

# Battles Are Fought in Kansas and Indiana

## Industry Vies With Nature



This scene shows part of the site for the proposed Prairie National Park in Pottawatomie county, near Manhattan, Kans. (UPI)

## Where Buffalo Once Roamed

(Editor's note: Unknown to millions of Americans who might one day have a vital interest in the outcome, a fierce battle is raging in the heart of Kansas over creation of a national park. On one side are those who believe it important to preserve a part of vanishing America; on the other, those who would be driven from their homes if the park became a reality. The author of this dispatch, a UPI Washington reporter, spent much of his childhood in the area.)

By **NORMAN RUNNION**  
 United Press International

Manhattan, Kan.—The landmark known as Twin Mounds in central Kansas has witnessed many notable events in the long and colorful history of the great prairies. Buffalo roamed it, Indians camped on it, and Steward L. Udall was kicked off it.

The man who gave the boot—a verbal one—to the U. S. secretary of interior was cattle rancher Carl Bellinger. A tall and lean frontiersman, with a small mustache and twinkling blue eyes, Bellinger was only doing what came naturally to his ancestors a century ago—defending his rights against all comers.

Bellinger's father, in this same territory, saw a Pawnee Indian war party moving by his house 86 years ago. They passed west without stopping. Udall halted awhile and, to 52-year-old Carl Bellinger, the secretary's abrupt and explosive stroll on Twin Mounds a year ago last Dec. 5 was far more dangerous than the Pawnee.

What Udall wanted then, and still seeks, is a Prairie National Park on 37,000 acres of Pottawatomie county. The idea is to preserve part of the vanishing prairie for posterity. The hope is that Americans of future generations may then be able to see for themselves what the great grasslands were like when their population was the buffalo and the antelope.

What Bellinger wanted then, and still seeks, is to be left alone. It is land that is his home and his livelihood, as it is to Glen and Viola Dodge, to Dave Carlson, Earl Moyer and a host of other ranchers who dwell in the 37,000 acres of proposed park.

A bill to create the park will be submitted to Congress. If it should pass, within a matter of a few years the ranchers would be off their land, the fences and man-made ponds removed, buffalo and antelope herds installed, a road built and camp sites established out in the hills.

**Bill Died In Last Congress**  
 A similar bill died in the last Congress, which set up the Point Reyes Seashore National Park in California. One park per Congress usually is the rule. The issue of the prairie merely was postponed.

Sooner or later the Senators and Representatives must deal with one of the stickiest national park dilemmas in a long time. Unlike any other, this one would be created on land that is 100 per cent privately owned. To provide pleasure and history for the whole nation, it would be necessary to bring chaos to the few.

Is it worth it? The ranchers ask.

**No Doubt About Need**  
 Udall has written: "We have no doubts about the need for preservation of a representative section of illustrating an important part of the country's heritage, so that present and future generations may experience and enjoy a sample of prairie as it existed during the days of the Indians, early settlers and emigrants."

To this Bellinger replies: "Doggone it, I think it's just a bureaucratic grab. They've just tried to run over us rough-shod, just as if we don't count."

And there are naturally, counter-arguments. William Colvin, editor of the Manhattan Mercury, a daily with a circulation of 9,500, played a leading role in getting Interior Department to select this particular 37,000 acres for the park.

**View of Overall Problem**  
 Colvin's view of the overall problem is this: "I don't see that the relocation of people is a really valid complaint." He adds: "It's a simple and inexorable example of progress."

Professor E. Raymond Hal of Kansas university, a long-time advocate of a prairie park, has the scientist's view of the need to preserve the prairie grasses. He has

written: "Continued over-grazing just as completely ruined this prairie in 50 years (or less) as plowing it up in two successive years would have."

Disagreeing is Dave Carlson, president of the Twin Mound Ranchers association, which represents the majority feeling of the 101 families living in the park area. Many, like Carlson, raise cattle.

**Now in Better Condition**  
 Carlson says the prairie grass now is in better condition than at any time in years. The owners, he declares with conviction, know that the grass is their salvation.

Mrs. Alice Rader, who lives in Manhattan but who owns 200 acres in the park area about five miles away, muses about the tourists. "They're perfectly welcome to camp on my property," she says. "But once they run into rattlers, chiggers, poison ivy and sand burrs, they'll get right off."

Colvin, rubbing a hand through his crew-cut hair while sitting in the Mercury's small office in downtown Manhattan, takes note of the ranchers' criticism that the 100-degree-plus midsummer Kansas heat will make camping unbearable.

"Anyone who thinks the park service is going to put a site on a hot hill has a hot head," he says, implying the planners will seek cool streamside locations instead.

**Land Surrounds Arguers**  
 Surrounding all the arguers is the land itself. There are stubby, mesa-like hills on which the sky seems to hang; long stretches of gently waving grasses that end abruptly by a tree-shrouded creek; vistas of sky from which erupt sudden and fierce summer storms.

It is dramatic, exciting country, at least to those who love it. At the same time it could perhaps appear ordinary and unimpressive to those whose concept of a national park is glacier-riven mountains, or steaming geysers of awesome canyons.

As one rancher put it: "It's just a lot of grass and sky and dinky little hills. We like it, but I'll bet tourists are going to look at it and wish they hadn't left the super-highway."

**Revolt Against Methods**  
 His fellow ranchers agree. But most of all, they revolt against the so-called high-handed methods which they say have left the ranchers out of the picture. They first heard a park was to be established on their property when they read about it in Bill Colvin's Mercury.

Supporting the concept of a prairie monument are the National Park Service, the preservationists, and the local businessmen.

The park service obviously has no ax to grind. Its one aim is to preserve this minute parcel of Americana which it is convinced may otherwise disappear.

The preservationists are equally detached. They have been horrified by over-grazing in the past and fear it will destroy this land, too.

**Claim They Have No Interest**  
 The Manhattan business supporters claim they, too, have no vested interests except the good of all the American people who need parks. Yet they cannot help mentioning, in the next breath, the down-to-earth effects of an adjacent national park: Great local prestige and thousands of families in cars looking for gas stations, motels and restaurants.

All these factions prepared the scene for Udall when he landed on Twin Mounds and found Carl Bellinger waiting for him.

He had heard the secretary would inspect the park site that day, and that no one had asked permission for him to land on private property. "I thought, the hell with you, you got no permission," Bellinger recalled.

**Udall's Helicopter Lands**  
 So he went to Twin Mounds, and Udall's helicopter landed. "They thought I was there to welcome him," he said, smiling mischievously. "But I wasn't."

Persuasively and firmly, he ordered Udall to get off because he was trespassing. "That was a battle won, but the war still is in progress. Congress alone may have to decide whether the good side is that of the park service, and the need to preserve the American heritage; or, that of the rights and beliefs of a hardy group of men and women who are themselves an integral part of that heritage."

(Editor's note: The battle between big industry and conservationists has been going hot and heavy since the days of Theodore Roosevelt. The latest skirmish in the war is being waged in Indiana, on the shores of Lake Michigan, where industrialists plan to build a steel mill and nature lovers have vowed to stop them. In the following dispatch the Indiana news manager of United Press International tells the story of "The Battle of the Dunes.")

By **BOYD GILL**  
 United Press International

Indianapolis, Ind.—UPI—The flora and fauna along most of the sand dunes on the southern tip of Lake Michigan sleep in peaceful hibernation these bleak winter days while a battle rages from Illinois to Washington over whether the shores shall be a large industrial complex or a nature haven.

But all is not silent in the dunes. Giant machinery is already clearing and preparing part of a 3,300-acre tract in the heart of the dunes for a \$250 million steel mill announced late last year by Bethlehem Steel company. It's going upon a tract known to naturalists as "undisturbed since the beginning of geological time."

While the machines claw at the dunes, two sets of stalwart citizens battle over whether nature or man shall prevail.

The "battle of the dunes" is a fight between proponents of an Indiana deep-water port capable of handling ocean-going ships, loading and unloading cargoes to and from Indiana's factories and fields, and hard-fighting people who consider the unspoiled dunes a vast, unmatched natural treasure.

### 200 Floral Varieties

"The virgin dunes, for esis and bogs contained in these two units largely owned by Bethlehem contain more than 2,000 floral varieties, including plant types native to the south-Western United States, the Arctic regions, tropical climates and of our east coast." So says material published by the Save the Dunes Council Inc., the organization through which the nature lovers are fighting the port.

"Nowhere else is such a variety available for scientific study and education," according to "Save the Dunes." "At this place in the Dunes is perhaps the greatest natural laboratory on our continent."

Supporters of the port include Gov. Matthew E. Welsh, all five living former Indiana governors representing both political parties, both U.S. senators from the Hoosier state and 10 of the state's 11 congressmen. While Indiana Democrats and Republicans once agreed only on such issues as motherhood, they now put forward a solid front favoring a port at Burns Ditch, a narrow artificial waterway which empties into the lake in the dunes area.

### Approved for Feasibility

The port they want to build has been approved for feasibility by the U.S. Army corps of engineers. But Indiana has been stymied in its bid for federal approval and for allocation of funds to help finance the port construction.

The chief roadblock is Sen. Paul H. Douglas, (D-Ill.), who took up the cud-

els for the Save the Dunes Council not long after it was organized in 1953.

When it appeared there was no chance to block a part somewhere in Indiana, the Save the Dunes interests proposed a tri-city harbor in the populous Gary-Hammond. This is where steel-making grew in desolate country south-east of Chicago a half century ago into the second most populous country in Indiana and the greatest steel production center in the nation.

**Setback Announcement**  
 Bethlehem's announcement of a huge mill to be built on the opposite side of the proposed port from a \$103 million plant Midwest Steel Corp. built in 1959 was a setback to the nature lovers. They had contended all along there was no tangible evidence Bethlehem planned to build there, even when the big steel firm bought 4,000 acres and spent \$6.5 million for it.

Douglas' countered with a proposed Senate bill to obtain more than 9,000 acres of dune-lands, including the 2,200-acre Indiana Dunes State park for a national preserve.

Among the government dignitaries whom Douglas attracted to the dunes for a first-hand look was Interior Secretary Stewart Udall. Udall seemed impressed by what he saw.

Washington delays held up approval of the port and Indiana, which previously had set aside \$2 million for the purchase of land for the harbor, girded itself for the possibility of financing the construction of the outer harbor and breakwater itself.

Governor Welsh, a Democrat, with the backing of Lt. Gov. Richard Ristine, a Republican, proposed creating an economic develop-

ment fund of \$36 million. Three-fourths of the fund would be used to start construction of the port without federal aid.

Indiana port interests wore a rut in the road between Indianapolis and Washington trying to persuade the federal agencies to speed up a decision on economic aid.

Republicans backing the port threw in a complaint that the state was being punished by the Kennedy administration because Indiana gave Richard M. Nixon a 250,000-vote majority in the 1960 presidential race.

**Legislature May Act**  
 If Douglas intends to stop industrial expansion eastward around the 42-mile Indiana perimeter of the lake, he'll have to hurry. The Indiana legislature, now in session, is likely to take steps to speed up the port so it can be used before the decade runs out.

Even though the Save the Dunes movement numbers thousands of persons, there is not much of a ground roots drive in Indiana against the port. Too many governmental and political figures, hopeful of seeing the Indiana economy pick up strength to end a lengthy lag, are on the port side.

Port backers point to the State park which stretches for about three miles along the lakeshore and imply the conservationists ought to be satisfied with that. But the conservationists want all or nothing.

**Described by Naturalists**  
 The prize—the dunes themselves—have been described by naturalists since the turn of the century as "unique in North America for geological and botanical contents."

Desert cactus and Arctic jackpine grow side by side with thousands of other

types of plants, some extremely rare, within sight of the great steel complex of Gary. It is a bird watchers heaven.

Naturalists argue that wastes and fumes from big factories will choke out the last vestiges of nature. The shifting dunes and their picturesque formations would perish in a maze of construction, say the conservationists.

### Indiana Spokesman

Chief Indiana spokesman for the nature lovers is Thomas E. Dustin, a Fort Wayne public relations man who fights the port interests with a sharp tongue and unabated energy.

Dustin accuses politicians and government officials of being under the thumb of the rich steel interests. He contends that 87 per cent of the benefits of a public port would go to the steel interests.

While Dustin lashes Welsh, Ristine and the Hoosier delegation in Congress, the Indianans rail at Douglas.

### Using Shoreline Bill

The gist of port-minded Hoosiers contention is that Douglas is using his national shoreline bill as a defense against encroachment on the Illinois port business around Chicago; that he is seeking to keep a large recreational area for the benefit of his Chicago constituents, or that he is carrying on a harassment campaign, because of the 1960 election results.

A national park has been considered in the dunes area since just before World War I. A port has been talked about since 1929. But the two interests never clashed openly until after the Army engineers in 1949 approved a survey for a port and the conservationists hastily organized for the battle against it.

No end is in sight.



This is the site of the dunes area in Indiana on the shores of Lake Michigan. (UPI)