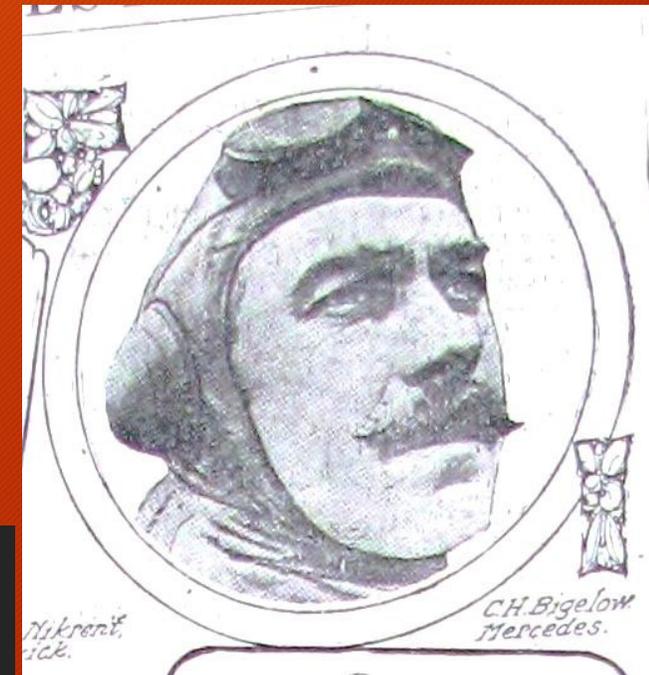


Red Rocks and Race Cars:

Charles H. Bigelow and
Tourism Development

along the Arrowhead Highway



Let's take a Road Trip!

When Bigelow drove his 1907 Reo roadster across the rugged sandstone slopes of southern Utah he became one of the first automobile tourists to fall in love with the red rock country. He wouldn't be the last!

The Arrowhead Highway from Los Angeles to Salt Lake City followed the route of today's Interstate 15 but, in the early 1900s, it was little more than a wagon trail. This is the story of one of the most successful Utah road promoters - Charles H. Bigelow - and the way he and the Arrowhead Highway changed the face of our state.



Near St. George, 1921

Photo: Lynne Clark Collection



5 miles west of Santa Clara, Utah along the Arrowhead Trail, 1929.

Photo: George A. Grant, Photographer (NARA record: 1226390)
- U.S. National Archives and Records Administration

The idea for the Arrowhead Highway (or Trail) was hatched by Charles Bigelow and some Las Vegas and Southern California businessmen during 1916. They were improving the “Old Mormon Trail” route between Los Angeles and Salt Lake City in order to encourage more people to buy automobiles and see sites such as “St. George...a green gem in a setting of brilliantly-colored sandstone cliffs and basalt-covered hills.”

August 3, 1924 *Los Angeles Examiner*



Who was Charles H. Bigelow?

- Born August 26, 1872 in Kilbourne, Illinois, he moved to Southern California with his wife in early 1900s to become a race car driver
- Competed in car races such as the 1908 LA to Phoenix overland race, the 1909 Corona, the 1911 Panama Pacific, and even drove in the first Indy 500 in 1911 at the famed brickyard!
- Drove 30 days from New York to Los Angeles, including crossing part of the Santa Fe Trail, in May, 1909 over a route which no car had driven before.
- Became fascinated with the desert southwest during his efforts to set land speed records in primitive autos across nearly impassable roads
- Wrote and published more than 100 articles in national newspapers such as the Los Angeles Times and San Francisco Examiner touting Utah scenery.
- Died June 8, 1958, buried in St. George, Utah, his scrapbook of newspaper articles was donated to Dixie College (now Dixie State University)





One of Bigelow's first big race wins came in the 1911 Oakland Portola Road Race: "in his handsome red car he came jauntily up to the tape and was ready to flash away...calm and collected he made a pretty getaway..." He raced 9 laps around a course in San Leandro - totaling 98 miles in a record time of 1:42:54! He drover a Mercer Raceabout.

February 22, 1911, Oakland Enquirer

...and behind the gun, has no favorites, and hopes the best man may win.

TTLE.

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...t races...
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...and Banning,
...Castle Dome,
...Callente and

...the first choice
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...stunts and is
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...to Yuma to fan-
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...a car out again.
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...ard to the fierce
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...ed more than

Phoenix Racers Ready.
(Continued from First Page.)

any other cars to be started. Hamlin has nothing to fear from any man or any driver. He has the car and he has had the experience.

Close second choice, Louis Nikrent, on the Buick, a car as fast as the Franklin, looms up as a money winner for this race. Nikrent has finished his trial work. He knows the course perhaps as well as Hamlin. His car is in excellent shape and there is no need to worry about Nikrent and the Buick.

Frank Howard, who enters the Buick, is a consistent road racer. He is enthusiastic about the chances of the car and is confident that Nikrent will win. He has planned this race carefully, has been over the course himself and will direct the contest, as far as the Buick is concerned.

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C. H. Bigelow.
The desert rat, the dark horse of the Los Angeles-Phoenix road race.

Bill Bramlette is the logical third choice with the Cadillac. He has the 1913 motor, a forty-horse-power racer that will give any car that it bumps up against a fierce race. Bramlette is a good third choice. Bramlette takes any stretch of road and it does not

Fourth choice is a difficult proposition. For my part I would choose Charles Soules. He has the other 1913 Cadillac, as fast a car as there is here.

“C.H. Bigelow - The desert rat, the dark horse of the Los Angeles-Phoenix road race.” He raced the 300-mile overland race at least 5 times from 1908-1912.

Bigelow, bottom left, shown as one of the racers in the inaugural Indy 500, May, 1911. He completed 194 of 200 laps and was in 15th place when he was flagged.

INDIANAPOLIS SUNDAY STAR
VOL. 8 NO. 87. INDIANAPOLIS, SUNDAY MORNING, MAY 28, 1911.

EVERY DRIVER OF NOTE WILL COMPETE IN SPEEDWAY EVENT TUESDAY.



Fore Door
2-Speed
Racers "20"
\$800

Fore Door
2-Speed
Racers "20"
\$800

On the road
whole story.
Their best are
car right out
durability, and
good looks say
When a car is
all proved.
We hold
them "20" at
...INDIANAPOLIS.

ROBERT WILCOX (INDIANAPOLIS)

WILL JONES (INDIANAPOLIS)

LEE FRAYER (INDIANAPOLIS)

FRED ELLIS (INDIANAPOLIS)

BOB BURMAN (INDIANAPOLIS)

LEW EMMETT (INDIANAPOLIS)

DAVID VAN HORN (INDIANAPOLIS)

LEW ANDERSON (INDIANAPOLIS)

NEW LYTEL (INDIANAPOLIS)

DAVID BRUCE (INDIANAPOLIS)

CHARLEY MEEZ (INDIANAPOLIS)

RALPH HULLMAN (INDIANAPOLIS)

FRED BELDEN (INDIANAPOLIS)

SPENCER SIBBART (INDIANAPOLIS)

FRANK F. FEE (INDIANAPOLIS)

HARRY CHRYST (INDIANAPOLIS)

DAVID BRUCE (INDIANAPOLIS)

LOUIS SIBBART (INDIANAPOLIS)

HARRY GRANT (INDIANAPOLIS)

EDDY HEWITT (INDIANAPOLIS)

FRANKER BULL SIBBART (INDIANAPOLIS)

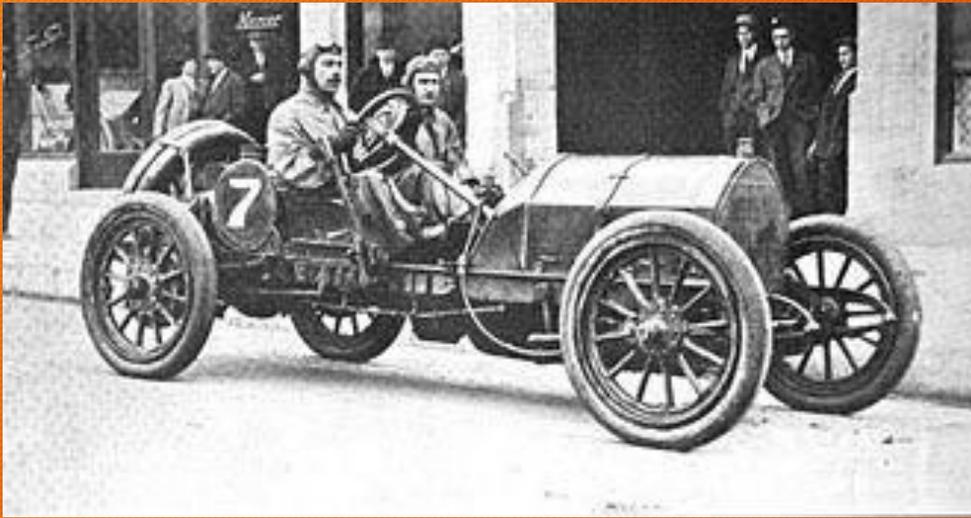
LEW STRAIN (INDIANAPOLIS)

FRED CLEWELL (INDIANAPOLIS)

LOUIS CHEVROLET (INDIANAPOLIS)

YUDY YETZLAFF (INDIANAPOLIS)

ARTHUR BELL (INDIANAPOLIS)



Early car races helped popularize the automobile...In 1910 there were only 873 cars in Utah and many adults had not yet seen a car on the streets of their own town.

Tourism - which was not practical in wagons nor very effective in trains - became immediately possible once you sat behind the wheel of your own vehicle.

You were free to set your own course, see things of your own choosing, and travel at your own pace.

But you needed good roads to do it!

In 1916 Utah had only 36.59 miles of concrete pavement in the whole state, none of it south of Provo.



Bigelow driving in the Portola race, above, and the Indy 500, below, 1911.

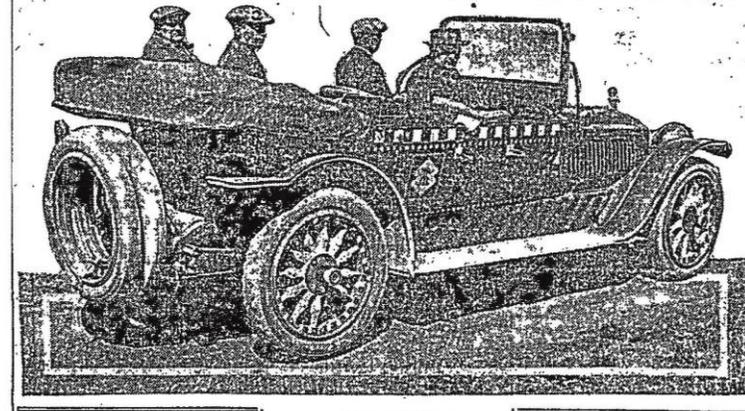
In 1916, Bigelow's first bold promotion effort was the Cactus Kate escapade where he helped drive a Packard Twin Six from LA to SLC to prove the Arrowhead Highway was viable for tourists:

“Cactus Kate II, her checkerboard paint besmeared with mud, arrived in Salt Lake last night after pushing her way across mountain and desert over the Old Mormon trail from Los The purpose of the trip has been to blaze and log the Old Mormon trail - an all winter route to the coast - later to be renamed...the total distance covered by Cactus Kate was 313 miles, to be reduced about seventy miles by proposed cutoffs. “The feature of this highway,” said Mr. Woods, “is its scenic wonders. There is no scenery on any tri-state highway to equal what we have seen in the past nine days. Little Zion canyon, near St. George in Utah, outshadows even California's wonderful scenery. All along the route we were given rousing welcomes.”

May 21, 1916, Salt Lake Telegram

Blazing Trail L. A. to Salt Lake Cactus Kate II. Arrives in Town

HERE IS CACTUS KATE II, taken on the desert "somewhere in Nevada." The famous car, a Packard Twin Six, with which a party of Los Angelenos has been blazing the Arrowhead trail—the all winter route to Los Angeles—arrived here last night.



Cactus Kate II, her checkerboard paint besmeared with mud, arrived in Salt Lake last night after pushing her way across mountain and desert over the Old Mormon trail from Los Angeles. Driven by Louis Nickrent, famous racing driver, the car completed the trip in nine days despite unfavorable weather and lost time in making side trips.

The party, consisting of Driver Nickrent, W. S. Wood, advertising manager for the Earl C. Anthony, Inc., of Los Angeles; Charles Bigelow, good roads booster of Los Angeles, and L. K. Dewein, Hearst Vitagraph weekly representative, carries a letter from the Los Angeles chamber of commerce to the Salt Lake Commercial club.

The purpose of the trip has been to blaze and log the Old Mormon trail—an all winter route to the coast—later to be renamed. The route is from Salt Lake to Provo, Nephi and through Fillmore, Beaver, Cedar City, St. George, Thomas, Las Vegas and Jean, Nev., Goffa, Barstow, Cajon Pass and San Bernardino, Cal., into Los Angeles. The total distance covered by Cactus Kate was 313 miles, to be reduced about seventy miles by proposed cutoffs.

“The feature of this highway,” said Mr. Woods, discussing the trip last night, “is its scenic wonders. There is no scenery on any tri-state highway to equal what we have seen in the past nine days. Little Zion canyon, near St. George, in Utah, outshadows even California's wonderful scenery.

“All along the route we were given rousing welcomes. The people are enthusiastic over the highway and within three weeks an expedition of fifty or more cars will come from various points along the route to Salt Lake to boost for the highway here.

“Aside from about sixty miles between Bunkerville, Nev., and St. George the roads were in the best of condition despite the rains. No better highway is to be found anywhere. With very little work, such as putting up road signs and a little work by some of the counties, the road is in condition for heavy travel right now.”

Bigelow organized a “Good Roads Day” in many Utah communities during 1916-1917 where citizens would turn out with their own horses, plows, and scrapers to build the Arrowhead Highway themselves.

At one Good Roads Day on February 10, 1917 there were more than 400 men and 80 teams of horses and wagons working on the route between St. George and Santa Clara. The ladies of both towns provided food:

“Wagon covers were spread on the ground on which snow white tablecloths were spread upon which the food was laid...There were chickens, ham, roast beef, cheese, potato salad, baked beans, sweet pickles, etc, etc, and cake in great abundance and variety.”

Bigelow arranged for a motion picture crew to film the work and show the film to motivate other communities.



Private Efforts at Road Construction, Washington County, about 1917

Photo: Lynne Clark Collection

In 1917, Bigelow broke a record for overland travel, driving an Oldsmobile Eight from Los Angeles to Salt Lake in 36 hours and 14 minutes!

“I do not believe that we could have even approached the record that we made on any other route except the Arrowhead trail, which I am sure offers the tourist the very best road conditions...The conditions of the Arrowhead trail speaks volumes for the hard work that has been done by the Salt Lake Route, the Oldsmobile company of California, and the B.F. Goodrich Tire company.”

- C.H. Bigelow, June 3, 1917, Salt Lake Tribune

The trip was done at the height of WW1 when the military hired Bigelow to identify routes that troops could use if the railroads were unusable.

The Salt Lake Tribune.

MINES AUTOMOBILE SECTION

SALT LAKE CITY, SUNDAY MORNING, JUNE 3, 1917.

ARROWHEAD TRAIL RECORDS SMASHED

MILITARY SCOUTING PARTY HANGS UP IMPORTANT RECORD FINDS HEAVY ROADS BETWEEN LOS ANGELES AND SALT LAKE

Military Car Makes Journey in Rain; Time 36 Hours 14 Minutes.

MUD FOR MANY MILES

Accomplishes Purpose of Finding Actual Running Time for Military Use.

When a mud bespattered motor-car pulled up in front of the Newhouse hotel shortly before midnight Tuesday night and four khaki-clad soldiers climbed stiffly from the seats and stretched their weary limbs for the first time in many hours, all previous records over the Arrowhead trail between Salt Lake and Los Angeles were eclipsed and the new time of 36 hours and 14 minutes hung up for the road "speedsters" to shoot at. Curious persons who crowded around the machine and showered hundreds of questions upon the weary lads could scarcely believe that an automobile could possibly plow through the wet and muddy roads in the face of the unseasonable weather conditions throughout the western country.

Accomplishes Purpose.

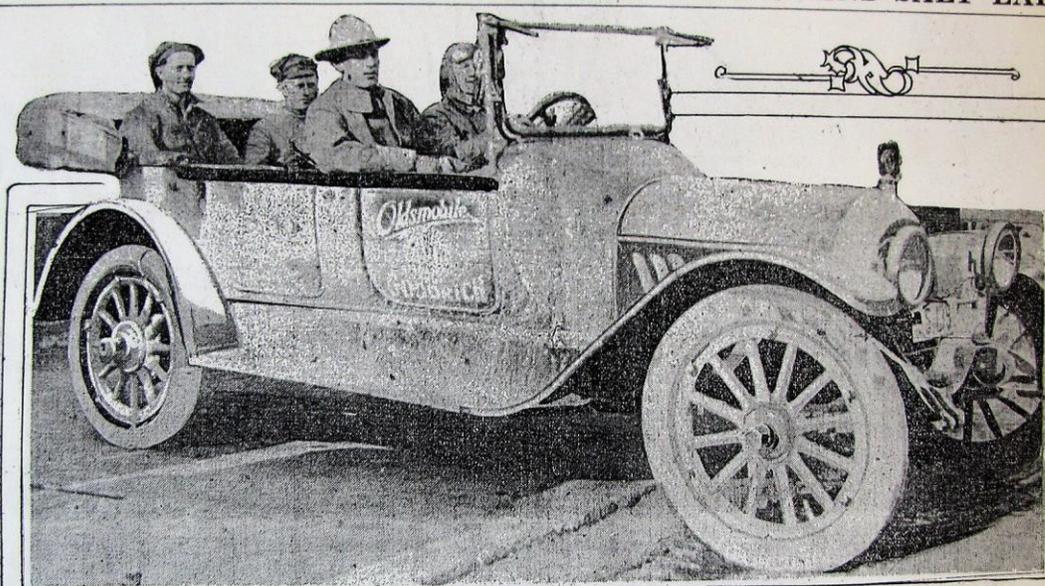
Besides establishing a record that is likely to stand for years over the trail in heavy rains, the party, headed by Captain Owen R. Bird, United States army motor division, accomplished the very thing that they had started out to do—to find the actual running time between the two cities over bad roads. This data is important, as the automobile would be chosen should the railroads be put out of commission during war times. Probably the party could not have chosen a better time for the trip to accomplish their purpose, for nearly every hour while the car plowed along they were buffeted with thunderstorms, salt storms and windstorms which beat into their faces and made driving difficult and slow.

With Captain Bird, in the Oldsmobile Eight, which made the record, were C. H. Bigelow, racing driver; Harold J. Baker, first sergeant in the motor reserve division; and Roy Hamilton, mechanic. Regarding the trip, Captain Bird said before leaving:

Stock Car Used.

In the first place it was necessary to choose a motor car of strictly stock model, due to the fact that this type would be used in case of necessity. No time could be spared in selecting others. Next it was necessary to fill it to capacity, four passengers, as this is the number which is generally used in a motor patrol party. The Oldsmobile was chosen owing to its ruggedness and ability to withstand hard knocks.

It is now an accepted fact that the motor car will be called upon if railroads and telegraph lines are out of condition in war times. Cavalry is fast waning, and, in fact, the horse is passing from the army. The motor car can be overworked. It can travel twenty-four hours a day, if necessary. It requires little attention when compared with



OLDSMOBILE EIGHT IN WHICH THE RECORD WAS MADE BY AND ARMY PARTY TESTING OUT BEFORE THEIR RETURN TRIP



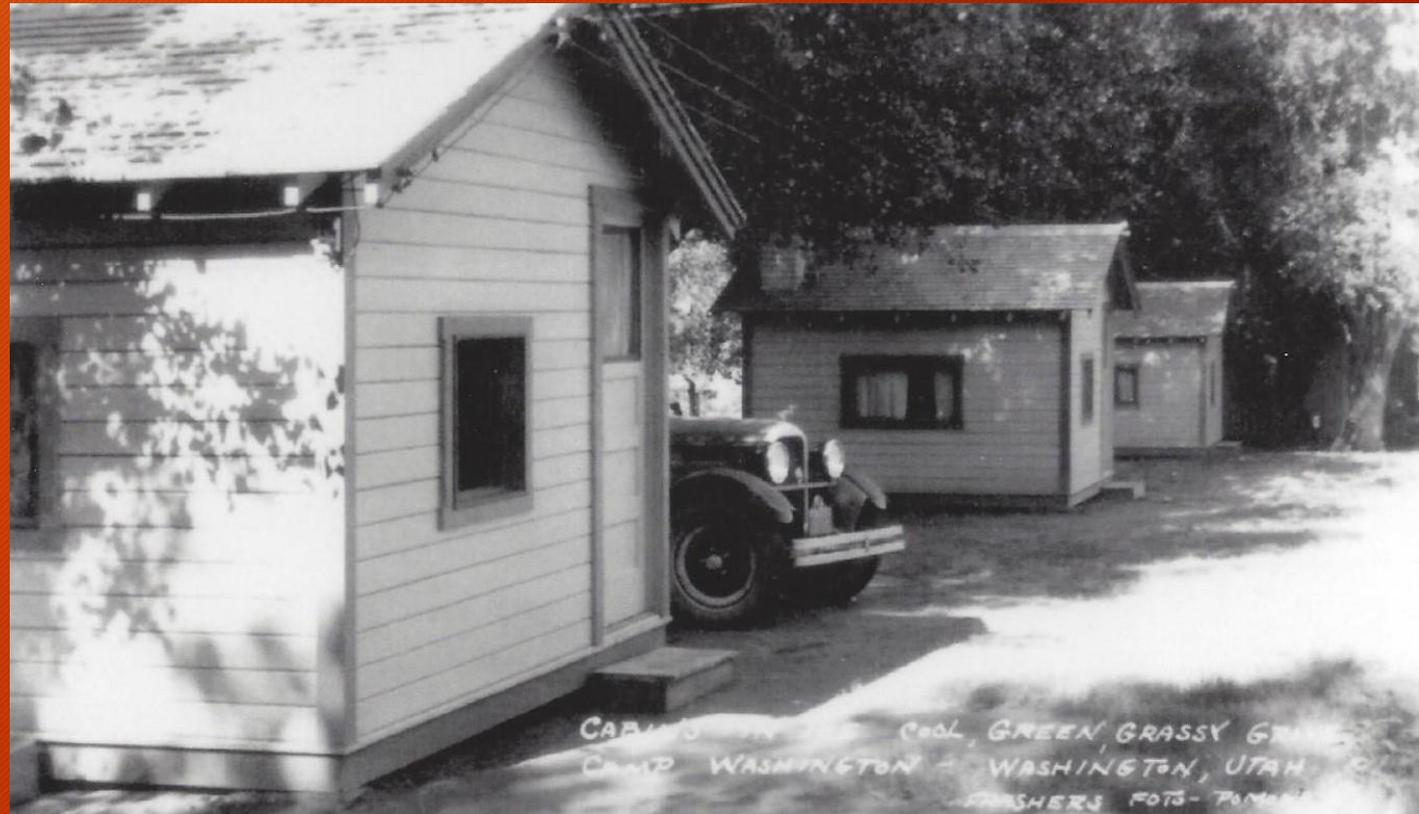
CAPT. OWEN R. BIRD ROY HAMILTON C. H. BIGELOW "RED"

Utah was seeking tourists - even as early as 1913!

- “Then take the tourist business. With a good automobile road through Washington County, hundreds of thousands of tourists from Northern Utah and adjoining states will visit this wonderful section, which is acknowledged to be the peer of any country on the globe.”

November 11, 1913, Washington County News

- 1916 9 visitors in St. George noted in 1 week
- 1920 Zion National Park renamed/dedicated
- 1928 Bryce Canyon opens



Hall's Cabins, Washington, Utah

Photo: Lynne Clark Collection

Bigelow took advantage of Utah's road construction boom...*

*with thanks to Ezra Knowlton!

Pioneer Era

1854 Road project “improve the southern roads as much as possible”

1876 Governor Emery - “The roads are insufferable in summer from dust and impassable during...winter” Urged money to “macadamize” a certain number of miles of the principal trunk roads.

1880 1st comprehensive road act funded by poll tax requiring donated labor

1893 1st road paved - SL Main Street

6,341 miles paved in U.S. but few in the west, none in Utah

After Statehood

1904 - Utah had 7,090 miles of roads, with 597 miles of gravel, 11 miles of stone, all others were dirt

Jan 14 1909 First Good Roads Convention held in Utah, 400 delegates, Utah Road Commission was formed by Legislature

1909-1919 Designation of Utah roads begins per County maps “on tracing linen” “in India ink”

1911-1913 Prisoners worked on road crews

1916 1st Federal Highway Aid Act - 50/50 cost-sharing with states

1919 Poll tax repealed

Early 20th Century

1919-1921 202 miles hard surface, 82 miles macadam in Utah = \$5m!

1921 2nd Federal Highway Act emphasizing interconnected national highway system

1927 “low cost oil surface” treatment now widely used in Utah

1931 Arrowhead Highway is now paved through most of state

1931 Utah has 3,426 miles of which 275 miles are hard surfaced

1933 Utah has 4,120 miles of which 365 miles are hard surfaced

1939 Utah has 5,163 miles of which 536 are hard surface, 1,844 are oil, 1,923 are gravel

The Charles Bigelow Scrapbook

1908-1932

Newspaper articles from Los Angeles Times, Los Angeles Examiner, Oakland Tribune, Salt Lake Tribune and many others around the west.

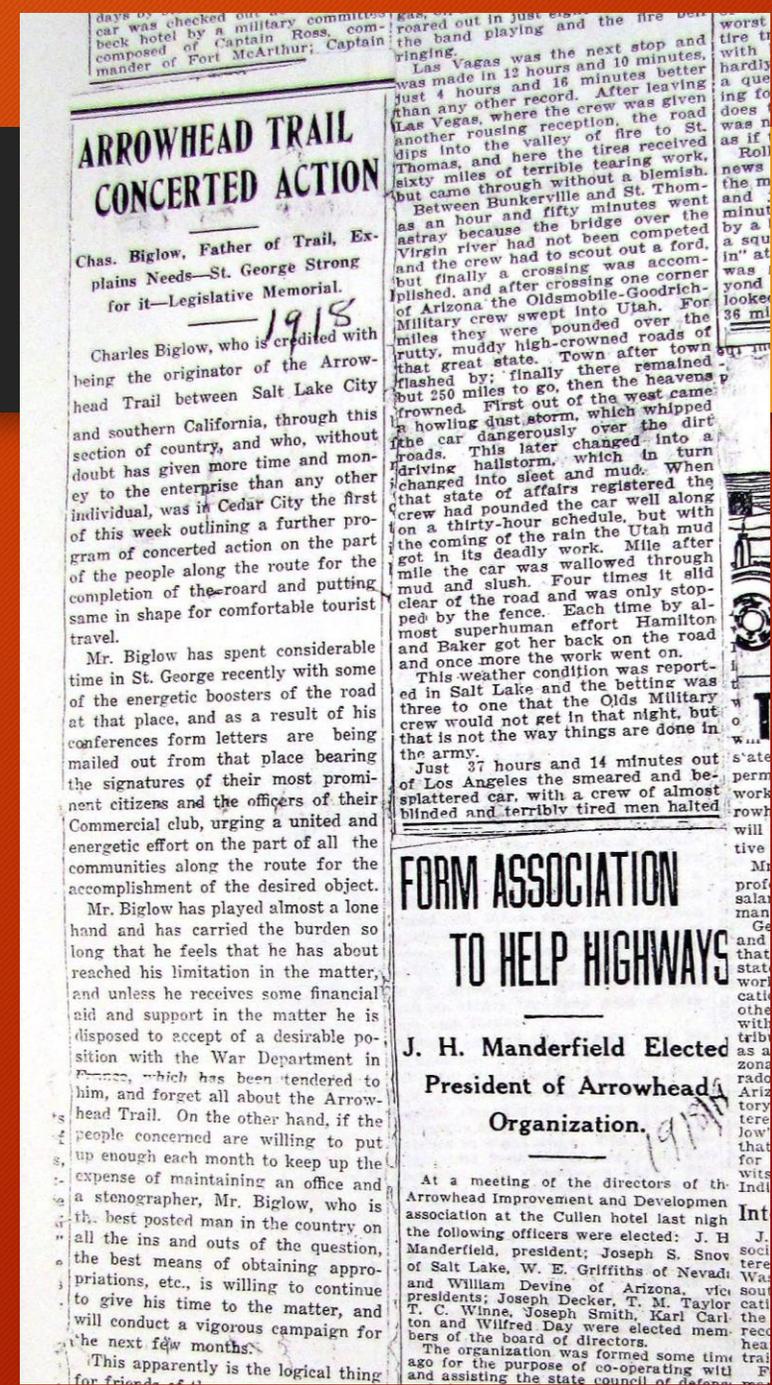
Bigelow wrote most of the articles and pasted the clippings into a 68-page scrapbook. The book is in a wooden box, about 2 feet by 3 feet, 4 inches deep. The pages are deteriorating but there are some black and white copies. It was donated to Dixie State University Library Special Collections after his death in 1958.



Bigelow's publicity campaign

- A flood of Bigelow articles hit the newspapers in California and Arizona promoting Utah as a beautiful destination starting in 1916 and lasting into the 1930s.
- “Charles Bigelow, who is credited with being the originator of the Arrowhead Trail...and who, without a doubt has given more time and money to the enterprise than any other individual...Mr. Bigelow has played almost a lone hand and has carried the burden so long that he feels that he has about reached his limitation in the matter...”

1918, Los Angeles Herald



AUTOMOBILE

EVENING HERALD
WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 19, 1928

SECTION

HIGHWAYS TO UTAH NATIONAL PARK ARE BEING IMPROVED

OFFICIAL GIVEN CREDIT FOR NEW ROADS

Stephen T. Mather Praised for Opening of Zion Canyon for Tourists

By CHARLES H. BIGELOW

It is related that one of the office men here recently had a conversation with the man who made the office, not the office man.

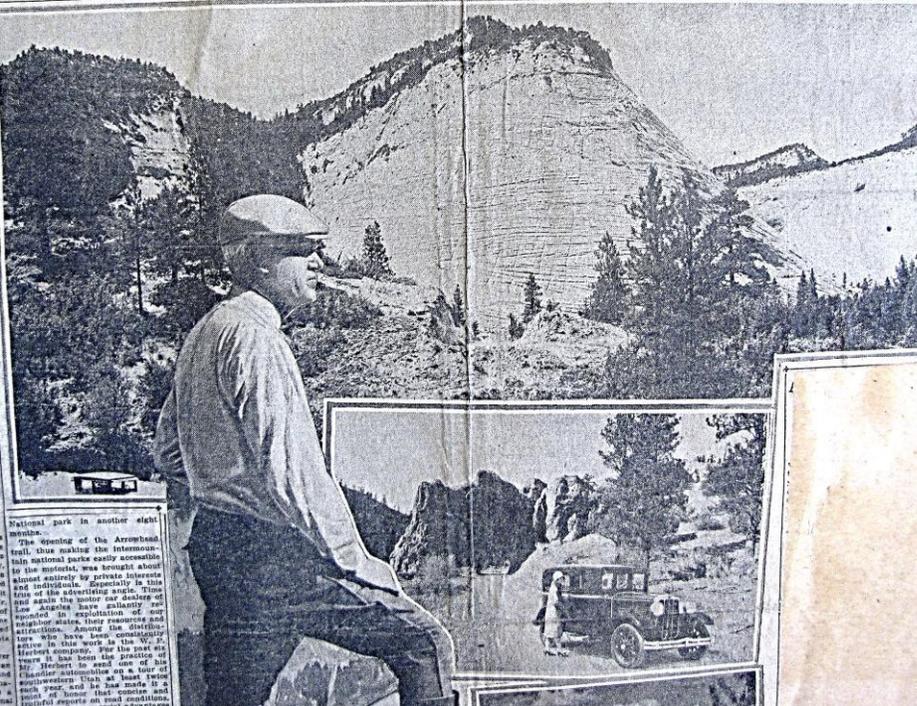
On July 4, 1917, Stephen T. Mather was born in San Francisco. In 1918 he attended the University of California, served on the staff of the New York Sun for six years, was Chicago manager of the Pacific Coast Steamship Co. and became assistant to the secretary of the Interior in 1919.

Among the jobs fitting around the department of Interior was that of director of the national park service. It is not much of a job from a standpoint of financial responsibility. As a matter of fact, quite the reverse, and still Stephen Mather was appointed to this position. It had been made for him originally. "We moderns are witnessing a man of the man dignifying the office."

PLANNED HIGHWAY

In 1919 a handful of Los Angeles business men operating with a like small number of Utah residents headed by Governor William B. Fry, decided that it was high time a motor highway should be opened connecting Los Angeles and Salt Lake City. On March 21, 1919, Mr. Mather was appointed director of national parks. About the same time a favorable road was opened connecting the city of the Angels with the City of the Saints.

After a year of inspection over the road, Mr. Mather became an active participant in the dedication of Zion Canyon. It is a fact that each year, and he has made it a point to see that the road is kept in good condition, and later as a national highway.



LIST 1782 CALIF. AUTO DEATHS DURING 1928

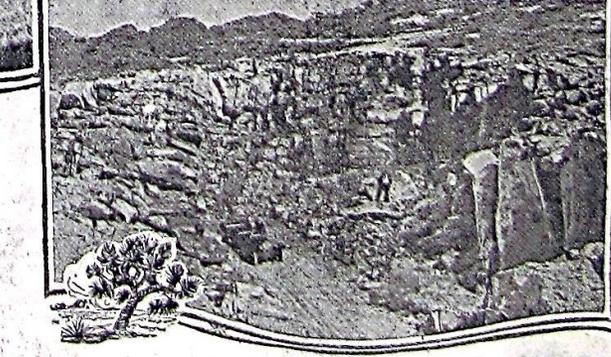
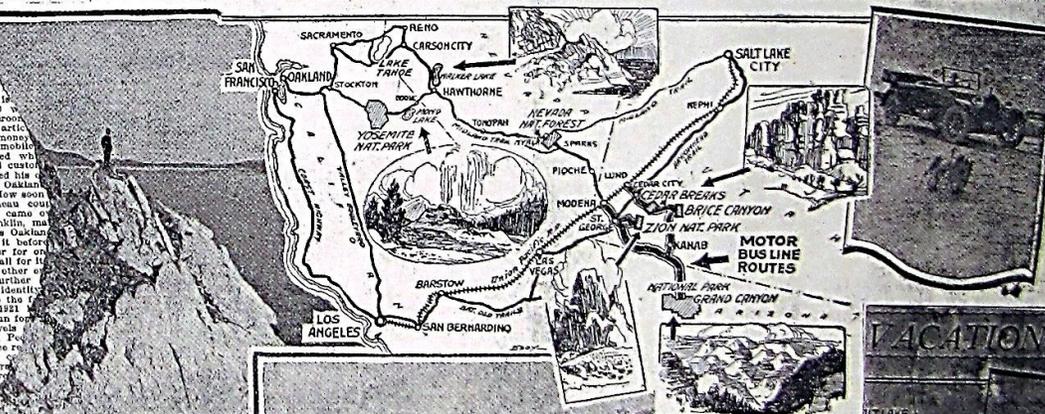
For Every Fatality There Are 30 Injured, New Auto Club Survey Shows

By MORRIS M. RATHBUN, member, New Boardman Automobile Club of Southern California. "What price automobile accidents? When a crash comes in the road and a couple of automobiles carrying half a dozen persons are seen to collide, the first question usually is: 'Anyone killed?'"

If the answer is negative, Mr. and Mrs. American Citizen proceed on their way, after exclaiming, "Well, it was a miracle." Escaping death in that particular instance.

OLDSMOBILE FOUR PARTY LOGS INTERESTING VACATION TRIP

RIVERSIDE, CALIFORNIA, SUNDAY MORNING, DECEMBER 18, 1921



Reconnaissance of inter-mountain highways with an Oldsmobile four. Upper left, Nevada state highway between Blythe and Blythe Junction, California; upper right, Oldsmobile on plain road; Boulder canyon road now under construction by the West End Chemical Co. and Clark, Squaw Valley, Nevada.

By C. H. Bigelow

Vacation trip stories can hardly be considered proper in December, particularly when written regarding a very interesting stretch of road development for the benefit of the Oldsmobile Four in a recent 3000-mile trip through the inter-mountain district.

The activity along the Colorado river looking towards the conservative development of electric power, energizing to a marked degree the valley and Blythe region. Imperial Valley and Blythe valley are busy engaged in improving their connecting longings eyes at the volume of favorable news over the Arrowhead trail.

Each of which will pass through between Nevada and Blythe. A class of motor has been removed that big beat by the construction of a sun-ford bridge, is preparing to reconstruct the road between Las Vegas and Salt Lake.

Utah is building roads to the absolute limit of their tax and bonding ability.

Securic Marvels

So much has been written of Cedar Brakes, Bryce canyon and Zion national park that mere mention of these scenic marvels is sufficient to introduce and make clear to the motoring public the value of the program now blocked out for next season by the Union Pacific railroad.

I deem myself fortunate that I was chosen to undertake this pioneering trip from St. George, Utah, we headed westward to Modena over a magnificent forest road, thence to Pioche, Nevada. Lincoln county and the citizens of Modena and Panaca have joined forces and opened a road before Oldsmobile conditions. It is good leaving Panaca a well improved highway is traversed to Pioche. The loss, with some of its miles over has been worked to any extent below the water level. Mark me, Pioche is not through.

Upper right, Nevada state highway between Blythe and Blythe Junction, California; upper right, Oldsmobile on plain road; Boulder canyon road now under construction by the West End Chemical Co. and Clark, Squaw Valley, Nevada.

Power Project

Again the electric development on the Colorado river will have a hand in affairs. Electricity spoils power. Power is all that is required to pump water and bring Pioche once more into the class of big producers. From Pioche to a junction point with the Midland trail the present road passes Royal City, crosses the White river and enters the Nevada national forest at Sparks, thence to Nevada or an alternative can be taken through Frenching via Twin Pass to the Midland trail.

We chose the Nevada national forest route. I had been told that in the center of Nevada we would find the Grand Canyon, a nature lover's paradise, abounding in small game, streams and streams stocked with trout. Such is the case, and the development of a highway across Nevada along this general line, the country to and from northern California to the crowded wonders of southwest Utah may, if he chooses, avoid a delightful winter's a descent range that is cool, well watered and even now has within its boundaries

comfortably equipped caravansaries. From Nevada lake, as a last side trip will be made to the rim of Little Zion canyon, also to and into Cedar Brakes proper. Combining the itinerary, Bryce canyon and the pass side of the Grand canyon, the north rim, will be next in order. Engineers are on the ground preparing to improve old and build new roads over the Kaibab mountain as soon as weather will permit. Plans are being drawn for a magnificent hotel at or near Panguitch that will rival, even excel, El Tovar.

The various transcontinental railroads have at last decided to meet their interests in passenger travel to the Grand Canyon National park and as a result the vacationist of next season may visit any portion of this domain and rough it only if he prefers being close to nature.

In speaking of the long trip made by the Oldsmobile Four, E. C. Fugle, Riverside district distributor, commented on the sturdy construction of motor. "It was those rugged wheels that enabled the Oldsmobile to cover the long rough trail without hesitation. Many Riverside Oldsmobile owners testify to the satisfaction they get from this car."

"So much has been written of Cedar Brakes [sic], Bryce Canyon and Zion National park that mere mention of these scenic marvels is sufficient to introduce and make clear to the motoring public the value..."

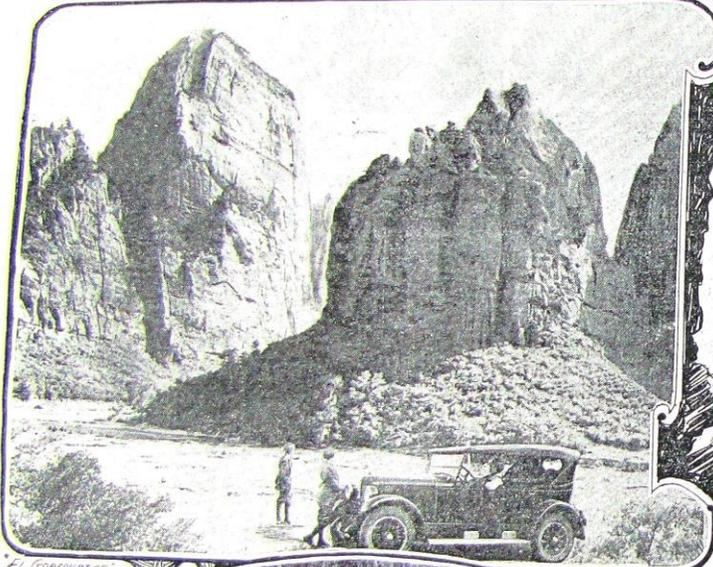
- C.H. Bigelow, December 18, 1921, Los Angeles Evening Express

JEFFERSONIAN DEMOCRATS

Wonders of Zion and Bryce Canyons, Utah

An Examiner Motorogue

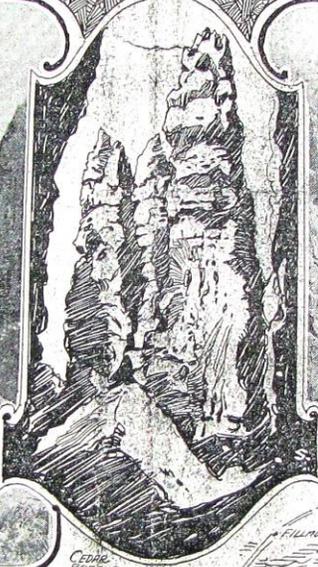
Curved in the sedimentaries that constitute the south 150 miles of the Wasatch Range by eons of wind and water erosion is a colossal scenic intaglio—Zion Canyon. Buttressed sandstone walls, surmounted by truncated cones rise 3000 feet above the canyon floor, 2000 feet done in mottled red and brown, capped by 1000 feet of white, splashed with pink, the whole ensemble toned by an elusive purple haze. Close by and equally scenic lie Bryce Canyon and the Cedar Breaks. The Examiner Motorogue car, a 1925 Cleveland "Six," from W. P. Herbert & Co., visited Zion National Park recently.—Map and sketches by Shuman.



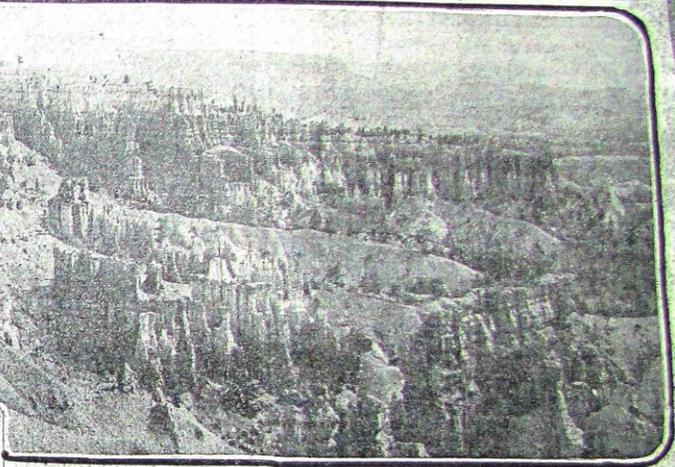
EL GOBERNADOR'S ZION CANYON, UTAH.



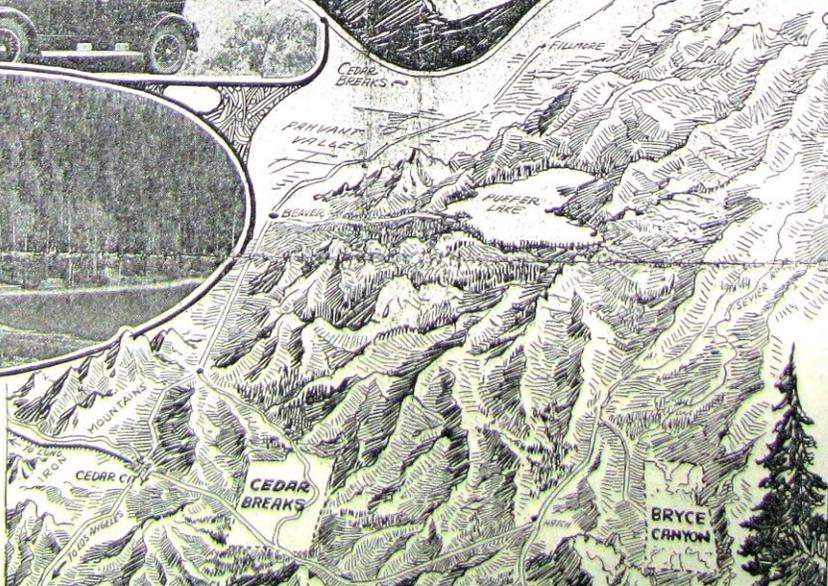
ON THE CEDAR BREAKS LAKE - 19 MILES SOUTH DENVER CITY, UTAH.



Cedar Breaks



SUNSET AT "BRYCE CANYON," UTAH.



Scenic Vacation Trip to Unique National Park

By C. H. Bigelow

ZION NATIONAL PARK, Utah, was prior to its reservation as a park, a national monument called by the old Indian name of the canyon, "Mukuntuweap." It was enlarged, March 18, 1918, by President Wilson to include a total of 76,800 acres and the name was changed to Zion National Park, as the principal accessible feature was a huge cleft in the sandstone formations that the Indians called Kapooch, the great Kanab settlers.

Vague rumors of the wonders of his region constituted all of the information readily available to the motoring public of the Southwest prior to 1918, although the mountains of Southwestern Utah were famed especially among geologists, as the world's greatest examples of erosion.

Zion Canyon and the closely associated scenic marvels, Bryce Canyon and the Cedar Breaks by virtue of a comprehensive scheme of road development have been made easily accessible to the motor-

(Continued on Page 6, Column 1)
The following schedule and itinerary will be helpful: from Los Angeles the first hundred miles to Victorville is pavement. Considering this year as commencing on a week-end, one may leave Los Angeles at 7 o'clock Friday afternoon, making the first night's stop at Victorville. An early morning start from Victorville will permit breakfast at Barstow. Highway construction on the National Old Trails necessitates careful driving.

"Zion canyon and the closely associated scenic marvels Bryce Canyon and the Cedar Breaks by virtue of a comprehensive scheme of road development have been made easily accessible to the motoring public during the past six years...We Californians are so proud of the beauties of our own state we are prone to lose sight of the charm and wonder of the 'just beyond'...Utah is becoming mecca to thousands."

- C.H. Bigelow, August 3, 1924, Los Angeles Examiner

A NEW TRANS-CONTINENTAL HIGHWAY FROM SALT LAKE CITY TO THE SEA

By Douglas White

THE Arrowhead Trail between Southern California and Salt Lake City has been pioneered by the Goodrich-Studebaker scout and the road experts with whom I was lucky enough to make the journey, have pronounced this new highway a thoroughly practical one. As a passenger on this initial journey I must coincide with their opinion. It has taken a whole lot of work on C. H. Bigelow's part

to bring about an awakening to the possibilities of this short line highway between the Pacific and the Rockies and the final organization of the Arrowhead Trails Association at Redlands on July 11 was the first of the real moves to bring the new roadway into reality.

Aid Is Given
Then came the co-operation tendered by the Goodrich and

Along the Arrowhead Trail



ENTERING COAL CREEK CANYON BATTLEMENTED WALLS FRAME IN VIVID REDS AND YELLOWS THE FORESTS OF FINE & SERVICE



"FROG ROCK" SIXTY THOUSAND ACRES OF RED SANDSTONE ERODED IN EVERY CONCEIVABLE FORM COVERED WITH AZTEC WRITING ARE FOUND EIGHT MILES FROM ST. LOUIS, ARIZONA



CIRCLING CRATER LIKE EROSIONS ALONG THE VIRGIN RIVER. THIS HOLE IS OVER FOUR HUNDRED FT. DEEP.



NEAR CEDAR CITY, UTAH, THE MOUNTAIN DALES ARE VERITABLE BOTANICAL GARDENS



PHOTOS SECURED BY GOODRICH-STUDEBAKER SCOUT CAR LOGGING ARROWHEAD TRAIL FOR GOODRICH GUIDE POSTS.

THE SANTA CLARA CREEK FOLLOWS HERE CRACKS IN BLANKET FORMATIONS. A REMARKABLE DEMONSTRATION OF SEISMIC DISTURBANCE THAT MADE THE WONDERLAND OF SOUTHERN UTAH.

“It has taken a whole lot of work on C.H. Bigelow’s part to bring about an awakening to the possibilities of this short line highway between the Pacific and the Rockies and the final organization of the Arrowhead Trails Association in Redlands on July 11 was the first of the real moves to bring the new roadway into reality.”

August, 1924,
Southern California Traffic Journal

Arrowhead Highway spawns an industry -1920s



St. George street signs read “Free Campground” and “Welcome Tourists - Gas - Oil”, 1920s



The Warren Cox family built the Arrowhead Hotel in St. George in 1917.

“Tourist traffic over the Arrowhead trail is growing every week...With the opening of good weather the problem of finding accommodations for the automobilists will be the most serious difficulty for business men of that section. More hotel accommodations are seriously needed...and the construction of two or three hotels along the Arrowhead trail this year will be one important phase of the development of southern Utah.”

Utah State Legislator Joseph Snow, February 5, 1920, Washington County News



Main Route through St. George, 1920s, looking east.
The Arrowhead Highway from LA to SLC was renamed U.S. 91 in 1927;
it wasn't fully oiled until 1931.

Photo: Lynne Clark Collection

New Motor Courts are built for Tourists



In the early 1930s, with the booming tourist traffic, St. George families started building lodging to appeal to the traveler who wanted to park next to his front door.

HERE THEY COME!

*The tourist vanguard is already
over the horizon!*

SAMPLES

of our hospitality and preparedness are now being gathered by every person who crosses our borders. If he likes these samples he will come back again and tell all his friends.

OUR PREPAREDNESS

may be only in course of development, but our

HOSPITALITY and FRIENDLINESS

have never been rationed.

Wishful thinking belongs to the war period, forever behind us. Let's now face the fact that the flood of tourist dollars will come to us only if we deserve them. Forty-seven other states are aggressively seeking them.

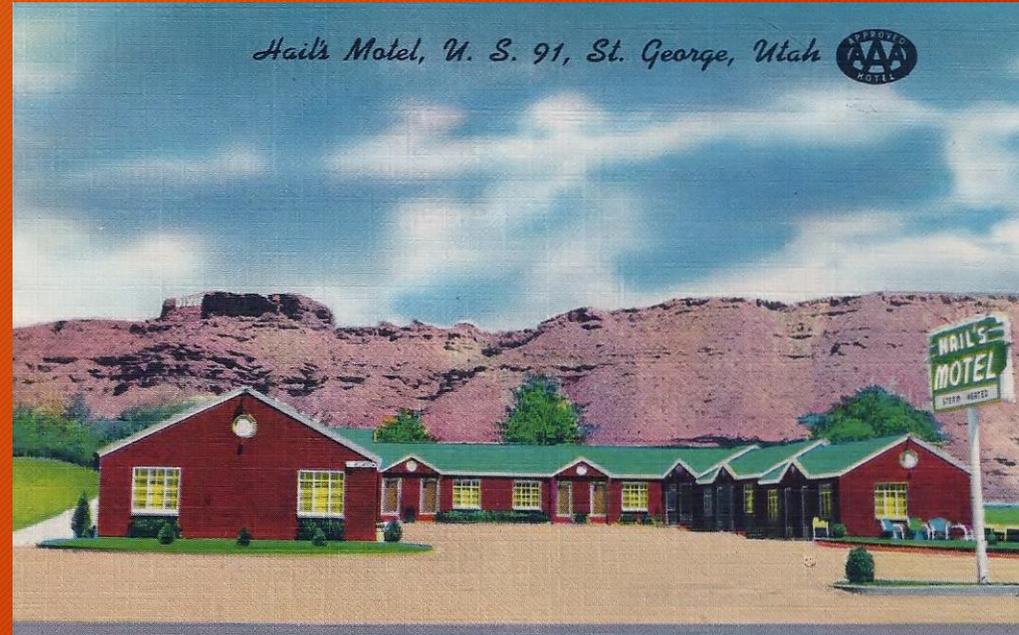
To be remembered twenty-four hours a day:

SERVICE — COURTESY — HOSPITALITY

UTAH STATE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLICITY
AND INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

Atlas Building Salt Lake City, Utah

(This advertisement is number four of a series to promote a future tourist trade for the entire state)



“Ten years ago, St. George and the intervening hamlets were just places where people lived. Today you find paved streets, handsomely appointed hotels and well-kept stores...now they are forward-looking - taking pride in self and ownership. Thanks to highways and automobiles.”

- C.H. Bigelow, May 21, 1931, Los Angeles Evening Express



Bigelow with his official Arrowhead Trail Oldsmobile car on the red hills near St. George, 1930

Photo: Lynne Clark Collection

“[Zion Park] was a land of high flung peaks, deeply graven canyons, timbered mesas and desert valleys, all bathed in gold or red or purple lights, made easy of access and serves today as a vacation land where jaded spirits find rest...”

- C.H. Bigelow, June 2, 1929, *Los Angeles Express*

“Describe a 300-mile circle with Zion Park as the center and therein is a territory in which a dozen lifetimes might be spent in geological, botanical, and archaeological research... sandstone hills sculptured by the winds and rains, grassy leas walled by colored ledges - visions that amaze and delight...”

- C.H. Bigelow, September 2, 1928, *Los Angeles Examiner*



Bryce Canyon National Park - Annual Visitors

1930	35,982
1935	63,703
1940	103,362
1960	272,000
2017	2,571,684



Zion National Park - Annual Visitors

1920	3,692
1925	16,817
1930	55,297
1935	97,280
1940	165,029
1960	575,800
2017	4,504,812

The Legacy of Charles H. Bigelow

“Did you ever meet Charley Bigelow?...We have known Charley for the past ten or twelve years...We met him again Saturday night in the Arrowhead Hotel in St. George, and say, some of the lies we told each other would hardly do to print here. Charley is down there, boosting as usual; boosting is his business, and always road boosting at that...It is safe to say he has pioneered more roads - desert roads - than any other man...”

(The Beaver Press)

“At his own expense and all alone would leave SL in his old Ford or Chevrolet with cans of gasoline - canteens - tire patching - fan belts - oil - springs - and everything to bounce over the rocks and thru sand and mud holes. He would contact anybody along the way whom he thought would help him make a bridge across a wash...”

(Howard Pulsipher)





It is tempting to define Bigelow's legacy in terms of numbers, such as road miles completed, or population growth along his beloved Arrowhead Highway, or tourism figures which grew to include millions of annual visitors. But there is also the profound value of Bigelow helping to discover a unique, hidden landscape and bringing others to experience that with him. The roads he explored and built outlasted him, as did the effects of tourism on the country. Tourism opened up the west, for good or bad.

In that sense, Charles Bigelow's influence is magnified by every visitor and road tripper who comes after him. We are still following his tail lights over the next red sandstone hill.

Thank you to these sources providing inspiration and insight!

Edward Leo Lyman, “The Arrowhead Trails Highway: The Beginnings of Utah’s Other Route to the Pacific Coast,” Utah Historical Quarterly, 1999 and many other Lyman publications

Ezra C. Knowlton, “History of Highway Development in Utah,” 1963.

Utah Digital Newspapers
www.Newspapers.com

Lynne Clark Photo Collection

Las Vegas Age database

Dixie State University, Special Collections, St. George, Utah

Washington County Utah Historical Society website www.wchsutah.org

Utah State Historical Society

