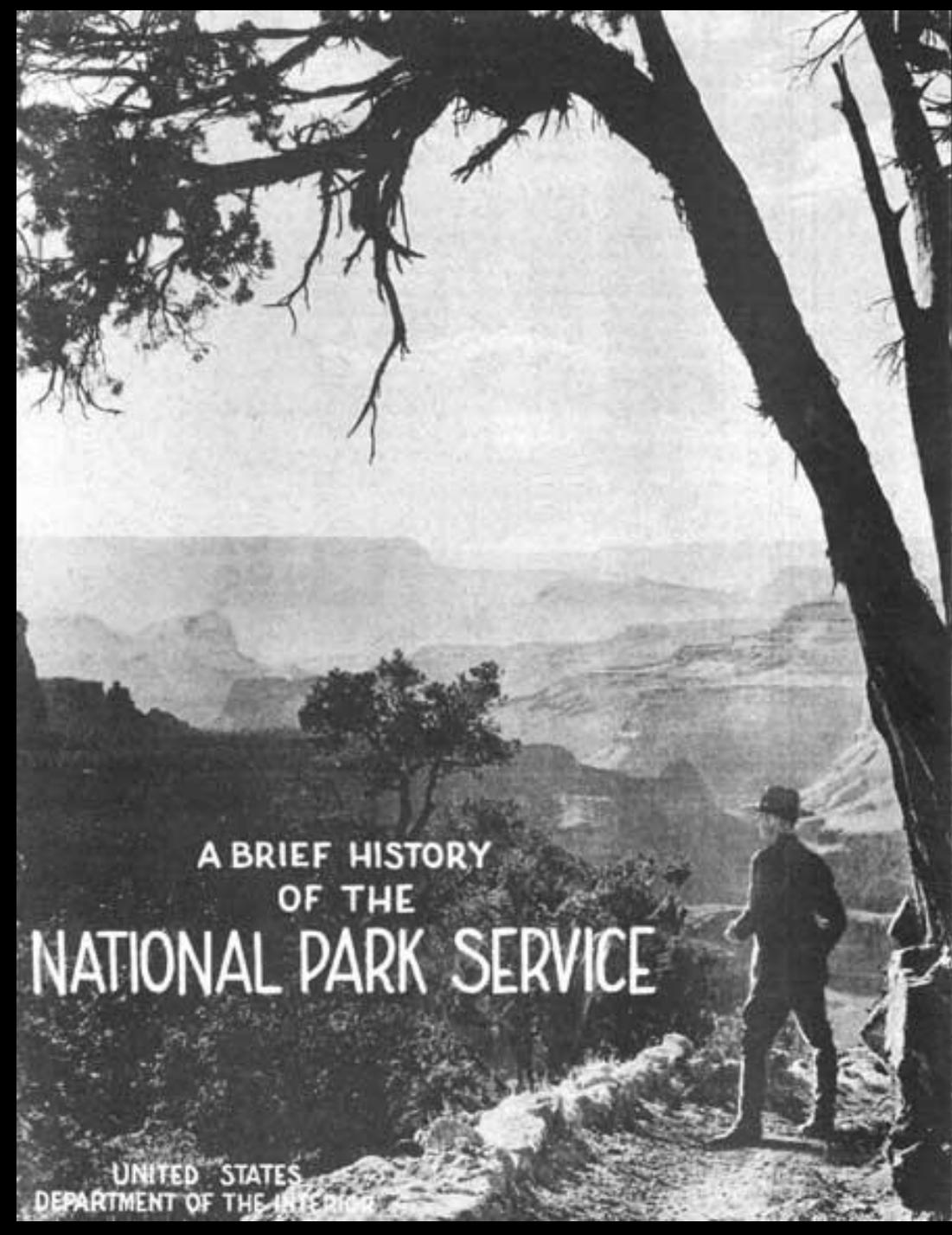


Happy 100th!

**The National
Parks and the
American
People, Week 2**



**A BRIEF HISTORY
OF THE
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE**

**UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**



America's Heritage: A Historian's Perspective on the National Parks

“Americans [in the late 19th-century] feel that the United States is somehow inferior to Europe. The United States doesn't have the ruins of Rome or Greece, it doesn't have the Acropolis, it doesn't have the Parthenon. And so it seems like we're an inferior nation. And yet the one thing we do have is a nature that looks closer to the new morning of God's own creation, closer to Paradise than anything that Europe has to offer. And so the thought is that if we're to **preserve anything that stands for the glory of America, then these overwhelmingly beautiful, sacred spots are the ones we ought to preserve.”**

--William Cronon

Culture ◆ *Nature*



William Louis Sontag, 1859-1860 *Shenandoah Valley*



***Nature:* (OED) – Middle English – vital or physical powers of a person; one’s strength, substance, or character. The inherent or essential quality. Derived from the Latin *natura* – birth or creative power. It was not until the 18th century that ‘nature’ came to be associated with the phenomena of the physical world, apart from humans.**

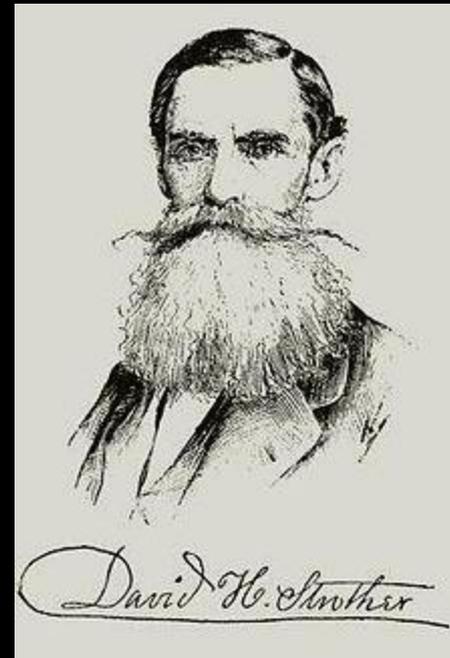
Coalbrookdale, English Midlands, 1709



HARPER'S
NEW MONTHLY MAGAZINE.

No. LXIII.—AUGUST, 1855.—VOL. XI.

“Virginia Illustrated: Adventures of Port
Crayon and His Cousins”



THE GREAT TOWER.

Regionalism and Local Color

Emerson



Thoreau



Fuller



**The intellectual ancestors of National Parks in the U.S.:
Transcendentalists, concerned about the loss of eastern wilderness**

**Thoreau suggested that every township should have a park or a
wilderness area maintained for instructional purposes.**

Saving For Later Generations: Conversation and Preservation

"Optimism is a good characteristic, but if carried to an excess, it becomes foolishness. We are prone to speak of the resources of this country as inexhaustible; this is not so."

Theodore Roosevelt. Seventh Annual Message to Congress, December 3, 1907

"Climb the mountains and get their good tidings. Nature's peace will flow into you as sunshine flows into trees. The winds will blow their own freshness into you, and the storms their energy, while cares will drop off like autumn leaves."

John Muir, *Our National Parks* (1901)

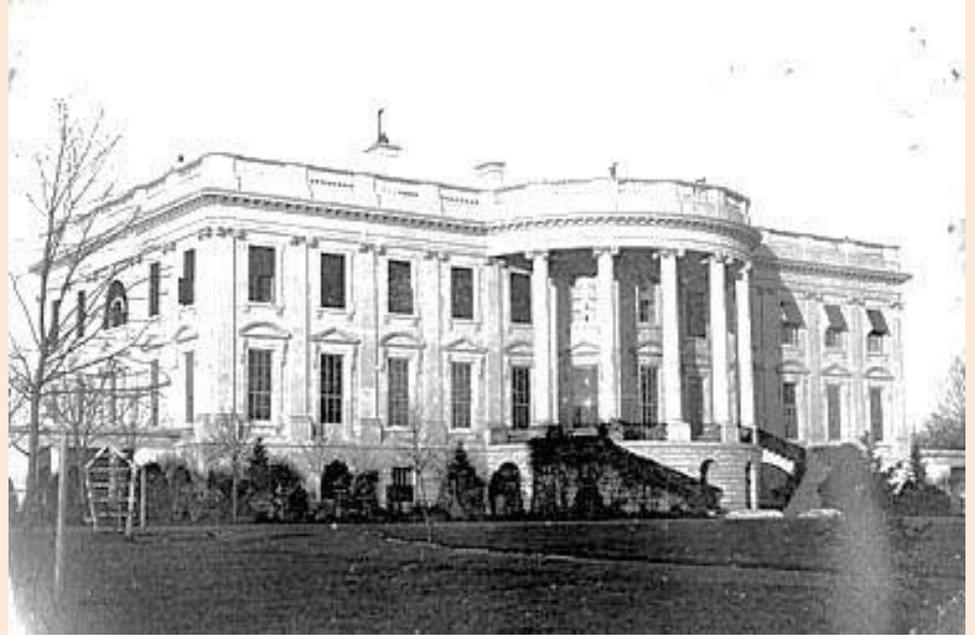


Teddy Roosevelt and John Muir at Yosemite

The words "national park" have special meaning to most people, conjuring up images of Old Faithful, Yosemite Falls, and the Grand Canyon.



Historically the first U.S. parklands trace their origins to the 17 public reservations that the federal government acquired in 1791 for the nation's capital. They included the National Mall, the White House grounds, and other units in the District of Columbia.



1846- First known photo of the White House



White House Today

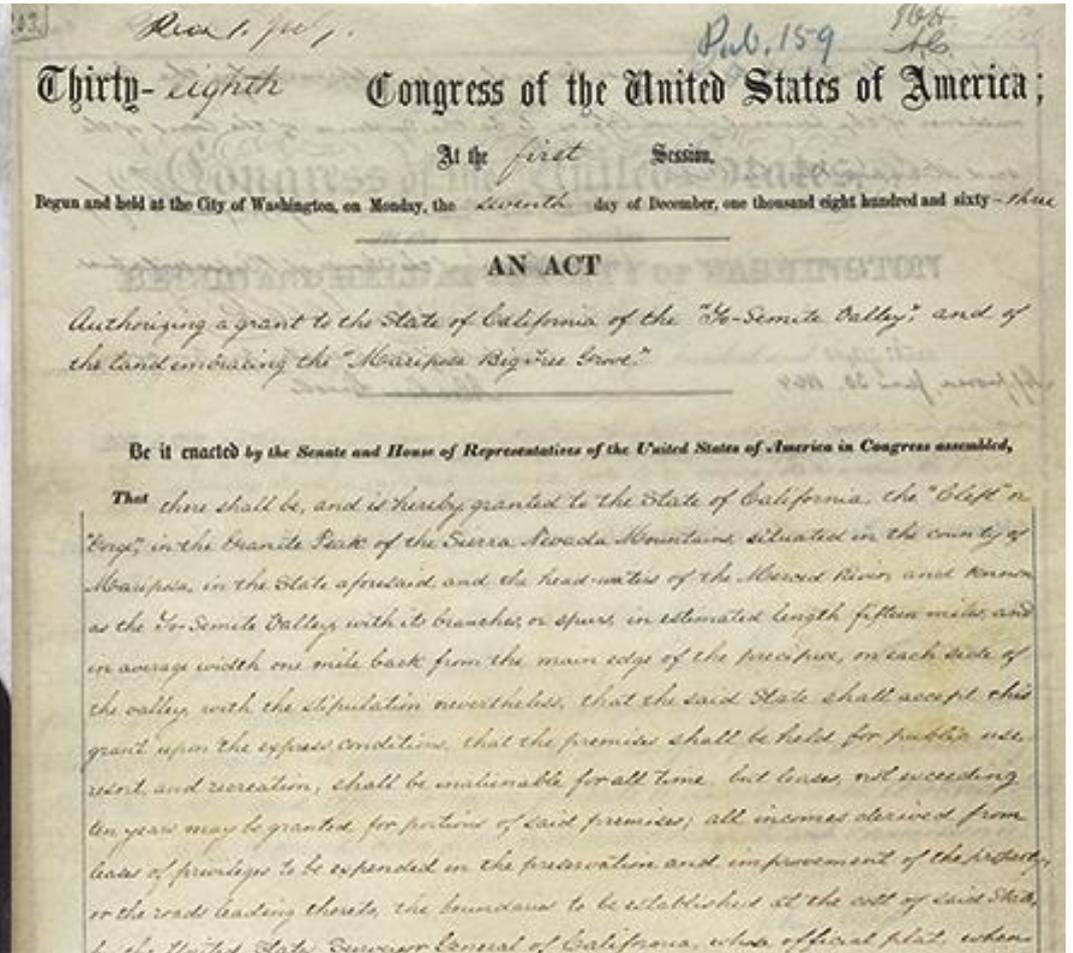
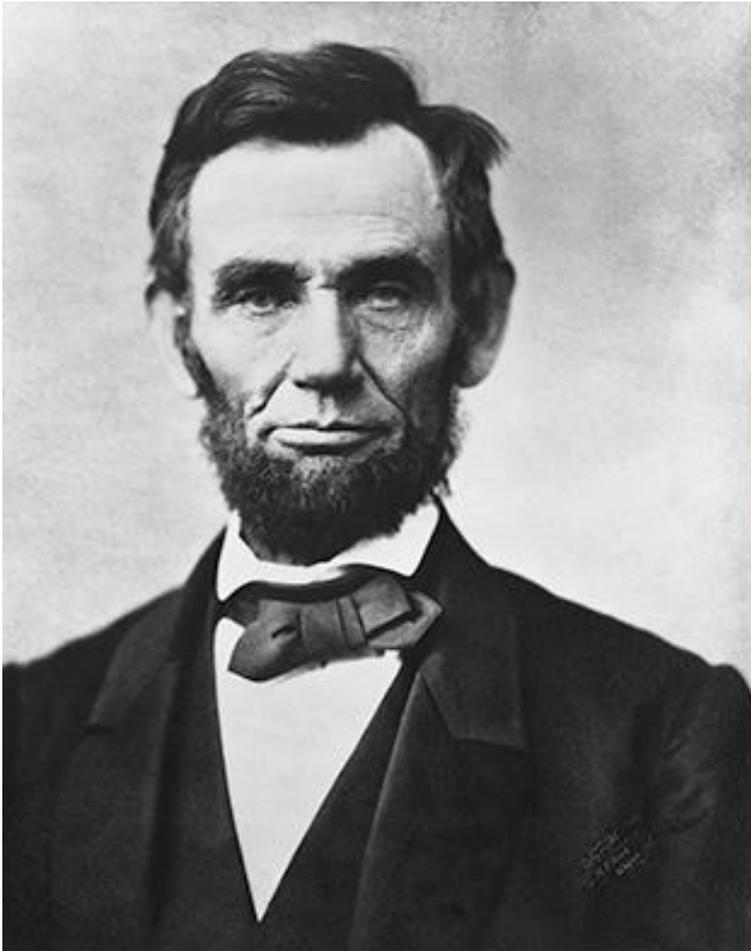


The idea of parks was carried forward by several individuals. One of the most influential was Frederick Law Olmsted (1822-1903).

Among many other projects, Olmsted designed New York City's Central Park. This was an effort to preserve "a specimen of God's handiwork" (1858).

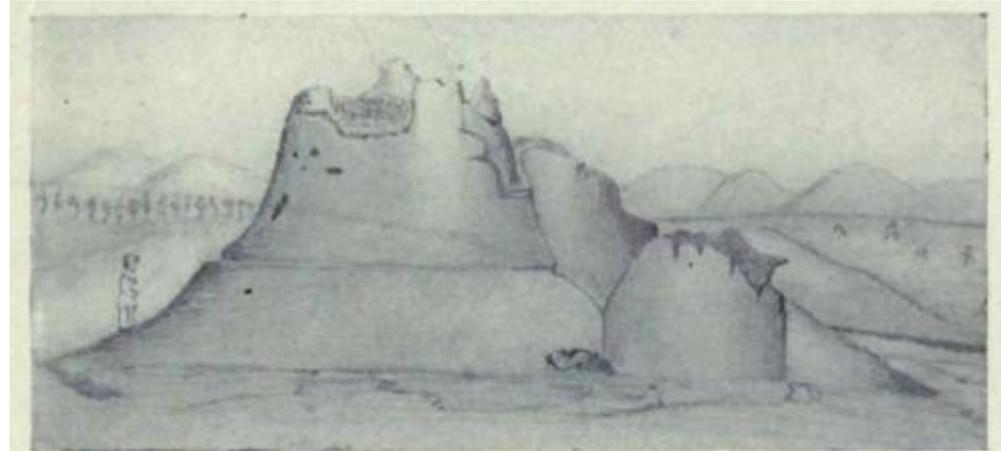


AN ACT AUTHORIZING A GRANT TO THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA OF THE "YO-SEMITE VALLEY," AND OF THE LAND EMBRACING THE "MARIPOSA BIG TREE GROVE," Approved June 30, 1864 (13 Stat. 325)



Yellowstone

- 1870: Marked first “official” exploration of the territory;
 - Gen. Henry D. Washburn led U.S. cavalry to remove the Crow and Blackfeet
 - Legends of Yellowstone spread through word of mouth

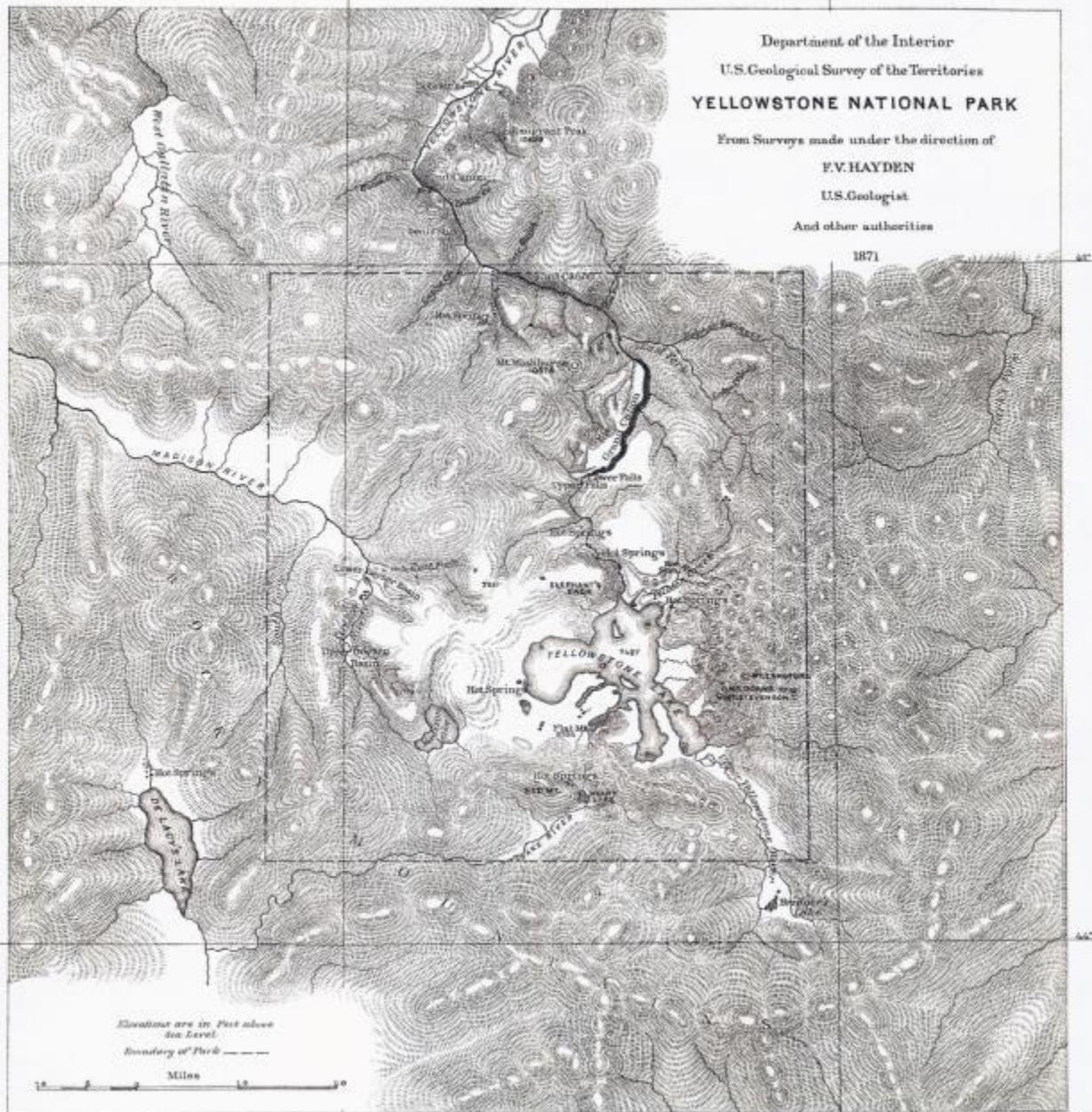


CASTLE GEYSER CONE.
ORIGINAL SKETCH.

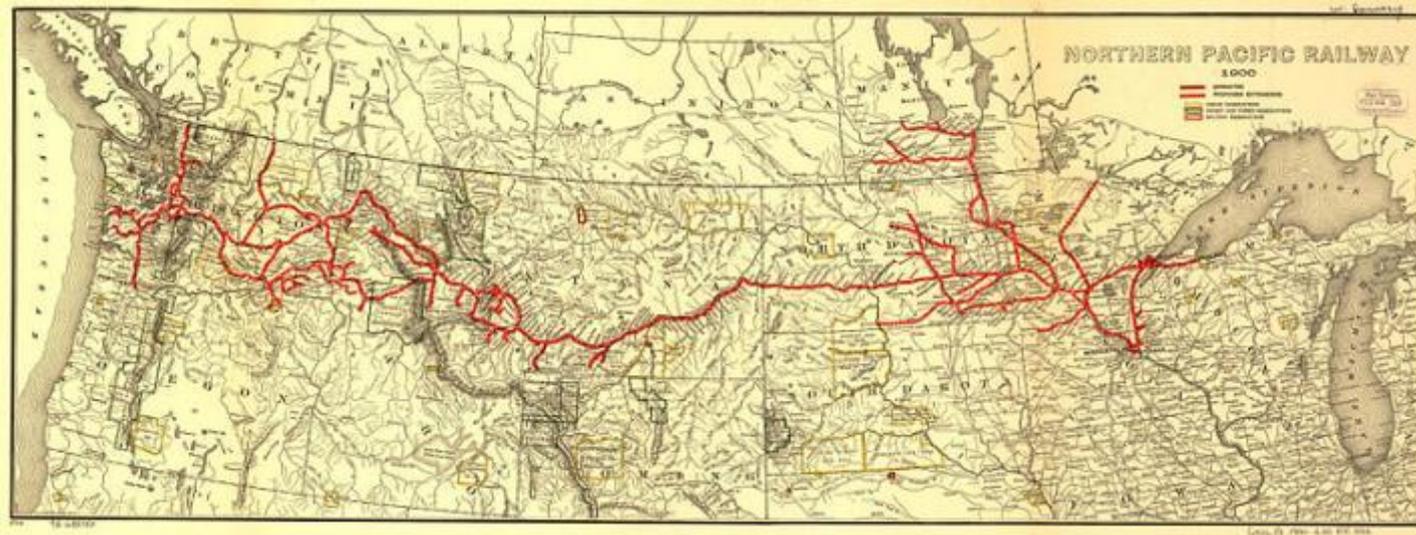
1871: Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone, William Henry Jackson







Yellowstone National Park, established in 1872, was the first federally managed national park in the world. It was the first embodiment of the national park idea – the world’s premier example of large scale natural preservation for all the people.



At the same time, regional railroad companies were making long-distance travel possible. In Yellowstone, this was the Northern Pacific Railway.



After Yellowstone's establishment, the national park idea was attacked by special interests, stoutly defended by friends in Congress, and successively refined and confirmed. Fourteen more national parks were established in the West between 1872 and 1916, most of them closely following the Yellowstone prototype.

**1890– Sequoia National Park
(California)
1899-- Mount Rainier National Park
(Washington)
1902-- Crater Lake National Park
(Oregon)
1903-- Wind Cave National Park
(South Dakota)
1906-- Mesa Verde National Park
(Colorado)
1910 Glacier National Park
(Montana)
1915 Rocky Mountain National Park
(Colorado)**



Crater Lake National Park

Yosemite and Mariposa Grove were returned to the federal government in 1906 to become Yosemite National Park.



WHY PRESERVE?



BATTLE OF CHICKAMAUGA.

Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park, est. 1890

During this period, several federal agencies were established for the management of natural resources:

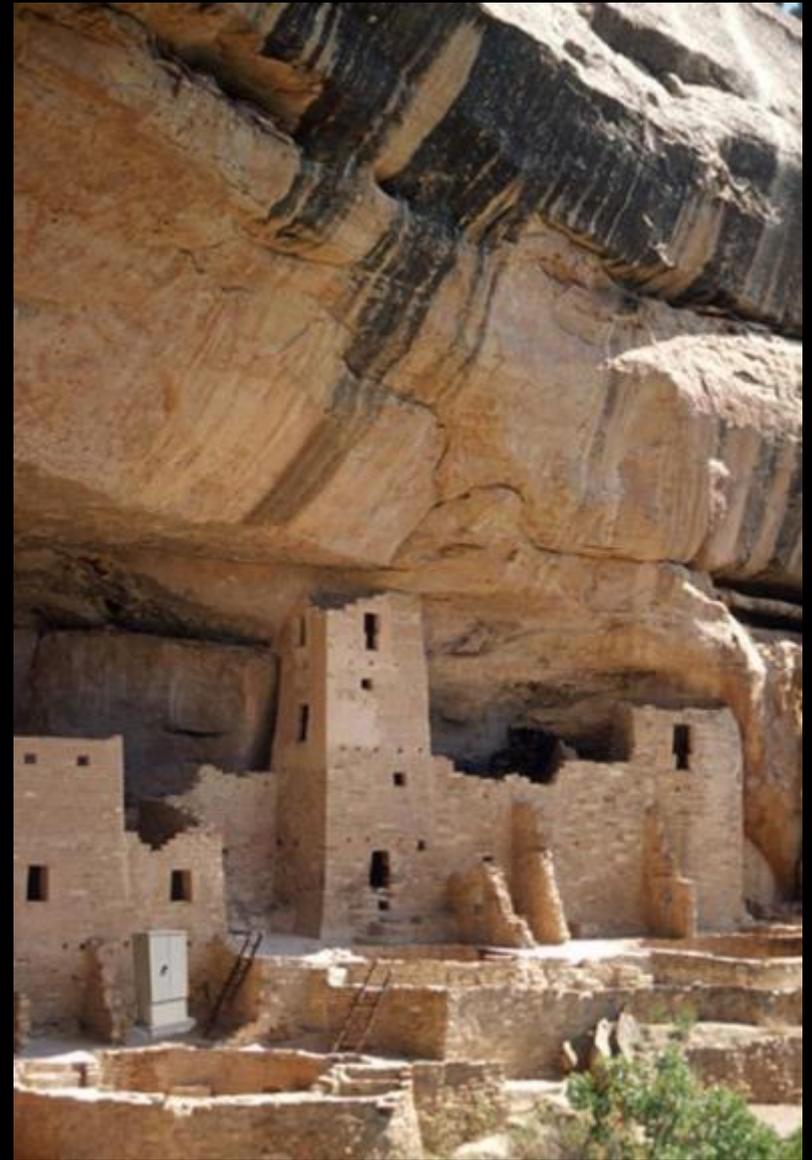
- 1. National Forest System – 1891**
- 2. Division of Forestry of USDA – 1898**
- 3. United States Bureau of Reclamation - 1902**
- 4. United States National Wildlife Refuge system – 1903**
- 5. United States Forest Service – 1905**

Pelican Island Refuge, in the Indian River lagoon on Florida's east coast, was the **first national wildlife refuge. It provided protection for egrets and other wading birds.**



A separate movement got underway to protect the cliff dwellings, pueblo ruins, and early missions discovered by cowboys, army officers, ethnologists, and other explorers on the vast public lands of the Southwest.

They were especially threatened by plunder and destruction at the hands of artifact hunters and vandals. With help from Sen. Henry Cabot Lodge, the **Antiquities Act** was passed in 1906 to help protect such areas and structures.



Mesa Verde National Park



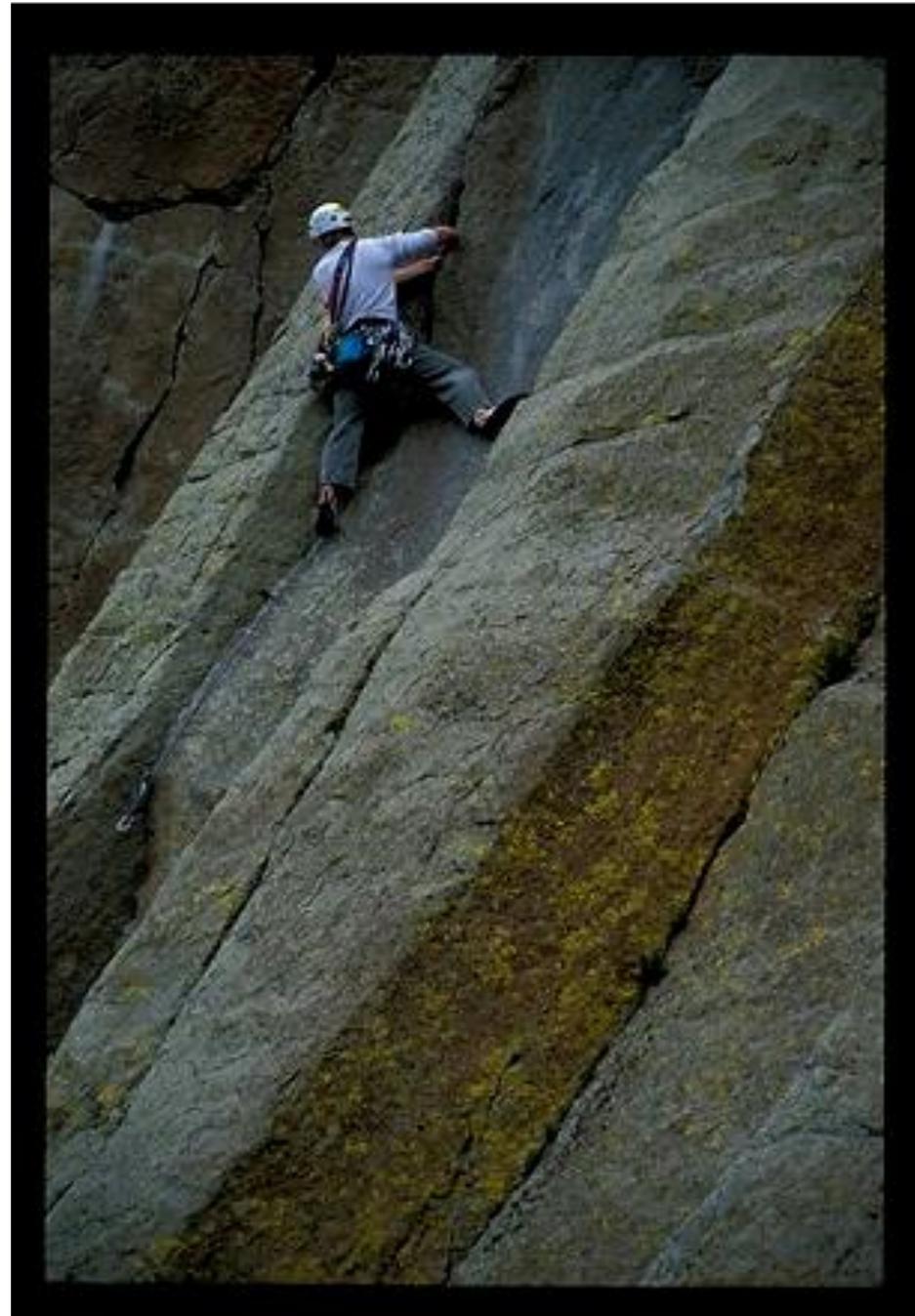
The first **national monument**, proclaimed by President Theodore Roosevelt some three months after he signed the Antiquities Act, was Devils Tower. It was established to protect this prominent Wyoming landmark.

During June, when Native tribes hold ceremonies, the NPS asks climbers to **voluntarily** refrain from climbing on the Tower and hikers to voluntarily refrain from scrambling within the inside of the Tower Trail Loop.

“Please strongly consider the closure when planning a climbing trip to Devils Tower. Alternative climbing areas are located within 100 miles of Devils Tower National Monument.”

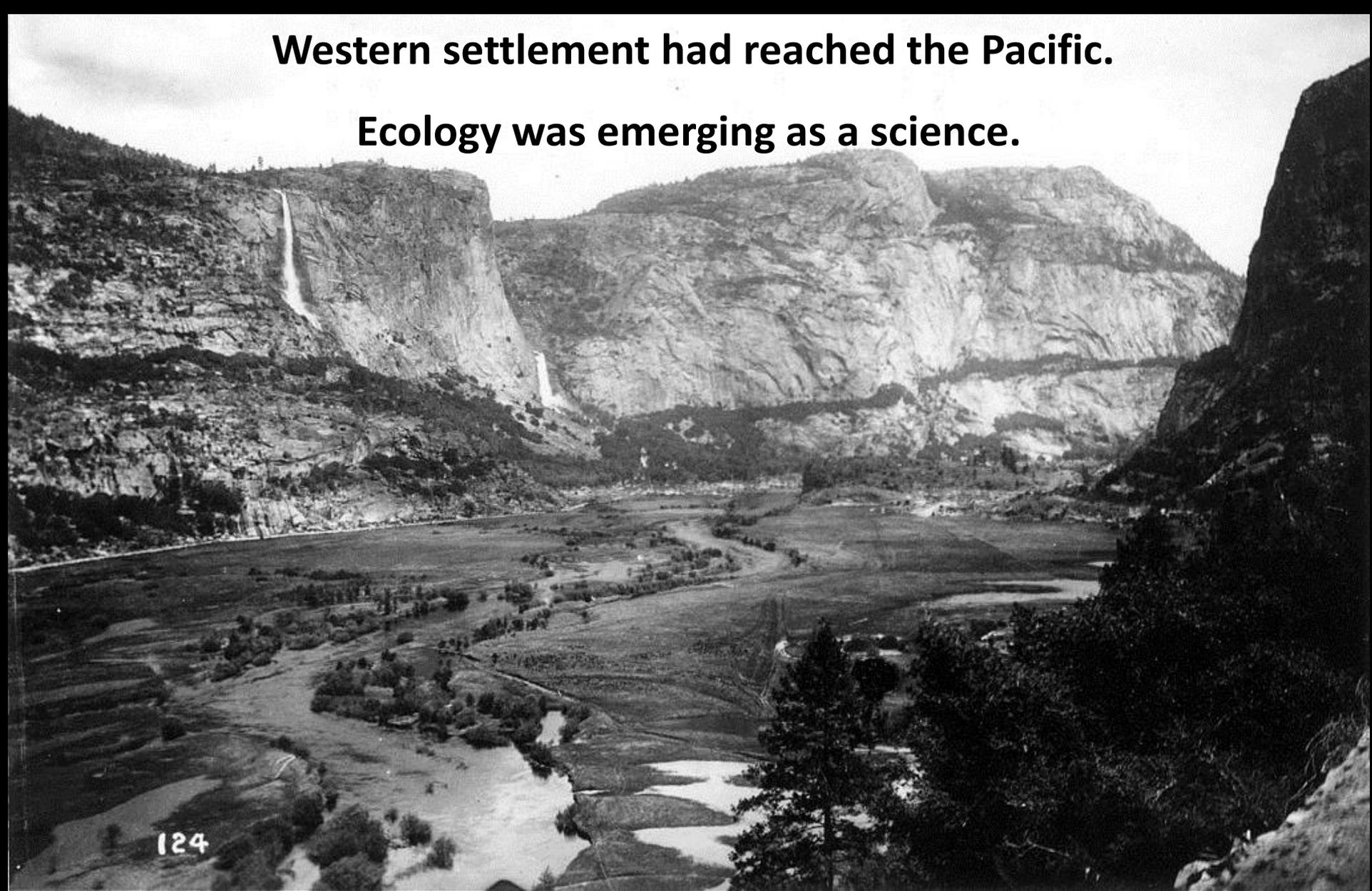
This closure has been very successful - resulting in an *80% reduction in the number of climbers* during June.

Question: why doesn't the NPS ban such use altogether?



Western settlement had reached the Pacific.

Ecology was emerging as a science.



Hetch Hetchy Valley, 1908

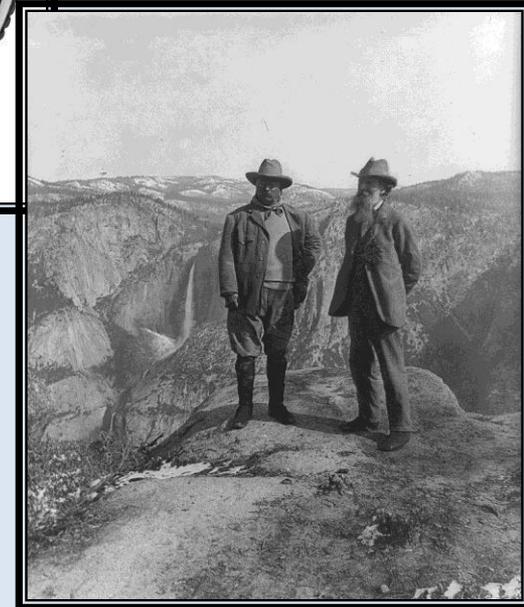
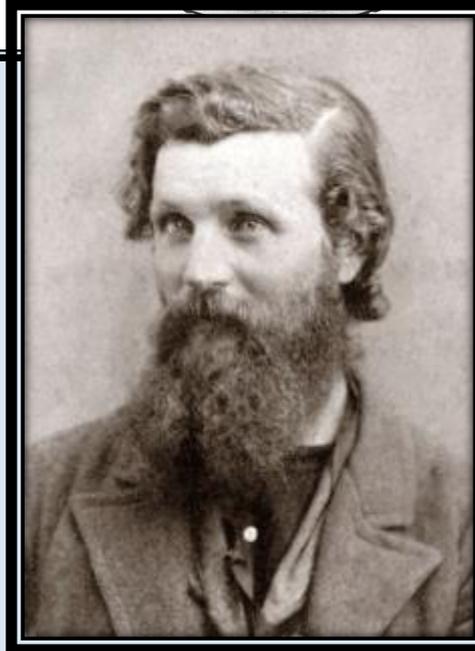
John Muir (1838-1914)

•Background:

- Born in Scotland
- Immigrated to America in 1849
- Attended the “university of wilderness”

•Employment:

- Summer job of shepherd in Yosemite sparked naturalist interests
- Started the Sierra Club 1892.



Teddy Roosevelt and John Muir atop Hetch Hetchy

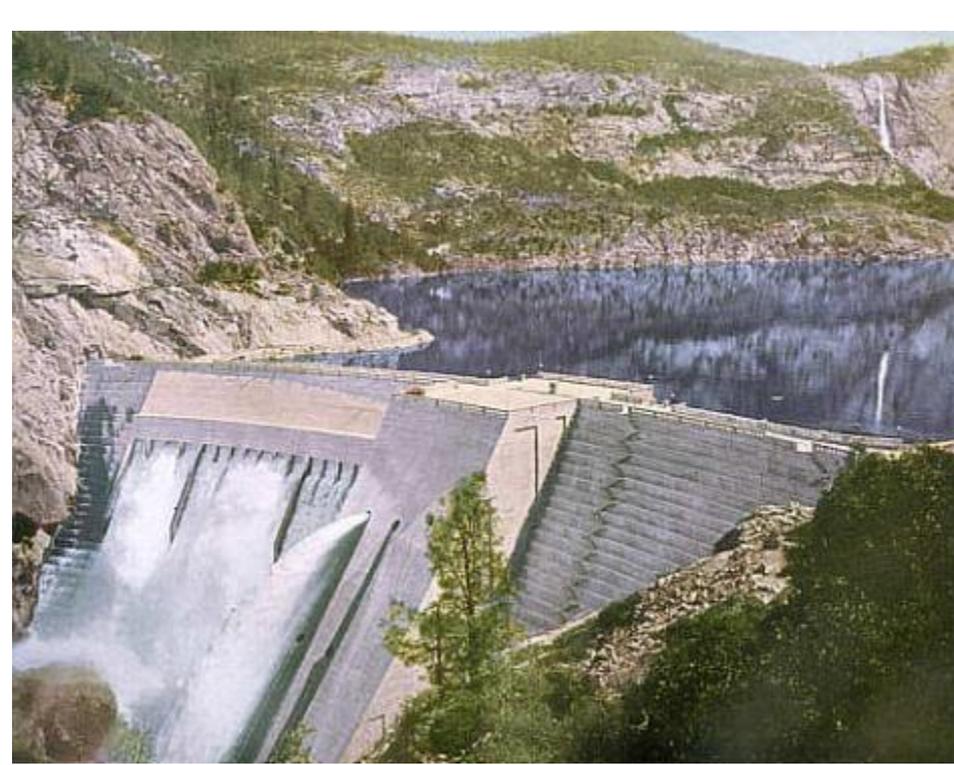
Gifford Pinchot (1865-1946)

- Founder of Yale School of Forestry
- Was a utilitarian, not a preservationist, (contrary to Muir, who was a preservationist)
- Philosophy was to manage for the greatest good for the greatest number of people



O'Shaughnessy Dam, 1923

*Conservation vs.
Preservation:
The American Dilemma*



Hetch Hetchy Reservoir as seen from the dam

Meanwhile, back at the Parks: early problems

- There was no central organization and no laws to govern the Parks.
- National Guard protected Yosemite from poachers.
- The Secretary of the Interior needed a department to facilitate and maintain the Parks.



A new era for national parks and monuments opened on **August 25, 1916**, when President Woodrow Wilson signed the **ORGANIC ACT**, creating a new federal bureau, the National Park Service, in the Department of the Interior.

The act created the National Park Service to:

*"...conserve the scenery and **the natural and historic objects** and the **wildlife** therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them **unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.**"*

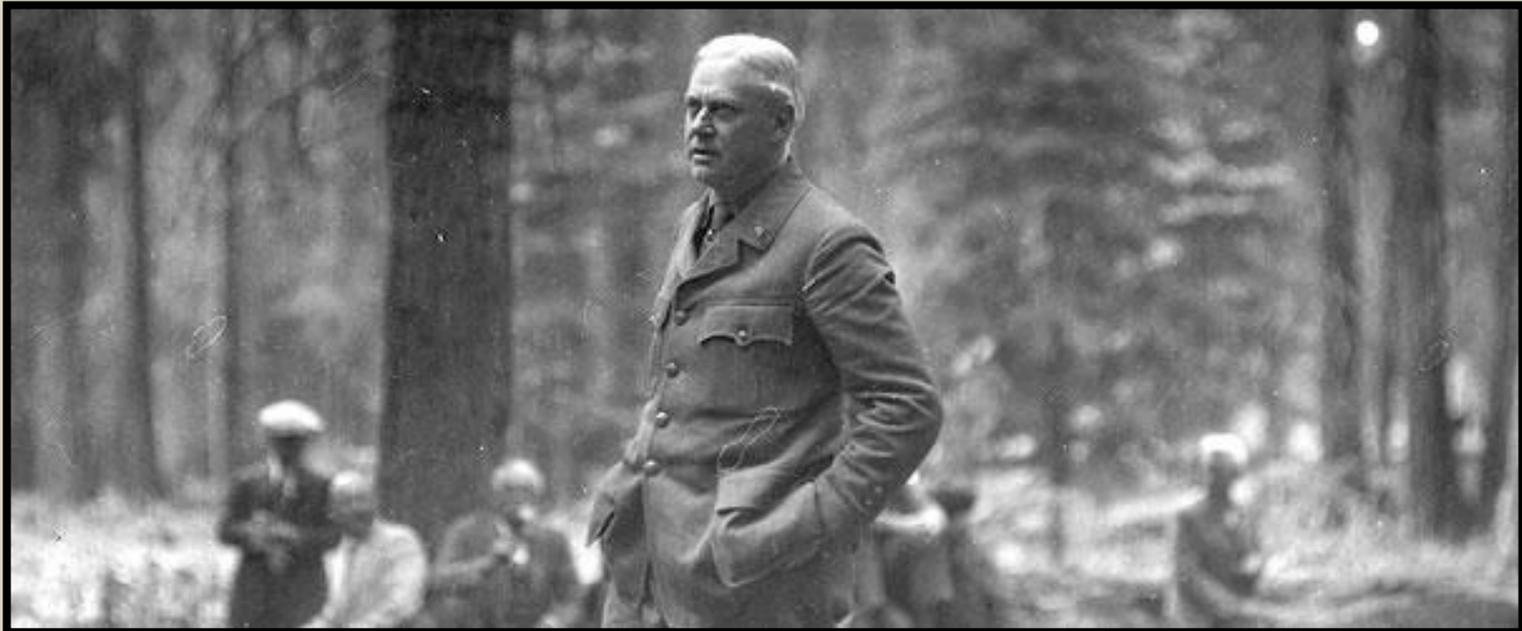


Stephen T. Mather (1867-1930)

- First director of the National Park Administration (1916-1928) for \$4,500 annual salary
- Selected national parks for their uniqueness
- Employed “quality” people, such as veterans
- Upgraded park grounds for public appeal

*“There will never
come an end to the
good that he has
done”*

Mathers Epitaph



"There is nothing so American as our national parks. The scenery and wildlife are native. The fundamental idea behind the parks is native. It is, in brief, that the country belongs to the people, that it is in process of making for the enrichment of the lives of all of us. The parks stand as the outward symbol of this great human principle." - Franklin D. Roosevelt



President Franklin Roosevelt (pictured here viewing the Lower Falls of the Yellowstone River) loved to visit national parks — and he encouraged his fellow citizens to do likewise, even during the hard times of the Depression.

The CCC Boys

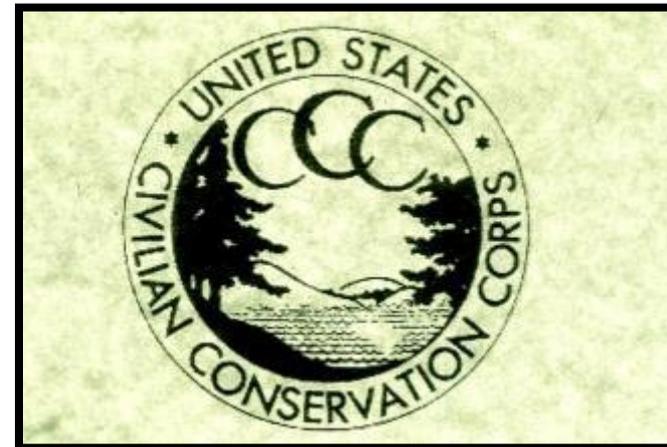
- Established 1933
- New Deal reform to employ young men in conservation work

63,256 buildings, 3,116 lookout towers and 28,087 miles of trails; erected 405,037 signs, markers, and monuments; planted 45 million trees; and fought countless fires. They developed more than 800 state parks.



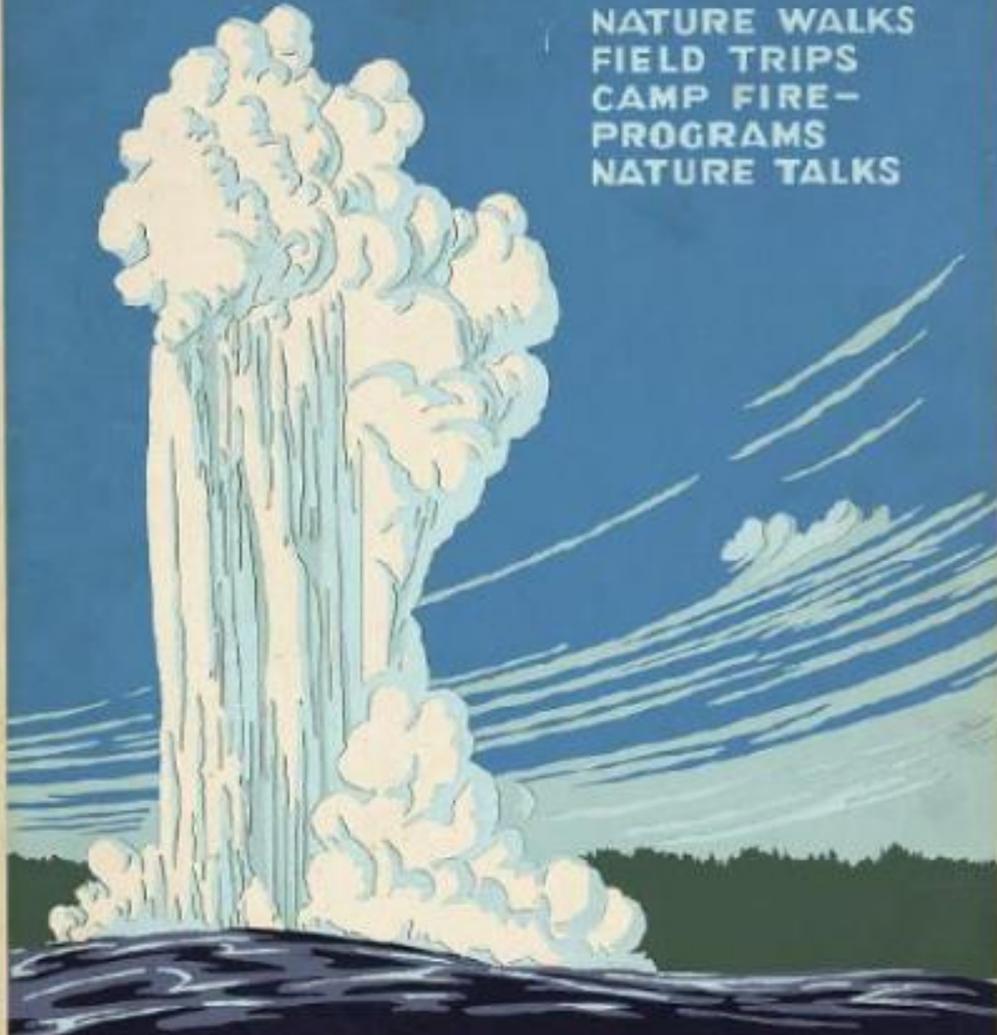
From New Deal to Post War: 1933-1956

- CCC provided disciplined program: 5 year plans finished in 1 season
- Drop in funding during WWII resulted in a decline in National Park System; many parks were closed to the public for military training maneuvers.



RANGER NATURALIST SERVICE

NATURE WALKS
FIELD TRIPS
CAMP FIRE-
PROGRAMS
NATURE TALKS



YELLOWSTONE

NATIONAL

U.S. DEPARTMENT
OF THE INTERIOR



PARK

NATIONAL PARK
SERVICE

It is during this period that interpretive programs began and the Parks took on a stronger educational mission.

Ansel Adams

- **Started work for national parks in 1919 as a janitor for the Sierra Club HQ.**
- **Love of nature sparked by experimenting with natural photography**
- **Became main photographer of the natural beauty found in the national parks**





El Capitan, Yosemite

Major National Parks



Timeline of Acts

- **(1864) Yosemite Act:** First state park/preserve
- **(1872) Yellowstone Act:** “Protect the Wonders”
- **(1890) Chickamauga Act:** *First war memorial*
- **(1906) Antiquities Act:** Authorized presidential power to create parks
- **(1931) Predator Policy:** Authorized parks as a “last stand” for victim species
- **(1933) Civilian Conservation Corps:** New Deal policy for employment, conservation, and maintenance of parks established under \$300,000,000
- **(1956-1966) Mission 66:** Provided independent funding for park rejuvenation
- **(1965) Concession Act:** Guaranteed one concession per park
- **(1969) National Environmental Protection Act:** Set ground rules for Federal agencies
- **(1998) National Park Omnibus Management Act:** Improved management of national parks