



George B. Hartzog, Jr.: Protector of the Parks

In considering the attributes of the exemplar, David K. Hart stipulates that the emphasis should be placed on a continuing moral contribution. It is certainly understandable that we applaud our moral heroes, but Hart observes that we have more to learn from our moral worker. In this sense, then, it is conduct during a public career, rather than during an event, that should command our attention.

George B. Hartzog, Jr., committed himself to a career in the National Park Service of the federal government. It is an agency where careerism is a predominant value, inextricably entwined with the programmatic mission of preserving and utilizing the nation's great natural and historical resources. Hartzog's book, *Battling for the National Parks* (1988), has a title that essentially says it all about the commitment of the career Park Service employee. Indeed, the Park Service has been criticized for the "mystic, quasi-religious sound" of its manuals, prompting a reply from an earlier director that anyone "not interested in the parks and loyal to its objectives . . . shouldn't be there" (Wirth, 1980, p. 310).

Personal Background

George Hartzog was born in 1920 and raised in a small town in rural South Carolina. The norms of that place and time shaped and

defined Hartzog as a person. He has commented: "I grew up with the values of the South. A man's word is his bond. My mother's father was a Civil War veteran. He always borrowed money from the bank for spring planting and fertilizing. Never in his life did he sign a note. Even if his family suffered, money was paid back on time because his word was his bond. My credo when I became the Park Service director, with all the political pressures, was a little bit different. It was to promise slowly and perform promptly" (Hartzog, interview, Nov. 8, 1989).

Hartzog's family knew difficult economic times, but these experiences only emphasized the importance of valuing one's self and taking full advantage of one's resources to meet the challenge. His father farmed land that had been in the family for generations and it provided a satisfactory income before the Depression. When the price of cotton dropped to five cents per pound and the price of watermelons did not even cover the cost of their freight, the family plight was desperate. As he has put it, "For a dirt farmer who had been put out of business, life became a very simple issue: Did we have something to eat or didn't we . . . ? This was the poverty level of zero" (McPhee, 1971, p. 74). The father became a severe asthmatic, and, in the same period, the family house burned down. It is in the context of these overwhelming problems that Hartzog saw his mother as the anchor, the rock that kept the family together. She simply did not give up.

Although the values imparted by his family were critical to Hartzog's development, the community of Walterboro, South Carolina, also seemed to provide him remarkable opportunities for growth. He began preaching when he was sixteen and received a license in the following year, 1937. In high school he learned shorthand and took maximum advantage of this skill, traveling the political circuit and recording the verbatim statements of candidates in the various campaigns. Very early, he made friends with some of the most important people in the state. The business people of Walterboro thought so much of him that they provided money for him to go to Wofford College. Because his support was needed by the family, however, he was not able to stay in school. At the age of nineteen, he went to work in the local law office of Joe Moorer as a stenographer, was given the opportunity to read the law, and

thirty-three months later took and passed the bar examinations of South Carolina. Thus, there seemed to be a remarkable melding of Hartzog capacities and a hospitable environment.

While working for the law office, Hartzog joined the local National Guard in order to augment his income. As war became likely in 1940, he was called to active duty but released a few months later because he was a main financial support for his family.

Politics and government were much a part of Hartzog's early life, as he has observed: "I was fortunate in going to work for Joe Moorer. He and his partner, Colonel Padgett, had been in the South Carolina legislature for years. Moorer's brother-in-law was old Senator 'Cotton Ed' Smith, who was an inspiration despite my differences with his political ideas. . . . I travelled with him as he went from precinct to precinct. . . . I also got to know U.S. Senator Jimmy Byrnes as a young fellow and was hired to take down his speeches. He also became somewhat of a model for me" (Hartzog, interview, Nov. 8, 1989).

In early 1943, Hartzog was drafted into the army and assigned to the Judge Advocate General's Office. Later, he was commissioned in the Transportation Corps and served in the military police. Three years later, he was out of the military and looking for a job. Because of a contact made in the army, he began the job search in Washington, where he found employment as an attorney with the General Land Office of the Department of Interior. Within six months, however, a private law firm offered him double his government salary, and he departed. But he was destined for public service. Hardly had he settled in his new firm than he was offered a job in the office of the Chief Counsel of the National Park Service in Chicago. Even though the salary was much less, he moved to Chicago.

Thus began his career in the National Park Service, which largely involved legal tasks for the first eight years. It was during this period that he completed his undergraduate studies and all but three units for a master's degree in business administration.

His assignment to general management as assistant superintendent of the Rocky Mountain National Park in 1955 ended his schooling but also started him on a path of major leadership responsibility in the Park Service. From there he went to a larger park, the Great Smokies in Tennessee, and, in December 1958, he was

named superintendent of the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial Historic Site in St. Louis—the location of the famed Gateway Arch.

It was six years later that Hartzog was appointed director of the Park Service, but it was his tenure at the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial that brought him to the attention of the secretary of the interior.

Process of Appointment as Director

The National Park Service has attracted many able people over the years; at that time it was essentially a closed, career system. One started at the bottom and worked up. A promotion for one person meant movement all along the hierarchical line for others. Comparatively speaking, Hartzog was a relative newcomer when he had conversations about his future with Director Conrad Wirth in 1962. Hartzog had entered the Service in 1946 and thus had a seniority of sixteen years; further, Wirth has noted that his performance as director of the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial in St. Louis (work involving the construction of the Gateway Arch) had been "excellent" (1980, p. 304).

With an offer in hand to become executive director of Downtown St. Louis, Inc. at a much greater salary, Hartzog told Wirth that he preferred to stay in the Park Service but felt ready for a new assignment. Hartzog reports the response was "that there were no major superintendent vacancies, that I had no regional office experience, and that I would have to get in line. However, the associate director's job was vacant and had been for months. I suggested that if he filled it, there would be a vacancy—never dreaming that he would appoint me as associate director. He would make no commitment to fill the job" (1988, p. 76).

Hartzog has said that he had "fallen in love" with the Park Service. The higher salary offered in St. Louis obviously made little difference to him, but a challenging assignment and an opportunity for even greater responsibilities in the future did. Clearly, he was offered the position with Downtown St. Louis because of his immense success with the Gateway Arch, which was designed by Eric Saarinen and is one of the great architectural sites in the world. In

his *New Yorker* profile, McPhee quotes Stewart Udall, the secretary of the interior, "had it not been for Hartzog there would be no arch. It was Hartzog who took a set of plans that had been lying dormant for fifteen years and built the great arch of St. Louis" (1971, p. 52). The way in which Hartzog's accomplishments were viewed at the higher levels of the Department of Interior is to be found in Udall's further comments:

In 1960 Congress said no to the arch. Any other Park Service ranger would have said, "O.K., Where am I to be sent now? Back to the Great Smokies? Out to Alaska to count blankets?" But not George. He kept at it until funds were appropriated.

George was a lawyer. That is why they had him in St. Louis. They had never built anything bigger than an outhouse before.

When the arch was halfway up, the contractor was losing money, so he stopped work, saying the structure was unsafe. Two legs, three hundred feet high, were sticking out of the ground. Hartzog said to the contractor, "Listen, I ordered an arch and I want an arch" [McPhee, 1971, p. 78].

Monumental as it was, the arch alone did not occupy Hartzog's full time. For a number of months, he had spent all his weekends, plus one or two nights during the week, at meetings and site inspections in the Ozark Rivers area about 150 miles distant from St. Louis. After Hartzog had assumed the St. Louis position, in 1960 Howard Baker, then the deputy Park Service director, asked him to work on another project that seemed to be going nowhere, the Ozark Rivers National Monument. The idea was to bring these rivers, notably the Current and Jack's Fork, into the national parks system. Opposition came from many sources; indeed, Hartzog did not go back to St. Louis one night because sand had been poured in the gas tank of his car.

Secretary Udall was enthusiastic about the rivers project and made a two-day trip to the Current River in 1961 to promote the proposal. He described the encounter with Hartzog in these terms:

"I met him on the Current River, in Missouri, in 1962. We were trying to make the Current a national river, and a group of us made a two-day float trip there. George . . . and I rode in the same boat, and I felt that in those two days I really got to know him well. . . . This was a group of outdoor people, who were in their element. The Current was going to be the first national river. We hadn't done anything like it before. George knew all the arguments, all the facts, although the Current River is a hundred and fifty miles from St. Louis and the project was not part of his job" (McPhee, 1971, p. 80). Thus, Hartzog was establishing his credentials with the secretary at a time when changes were brewing in the executive suite of the National Park Service. Wirth writes that he had by that time begun to contemplate retirement, and he leaves the impression that there were stresses in his relations with the upper echelons of the Department of Interior. At the personal level, for example, it would be hard to envisage the scene of camaraderie Secretary Udall described with Hartzog on the Current River occurring between Udall and Wirth. Further, there appeared to be policy differences. Wirth, a landscape architect, had directed his energy to Mission 66, which was an effort to improve the physical structures of the park. Aside from the fact that Mission 66 was thought by some to have led to overdevelopment, it did not fit particularly well within the priorities of Secretary Udall. Everhart notes that the Kennedy years witnessed the emergence of conservation as a front-page item, with concerns for the total environment. And Udall "became the acknowledged federal spokesman on environmental matters" (1983, p. 26).

There was also conflict within the departmental system. Since the 1960s, more assistant secretaries had been created and occupied policy positions between bureau chiefs and departmental secretaries. These relationships have seldom gone smoothly, but apparently that between Wirth and Assistant Secretary John Carver was particularly bad. Wirth devotes a number of pages in his book to explaining his side of an argument in which Carver accused the Park Service of being unresponsive, unchanging, rooted in its tradition, and unable to cope with shifting priorities. It is inevitable that much of this conflict came to Udall's attention and heightened the need for a change in Park Service leadership.

In January 1963, Director Wirth had lunch with the secretary and announced his intention to resign in January of the following year. He also secured an agreement that his successor would come from within the ranks of the Service. Subsequently, he provided the secretary with a list of five recommended persons, one of whom was Hartzog, even though he had resigned from the Service several months earlier.

Hartzog had, however, had another meeting with Secretary Udall that really cinched his appointment. It occurred in August 1962, and it again revealed the way in which Hartzog's accomplishments opened up opportunities for him. It came about because of his warm, personal friendship with St. Louis Mayor Raymond Tucker, whom he has described as his "guide and counsel" on the Gateway project (1988, p. 74). When Secretary Udall was coming to town, the mayor asked Hartzog to go to the airport to greet him. Hartzog describes the sequence of events in these terms: "We met the secretary, had a pleasant visit on the way into town during which Mayor Tucker told the secretary that I had left the NPS [National Park Service] and was now working with Downtown St. Louis, Inc. The secretary expressed surprise. When we arrived at the Jefferson Hotel, the mayor preceded the secretary and me through the door. Instead of following, Stewart hung back and asked me why I left. I said, 'Well, I had no future.' He replied, 'Would being director be enough future?' I said, 'Mr. Secretary, it sure would.' He followed the mayor through the door with me behind him. The subject was not mentioned again during the visit" (1988, pp. 74-75). Secretary Udall gave himself a greater role in arranging the encounter with Hartzog, according to his interview with McPhee. He declared, "I heard he had quit the Park Service, because he thought he had no future in it. I went to St. Louis and looked him up and asked him if he would come back and if he thought being director was enough of a future. He said, 'Mr. Secretary, I surely do'" (1971, p. 80).

Three months after the August encounter, Hartzog again met with Udall, this time in Washington. The secretary reiterated his intention to make Hartzog the director. Hartzog recalls his question, "Is Connie Wirth retiring?" The rejoinder was, "He's going to." Hartzog then declared, "Mr. Secretary, I want that job more than anything in the world, but I do not want to be a party to

pushing Connie Wirth out" (1988, p. 75). Hartzog said that he would not accept unless Wirth personally invited him to become the associate director, with the understanding that the directorship would come to him on Wirth's retirement. A general agreement was reached, largely with Assistant Secretary Carver, that the process could go forward only with Wirth's full acquiescence. It was Carver who said, "You are exactly right not to be a party to pushing out Connie Wirth. If you did that, you would bring with you your own enemies and all of Connie Wirth's friends who would become your enemies" (Hartzog, 1988, p. 76). But Hartzog's feeling ran deeper than simple concerns about propriety and politics. He was incensed that a person with his commitments and record of success had been so cavalierly treated by Wirth. It was bad for himself personally of course; more importantly, it was very bad for the organization and undermined its capacity to get and retain the best people. Thus, he established the condition that Wirth personally had to invite him back as associate director.

Shortly after the meeting with Udall and Carver, Hartzog did meet with Wirth and reported that the associate director's job had been discussed. Nothing was said about the directorship. Two months later, Wirth called and made the formal offer of the associate position, and Hartzog reported in February 1963. There is some discrepancy in the accounts of Hartzog and Wirth about what exactly happened. Hartzog thought the list of five recommended names was for the associate directorship; Wirth is quite clear that they were nominations for his successor. Wirth does not report on the meeting with Hartzog and implies that his succession was his sole preoccupation. Things proceeded as planned, and Hartzog took office as director in January 1964.

Hartzog's Challenges in the Job

George Hartzog assumed the director's position in 1964, the year before the Watts riots. The racial strife in Los Angeles presaged the beginning of nearly a decade of national ferment, the ill-fated Vietnam War, generational conflict, and belated discovery of the severity of the nation's urban problems. For most people it would not be regarded as the best of times to occupy a position of national lead-

ership. Hartzog thought differently. It was an opportunity to fix a lot of things that seemed unrepairable.

The nature of public leadership in a democracy makes it difficult, however, for even the strongest and most committed individual to move unswervingly toward a desired goal. Further, the navigation of park policy must occur within a context of profound, long-standing differences of opinion about how the parks should be conceived and managed. At the one extreme are the disciples of John Muir, who view the parks and everything in them as God-given. Every living creature is in the parks by design and deserves protection; and humankind has no right to assert its priorities over the other elements of the ecosystem. The obligation, then, is to preserve these sites exactly as they are. At the other extreme are the demands for transportation, amenities, and accommodations that will permit multitudes of people to enjoy these natural wonders, which of course become less natural with such intrusions. The concessionaires who insist on the right to fly sightseeing airplanes over the Grand Canyon are perhaps at the extreme of these use claims.

Such disputes did not originate with Hartzog, but were likely exacerbated by his dogged determination to discover the public interest. McPhee reported that congressmen were upset in 1969 when there were rumors of Hartzog's impending departure. He wrote, "They admire his effort to give new directions to the park system. . . . They are sympathetic to some of Hartzog's problems within the Administration. 'Sometimes he gets clobbered by the secretary or the White House,' [U.S. Representative John P.] Saylor has said. 'Sometimes he comes in here in a straitjacket. He is not always free to act as an individual. He is told policy. It takes a strong, strong man to overcome the political shenanigans that go on here in Washington. His is supposed to be a nonpolitical job, but it's not'" (1971, p. 68).

Hartzog was well aware of the conflicts within which his position placed him. In the *Richmond Times Dispatch*, Connelly (Dec. 10, 1972) reported that Hartzog saw himself as seeking a balance between those who wanted parks to provide more roads and conveniences and those who wanted to protect the natural areas from being overrun by people: "That's the story of my life. I'm caught between the extremists . . . and you'll never please either side

[the conservationists or the recreationists] if you truly protect the public interest in the parks."

In the first chapter of Hartzog's book, entitled "Whose Parks Are These?," the essential question is the conflict between preservationist and park user. Although parklands at the beginning of the park system in 1872 were to be preserved from injury or despoliation, the construction of roads and bridle paths was authorized. Over the years the conflict between preservation and use has reappeared and been reinforced: in 1906 with extended powers to build roads and to make leases with concessionaires; in 1916 in the establishment of a park service with freedom to establish accommodations in the parks; and in 1965 in the Concessions Policy Act, where "in glorious ambiguity, it [the Congress] reaffirmed both preservation and use" (Hartzog, 1988, p. 6). Hartzog continues:

In the United States the people are sovereign. America's national parks are the special creations of the people through their elected representatives in Congress. . . . The purpose of the national parks remains in hot dispute. Is it their purpose to be host to exuberant youth on a frolic or privately-owned camping spaces for congenial club members? Protectors of gene pools to sustain life or parking sites for relaxing in recreational motor vehicles bringing all the modern conveniences from the home left behind? Preserves for scientists to search for knowledge and understanding of the web of life or a sanctuary for the poor and the underprivileged among us to protest against the ravages of poverty and the indignity of justice too long denied? [1988, p. 10].

Hartzog's comments make it quite clear that he rejected extremes of both preservation and use. The very idea of the park suggested human involvement in his mind. He was quoted as saying, "A park by definition is an area that is set aside for the use and benefit of the people. Therefore, there has got to be appropriate use designed into a park or, by definition, it is not a park" (*The Kemmerer Gazette*, Mar. 30, 1972). It must also be borne in mind that

Hartzog was living through a highly turbulent period of American life when public officials were desperately seeking ways of reducing extreme social tensions. The experiencing of nature, Hartzog believed, was an uplifting, essentially spiritual event in which all Americans should share. Such benefits for the individual would also bring societal gains through a greater sense of partnership and participation in the system as a whole.

Hartzog had two principal goals: to maintain the park system's vast existing apparatus and to give it a new emphasis toward the cities. One Hartzog subordinate stated, "We used to be trying to catch up to development in established parks, but George is trying to find the needs of the seventies. Those who identify the natural scene as the true purview of the Park Service think of him as a renegade" (McPhee, 1971, p. 60).

As might be expected, such positions did not receive the approbation of the conservationists. Over time, opposition to Hartzog mounted, both inside and outside the Park Service. That from inside was fairly muted. The outside voices were clearly more strident. By the time of his removal in 1972, the press was acknowledging such antagonists, though specifics were sparse. Two people identified as seeking his dismissal were George Alderson, head of legislative affairs at Friends of the Earth, and Michael Frome, a writer. The basic charge was that he favored development. Alderson and Secretary of the Interior Rogers Morton exchanged letters, which appeared in the journal *Parks and Recreation*.

Six of nine charges made by Alderson involved development questions: Hartzog was "using every trick" to sabotage the Wilderness Act; he wanted to intrude on the wilderness with two tramways; in the case of Mammoth Caves, he wanted no wilderness protection at all; the director wanted to open "motor nature trails" in wild areas; he allowed concessionaires to keep their business secret from the public; and he made "political deals involving the giveaway of lands." The other three charges were of a management nature and involved criticism of turning the parks over to mere administrators, too rapid transfers of superintendents and ranger personnel, and the use of transfers as a reprisal mechanism (Morton, 1972, p. 49). Secretary Morton responded in the strongest possible terms, declaring his rejection of all the accusations. He wrote in *Parks and Recrea-*

tion, "The National Park System has experienced a great period of expansion under director Hartzog's determined leadership. Throughout this period the goals of the National Park Service have been met. . . . Your unsupported allegation that Mr. Hartzog is intentionally destroying the national parks is totally and absolutely rejected" (Morton, 1972, p. 49).

Dismissal and Its Aftermath

The election of Richard M. Nixon as president in 1968 seemed likely to end Hartzog's tenure as Park Service director. The new chief of state had already stated his resolve to sweep out those who had even remote ties to the past administration. It is significant that Hartzog, whose position was a formal appointment of the secretary of the interior, was actually fired by the president—and not immediately but four years later, in 1972.

Much of this story is reported by Hartzog in his book (1988). Interestingly, his own network kept him completely informed in respect to President Nixon's intentions; and one member of that network was former president Lyndon Johnson, who asked Secretary of the Treasury John Connally to intercede in support of Hartzog. The word that came back was that Nixon was adamant. Indeed, it has been reported that Rogers Morton's reappointment as secretary of the interior in 1972 was conditioned on his firing Hartzog. Morton and Hartzog had an extremely close working relationship, and Hartzog's account reveals that the occasion was a particularly painful one for Morton.

Why was the president so negative about Hartzog? The story behind his attitude suggests moral differences between the nation's chief executive and the director of the National Park Service. The basic facts are detailed by Everhart:

When the Park Service was acquiring the land for Biscayne National Monument, not far from Nixon's Florida retreat, it purchased the Biscayne Club. This imposing lodge was formerly owned by a group of wealthy sportsmen, of which Nixon's pal Bebe Rebozo was a shareholder. As was customary, the Park Service

continued to employ the resident caretaker, who happened to be Rebozo's brother-in-law. Before the Park Service takeover, the caretaker had been granted exclusive use of the club's boat dock, but after he was placed on the federal payroll this privilege ended and the dock was opened to the public. As it turned out, Nixon and Rebozo had been the actual beneficiaries of the private dock, using it as an occasional stop on their jaunts in the Rebozo pleasure boat. Nixon was furious with Hartzog for not taking the necessary steps to maintain the dock as a presidential enclave. Thenceforth he preferred to anchor out in the bay rather than share the dock with the public [1983, p. 151].

Hartzog's network had let him know that he had powerful enemies in the Nixon administration. After persistent questioning of his informants, one enemy's name that emerged was Rebozo. Horace Albright, the second director of the Park Service and still a much respected and active participant in its affairs in 1972, asked Hartzog what he could have done to offend Rebozo. "Beats me," the director replied, "I never met the man." Then he recalled the Biscayne National Monument affair. Albright quickly responded, "That's it, and you are in lots of trouble" (Hartzog, 1988, p. 241). Thus, the Park Service director's ethic of making facilities available to all the people ran afoul of a chief executive's insistence that his private interest come first.

With his firing, Hartzog's direct service to the government was over, but the government was not through with him. Virtuous administrators do not necessarily ride off into a glorious sunset. A proactive, aggressive leader, working in a field of immense policy controversy, inevitably elicits antagonisms that sometimes become pure enmity. Hartzog's break with the public service was therefore not likely to be clean. Much of what ensues can be characterized as out-and-out harassment, and it can occur no matter how scrupulous one has been in the conduct of government responsibilities.

In the five years following his departure from government, there were several different assaults on Hartzog's reputation and on

his pocketbook. These cost five years of time spent in defending himself and the expenditure of tens of thousands of dollars in lawyer's fees and other burdens associated with his defense. The general allegations were that he represented a client who had a conflict of interest, that he had accepted bribes and kickbacks in the award of architectural contracts, and that he had used government lodging without paying. In addition to the FBI and the department's auditors, the bribery and kickback accusations also occasioned the attention of the Internal Revenue Service, which checked to see whether he had reported all of his alleged ill-gotten gains.

It is interesting that Hartzog was able to wage a successful defense because of lessons learned from the McCarthyism of the 1950s. He wrote in a personal memo,

Early in my public career I observed portions of the McCarthy hearings. . . . One of the many people Senator McCarthy attempted to smear with his "Soft on Communism" brush was Methodist Bishop G. Bromley Oxnam. Based on his meticulous log of every meeting, every trip and of every organization of which he was a member, Bishop Oxnam demolished the reckless allegations of the senator. Then and there I resolved to keep a daily log—every telephone call, meeting and trip. The habit became so ingrained that even today I never pick up the telephone unless I have my log and a pencil at hand. From the beginning of our marriage of more than 40 years I have kept every bank statement, cancelled check, check book and paid bill. . . . One FBI agent remarked after observing my documentation, "I have never seen anything like this in my life" [n.d.].

Hartzog observed that he had played "hardball" all of his public life and liked the game. But this was "dirty ball." He reported a particularly poignant moment when he found his thirteen-year-old son weeping. He asked the reason for the tears as he put his arms around him. The boy blurted, "Because you are going to jail!" Hartzog writes, "Father and son wept together—he in his

concern for me; me in my fury and frustration over how much he was hurting" (Hartzog, interview, Nov. 8, 1989).

Ultimately, Hartzog came out of the five years with his reputation untarnished. None of the charges stuck. But he had learned a great deal about the dark side of people. He regarded the experience as the most negative of his long public service.

Although public officials must be held to high ethical standards, the Hartzog case suggests how such an expectation can be turned and used against former officials, irrespective of their record of integrity. Personal and political vendettas can masquerade as efforts to protect the public interest. Hartzog never did discover for certain who his accusers were, but the pattern of behavior was familiar. There were not only harassing accusations that took money and time to refute, but the agencies of both government and the media were mobilized to press the vendetta. The continued interest of the FBI in the case, for example, was considered to be occasioned more by a report in the *Washington Post* that Hartzog was under investigation than by any hard data. Thus, both the FBI and the *Post* were enlisted to make life thoroughly miserable for an eminent and responsible public official.

The Hartzog Performance

What is there about the Hartzog record that makes him worthy of inclusion in this book? His name is certainly not a household word. He enjoys no public recognition as a moral hero. Indeed, his relative anonymity (outside the parks and recreation field) is the common condition of the many moral leaders who populate the public services of the nation. It becomes important to identify such people, to understand their contributions, to create an appreciation of their qualities and capacities, and to pass this information on so that future generations will have the same imperative for a full share of exemplars.

There are no easy, quantitative ways in which to measure the performance of the Park Service during the Hartzog tenure or to contrast his leadership service with that of his predecessors and successors. Further, conflict still exists over what the Park Service should do in its role as overlord of highly significant national re-

sources. Even so, there does appear to be one area of consensus: it is that the system should be continually expanded in order that more of the nation's heritage will be preserved and protected. A consequent test of leadership performance is the change in physical scale of the parks in a particular director's term.

By this standard Hartzog has far outstripped other Park Service directors. It was during his tenure that the greatest parks expansion so far was recorded. Connelly (Dec. 10, 1972) wrote at the time of Hartzog's dismissal, "Even Hartzog's enemies concede, however, that he had a remarkable record of achievement in expanding the park system. During his administration 77 units totaling 2.7 million acres were added."

The *Washington Evening Star* editorialized: "The record speaks impressively. Since Hartzog took charge in 1964, national parks acreage has swelled by more than two and one-half million acres and 78 new parks have been created. . . . At Wolf Trap Farm, the cultural national park concept was initiated. . . . St. Louis has its splendid urban national park beside the Mississippi with the graceful Saarinen arch towering as the Gateway to the West" (Dec. 15, 1972).

The National Park Service (1984) published a monograph tracing the history of national park development from its origins in the Hot Springs Reservation in Arkansas in 1832 to its status 152 years later. It is noteworthy that the period 1964-1972 was singled out for special treatment and was further labeled, "The Hartzog Years." Those nine years were the shortest period of time covered in the several sections of the book. The report offers justification for this special treatment by revealing that 69 of the 334 National Park Service units were authorized or acquired during the Hartzog period, nearly three-quarters as many as had been added in the previous thirty years. Some measure of Hartzog's involvement and aggressive leadership in these developments was captured in the *New Yorker* profile of him. Describing a typical staff meeting, McPhee quotes Hartzog: "'We've got to move on Alaska. Alaska is hot right now. What is the list of the things we want?' He then answered his own question: 'Klondike Gold Rush International Historical Park, Wood-Tikchik National Recreation Area, the Lake Clark Pass, extensions to Mount McKinley National Park, Gates of

the Arctic National Park, and St. Elias Range—fifteen million acres in all'" (1971, p. 48).

Everhart, whose book on the Park Service is a basic reference, reported that Hartzog's personal involvement in "the most accelerated growth in Park Service history" caused many to refer to his tenure as the Hartzog era. He commented further: "The seventh director, George B. Hartzog, Jr., who served from 1964 through 1972, was among all directors the closest to Mather [Stephen T. Mather, the Service's much revered first director, who served from 1914 until his death in 1929] in style. Not at all slavish about following established procedures, he refreshed the outlook of a tradition-loving organization with a constant stream of fresh ideas. Perhaps most important, he knew how to make the ideas work. . . . During his regime sixty-two new parks were established" (1983, p. 27). (It should be noted that Everhart apparently counted only those parks that were established, not authorized.)

As might be expected, expansion also brought increased patronage. Visitors to park installations more than doubled in the Hartzog years to 213 million people. Thus, by virtually any quantitative measure, it appears that Hartzog led the National Park Service to a peak of acceptance and support.

George Hartzog had the third longest tenure of any Park Service director. Though there need not be a correlation between length in office and quality of performance, leaders in highly visible federal posts, such as directors of the Park Service, can afford to alienate only a part of their constituency. Too many dissatisfied people and the leader walks. The longest tenure was that of Stephen Mather, who served from 1915 to 1929, fourteen years; Conrad Wirth had the second longest, a total of twelve years from 1951 to 1963; and Hartzog's nine-year term ranks third. All these directors served under several presidents of both political parties and thus underscored the professionalism of the system. Hartzog himself served two presidents (Johnson, a Democrat, and Nixon, a Republican) and three secretaries of the interior (Udall in the Johnson term and Walter Hickel and Rogers C. B. Morton in the Nixon term).

In many respects the most eloquent appraisal of the Hartzog performance comes from Wallace Stegner, the well-known author, professor, environmental activist, and former chairman of the secre-

tary of the interior's Advisory Board on National Parks. He described Hartzog as the "toughest, savviest, and most effective bureau chief who ever operated in that political alligator hole," and he went on, "Among distinguished public administrators he was one of the most distinguished, one of the friendliest, and one of the most honest." Finally, he declared, "The National Park Service has never since been the model high-morale federal bureau that it was during George Hartzog's tenure" (letter, Feb. 26, 1988).

It is evident that the National Park Service did have some of its finest hours under George Hartzog. Institutionally, it was a high point for the organization, and the director must logically be assumed to have contributed substantially to that performance. Further, the many personal evaluations of Hartzog from a wide diversity of sources inside and outside the Park Service are highly positive. The label "Hartzog Years" seems to epitomize the scale and consequence of his leadership contributions. It therefore appears reasonable to categorize him as an exemplar, a person who has made a significant and continuing contribution to the public good.

Hartzog's Moral Foundations

There are three aspects of the Hartzog character that help to explain the reasons why these accomplishments were achieved within a framework of moral commitment: religion, democratic values, and work ethic.

Throughout his career, Hartzog never moved away from his profound moorings in the Methodist church. He is an exceedingly devout person who still talks of his original ambition to be a clergyman. Some measure of his religious commitment is to be seen in the fact that he has tithed throughout his working life. It has occurred even when he has been in substantial personal debt. When asked whether he could afford to tithe under such circumstances, he said he had no option. The money did not belong to him. It belonged to the Lord.

Hartzog frames much of his language and description of his activities in terms of the pastorate. He saw his job as director of the Park Service as a mission, not very different from the work of the church. As a youngster growing up with an ambition to go

into the ministry, he had a commitment to serve other people. "The thing that pulls you into the public service and keeps you there is that same interest in serving people." He speaks of converting people to the causes in which he has invested deeply. "I am not trying to make people Methodist. But I am trying to get them to recognize the public interest. When you are dealing with the logging industry, you are trying to convert them, not to a faith but to a cause. You are seeking some kind of compromise that meets their needs and also serves the public interest" (Hartzog, interview, Nov. 8, 1989).

Religion is a very personal and private matter for George Hartzog. On the job it is never discussed. Indeed, he is sufficiently profane and irreverent as to suggest little attachment to any church. He emphasizes that religion does not enter into his work at the conscious level. Instead, it functions very much as an internal beacon. "Religion impacts you as a person; and you impact the Park Service as a person," he says. "I could no more steal now as a practicing lawyer than when I was director because I believe very deeply that stealing is not an acceptable method of living, based on my understanding of the Ten Commandments, in the Judeo-Christian tradition" (Hartzog, interview, Nov. 8, 1989).

Integrity is an important bridge to the second value profoundly associated with the Hartzog character, democracy. Integrity means nothing more nor less to Hartzog than scrupulous honesty. No matter the work situation, the same principle applies. It is a part of his religion. But it also happens that integrity is a particular part of his political belief system. A democratic society is rooted in reciprocity, in which there are gives and gets. The exchange relationship must be one of integrity so that everyone comes out valuing the system and its continuation.

This notion of reciprocity was reflected very much in his managerial style. He regarded openness as well as honesty as critical in forging a collaborative human system. In the author's interviews with him, for example, Hartzog was particularly careful to cite illustrations of difficult personnel relations, in which openness and honesty were particularly evident. One case exhibits the bridge between his religious commitment and his political values.

It involved dealing with a park superintendent who had long been in the position and had made his own political friendships,

one of whom was the secretary of the interior. Fearful that he would retire and run against him, even the congressman in the district was wary of this superintendent. The man had become, in Hartzog's terms, a "winger," a lone operator. "The result," said Hartzog, "was great difficulty in getting him to do what you thought needed to be done. I resolved I could not have that. I had to be in charge because we had a lot of things going in the state at that time" (Hartzog, interview, Nov. 8, 1989).

First, he went to his boss, the secretary of the interior, to tell him what he was planning. The secretary asked, "Do you have to?" When Hartzog said yes, the secretary responded, "Will you be kind about it?" The director then telephoned the superintendent and said he would like to take him and his wife out to dinner the end of the week. The social event was held and was pleasant. As they got up to leave the table, Hartzog indicated that he would like to have breakfast with the superintendent the next morning. "Anything special?" the superintendent asked. "Yeah. I would like to know where you would like to go." Things were left at that point until the following day. Hartzog tells the rest of the story in this way: "The next morning we met for breakfast. I started outlining what I perceived the problems to be. He said, 'You don't have to tell me about them. I know them all. If you will let me stay here, I will guarantee you that you will never have another problem with me as long as we live.' I said, 'If that is the way you feel about it, I can't imagine a person who could do a better job.' He went back and became one of the most superb, supportive people in the world" (Hartzog, interview, Nov. 8, 1989).

Only a few moments of conversation will quickly reveal Hartzog's deep commitment to the U.S. political system. He is utterly attached to it, adores its frailties, and can think of nothing more delightful than participating in it. If his wife (a Bostonian) had been willing to live in the South, he undoubtedly would have pursued a political career. Shortly before he was to be married, an offer was made to him to finance his campaign for the South Carolina house of representatives. As he recounts the incident, it is clear that Hartzog still savors the idea of a vigorous political campaign. The recollection also brings forth memories of the South Carolina

culture that produced such a strong commitment to the American political system.

Faced constantly with fundamental policy conflicts, top public executives such as the National Park director must possess a personal compass in negotiating among the claimants to public resources, present and future. One must have a clear sense of role and a perspective that accepts conflict, ambiguity, and contingency as inherent in such responsibilities. Hartzog thought of his job as similar to that of the president of a university, in that both "require the skill to herd wild hogs on ice." Such a skill, he remarks, "may be the key qualification for being director," rather than any particular professional discipline (1988, p. 79).

There were two signs prominently displayed in the director's office during the Hartzog years. One, a framed admonition from George Washington, read: "Do not suffer your good nature, when application is made to say 'Yes' when you should say 'No.'" Another, by the door, said: "Great Spirit, grant that I may not criticize my neighbor until I have walked a mile in his moccasins" (McPhee, 1971, pp. 45-49). What these maxims suggest is that the leader should take strong policy positions but that the commitments and convictions of others deserve equal recognition. Thus, it was possible for Hartzog to be a very strong leader, as one congressman observed, and at the same time to accept the importance and legitimacy of differing views. It is important to note that Hartzog did not cower in the wings when a battle clearly was to ensue. He had courage. Courage, as such, is not something about which Hartzog speaks. He regards it as a natural corollary of religious conviction, and of openness in reciprocal relations, and as essential to the democratic process.

It was Hartzog's belief in democracy that enabled him to accept and cherish the uncertainties and ambiguities of his leadership experience. In emphasizing that the people are sovereign, Hartzog describes himself in full measure as a pluralist. He truly believes that the public interest can be discovered in the active contest of interests and wills. In consequence he did not grieve when a battle was lost. If the fight was fair, he assumed the public interest was served. If it was not, the issue was to create a process in which battle could be engaged equitably and openly by all sides. Hartzog

had a philosophy about his job that kept him personally fresh and invigorated; at the same time that philosophy could not have better honored the interests and ideals of a democratic society.

At the practical level, Hartzog's deeply held democratic values enabled him to function as a particularly effective representative of Park Service interests in its external environment. Nowhere was this more evident than in his relations with Congress. Had it not been for support from the Hill, the general view is that Hartzog would not have survived the first Nixon administration. Although Hartzog's own skills and capacities accounted for much of his success in congressional relationships, his belief in democratic government and particularly in the U.S. system positioned him to go to unusual lengths to make it work. Most certainly, his system of values never allowed him to depreciate the importance of the Congress. He reported that when he assumed the directorship, he personally knew nine congressmen. When he left the position nine years later, the count was three hundred. Further, he made clear his commitment to helping them do their jobs. McPhee reported, "He will travel . . . to the remotest corner of any state in the Union to please a senator or a significant congressman" (1971, p. 67).

His performance in the role also did much to gain him support. Congressmen evaluated him as the most industrious director the Service had ever had, admired his effort to give new directions to the system, and felt that he had drawn into the Service people of very high calibre who would not otherwise be there (McPhee, 1971, p. 67).

The Hartzog style also was an asset. In his frequent testimony before congressional committees, he was said to speak strongly and colloquially, was well prepared, made his points clearly, and gave the impression he knew what he was talking about, "which put him in something of a minority among bureaucrats" (McPhee, 1971, p. 68).

In his book, Hartzog provides many case examples of the specific ways in which he worked with congressional leaders. It was obvious that he relished the fray, and there could be no gainsaying the fact of battle. As Congress has become increasingly urban in its orientation, support for the parks is not by any means automatic. Hartzog had to use his every wile to cajole, induce, and pressure

congressmen to support his programs. As one congressman said, "He's willing to stand up and fight—he has a healthy respect for Congress, not a callous disregard, but he's willing to stand up and fight. Some days I wouldn't trade him for anyone in the world, and some days I could kill him" (McPhee, 1971, p. 68).

Hard work was regarded as a critical element in dealing with the human circumstance. It will be recalled that Hartzog's was a proud family, impoverished by the Depression. That situation called for even greater effort, in which his mother played a major role. Hartzog recalls, "She worked hard. She pulled the family through. She believed you couldn't fail to achieve anything if you just worked. She encouraged me and instilled in me the responsibility for working" (McPhee, 1971, p. 82).

Cleveland declares that executives must be possessed of "animal energy" (1972, pp. 76-77). In Hartzog's case immense physical stamina was a support for his highly dominant work ethic. He simply thought everyone ought to work hard, preferably in furthering the public interest; but it is clear that the work ethic in itself constituted a significant value.

His office was always a beehive of activity, despite the fact that he was frequently in the field. Indeed, his virtual omnipresence in the nation's parks struck terror in the lives of his subordinates. He must have been one of the originators of the "walking around" ideas that became popular in top management circles in the 1980s.

The Ozark Rivers experience reported by Hartzog suggests the level of his work ethic. As if the Gateway Arch were not a sufficiently daunting task, Hartzog eagerly took on the responsibility of shaping a new kind of park in southeastern Missouri, later to be known as the Ozark Rivers National Monument. It had been going nowhere when the deputy director of the Park Service solicited his involvement. In his description of this experience, it is clear that Hartzog's work ethic, important as it was, could not be separated from his commitment and devotion to the preservation and use of the nation's physical resources. The Current River, he found, was a special and beautiful spot. It demanded the very best of him.

Thus it was that he spent every weekend for several months on a 300-mile round trip to the site. Other trips were made to attend one or two meetings during the week. He describes one such session,

which did not end until midnight. It was 1 A.M. before he finally got into his car to drive the 150 miles back to St. Louis, only to have the car stall out on him. It was about 6 A.M. before he got back to town (1988, p. 61).

Hartzog also gained credibility, both inside and outside the Service, because his total commitment was to the parks. No one apparently saw his actions as driven by personal ambition. Indeed, on at least one occasion, he refused a promotion to assistant secretary. Apparently, the presence of such selflessness was regarded as refreshingly unique; the Department of Interior was characterized as "loaded—it's stuffed—with people who are over-ridden by personal ambition. But that is not true of George" (McPhee, 1971, p. 70).

Though Hartzog had his detractors, he was generally viewed in positive terms. He has been depicted as bright, forthright, courageous, honest, and committed. Further, such descriptions as lovable and personable suggest a high personal attractiveness. Congressman Wayne Aspinall labelled him a "fine companion," and former secretary Udall called him a "happy warrior who exuded reasonableness and good will." Udall added: "His signature was the greeting he invariably extended to ordinary citizens and senators alike: 'Hello, my friend, what can I do for you?'" (McPhee, 1971, p. 59).

His intelligence and commitment, along with his zest for work, left little room for indulging inadequacies. Thus, the "happy warrior" was not always the visage his subordinates in the Service observed. One view was that he was aloof and imperious; a more contradictory one was that he was gruff but genial. Within the organization he was described as "very hard on his people. He cracks the whip. And he has a short fuse." He was also seen as "too august, too removed a figure" (McPhee, 1971, p. 60). These views were undoubtedly part of a broader perception of Hartzog as a strong, bold, and courageous figure who inspired the contradictory feelings of respect and fear. Hartzog was the dominant force in the National Park Service. It was almost inevitable that such a towering presence would excite both positive and negative feelings.

At the same time, within the context of the Hartzog dominance, there was encouragement of open communication and a con-

cern for fair play. Further, as McPhee remarks, he "never asks the next guy to do what he wouldn't do himself. He's demanding but his example is high" (1971, p. 60). It is not surprising that Hartzog was regarded as the symbol of an organization, which achieved a peak of pride, discipline, and professionalism during his administration.

Conclusion

George Hartzog had a long, highly successful career in the National Park Service. Though there were many events that could be conceived as important moral episodes in his experience, it is most appropriate to consider him, in Hart's terms, as a moral worker, a person who contributed over the long term. But there is a significant difference between working and leading. True, Hartzog was a worker. More importantly, he was a public leader. In assessing his status as a moral exemplar, it is important to keep his leadership responsibility in focus.

To such tasks Hartzog clearly brought a substantial set of physical resources: huge energy, high intelligence, and excellent verbal facility. Yet there are many people with the physical equipment and the opportunity who do not merit consideration as moral exemplars. The difference clearly lay in Hartzog's strongly held values: religious convictions that dominated his life and propelled him toward public service; a deep love for democratic processes ideally designed so that everyone had a chance at influencing human events; and a personal work ethic that provided the drive to use these considerable capacities on behalf of the public interest. Together, these qualities provided the dedication, the commitment, and the courage that characterized his performance.

What is particularly arresting about Hartzog is that his strong convictions did not negate another key leadership requirement: flexibility. Those at the top, obligated to hold together an always uneasy coalition of interests and frequently conflicting goals, must have the particular capacity to deal with and accept differences of opinion. As has been pointed out, the National Park Service, both within the organization and outside among its many constituencies, consistently confronted the most basic forms of conflict. Yet, within this world, George Hartzog was a happy warrior, as Secretary Udall ob-

served. To him, it was the essence of life to be engaged in a contest with others over things about which he deeply cared.

Hartzog had a deep religious commitment, but it was also profoundly personal. Religion has set the terms by which he holds himself personally accountable; others are given considerably greater leeway within which to construct their own philosophies and codes of conduct. Boundaries are essentially set within the framework of his democratic beliefs. Everyone has to play by the rules, which have to be sufficiently broad and embracing to make the contest one in which each player has an equal chance to win. Clearly, Hartzog's leadership flexibility can be traced to his love of an open and vibrant democratic system. Very likely, his work ethic produced the greatest intransigence in his leadership style. He never did quite understand that others did not have the same motivation and drive as he.

Many who observed him would probably find it difficult to conceive of George Hartzog as flexible. Indeed, a substantial number likely gave him approval because of the courage and tenacity with which he pursued goals in which they believed. Yet it is within his belief in open and vigorous democratic processes that Hartzog could be his own person, honor his convictions, and pursue his goals with such vigor.

References

- Cleveland, H. *The Future Executive: A Guide for Tomorrow's Managers*. New York: HarperCollins, 1972.
- Connelly, B. "GOP, Ecology Headhunters Finally Get Park Director." *Richmond Times Dispatch*, Dec. 10, 1972.
- Everhart, W. C. *The National Park Service*. Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1983.
- Hartzog, G. B., Jr. *Battling for the National Parks*. Mt. Kisco, N.Y.: Moyer Bell, 1988.
- The Kemmerer* [Wyoming] *Gazette*, Mar. 30, 1972.
- McPhee, J. "Profile: G. Hartzog." *New Yorker*, Sept. 11, 1971, pp. 45, 48ff.
- Morton, R. "Morton Backs Hartzog in Park Controversy." *Parks and Recreation*, Sept. 1, 1972, p. 49.

- National Park Service. *The National Parks: Shaping the System*. Washington, D.C.: Division of Publications, National Park Service, Department of the Interior, 1984.
- Stegner, W. Letter to Brett Bell. Feb. 26, 1988.
- Washington Evening Star*, Dec. 15, 1972.
- Wirth, C. L. *Parks, Politics, and the People*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1980.

Cooper, Terry L. & N. Dale Wright, eds. *Exemplary Public Administrators: Character and Leadership in Government*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1992.