" *Sunset Magazine* 53 (September 1924): 48-49. It would have remained a costly vacation for many if not most Americans, however. According to *Statistical History*, 7,139, the U.S. per capita annual personal income in 1924 was only \$642 or approximately \$1.76 per day.
 11. Cross, *Time*, 78-81, 95. See also Aron, *Working*, 183-205.
 12. "Neighbors for a Night in Yellowstone," *Literary Digest* 82 (August 30, 1924): 44, 46
 13. R. L. Duffus, "America Works Hard at Play," *New York Times Sunday Magazine*, September 1, 1929, 21
 14. The limits and challenges faced by African Americans as they pursued nature-based and other recreations at this time were reported in William H. Jones, *Recreation and Amusement Among Negroes in Washington, D.C.* (1927; reprint, Westport, CT: Negro Universities Press, 1970); Forrester B. Washington, "Recreational Facilities for the Negro," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 140 (1928): 272-82; Charles S. Johnson, *The Negro In American Civilization* (New York: Henry Holt, 1930), 299-310, 457-58; and Gunnar Myrdal, *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy*, Twentieth Anniversary Edition (1944; reprint, New York: Harper and Row, 1962), 346-47. For more on the history of African American recreation and outdoor activities in a variety of public and private settings, see Craig Allan Kaplowitz, "A Breath of Fresh Air: Segregation, Parks, and Progressivism in Nashville, Tennessee, 1900-1920," *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* 57 (1998): 132-49; Aaron V. Wunsch, "From Private Privilege to Public Place: A Brief History of Parks and Park Planning in Charlottesville," *Magazine of Albemarle County History* 56 (1998): 77-117; Mark S. Foster, "In the Face of 'Jim Crow': Prosperous Blacks and Vacations, Travel and Outdoor Leisure, 1890-1945," *The Journal of Negro History* 84 (1999): 130-49; Jearold Winston Holland, *Black Recreation: A Historical Perspective* (Chicago: Burnham, 2002); Brian Alnutt, "'The Negro Excursions': Recreational Outings Among Philadelphia African Americans, 1876-1926," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 129 (January 2005): 73-104; and Scott E. Giltner, *Hunting and Fishing in the New South: Black Labor and White Leisure after the Civil War* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008). See also Aron, *Working*, 206-36.
 15. Washington, "Recreational," 272; Johnson, *The Negro*, 457.
 16. William G. Crawford, Jr., "The Long Hard Fight for Equal Rights: A History of Broward County's Colored Beach and the Fort Lauderdale Beach 'Wade-Ins' of the Summer of 1961," *Tequesta: the Journal of the Historical Association of Southern Florida* 67 (2007): 19-51.
 17. Great Smoky Mountains National Park, Shenandoah National Park, and Mammoth Cave National Park in Kentucky were all authorized in May 1926, but became available

- for public use at different times. Great Smoky Mountains park was established for “full development” in June 1934, Shenandoah was “fully established” in December 1935, and Mammoth Cave was “established” in July 1941. See *The National Parks: Index 1997-1999* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2000), 46, 80, and 90. See also Alfred Runte, *National Parks: The American Experience*, 3rd ed. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997).
18. See Durwood Dunn, *Cades Cove: The Life and Death of a Southern Appalachian Community, 1818-1937* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1988); Margaret Lynn Brown, *The Wild East: A Biography of the Great Smoky Mountains* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2000); Daniel S. Pierce, *The Great Smokies: From Natural Habitat to National Park* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2000); Darwin Lambert, *The Earth-Man Story Starring Shenandoah Skyline* (New York: Exposition Press, 1972); and Justin Reich, “Re-Creating the Wilderness: Shaping Narratives and Landscapes in Shenandoah National Park,” *Environmental History* 6 (January 2001): 95-117.
 19. See E. K. Burlew to Carter Glass, March 6, 1939, Department of the Interior, Office of the Secretary, Central Classified Files, 1937-1953, RG 48, Box 3791, “National Park Service, General, Racial Discrimination” [hereafter DOI-Racial], NA; and Harry Byrd to E. K. Burlew, March 9, 1939, DOI-Racial, NA.
 20. See Jerrold M. Packard, *American Nightmare: The History of Jim Crow* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2002).
 21. L. E. Wilson to Harold L. Ickes, September 10, 1936, NPS-2, Box 1650, “Shenandoah, Lands (General), Camp Sites,” NA; A. E. Demaray to L. E. Wilson, September 18, 1936, NPS-2, Box 1650, “Shenandoah, Lands (General), Camp Sites,” NA.
 22. Walter White to Harold L. Ickes, January 21, 1937, NPS-2, Box 1650, “Shenandoah, Lands (General), Camp Sites,” NA. For more on the history of the NAACP during this period, see Mark V. Tushnet, *The NAACP’s Legal Strategy against Segregated Education, 1925-1950* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987); Kenneth Robert Janken, *White: The Biography of Walter White, Mr. NAACP* (New York: New Press, 2003); Manfred Berg, *“The Ticket to Freedom”: The NAACP and the Struggle for Black Political Integration* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2005); and Gilbert Jonas, *Freedom’s Sword: The NAACP and the Struggle Against Racism in America, 1909-1969* (New York: Routledge, 2005). White and Ickes had been corresponding about federal involvement in racial issues since shortly after the latter was appointed Interior secretary in 1933 and they were both on the Virgin Islands Advisory Council that was formed in February 1934. See T. H. Watkins, *Righteous Pilgrim: The Life and Times of Harold L. Ickes, 1874-1952* (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1990), 503; Nancy J. Weiss, *Farewell to the Party of Lincoln: Black Politics in the Age of FDR* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 51; and Janken, *White*, 176ff. White greatly respected the secretary, saying he was “throughout his life an unequivocal battler for justice to the Negro” in Walter White, *A Man Called White: The Autobiography of Walter White* (New York: Viking Press, 1948), 181-82. The NAACP embraced other segregation issues at around this time. Late in the following year, 1938, the black press, and a variety of black organizations began to call for racial integration throughout the military. The NAACP took up this issue officially and vigorously in spring 1940. See Weiss, *Farewell*, 274ff; and Harvard Sitkoff, *A New Deal for Blacks: The Emergence of Civil Rights as a National Issue* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 302ff.
 23. Harold L. Ickes to Walter White, February 4, 1937, NPS-2, Box 1650, “Shenandoah, Lands (General), Camp Sites,” NA. Three months later, the Memphis Chapter of the NAACP requested the NPS to provide “proper provision for Negroes” at the Shelby Forest RDA. Along with many supporting churches, clubs and fraternities, they stated

- that there were no "rural parks for out-door recreation available to Negroes" in the area. In harmony with many recreationists around the country, they claimed that this situation condemned "Negro Youth, during leisure hours, to the streets of Memphis and makes them the easy prey of places of vice and disease." Grace T. Hamilton to Conrad L. Wirth, May 13, 1937, National Park Service, RG 79, Appendix 30 [hereafter NPS-30], Box 17, "Recreation Facilities for Negroes," NA. After this single exchange, further contact with the NPS came only through the NAACP's central office.
24. J. R. Eakin to William P. Gamble, September 18, 1933, NPS-2, Box 1101, "601-02," NA. See also A. D. Lambert, "Shenandoah National Park, an Administrative History" Typed, unpublished manuscript, (Luray, VA: Shenandoah N.P., 1979), 254, who records that Arno Cammerer, assistant director of the National Park Service, noted the need for African American accommodations at Shenandoah National Park in late 1932, but no controversy was involved at the time.
 25. T. Arnold Hill to Harold L. Ickes, June 25, 1935, NPS-2, Box 379, "National Park Service Recreational Areas," NA
 26. Hill and Ickes became friends while the former was executive secretary of the Chicago Urban League from 1916 to 1925. He changed from acting to executive secretary of the National Urban League during 1925. See "T. Arnold Hill," *The Journal of Negro History* 32 (1947): 528-29; and Guichard Parris, "Hill, T(homas) Arnold," in *Dictionary of American Negro Biography*, ed. Rayford Logan and Michael R. Winston (New York: W.W. Norton, 1982), 311-13. Watkins, *Righteous*, 199-201, details Ickes's involvement with the NAACP during these years. Weiss, *Farewell*, 51, also mentions Ickes's time as the NAACP chapter's president and she quotes Ickes as saying that "'the prevention of discrimination against the Negro race' was a subject that was 'very close' to his heart." T. A. Walters to T. Arnold Hill, July 3, 1935, NPS-2, Box 379, "National Park Service Recreational Areas," NA.
 27. Weaver graduated in 1934 from Harvard University with a PhD in economics. According to Watkins, *Righteous*, 645-47, Weaver was hired in November 1933 to be an assistant to Clark Foreman, Ickes's first adviser for Negro affairs. Weaver took over Foreman's post in early 1936. See also Sitkoff, *A New Deal*; and Janken, *White*. Robert C. Weaver to Arno B. Cammerer, July 1, 1936, NPS-2, Box 378, "General, Lands, Camp Sites," NA. Arno B. Cammerer to Robert C. Weaver, July 6, 1936, NPS-2, Box 378, "General, Lands, Camp Sites," NA. Beginning in 1934, the federal government provided funds to purchase "submarginal agricultural lands" for conversion into dozens of state parks. The National Park Service administered the Recreational Demonstration Area program throughout the decade. See Linda Flint McClelland, *Building the National Parks: Historic Landscape Design and Construction* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 414-20.
 28. Robert C. Weaver to Harold L. Ickes, August 17, 1936, NPS-2, Box 378, "General, Lands, Camp Sites," NA. The issue of African American campgrounds and Cammerer's position on them come up in Cammerer to Weaver, July 6, 1936; Arno B. Cammerer to A. E. Demaray and Conrad L. Wirth, September 30, 1936, NPS-2, Box 378, "General, Lands, Camp Sites," NA; and Arno B. Cammerer to Charles S. Johnson, May 27, 1937, NPS-2, Box 379, "National Park Service Recreational Areas," NA. Great Smoky Mountains National Park Superintendent J. R. Eakin conveyed to Cammerer that if the proposed African American campground was constructed in his park, the number of African American campers "would undoubtedly increase." J. R. Eakin to Director [Arno B. Cammerer], April 25, 1938, NPS-2, Box 1101, "601-03," NA.
 29. Johnson was Robert E. Park's first African American student and a graduate of the University of Chicago. He ultimately rose to become Fisk University's president and a nationally renowned expert on race relations. He was a well-known, prolific author and

- knew Eleanor Roosevelt personally when he sent his letter to Cammerer. See Patrick J. Gilpin and Marybeth Gasman, *Charles S. Johnson: Leadership Beyond the Veil in the Age of Jim Crow* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003). Charles S. Johnson to Arno B. Cammerer, April 23, 1937, NPS-2, Box 379, "National Park Service Recreational Areas," NA; Cammerer to Johnson, May 27, 1937; Charles S. Johnson to Arno B. Cammerer, June 8, 1937, NPS-2, Box 379, "National Park Service Recreational Areas," NA; Johnson to Cammerer, June 8, 1937; Arno B. Cammerer to A. E. Demaray, July 24, 1937, NPS-2, Box 1650, "Shenandoah, Lands (General), Camp Sites," NA.
30. See "W. J. Trent, Jr. Gets New Job under Federal Works Agency," *Norfolk Journal and Guide*, July 28, 1939, on Trent's 1936 work for the Weaver survey. Judy Scales-Trent, e-mail with author, June 20, 2006, related the story of Weaver's recommendation of Trent.
 31. Bethune would become one of the best-known advocates for equal civil rights. See Rackham Holt, *Mary MacLeod Bethune: A Biography* (Garden City, NJ: Doubleday, 1964); Weiss, *Farewell*; and Andrea Davis Pinkney, *Let It Shine: Stories of Black Women Freedom Fighters* (San Diego: Harcourt, 2000). For more on the "Black Cabinet," see Willard M. Kiplinger, *Washington Is Like That* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1942), 147-62; Albert W. Hamilton, "The Black Cabinet," *Common Sense* 12 (1943): 97-99; and Weiss, *Farewell*, 136-55.
 32. W. J. Trent, Jr., to Mary McLeod Bethune, December 21, 1938, William J. Trent, Jr. Papers [hereafter TrPa], Box 1, "Interior Department, Articles Statements Speeches," Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University, Washington, DC [hereafter MSRC]. The "special interest" quote is from Judy Scales Trent, e-mail with author, June 20, 2006. Trent's hunting is mentioned in William J. Trent to William J. Trent, Jr., December 4, 1944, TrPa, Box 1, "Personal Correspondence," MSRC.
 33. Both Salomon and Evison were well established in their fields. See, for instance, Julian Harris Salomon, "Camping Trends and Public Areas," in *American Planning and Civic Annual, 1938*, ed. H. James (Washington, DC: American Planning and Civic Association, 1938), 146-51; and Herbert Evison, ed., *A State Park Anthology* (Washington, DC: National Conference on State Parks, 1930). Ickes's request for a study is noted in W. J. Trent, Jr., "New Deal Recreation Program for Negroes" (unpublished speech, Washington, DC, n.d. [1939]), TrPa, Box 1, "Interior Department, Articles Statements Speeches," MSRC, 1. W. J. Trent, Jr., to T. Edward Davis, December 21, 1938, TrPa, Box 1, "Interior Department, Articles Statements Speeches," MSRC; and W. J. Trent, Jr., "The Government and Organized Camping Among Negroes," *The National Educational Outlook Among Negroes* 2 (February 1939): 23.
 34. W. J. Trent, Jr., to Mary McLeod Bethune, December 23, 1938, TrPa, Box 1, "Interior Department, Articles Statements Speeches," MSRC, 5; Trent's request letter is W. J. Trent, Jr. to The Secretary [Harold L. Ickes], January 3, 1939, NPS-2, Box 10, "Parks General, Conference *Wash DC Santa Fe, 1939," NA.
 35. Trent's preface is noted in Donald S. Libbey, Secretary, "[Minutes -] Superintendents' Conference, Washington, D.C., January 7, 1939," NPS-2, Box 10, "Parks General, Conference * Wash DC Santa Fe, 1939," NA, 1; Trent, *Negro and National Parks: A Discussion Before the Superintendents of the National Parks*, NPS-2, Box 10, "Parks General, Conference * Wash DC Santa Fe, 1939," NA, 1.
 36. Trent, *Negro*, 3, 5-6.
 37. Trent, *Negro*, 2, 8.
 38. Eakin to Director, April 25, 1938, placed the total number of visitors at 727,243 at Great Smoky Mountains National Park; Cammerer and Lassiter are recorded in Libbey, Secretary, "[Minutes -]", 1; The superintendents' recommendations are recorded in "Accommodations for Negroes," in *Recommendations of the National Park*

- Superintendents' Conference, January 1939*, NPS-2, Box 10, "Parks General, Conference * Wash DC Santa Fe, 1939," NA, 12.
39. Michael Fletcher, "Inherently Unequal," *The Crisis* (2004): 24-31. See also White, *A Man*, 142. When Ickes assumed the secretary's office he needed a departmental solicitor so he consulted with Felix Frankfurter of Harvard University and Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis. Both recommended the 33-year-old Margold. See Jeanne Nienaber Clarke, *Roosevelt's Warrior: Harold L. Ickes and the New Deal* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 39-40. Phineas Indritz to Solicitor [Nathan R.] Margold, January 12, 1939, DOI-Racial, Box 3791, "National Park Service, General, Racial Discrimination," NA, 3, 9. Indritz would go on to become a renowned New Deal liberal and civil-rights activist. See *New York Times* obituary of October 26, 1997.
 40. Nathan R. Margold to Secretary [Harold L.] Ickes, January 17, 1939, DOI-Racial, Box 3791, "National Park Service, General, Racial Discrimination," NA, 1-2.
 41. Franklin D. Roosevelt quoted in Watkins, *Righteous*, 638. Ickes's notification to Demaray is mentioned in Associate Director [A. E. Demaray] to Director [Arno B. Cammerer], February 11, 1939, NPS-2, Box 1650, "Shenandoah, Lands (General), Camp Sites," NA, 1; Ickes quote from Harold L. Ickes, *The Secret Diary of Harold L. Ickes, Volume II: The Inside Struggle, 1936-1939* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1954), 105-06. See also Rixey Smith and Norman Beasley, *Carter Glass: A Biography* (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1939), who noted how Glass defended Virginia's poll taxes against President Roosevelt's efforts to eliminate them throughout the United States and Glass's acidic, public disagreement with Ickes over the use of federally funded public works projects. Both events occurred in 1938.
 42. Ebert Keiser Burlew (known universally as "E. K.") had been with the Interior Department since 1923. Ickes, who considered Burlew quick, reliable, and efficient, appointed him as one of his two personal assistants. See Watkins, *Righteous*, 329. Carter Glass to E. K. Burlew, March 7, 1939, DOI-Racial, Box 3791, "National Park Service, General, Racial Discrimination," NA; Harry F. Byrd to E. K. Burlew, March 9, 1939, DOI-Racial, Box 3791, "National Park Service, General, Racial Discrimination," NA.
 43. W. J. Trent, Jr., "The Government and Organized Camping Among Negroes, Part II," TrPa, Box 1, "Interior Department, Correspondence, 1939," MSRC, 1, 5.
 44. W. J. Trent, Jr., to Harold L. Ickes, March 20, 1939, TrPa, Box 1, "Federal Works Agency, Correspondence," MSRC.
 45. A. E. Demaray to Director [Arno B. Cammerer], March 25, 1939, NPS-2, Box 1650, "Shenandoah, Lands (General), Camp Sites," NA. See also E. K. Burlew to Clyde C. McDuffie, n.d. [March 29, 1939], NPS-2, Box 1650, "Shenandoah, Lands (General), Camp Sites," NA, which includes the earliest reference to "jurisdictional islands."
 46. The quotes are from A. E. Demaray to Secretary [Harold L. Ickes], April 7, 1939, DOI-Racial, Box 3791, "National Park Service, General, Racial Discrimination," NA. The development at Lewis Mountain is detailed in the attachments to a memo from A. E. Demaray to E. K. Burlew, March 14, 1939, DOI-Racial, Box 3791, "National Park Service, General, Racial Discrimination," NA.
 47. Secretary Ickes was apparently pleased with Trent's work and decided that Trent should change posts. Judy Scales-Trent, e-mail with author, June 20, 2006. Soon Trent's title changed to racial relations officer and the agency was renamed the Federal Works Agency. W. J. Trent, Jr., to Henry S. Percival, October 25, 1939, TrPa, Box 1, "Interior Department, Correspondence, 1939," MSRC; Henry S. Percival to William J. Trent, Jr., November 20, 1939, TrPa, Box 1, "Interior Department, Correspondence 1939," MSRC.
 48. W. J. Trent, Jr., to Harold L. Ickes, February 24, 1940, NPS-2, Box 1650, "Shenandoah,

Lands (General), Camp Sites," NA; Harold L. Ickes to W. J. Trent, Jr., March 6, 1940, NPS-2, Box 1650, "Shenandoah, Lands (General), Camp Sites," NA. Trent's ongoing concern about federally sanctioned racial segregation was not limited to the national parks. According to Truman K. Gibson, *Knocking Down Barriers: My Fight for Black America* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2005), 81, in Fall 1940, Trent convinced Gibson, a family friend, to come to Washington, D.C., to meet William Hastie, a member of the "Black Cabinet" and civilian aide to the secretary of War, who wanted Gibson for his assistant. Gibson visited for one week and during an evening's poker game, "Trent and [Robert] Weaver poured out all the arguments about duty, responsibility, and challenge" to convince Gibson to take the post. In particular, Gibson found "the challenge of tackling segregation in the army registered strongly with me," which suggests that Trent advocated its end in the national parks and beyond. Gibson accepted Hastie's offer and became personally involved in many of the meetings, discussions and debates that culminated in President Truman's Executive Order 9981 in July 1948. It declared a policy of equal treatment in the military and began the end of racial segregation in it.

49. Walter Magnes Teller to Newton B. Drury, October 4, 1940, NPS-2, Box 1650, "Shenandoah, Lands (General), Camp Sites," NA, about segregation as a violation of democracy, but see also, for example, Walter Gellhorn to Harold L. Ickes, May 26, 1939, NPS-2, Box 1650, "Shenandoah, Lands (General), Camp Sites," NA; Sadie Evans Gough to Harold L. Ickes, June 19, 1939, NPS-2, Box 1650, "Shenandoah, Lands (General), Camp Sites," NA; Millicent E. Selsam to Harold L. Ickes, July 7, 1939, NPS-2, Box 1650, "Shenandoah, Lands (General), Camp Sites," NA; Richard Grobstein to Harold L. Ickes, July 5, 1940, NPS-2, Box 1650, "Shenandoah, Lands (General), Camp Sites," NA; George F. Miller to President [Franklin D. Roosevelt], July 6, 1940, NPS-2, Box 1650, "Shenandoah, Lands (General), Camp Sites," NA; Arthur Ernst to Harold L. Ickes, September 23, 1940, NPS-2, Box 1650, "Shenandoah, Lands (General), Camp Sites," NA; Robert O. Ballou to S.K. Padover, January 17, 1941, NPS-2, Box 1650, "Shenandoah, Lands (General), Camp Sites," NA; and Norma E. Boyd to W. J. Trent, Jr., April 2, 1941, TrPa, Box 1, "Federal Works Agency—Correspondence," MSRC. According to J. R. Lassiter and Theodore T. Smith to Director [Arno B. Cammerer], February 28, 1940, NPS-2, Box 1650, "Shenandoah, Lands (General), Camp Sites," NA, "the Rangers at the checking stations [of Shenandoah National Park] have been bitterly assailed for allowing the joint use of picnic grounds," but a year later, Oliver G. Taylor, "A Report On Developments for Public Use in Shenandoah National Park with Particular Reference to Racial Use," typed report, Washington, D.C., January 23, 1941, NPS-2, Box 1650, "Shenandoah, Lands (General), Camp Sites," NA, 2, reported that visitors had "made no written complaint" at the park. The author found no complaint letters anywhere else among the archival records.
50. Drury became the National Park Service Director on August 20, 1940. The study was Taylor, "A Report." The quote is from Newton B. Drury to Superintendent [J.R.] Lassiter, February 25, 1941, NPS-2, Box 1650, "Shenandoah, Lands (General), Camp Sites," NA. On Trent's support see W. J. Trent, Jr., to E. K. Burlew, April 4, 1941, NPS-2, Box 1650, "Shenandoah, Lands (General), Camp Sites," NA; E. K. Burlew to W. J. Trent, Jr., April 14, 1941, DOI-Racial, Box 3791, "National Park Service, General, Racial Discrimination," NA; and W. J. Trent, Jr., to E. K. Burlew, May 3, 1941, DOI-Racial, Box 3791, "National Park Service, General, Racial Discrimination," NA.
51. Archibald MacLeish to Harold L. Ickes, April 7, 1942, TrPa, Box 1, "Federal Works Agency—Correspondence," MSRC.
52. W. J. Trent, Jr., to E.K. Burlew, May 19, 1942, NPS-2, Box 378, "General, Camp Sites (Colored)," NA.

53. Harold L. Ickes to Archibald MacLeish, May 21, 1942, NPS-2, Box 378, "General, Camp Sites (Colored)," NA. The letters Ickes had sent were E. K. Burlew to Director [Newton B. Drury], May 21, 1942, NPS-2, Box 1650, "Shenandoah, Lands (General), Camp Sites," NA; E. K. Burlew to Director [Newton B.] Drury, May 22, 1942, NPS-2, Box 378, "General, Camp Sites (Colored)," NA. For an example of the letters sent to the Regional Director and the superintendents, see Newton B. Drury to Superintendent [J.R. Lassiter], May 26, 1942, NPS-2, Box 1650, "Shenandoah, Lands (General), Camp Sites," NA.
54. Newton B. Drury to First Assistant Secretary [E. K.] Burlew, June 12, 1942, NPS-2, Box 378, "General, Camp Sites (Colored)," NA; Newton B. Drury to Regional Director, Region One, June 15, 1942, NPS-2, Box 378, "General, Camp Sites (Colored)," NA.