

Introduction

Overview of the US Travel Bureau

From its earliest operation in 1937 until 1942, USTB was a novel and nearly unique agency in the American federal government. Until its creation, the common view was that tourism promotion was not a proper activity for the federal executive branch. It belonged to private businesses that benefited from it and to state and local tourism offices for those regions that economically were significantly dependent on visitors. For example, urban chambers of commerce had organized and promoted city festivals to attract tourists (Cocks 2001) and railroads advertised the scenic locations passengers could visit (Shaffer 2001, chap. 2).

USTB broke that template. It was the first formal effort in the federal government to promote domestic tourism. Its task was to do something Washington had not done before or considered to be within its ken: promoting travel and tourism to the citizenry-at-large. The bureau did this with a full-throated and robust public relations effort, including publications, posters, campaigns, radio programs, advertising, conferences, and newsletters. These PR programs co-existed with Congress's longstanding and general opposition to executive-branch PR, which had been heightened in reaction to FDR's significant expansion of the public relations programs of federal agencies (Lee 2011).

The bureau first came into existence in 1937, when Interior Secretary Harold Ickes established it through a secretarial order. Its initial name was the US Tourist Bureau. Jockeying with the Commerce Department for primacy in promoting tourism, Ickes eventually persuaded Secretary of Commerce Harry Hopkins to yield in the turf battle and agree that domestic travel promotion should go to Interior. Then, with the enthusiastic support of the business sector, the Seventy-sixth Congress (1939–40) passed legislation authorizing a more formal status for USTB. This law also made the

bureau eligible for funding in the annual departmental appropriation bill. FDR signed the bill into law in mid-July 1940, though the bill signing was understandably drowned out by the political news of his nomination for a third term by the Democratic Party's convention in Chicago and by the war news from Europe.

After Pearl Harbor, the agency had an on-and-off existence, still operating nominally until 1943, reviving in 1946, dying again in 1949, reviving again in 1968, losing its funding in 1971, and finally losing its statutory authorization in 1973.

Literature Review: American Public Administration History

Contemporary literature in US public administration is heavily tilted to current-day practices, case studies, empirical research, behavioral research, and quantitative studies. These contribute to the scholarly body of knowledge, yet they are often wholly or largely disconnected from historical events. This often leads to an inaccurate sense of modern practice occurring in a vacuum, even of newness, which can be quite incorrect. Therefore, historical knowledge can help contemporary researchers by adding perspective and context to the subjects being examined.

The study of American public administration history has been a relatively modest genre within the discipline, but it has gradually been growing in scope. Published historical research since 2000 tends to focus mostly on horizontal subjects with broad and overall perspectives, including the Founding Fathers (Bertelli and Lynn 2006; Newbold 2010), gender (Gabriele 2015; Stivers 2000), pedagogy (Raadschelders 2017), Progressivism (Durant 2014; McDonald 2010), performance measurement (Williams 2002), role of Congress (Rosenbloom 2000), public law (Mashaw 2012), civil service (Pfiffner and Brook 2000; White 2003), budgeting (Meyers and Rubin 2011), management fads (Schachter 2017), American political development (Hoffer 2007), and even counterfactual history (Lee 2005a). President Franklin Roosevelt's seminal role in public administration also continues to be of central interest to historians, with recent examples including the Brownlow Committee report, its subsequent implementation, enhancement of personnel management, and FDR's first budget director (Lee 2016; 2018; Newbold and Rosenbloom 2007; Newbold and Terry 2006; Zelizer 2012, chap. 7).

However, there is less historical research using a vertical silo approach, examining individual line agencies in the executive branch. This approach was very popular early in the twentieth century, when the Washington-

based Institute for Government Research (a predecessor to the Brookings Institution) began publishing a book series of sixty-six agency profiles called *Service Monographs of the United States Government*. The first installment was on the Interior Department's Geological Survey in 1918, and the last volume was published in 1934 on the Veterans Administration (*US Geological Survey* 1918; Weber and Schmeckebier 1934). Later, commercial publishing house Praeger released a series of about forty-five volumes on federal departments and agencies from 1967 to 1976, but these were oriented to a more popular readership. There has been something of a modest revival in this somewhat old-fashioned and less glamorous approach to public administration history, although not framed as such. They include examinations of the history of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (Rockwell 2010), the General Land Office (Stivers 2011), NASA (Lambright 2017; 2007), the Food and Drug Administration (Carpenter 2010), and a bureau in the Federal Trade Commission (Paulter 2015).

There is also a growing literature on the history of tourism and travel promotion, both in the United States and abroad. These include Apostle (2001), Baranowski and Furlough (2001), Dawson (2004), Dubinsky (1999), Furlough (1998), Semmens (2005), Shaffer (2001), and Wrobel and Long (2001).

Prospective Significance of the US Travel Bureau

The scholarly literature of American public administration has not included an overall or in-depth examination of USTB. In fact, it is almost entirely invisible. However, the bureau has been of passing interest in the literature of other academic disciplines, particularly the emerging literature on tourism and parks (Berger 2006; Berkowitz 2001; Dawson 2011; Duchemin 2009; Popp 2012; Swain 1972). Other academic research has discussed (or at least glancingly alluded to) USTB vis-à-vis African Americans (Armstead 2005; Sorin 2009), congressional committee jurisdictions (King 1994), WPA writers and artists (Griswold 2016; Pillen 2008), and a biography of Hollywood cowboy Gene Autry (Duchemin 2016). Also, a dissertation in history examined the cultural politics of representations of the American national identity from 1930 to 1960 and included a well-researched chapter on USTB (McLennan 2015, chap. 1).

This inquiry seeks to add to the historical literature in two ways. First, it is a vertical study of one federal agency, representative of the larger transformation of the federal administrative apparatus during FDR's presidency.

The USTB, founded in 1937, can be seen as an example of FDR's expansion in the scope of the federal government. Up to that point, tourism and travel promotion had never been a responsibility or departmental mission in Washington. FDR's administration pushed hard to expand the functions of the executive branch to include a tourism promotion office. In that respect, USTB is an exemplar for the broadening of the scope of the federal government during the New Deal in the 1930s and 40s.

Yet, beyond this generic rationale for a public administration case study that had previously been largely overlooked, USTB is of interest for several other distinct reasons. It stands out because, unlike so much of FDR's expansion of the federal executive branch, its legal status was (eventually) authorized by an act of Congress. This statute was in stark contrast to the many alphabet agencies he created with their legality based solely on executive orders (Lee 2018, 24; 2016, 100). How and why was USTB an exception? The answer leads to another unusual aspect of its existence: unlike the strong animosity and even hatred of FDR and the New Deal by American business and its allies on Capitol Hill, USTB was a program that business liked, wanted, and lobbied for. These strange political bedfellows stood out in an era of the private sector's seemingly implacable opposition to anything relating to FDR and the New Deal.

Travel Promotion as Government PR

Another unusual element of USTB is that the bureau did not produce any kind of tangible product. Unlike most of public administration at the time, it did not create anything, such as highways, parks, maps, and ships; did not run anything, such as schools, Indian reservations, dams, and grazing lands; did not distribute money, such as relief, farm subsidies, and construction grants to local governments; and did not produce scientific research, such as on plants and insects, labor statistics, and drug safety. All USTB did was disseminate information. It was simply and wholly a PR agency.

There were a few limited precedents to such an unusual activity in American public administration, such as USDA distributing information to farmers to stabilize and increase their incomes or the Department of Commerce notifying businesses of export opportunities. In those more traditional cases, the circulation of information was largely limited to specific slices of the economy or to well-defined and attentive audiences, such as farmers and businesses. The information was not of interest to the public at large, nor did it benefit the citizenry in any direct or useful way. USTB

was different. Its informational products and outputs were geared to the undifferentiated public, to any resident (or even foreigner) who might be a potential traveler in the United States.

In some of those comparable examples of agency PR, information that the federal agency would circulate and publicize was almost always prepared and generated in-house by the agency itself. For example, the weather bureau researched meteorological patterns and then, based on its data gathering, released forecasts that interested the public at large. Some of the information USTB disseminated was generated in-house, such as directories, monthly bulletins, maps, calendars of events, and travel posters. However, more often than not, the information it possessed and distributed was provided by entities outside the bureau, even outside the federal government. These materials came from for-profit corporations, such as railroads, gasoline companies, shipping lines, and airlines; from nonprofit chambers of commerce and other business associations; and from the tourist promotion offices of states and regions with a particular interest in attracting vacationers. In those cases, the USTB received materials from those outside sources and then engaged in PR to circulate them. That made the bureau something of an informational way station, a go-between service that added the imprimatur of the federal government on materials generated by third parties. This was very unusual role for the federal civil service.

Finally, USTB's information outputs of the agency were not merely factual, on the level of, say, crop reports and employment statistics. Instead, they were intended to be persuasive. How about taking a vacation within the United States? How about visiting these interesting places? These PR outputs were aimed at influencing the *behavior* of citizens, of convincing them to travel in the United States. This could just as easily be called propaganda because its intent was to affect economic and leisure activities of the public at large. This was contradistinction to the more precedent-based informational dissemination activities of the traditional executive branch. For example, the NWS distributes free and neutral information but with no explicit persuasive bent. FYI, it might rain tomorrow, but it is up to you to decide if you want to take an umbrella when you leave for work or school. In all, USTB's *raison d'être* was pure public relations. PR was its sole mission. Persuasion and modified behavior were the intended outcomes. Success would accrue to the economic benefit of others, not the federal government nor federal taxpayers directly.

As a general rule, Congress, conservatives, and the news media were strongly antipathetic to federal PR, denouncing it as self-serving propaganda, back-patting, and insidious indirect lobbying of Congress by building a

positive image with voters. With effective PR, an agency could increase its autonomy from political oversight and control (Carpenter 2001; Lee 2011). Oddly, USTB faced few to none of those standard political accusations. If anything, the usual sources of criticism of agency PR were pressing the bureau to do more PR, more promotion, more information dissemination. The sky was the limit, it seemed. USTB was the exception to the political rule that federal agencies should be seen but not heard.

Published Errors about the Travel Bureau

For the relatively modest extant literature on USTB, there are an above-average number of errors and misstatements about its life and death that deserve to be corrected, so that future researchers will have a more accurate account. These errors start with the agency's beginnings and continue through to its demise.

Historical summaries of federal tourism policy and administration sometimes wholly omit USTB as the first federal tourism promotion effort. Edgell reported the first "formal legislated involvement" by the federal government in encouraging foreigners to visit the United States was in 1961 (1992, 595). This ignored USTB's early international work, particularly the formal congressional appropriation in 1940 for the bureau to prepare brochures in Spanish and Portuguese for distribution in Latin America. Airey's review of federal tourism administration also wholly overlooked USTB, starting his historical review with the 1961 law signed by President Kennedy (1984, 273). Similarly, a 2019 textbook on tourism dismissed everything that happened in the federal government before the 1970s with the observation that "tourism in the 1950s and 1960s received very little policy attention from the U.S. government" (Edgell and Swanson 2019, 191). USTB's existence in the 1930s and '40s did not merit even a passing mention.

Regarding its beginnings, Sellars referred to "the U.S. Travel *Division* . . . created in early 1937" (1993, 46, emphasis added). No. From 1937 to 1938, it was called the US Tourist Bureau. Beginning in 1939, its name changed to US Travel Bureau. Only when revived after WWII was it called the US Travel Division. He also misstated that the agency's purpose was "to stimulate travel to the national parks." Its mission was to stimulate all domestic travel and tourism, not just to national parks, even though it was a unit within the National Park Service (NPS). Mak accurately stated that before the 1940 law giving USTB statutory status, Interior Secretary

Harold Ickes had transferred it from NPS to the Office of the Secretary in March 1939 (2015, 27n88). However, he neglected to mention that only a year later (and before the congressional enactment), Ickes reversed himself and transferred it back to NPS.

Three publications stated that the 1940 law giving USTB statutory status was formally called the “Domestic Travel Act” (Gunn 1983, 33; Brewton and Withiam 1998, 54) or “the US Domestic Travel Act” (Egdall and Swanson 2013, 41). Actually, the law had no title, as was the common practice at the time.² Swain wrote that the 1940 law established USTB as “an independent” agency and, as a result, “the Park Service bowed out of the business” (1972, 318). No. The 1940 law explicitly created USTB as an entity *within* NPS. It stayed that way throughout its subsequent existence until the law was repealed in 1973. Furthermore, NPS never voluntarily “bowed out.” Rather, it fought tooth and nail to retain this statutory mission and only gave up the fight after the secretary of interior decided in 1971 to cede the jurisdiction for this activity to the Commerce Department.

Berger referred to “the State Department’s United States Travel Bureau” (2006, 85). Wrong. It was in the Interior Department. It received some modest funding from Congress in 1940–41 associated with a larger appropriation to the State Department to support tourism to and from Latin America. Egdall and Swanson wrote that USTB was “superseded in 1941” with the beginning of the war and “ceased” to operate (2013, 41). Similarly, Berkowitz stated that USTB “shut down after the first months of World War II” (2001, 203). Both references indicated that USTB closed shortly after the December 1941 Pearl Harbor attack and the US declaration of war. No, the bureau’s planned shutdown was publicly announced a year later, in December 1942, and its (reduced) staff remained on the payroll until February 1943.

Based on the 1940 law that was still on the books, NPS tried to revive the travel bureau beginning in 1968. According to Gunn, it was “given greater funding in 1970–72. Then, in 1973 the program was again inactive” (1983, 33). No, Congress first formally (resumed) appropriated funding to it for fiscal year (FY) 1971 (July 1970–June 1971). The Nixon administration did not ask for funding for FY 1972, and Congress did not overrule that budget recommendation. That meant the travel office was defunded in mid-1971, at the end of FY 1971. More importantly, what happened to it in 1973 was not becoming “inactive.” Rather, a new law that year repealed NPS’s 1940 legal mission of promoting domestic travel and reassigned this role to the Commerce Department.

Due to this disproportionate number of errors in the literature, this inquiry seeks to reconstruct the history of USTB based as much as possible on primary and original sources and to minimize reliance on secondary sources that might be inaccurate.

Disciplinary Foci

This study of the USTB will likely be of interest to academic audiences in political science, public administration, American history, public relations, African American studies, tourism and leisure studies, and the environment.

In the social sciences, the story of the USTB embodies several different threads of attention and prisms of analysis, including Congress, FDR and the New Deal, bureaucratic politics, the executive branch, administrative history, governmental management and organization, political history, and policy history. As an inquiry about a relatively unknown federal bureau from birth to death, it seeks to present a full biography of USTB in the context of public administration and the federal government. Some of this agency's prominent features included an unusual and almost exclusive focus on public relations, the role of external business stakeholders particularly by pressuring Congress to support creating and funding it, and ongoing dependence on congressional decision making regarding the proper role of the federal government in tourism promotion.

A USTB biography is also about the power of a law, from germination to repeal. Once passed by Congress, the 1940 law assigning the domestic travel portfolio to the Department of the Interior was a kind of administrative and political Rock of Gibraltar. It set in place a permanent statutory assignment to the NPS in the Interior Department, along with the presumption of the continued operations of the agency. The 1940 law gave Interior a monopoly over domestic travel promotion. No other federal agency could legally engage in such activities. NPS was able to wield the law as a powerful club to maintain its possession of this mission. Furthermore, laws are not changed easily. Only if, or when, Congress would repeal or amend the law could the status quo be changed. In that sense, this is the biography of a law as well as of a federal agency.

The 1940 law and its aftermath also reflected internal centers of power on Capitol Hill. Congress had a required two-step process for all federal spending. In both houses, a bill *authorizing* expenditures for a particular purpose could only be handled by the pair of standing committees with

substantive jurisdiction over the subject. For the policy area of domestic tourism promotion and its assignment to the Interior Department, there was conflict between the commerce committees that claimed this was a matter of commerce, and the interior committees because the locale of the activity was in the Interior Department. Generally, the weight of referral precedent gave travel and tourism bills to the commerce committees (King 1994, 57–58). Traditionally, authorization bills set a cap on the maximum amount that could be appropriated for the activity. As a matter of practice, Congress preferred not to authorize an unlimited amount.

The role of the standing committees in passing authorizing legislation was a counterweight to the power of the purse held by the two appropriations committees, with the House committee the more important of the two because the Constitution required that all funding bills had to start there. As a result, appropriations bills were limited to funding an activity that had already been authorized by laws controlled by the standing committees. However, such authorizations did not compel Congress to appropriate any funding for that particular authorized activity. Appropriations Committees could recommend spending less than the full authorized amount. They could not even fund the program at all. A zeroing out of funding was a *de facto* repeal of the authorized activity. Conversely, appropriations could not be made to any federal activity that was not already authorized by a preceding and separate law. Similarly, an appropriation bill was prohibited from amending authorizing legislation. Each funding bill was limited to authorizing decisions about the annual amount of money dedicated to that activity or agency.³

USTB's story is about politics writ large, including that of private-sector interests lobbying Congress, an agency seeking to promote its standing with stakeholders, cabinet secretaries competing for primacy within a presidential administration, and whether differences in party control of Capitol Hill and the White House were significant in setting USTB's role. The USTB also embodies a never-ending bureaucratic turf war between the Departments of Interior and Commerce that seemed to be the public administration equivalent of the Thirty Years War. The multiple changes in presidents and secretaries appeared to have little effect on their respective and continuing efforts for primacy.

This political, legislative, and bureaucratic wrangling also presents a case study of public policy: who makes it, how it is made, how it is implemented, and how it is changed. Just as USTB is a biography of an agency and of a law, it is also the biography of a public policy. In this case, from

the perspective of policy history, it goes from initial ideas to final burial (at Interior) and rebirth (in Commerce). It is a full circle of the public policy process, or at least a complete chapter of this particular policy history. In the longer perspective that history offers observers of public policy, USTB's eventual extinction is also the story of a policy failure. Zelizer has argued that the historical examination of failures can be as interesting and instructive as successes. He noted that the contemporary revival of political history needed to include forgotten events and specifically failures (2012). Recounting these stories can be as valuable and helpful as the remembered narrative of major events and policies that were enacted and remained in force.

For historians, the saga of the USTB fits into several disciplinary subcategories, including the presidency and Congress, FDR and the New Deal, federal executive-branch expansion, and twentieth-century American history. Smaller parts of the story entail the records of Presidents Truman, Johnson, and Nixon (chap. 9).

For the study of public relations and mass communication, the record of USTB explores a relatively novel manifestation of the practice of public relations in the American public sector. There is a growing literature on the governmental promotion of tourism by other countries, including Canada (Dawson 2004; Dubinsky 1999), France (Furlough 1998), Great Britain (Buzard 2001), and Nazi Germany (Baranowski 2004; Semmens 2005). Generally, the historical literature of American public relations focuses on the for-profit business sector and, sometimes, on the nonprofit sector (aka NGOs). Knowledge of the history of the practice of PR in public administration has been relatively limited (Lee, 2014; 2017a; Lee, Likely, and Valin 2017). There is also an emerging literature on place branding by governmental entities as a form of marketing, tourism destination promotion, and local identity (Zavattaro 2015; 2018).

This is the story of a government agency whose sole assignment was to engage in external communication. Generally, government PR was a controversial subject, especially with the congressional conservative coalition and particularly when FDR was president. Yet here was a rare example of an executive-branch agency assigned by Congress to engage in public relations—and just public relations—for a goal that was declared through the law-making process as in the national interest. Using PR to increase domestic tourism was, unusually, suddenly declared a good thing for government to do. This then justified the expenditure of tax dollars and the employment of civil servants. That FDR was president (and, in fact, in the midst of running for an unprecedented third term) did not seem to bother these

conservative lawmakers. Once up and running, USTB become something of the government PR equivalent of a retail big-box category killer or of a regional shopping mall. It engaged in just about every mass-communication technique then available to reach the public at large. It sought to persuade citizens of the value of traveling to see other parts of the country. USTB was government PR to the max.

In the field of African American studies, USTB was something of a quiet standout in FDR's administration regarding his civil rights record. It made a distinct and positive contribution by viewing African American citizens as equally important potential tourists as white Americans. USTB disregarded possible backlash from attacks by racist politicians in Congress. It hired three African Americans to work in its New York office, produced marketing materials to encourage African Americans to travel, printed guides with locations of hotels and guest houses that welcomed African Americans, and included a regular column addressing the interests of African American travelers in the newsletter that USTB mailed to travel professionals throughout the eastern United States. It also openly cooperated with the privately published *Green Book* guides for African American tourists.

A relatively new and growing academic discipline in American institutions of higher education encompasses tourism, travel, leisure, parks, and recreation. This book is about the earliest history of tourism and park promotion in the federal government, including the first federal agency formally tasked with encouraging domestic tourism. Its story also reflects the emergence of the travel industry as a major economic sector and the politics of tourism promotion. Given that USTB presents a template (or at least a chapter) regarding federal involvement in travel promotion, it may well suggest outlines of future similar struggles over this federal policy role, including political debates about the sources and levels of funding for such programming.

Finally, the history of USTB reflects the early stirrings of environmental protection as a field of study. In its initial years, as a unit within the National Park Service, USTB encouraged Americans to visit parks and thereby gain an appreciation for the vistas and unique outdoor sites that NPS was protecting. In particular, as president, FDR had significantly expanded the amount of federal lands protected from private ownership in order to enhance the conservation role of the national government (Brinkley 2016). USTB's promotion in the late 1930s and early 1940s of domestic tourism was a way to encourage Americans to visit these newly protected areas, to appreciate the importance of conservation, and to generate support for

Roosevelt's accomplishments in this matter. This environmental orientation of travel was further emphasized by USTB's post-WWII incarnations. As the US Travel Division in 1946–49, it explicitly promoted conservation and the prevention of stream pollution as impetuses for increasing domestic tourism (chap. 8). USTB's third existence, as NPS's Travel Office during the final years of the Johnson administration and initial years of the Nixon presidency, coincided with the rise of the modern environmental movement, such as the first Earth Day and the establishment of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). During those years, the head of the office linked the rise of interest in the environment with travel so that Americans could see for themselves important examples of NPS's protection of the physical and natural environment (chap. 9).

Research Methodology and Structure

In 2018, the editors of *Public Administration Review* noted that triangulation “seems to have been rediscovered by public administration scholars in recent years” (Battaglio and Hall, 825). As a research design, triangulation is an exceptionally useful approach for reconstructing the historical record of an institution, particularly because it helps fill in lacuna of any individual sources (McNabb 2018, 46, 289, 379, 417–18). Its benefit is “piecing together many pieces of a complex puzzle into a coherent whole” (Jick 1979, 608). Another advantage is the ability to create “a chronological reconstruction” of events and developments (van Thiel 2014, 149). Finally, triangulation can sometimes corroborate or contradict accounts from another source. When coming from a second unrelated and independent source, this adds credibility and veracity to events and developments. It is also very helpful in identifying discrepancies about those events. For this study, the three sources I relied on were archival documents, official federal publications, and contemporaneous journalism (Lee 2019).

An obstacle to reconstructing USTB's history was the relatively limited amount of archival material on the agency at the National Archives II site in College Park (MD). Other scattered archival sources (acknowledged in the preface and listed individually in the bibliography) helped fill in many gaps. However, one notable exception of missing documentation was the Interior Department's Secretary's Orders. These legal documents are rarely cited in historical and public administration literature, even though they are the cabinet-level counterparts to presidential executive orders. These

secretarial orders were authoritative decisions, promulgated as formal legal documents, and were usually numbered. Several important administrative developments regarding USTB occurred through secretary's orders. However, they were not in "Numbered Secretarial Orders, 1925–1967" of the Records of the Secretary of Interior (RG 48) at National Archives II. Similarly, they were not in the reference collection of the Department of Interior Library,⁴ the Departmental Orders folder in Box 156 of the Ickes Papers at the Library of Congress Manuscript Division, nor were they published in the *Federal Register* (as some later ones were). I also consulted with previous NPS historians⁵ and the government information librarian at the Wisconsin Historical Society.⁶ The only relevant secretarial order I found was Secretary Udall's 1968 decision to revive the bureau, located in the papers of NPS director Hartzog.

Other helpful sources for reconstructing USTB's story were official federal publications. These included congressional hearings, committee reports, presidential messages, and committee documents. In one case, an unpublished congressional hearing was in the ProQuest congressional database. The Travel Bureau's publications were similarly helpful. Some were serials, such as its *Official Bulletin* and the newsletters of its New York and San Francisco field offices. The bureau also occasionally issued other publications, such as calendars of events and research reports.

Even though journalism is sometimes discounted by academic historians as a nonoriginal and nonprimary source, it can be very valuable in the triangulation approach as an independent source that might confirm or supplement other sources. Such contemporaneous material has another particular benefit of presenting a "you are there" perspective. Reporters and other writers were conveying how things looked at that point, with no idea how the story would turn out in the long run. This provides a good counterbalance to the inevitable tug of hindsight that often invisibly plagues historians. There is an unintended tendency to disregard or downgrade that which seems ultimately unimportant based on later developments. The arc of historical storytelling of governmental history should be about letting the story unfold as it did, particularly when the outcome of events was uncertain or unpredictable. From that perspective, historians need to recognize that journalism is indeed "the first rough draft of history."⁷

When it was necessary to interpret and analyze the historical record or connect the dots due to gaps in source material, I applied the historical evaluation standard Clark used for identifying the origins of World War I. He called it the logic of "maximum plausibility" for explicating events and

motivations (2013, 48). This approach can somewhat strain the justifiable academic insistence on careful judicious documentation. However, in a few cases, it seemed necessary to try to pull back the curtain and examine possible motivations and political considerations. I have been as restrained as possible about using Clark's historiographic technique.

A note on nomenclature. The federal agency promoting domestic tourism went through multiple name changes. It began as the US Tourist Bureau; then it became the US Travel Bureau. After WWII, it was US Travel Division and in the late 1960s and early 1970s, its name was the Office of Travel and Information Services. During its existence, the agency's longest lasting title was US Travel Bureau. Therefore, for simplicity sake, when discussing the overall record of the domestic tourism promotion effort at the NPS and the Interior Department, I have used the name US Travel Bureau and its acronym (USTB) as a generic term. This covered not only when that was its formal and legal title, but also in other post-WWII contexts as an overall reference to its activities throughout its existence.

The structure to follow is chronological, beginning with the pre-FDR congressional efforts to involve the federal government in tourist promotion (chap. 1), the administrative creation and operations of the US Tourist (later Travel) Bureau (chaps. 2–4), the congressional act creating USTB as a statutory agency in 1940 (chap. 5), and the programs of USTB until Pearl Harbor in December 1941 (chap. 6). USTB gradually went out of existence after the US declared war, lasting in reduced form until early 1943 (chap. 7). With the end of the war, the Truman administration tried to revive it, but it shut down again in 1949 due to Congress refusing to fund it further (chap. 8). Then President Johnson's administration revived it in 1968–69 and Congress funded it through 1971. The Nixon administration was not as interested and declined to propose funding USTB for FY 1972. Then, in late 1973, President Nixon terminated USTB's legal status by signing legislation transferring the statutory duty for promoting domestic travel from the Interior Department to the Commerce Department (chap. 9).