

Zion Park Celebrates 37th Birthday

On Monday, Nov. 19, the establishment of Zion National Park 37 years earlier was commemorated. The park was established 37 years ago, Nov. 19, 1919, through Congressional action.

Father Escalante, the stout-hearted Spanish priest, went through the flaming canyons of the country now protected in Zion National Park as early as 1776.

Jedediah Strong Smith, in 1826 and 27 led his exploring trappers by in search for beaver and a route to California. He gave Virgin River its name.

In 1858 a young Mormon scout explored in Zion Canyon and during the next few years many pioneering Mormon settlers made their home in southern Utah.

A review of Zion's history reveals that in bringing to the attention of the world, the scenic, aesthetic and recreational values of Zion Canyon a few individuals played important roles and prophesized well the events to come.

Impressions Recorded

Members of the U. S. Geological Surveys under Major John Westely Powell visited Zion Canyon in 1872 and gave reports of what they saw, each in his own way.

In 1903 Frederick S. Dellenbaugh, famous artist, made oil

paintings of Zion Canyon which were exhibited at the World's Fair at St. Louis in 1904 and created widespread interest in the area.

During the summer of 1908, Leo A. Snow of St. George was assigned the job of surveying an area including Zion Canyon and Mr. Snow's report was dispatched to Washington June 25, 1909. A little more than a month later, July 31, the Acting Secretary of the Interior recommended to the President the creation of the Mukuntuweap National Monument. President Taft signed the proclamation on the same day.

Interest Increased

With the creation of the National Park Service in 1916 more attention was given to the management and supervision of the national parks and monuments. Interest in Zion increased over the years; roads were developed and by the summer of 1917 a passable road led into Zion Canyon.

Douglas, White, a zealous promoter of Utah's scenic riches, urged Horace M. Albright, an assistant to Secretary Franklin K. Lane, to come West and visit Zion with him in the summer of 1917. Albright did this and was so impressed with what he saw, that on his return to Washington, he persuaded Secretary Lane and the Utah Congressional delegation to concur in enlarging Mukuntuweap National Monument to 120 square miles and to change the name to Zion National Monument. President Wilson signed the proclamation March 18, 1918.

Park Bill Introduced

The bill to establish Zion National Park in the State of Utah was introduced in the Senate by Senator Reed Smoot of Utah on May 20, 1919. By Oct. 6, the bill had been passed by both houses of Congress, and sent to President Woodrow Wilson, who signed it Nov. 19, 1919, just 37 years ago Monday.

Boundary lines of the park were based on information furnished by Richard A. Thorley of Cedar City and Leo A. Snow of St. George.

Tribute is paid to these men and to many more who had a part in planning for the development and establishment of Zion National Park. Of special note are the following: Wesley King of Salt Lake Commercial Club; E. D. Wooley, a promin-

ent leader of Kane County; Governor William Spry of Utah for his promotion of highways in southern Utah; J. Cecil Alter, prominent author of Utah history; Randall L. Jones, who aided in promoting travel to southern Utah. Dr. Herbert E. Gregory, who gave the world much of the geologic story of the Zion Region and Angus M. Woodbury, naturalist and historian, who served as the park's first naturalist.

Significant Growth

In its 37 years of existence Zion National Park has witnessed marked changes — roads and trails of high standards have made much of Zion's scenic beauty available to the visitor. Modern accommodation facilities,

museum and exhibits and interpretive services have been provided for the nearly half million visitors each year.

With the addition of the Kolob area which had been set aside as the second Zion National Monument in 1937, to Zion National Park during July 1956, plans for further development are now under way. The Finger Canyons of the Kolob Terrace, LaVerkin Canyon and many other phenomenal features of outstanding scenic beauty will be made available to visitors by construction of roads, trails, accommodations and interpretive facilities in this new section of the park. There will also be expansion of the facilities in the present Zion Canyon.