The National Park Service has two creation myths, neither of which will serve the agency well as it enters its second century of service. Instead, argues the author, Park Service leaders should use current scholarship to help shape a founding narrative for the twenty-first century. First delivered as the Lynn W. Day Lecture in Forest and Conservation History three weeks prior to the 2016 presidential election, the text appears here with a new prologue.

BEYOND THE CAMPFIRE

A FOUNDING NARRATIVE FOR A TWENTY-FIRST-CENTURY NATIONAL PARK SYSTEM

The year 2016 may be as pivotal a year for America's national park system as 1916. That, of course, was the year when Congress finally established a professional bureau to manage the nation's growing portfolio of national parks and monuments. A century later, the recently concluded National Park Service centennial celebration was largely defined by an ambitious campaign to rebrand the agency's image to reflect fundamental reforms. Intended to realign the agency to appeal to a younger, diverse, and more urban demographic, the reforms had three general aims: (1) developing resource stewardship strategies, based on scholarship and science, that acknowledge and manage for continuous change; (2) vigorously promoting the agency's role in formal and informal education and lifelong learning; and (3) making the park system as a whole more welcoming, inclusive, and representative of all Americans.

Since the days of the New Deal's emergency conservation programs, no single issue has galvanized the National Park Service as much as climate change. Recent policies recognize that the National Park Service faces "environmental and social changes that are increasingly widespread, complex, accelerating, and uncertain."[1] By the end of 2016, it seemed as if nearly every national park and program had a climate response plan or action agenda. Programs were in place to advance climate literacy, climate resiliency, landscape connectivity, alternative energy, and scaled-up collaborative conservation.

Concurrent with the centennial and the emphasis on climate change, the social contours of the national park system were also significantly expanded with the creation of a record number of national monuments. The Obama administration used the Antiquities Act of 1906 to establish 15 new monuments and enlarge 19 others. Many of the proclamations sought to make the system more representative of the nation as a whole, with monuments associated with the stories of Hispanic farmworkers, interned Japanese Americans, women's history, gay rights, and the civil rights movement. "There was a time when we only focused on men on horseback, with swords," explained Alan Spears, the National Parks Conservation Association's cultural resources director in an interview with the *Washington Post*. "That was a different time. We've expanded the definition of…what's nationally important."[2]

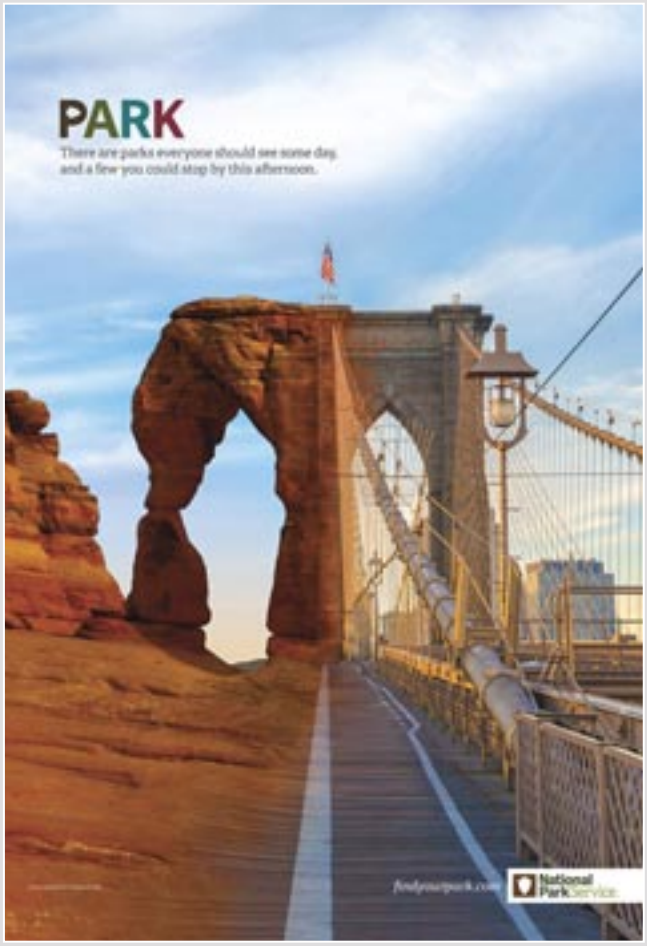
But 2016, of course, was also the year of a contentious national election. And though it may be some time before many of the election's consequences for the Park Service are clearly understood, there is little doubt that the agency's political authorizing environment has radically changed, and that the future of many

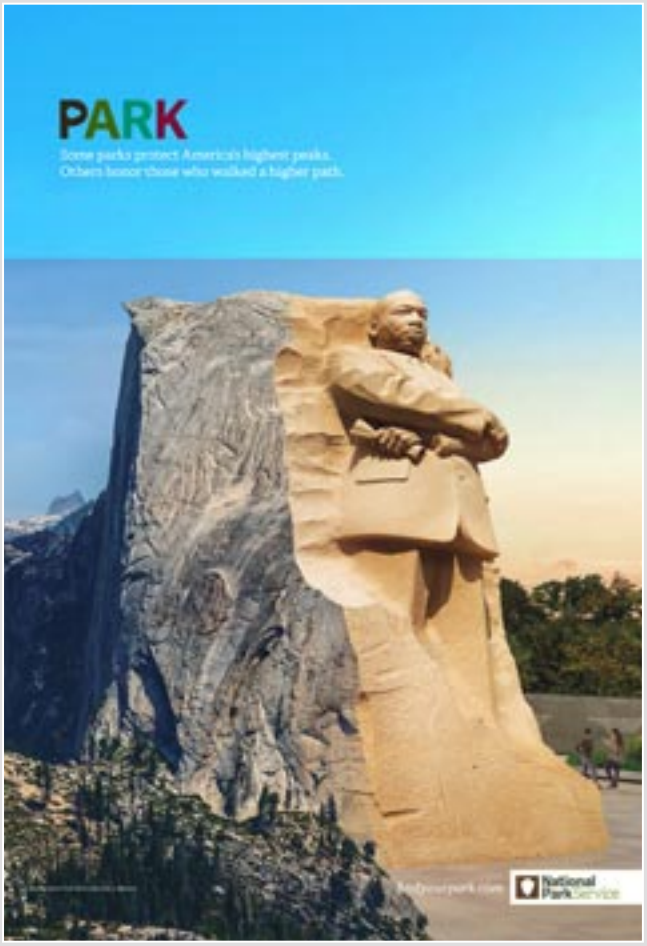
BY ROLF DIAMANT

centennial-related reforms is uncertain at best. Office of Management and Budget directive M-17-22 calls for workforce reductions and cost savings that stretch far into the future. *New York Times* columnist Eduardo Porter warned that deep cuts to domestic discretionary spending would leave government as "little more than a heavily armed pension plan with a health insurer on the side."[3] Ominously, the directive also calls for a government-wide reorganization, clearly intended to eliminate, offload, or privatize many public services and responsibilities.

For this reason it is increasingly important for people who care deeply about national parks to share a common understanding of the modern national park system and how it came to be. Such

NATIONAL PARK FOUNDATION





For the centennial the National Park Foundation commissioned a series of posters to reflect the diverse offerings and history found in the parks.

an understanding should also accurately reflect the cumulative changes and reforms that have shaped the Park Service into the organization that it is today. This baseline knowledge will better position people to challenge abrupt program and policy reversals and, looking to the future, retain a common vision of a national park system that can remain relevant and useful in a rapidly changing world. This is a vision of a National Park Service that is inclusive and committed to engaging diverse constituencies in cooperative stewardship and real-world learning. It is a vision that embraces the best current science and scholarship. It is a vision that recognizes and values national parks and programs for their many contributions to climate resiliency, ecosystem services, and the public health and well-being of the nation.

Public perception and understanding of the national park system, however, is fragmentary at best. Largely shaped by iconic imagery and stereotypes, the system's origins and evolution are poorly understood. As historian Ronald Foresta observed more than thirty years ago, "The reality beneath the image is that neither the national parks nor their keepers stand apart from our times; they are very much subject to the problems and dilemmas of modern American life."[4] Although the recent Park Service reforms have been a response to the growing diversity and complexity of our society, they are also aligned with progressive movements that historically played a pivotal role in the early philosophy and creation of the Park Service and national parks reaching all the way back to the Civil War. Unfortunately, the Park Service has obscured these connections, past and present, by perpetuating unsubstantiated narratives about its own creation and the early history of national parks in America.

Agency-sanctioned stories and myths have been subject to contestation and revision since the agency's launch in 1916. There is, however, a clear risk today that confusion and misunderstanding about agency history and its larger historical context may endanger many recent Park Service reforms. This is a particular concern if the Park Service is pressured to return to a "core mission" predicated on an outdated, simplified, or idealized image of the national park system that willfully overlooks a century of accumulated responsibilities and legislative mandates. As former Park Service chief historian Dwight Pitcaithley pointed out, "The National Park System today is vastly different from the one envisioned and managed by Stephen T. Mather and Horace M. Albright one hundred years ago."[5] Current circumstances, therefore, add a sense of urgency to revisiting and retelling National Park Service history, and why now, more than ever, it is important to get the story right.

■ ■ ■

FIRST CAMPFIRE STORY

We live and operate in an ever more complex world, and we desperately need a better understanding of the context of our decisions and the nature of forces that continue to shape our history. It was therefore disappointing that the National Park Service's approach to its centennial commemoration was largely ahistorical even in regard to the agency's own origins and philosophical roots. The Park Service has always been recalcitrant in correcting myths associated with its story. For almost a century now, two "creation narratives" have helped shape the image of national parks and the National Park Service in the public eye. Both narratives (perhaps not surprisingly) involve campfires.

When I first joined the service in the 1970s, many people still believed the long-discredited story that the idea for national parks was first discussed, one hundred years earlier, by a group of western explorers around a campfire near the end of their expedition reconnoitering the Yellowstone region. This creation myth for the national parks, which historian Richard West Sellars called the "virgin birth," was a fiction that had nine lives.[6] In 1917, Horace M. Albright, then acting director, included the story in the National Park Service's first annual report, retelling Nathaniel P. Langford's 1905 account of the purported 1870 Yellowstone campfire discussion, which Langford claimed to personally remember. The narrative was largely unquestioned by Park Service leadership for the next sixty years.

"The process by which the campfire story became institutionalized in the annals and consciousness of the National Park Service was a simple one," wrote Paul Schullery and Lee Whittlesey in their book, *Myth and History in the Creation of Yellowstone National Park*. "It was published, it was believed, and it was loved." Even in the 1970s, by which time the National Park Service's own historians had concluded that the campfire story was likely an invention of Langford, no one in the agency's hierarchy seemed prepared to contradict octogenarian founder Horace Albright, still revered throughout the agency. Yellowstone National Park historian Aubrey Haines had, in fact, begun to raise serious doubts about Langford's veracity as early as the 1960s. "We are a federal agency," Haines cautioned his superiors, "from which the public expects literal truth. We should not engage in…propaganda." A high-level National Park Service official responded, "If it didn't happen we would have been well advised to invent it."[7] This was, in effect, what Park Service publicists had done. E. T. Scoyen, associate director under director Conrad Wirth from 1956 to 1962, praised the campfire story, even as agency historians were debunking it. Scoyen, who was not inclined to allow scholarship to get in his way, stated, "I, for one, will not be satisfied with mere confirmation as a reason for throwing this valuable National Park asset out the window or degrading it in any way."[8]

Historian Edward Linenthal has written about "the power of the first narrative" and how difficult it can be to dislodge these foundational stories once they have become embedded with organizational values and traditions. In the years that followed Yellowstone's centennial in 1972, however, it was clear the Park Service could not hold on to the Langford story forever. When this "valuable asset"—the original campfire story—could no longer be defended against the weight of historical evidence, a second campfire creation narrative conveniently emerged to take its place.

SECOND CAMPFIRE STORY

This replacement creation story at least had some basis in fact. In 1903, President Theodore Roosevelt, while on a tour of Yosemite Park, insisted on camping alone with John Muir, the famed naturalist who was the park's self-appointed advocate. It is highly likely that during this outing Muir encouraged Roosevelt to support the eventual inclusion of Yosemite Valley into the larger Yosemite National Park. However, it has gradually become accepted in the popular imagination that the idea for national parks and even creating a national park service came from Roosevelt and Muir. The fact is, national parks had been in existence for more than thirty years prior to Roosevelt and Muir's camping trip, and the National Park Service would not be established until 1916, thirteen years later, long after Roosevelt had left office and John Muir had died.

This misconception gained momentum in the late twentieth century as Muir's popularity grew among a new generation of environmental and wilderness enthusiasts, thus creating a receptive audience for this second creation narrative. It was also a story made for television. Ken Burns and Dayton Duncan's PBS television series on the national parks, first broadcast in 2009, devoted part of an episode to the camping trip in Yosemite, further canonizing John Muir and Theodore Roosevelt, in the public's eye, as the principal architects of "America's best idea." The Park Service has made no official effort to present an alternative founding narrative, even though a growing body of scholarship both inside and outside the Park Service has pointed in other directions.

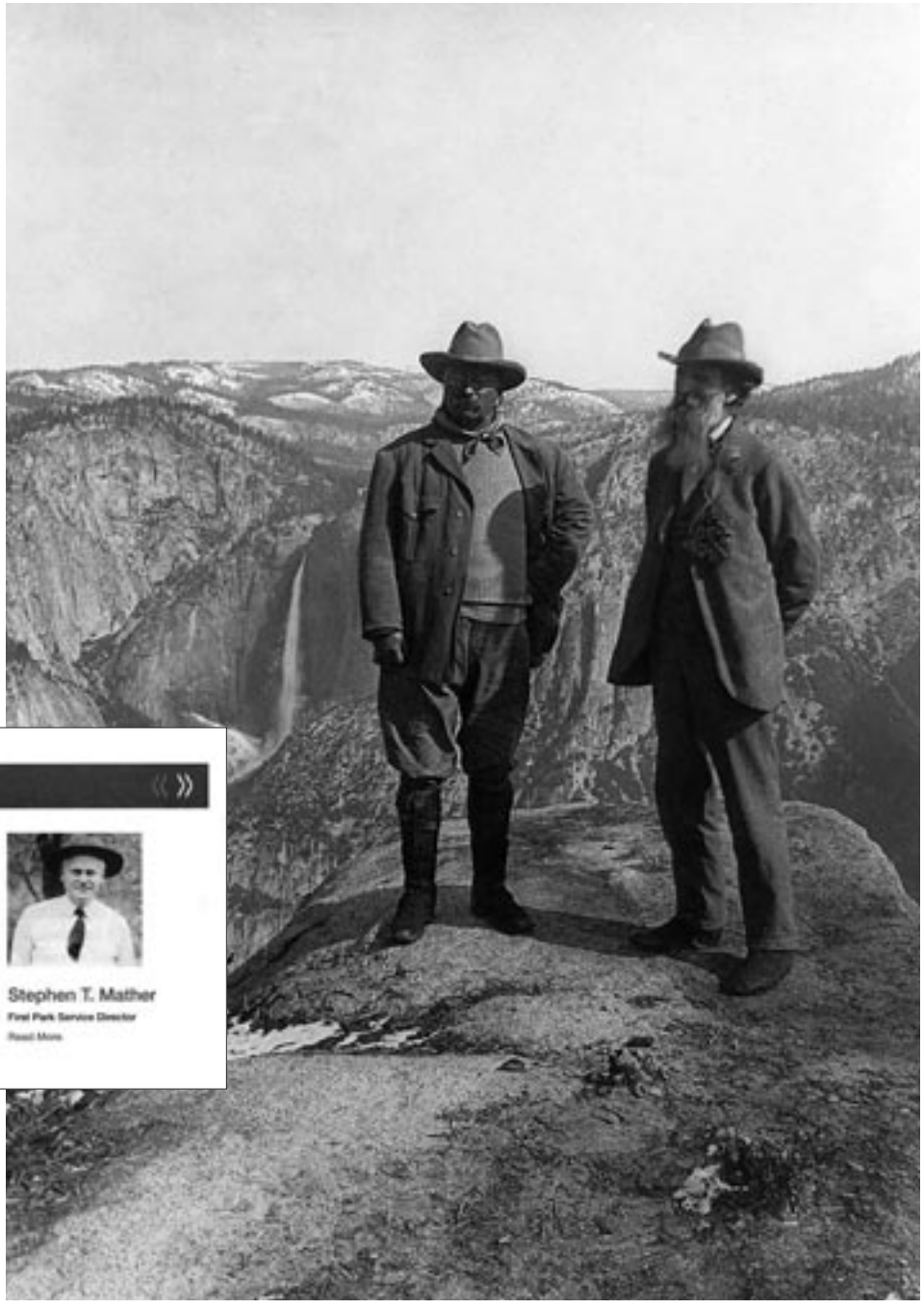
The 2016 centennial commemoration should have been an ideal opportunity for this scholarship to be acknowledged, but instead, the Park Service doubled down on the second campfire creation narrative. John Muir and Theodore Roosevelt are united once again, this time on the Park Service's centennial webpage, as the "The Early Leaders" of the Park Service idea.

Muir and Roosevelt are identified along with Stephen Mather, the agency's politically adroit and charismatic first director, as the visionaries. Together they are credited with "groundbreaking ideas preserving America's treasures for future generations"—with John Muir getting top billing as "Father of the National Park Service."[9]

I am not questioning the very significant contributions Muir, Roosevelt, and Mather made to conservation and national parks. But the story being told is too neat and woefully incomplete. This was just what the Organization of American Historians' report *Imperiled Promise: The State of History in the National Park Service*, issued in 2011, five years before the centennial, cautioned the Park Service to avoid interpretation that is "less the product of training and expertise and more the expression of conventional wisdom."[10] What is most striking about this official web feature is not only who is being given all the credit but also who is being erased, in effect, from this high-profile Park Service history.

WHO IS MISSING?

Given all the national monument proclamations in the past few years, one might have expected the agency's centennial webpage biographies to make room for a line or two about Iowa congressman John F. Lacey (1841–1913). Lacy was the principal sponsor of three landmark conservation laws—two that protect wildlife and one that, in some respects, is the National Park Service's first "organic act."[11] The energetic Iowa congressman, a member and later chairman of the House Committee on Public Lands, sponsored and championed the Antiquities Act of 1906, which has thus far provided "authority for the initial setting aside of more than half of the total



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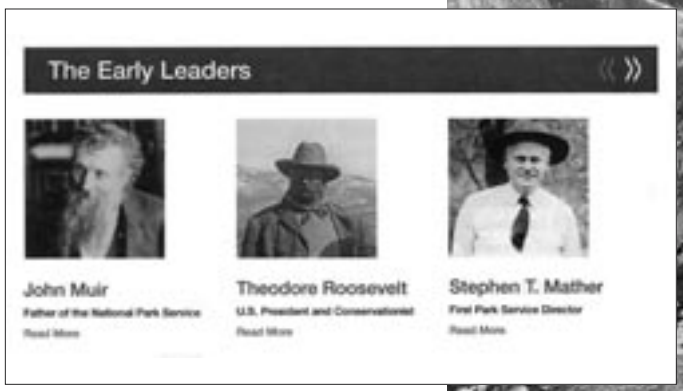

The National Park Service's own website perpetuates the myth that Theodore Roosevelt and John Muir were the principal architects of the national park idea, and that they developed their ideas while together in Yosemite Valley in 1903.

acreage in the national park system as it exists in the early twenty-first century," according to historian Richard Sellars. Moreover, "In the realm of historic and natural preservation on the nation's public lands no law had ever approached the scope of the Antiquities Act. The Act made explicit that preservation of historic, archeological, and other scientific sites on lands controlled by the federal government was indeed a federal responsibility."[12]

J. Horace McFarland (1859–1948) also appears forgotten by history, at least on the Park Service centennial webpage. McFarland, a Pennsylvania businessman and progressive reformer, was the long-time leader of the American Civic Association, a major opponent of the damming of Yosemite's Hetch Hetchy Valley in the early twentieth century, and an advocate for a national park service. In the words of his biographer, Ernest Morrison, McFarland pursued these goals with "single-minded perseverance."[13] Between 1908 and 1916, McFarland, backed by his association, was the driving force behind 16 bills introduced into Congress to establish a national park service.

Another person missing from the webpage is Mary Belle Sherman (1862–1935). She became known as "the National Park Lady" because she was instrumental in the formation of six national parks. Sherman spearheaded the General Federation of Women's Clubs' crusade on behalf of the national park service legislation and mobilized the federation's three thousand clubs and rallied its nearly one million members to the cause. A national park, Sherman said, "supplies the better, greater things of life." Looking many years into the future, Sherman envisioned the value of national parks to American civic life and education, asserting that parks possess "some of the characteristics of the museum, the library, the fine arts hall, and the public school."[14]

Perhaps the most striking omission on the centennial webpage is the absence of any recognition for Frederick Law Olmsted Sr. (1822–1903) and his landmark Yosemite Report, or of his son, Frederick Law Olmsted Jr. (1870–1957), who penned the compelling statement of purpose for the 1916 Organic Act. The elder Olmsted's 1865 park plan for Yosemite Valley presciently called for the "establishment by government of great public grounds for the free enjoyment of the people"—a prescription for a future system of national parks.[15] In 1864 President Abraham Lincoln signed legislation setting aside Yosemite Valley and the adjacent Mariposa Grove of giant sequoias for "public use, resort, and recreation…inalienable for all time."[16] These federal lands were initially protected as a land grant by Congress to the state of California, and Olmsted, a co-designer of New York City's Central Park then working in California, was called on to provide an overarching vision for this new experiment in public park making. The establishment and stewardship of these public lands, Olmsted argued, were no less than a fundamental duty of government, based on republican principles of "equity and benevolence."[17] The government had an obligation to provide for the protection of all its citizens in their pursuit of happiness against all obstacles, including the selfishness of individuals and organized groups. (For more on the Olmsteds, see "Biographical Portrait" on page 68.)

FAULT LINES RUN BACK TO THE CIVIL WAR

The bloodiest war in American history ended up being fought over those very principles of "equity and benevolence" and the nature and function of constitutional government. The future of national parks such as Yosemite and Yellowstone, as well as federal forest reserves, were all inexorably linked to sweeping changes brought about by the Civil War. To understand the effect the war had on federal conservation lands established in the latter half of the nineteenth century, it is instructive to examine the nature of the opposition to an earlier land grant proposal.

The Morrill Land-Grant College Act was first introduced in Congress in 1859, just prior to the Civil War. The legislation proposed making grants of federal land to states to support a nationwide system of public colleges for advancing agricultural technology and higher education. Like the subsequent reservation of federal lands for national parks and forests, the legislation also sought to use federal land for achieving a defined public benefit, in this case education.

The bill was met with a storm of opposition, mostly coming from southern Democrats in Congress. One objecting congressman denounced the proposed legislation as "one of the most monstrous, iniquitous and dangerous measures which have ever been submitted to Congress." Another congressman declared, "If the people demand the patronage of the federal government for agriculture and education, it is because they have been debauched and led astray." Yet another warned that a dangerous precedent would be set and predicted that the national government would soon be "feeding the hungry, and clothing the naked and one day building schools and supporting those schools."[18]

Despite those apocalyptic predictions, the land grant bill narrowly passed Congress, only to be vetoed by President James Buchannan. In his revealing veto message, Buchannan elucidated his preference for selling off federal lands rather than granting them for a public purpose, and that he championed states' rights over national interests, declaring the bill would "break down the barriers which have been so carefully constructed in the Constitution to separate Federal from state authority."[19]

A SECOND REVOLUTION

Historian David Blight has described the Civil War as "our second revolution." The war represents "the destruction and death of that first American Republic and the invention and beginning of the second Republic."[20] The eleven southern states that left the Union in 1861 no longer stood in the way of a Republican Party that believed, according to Blight, "in energetic, interventionist government." By the spring of 1862, Lincoln and a war-hardened Congress embarked on this "second American Revolution" by passing a sweeping Republican legislative agenda. This agenda represented a profound change of direction for the U.S. government. The government would intervene on a transcontinental scale, on behalf of emancipation and free labor, agrarian opportunity, national improvements, and public education.

Over a period of just three months in 1862, a remarkable legislative agenda was passed: on May 15, Lincoln signed legislation establishing the Department of Agriculture; on May 20, Congress passed the Homestead Act; on July 1, Congress authorized the Pacific Railroad Act and the construction of a rail link to California; on July 2, Congress passed the Morrill College Land-Grant Act; and on July 22, Lincoln showed a first draft of the Emancipation Proclamation to his cabinet.

As the war progressed, the United States was transformed into a modern, centralized nation-state—reinvented to win an all-out war. It would create new governmental bureaus, nationalize its currency, and establish a national banking system. Environmental historian Mark Fiege wrote, "Lincoln did all he could to turn the conflict to a higher end. Improvement in its various forms became

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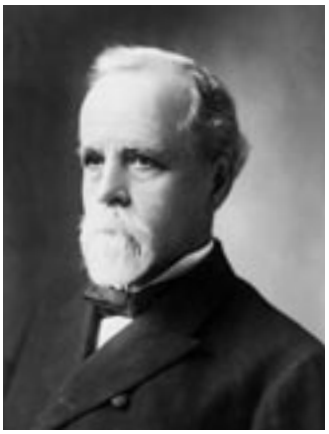

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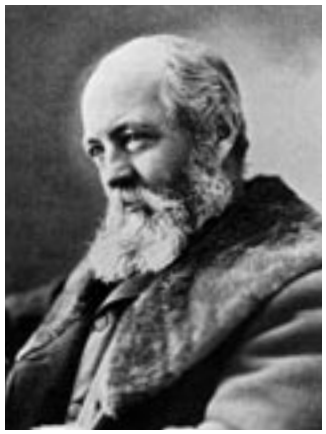


NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

From left to right, the National Park Service's website fails to acknowledge the contributions of John Lacey, Horace McFarland, the Olmsteds, and below, Mary Belle King Sherman (pictured, from left, with Robert Sterling Yard, Enos Mills, F. O. Stanley, Congressman Ed Taylor, and Governor George Carlson at the dedication of the Rocky Mountain National Park in 1915).

GFWC INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENTS PHOTOGRAPH COLLECTION, PRES 1924-1928.01

the means by which he prosecuted the war and preserved the Union."[21] So when in May 1864, California Senator John Conness introduced his land-grant bill to preserve Yosemite Valley and Mariposa Grove for public use "inalienable for all time," Congress passed the legislation with relative ease and Lincoln signed it. Much like the Morrill Act, this wartime measure to protect Yosemite was consistent with Lincoln's overall effort to justify the terrible sacrifices called for on the battlefield by redefining and expanding the rewards of American citizenship and promising what he called in his Gettysburg Address "a new birth of freedom."

There can be little doubt that government support for any public parks or reservations would have faced an uphill battle in the political environment of pre–Civil War America. A land grant, such as the one for Yosemite, would likely never have been authorized by the antebellum Congress and, even if it had, it would have certainly been vetoed by a president like James Buchanan. Abraham Lincoln and four years of civil war upended the political status quo. For the first time in America's history there existed an opportunity to align formative conservation and recreation objectives, starting with Yosemite, with the greatly strengthened and expanded capacity of government.

THE PATH TO YELLOWSTONE

The conventional historical perspective on the establishment of Yellowstone National Park in 1872 is ably summed up by Chris Magoc in his book *Yellowstone: The Creation and Selling of an American Landscape, 1870–1903*: "Buttressed by the language of cultural nationalism, compelling romantic imagery, and a cadre of railroad friends and boosters, both houses of Congress swiftly passed the Yellowstone Park Act." However, many historians, Magoc included, have overlooked the profound changes in American governance in the years following the Civil War that played a significant role in preparing the ground for the Yellowstone legislation. In 1867 Congress passed a series of military reconstruction acts allowing biracial state governments to be elected in the South and supported ratification of the Fourteenth (1868) and Fifteenth (1870) amendments to the Constitution, all affirming federal rather than state protection of civil rights. Some of the same Republican congressmen who supported this Reconstruction agenda, such as Senators Lyman Trumbull and Samuel C. Pomeroy and Representative Henry L. Dawes, were also principal sponsors of the Yellowstone legislation.

The rise of a nascent conservation movement, even with the support of railroads and other interests, would not have had the traction it did without major constitutional reforms, the assertion of federal authority over domestic policy, and a much larger national government—all direct outcomes of the war and Reconstruction. Congress, still controlled by an activist Republican postwar majority, was prepared to accept in principle the idea of establishing Yellowstone as a national park, in Olmsted's words, as a "duty of government." Historian Adam Wesley Dean wrote, "After the war, many Republicans felt that the federal government could solve problems when state governments failed."[22] The *New York Times* declared that if Yellowstone became a national park, "it will remain a place which we can proudly show to the benighted European as a proof of what nature under a republican form of government can accomplish in the great West."[23] Or as historian Lisa Brady explained, "The establishment of federal authority over states' rights to determine citizenship and other civil rights also established increased federal power to decide what elements in the natural treasury would become permanent fixtures of the national landscape."[24]

WHY THEN THE CAMPFIRE STORIES?

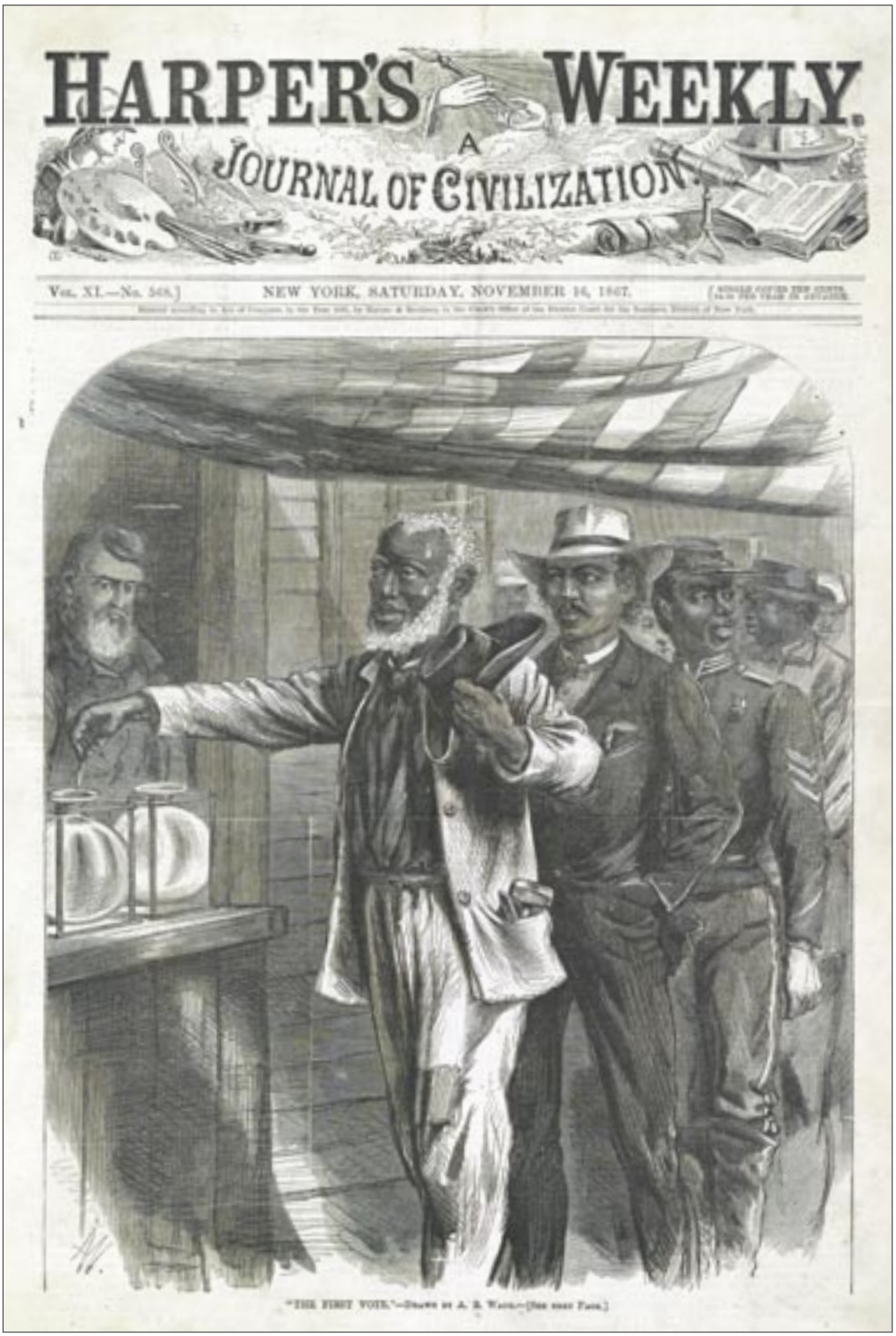
So why, we might ask, has the National Park Service, starting in the early twentieth century, presented to the American public a history of the national parks largely disassociated from Olmsted, Yosemite, and the formative influence of the Civil War era? For one thing, by the early twentieth century, when political momentum was building to establish a national park service, North-South reconciliation was a priority and many civil rights gains of the Civil War and Reconstruction eras had been or were being systematically rolled back. No attention was being given to the underlying cause of the war—slavery—and the struggle for freedom that followed, even as Congress was setting aside commemorative reservations on former battlefields, later to become national parks. In the years immediately leading up to the passage of the Organic Act of 1916, national park service boosters, seeking support from southern legislators and Virginia-born President Woodrow Wilson, chose a national park creation narrative that avoided historical connections with Olmsted and the Civil War era. Olmsted was a problematic figure in several respects: he was closely associated with older, eastern urban parks when the national parks were being marketed as a new concept born in the West, and Olmsted had also been a supporter of the Fourteenth Amendment as well as the author of several influential antislavery books published prior to the Civil War. Langford's Yellowstone campfire story, on the other hand, carried no such baggage and served as a comfortable substitute story.

There was a vigorous rearguard defense of the campfire myth waged by Park Service leaders in the second half of the twentieth century aligned with a Cold War–era ideology that projected American cultural exceptionalism. "From the White House down," wrote historian Alfred Runte, "the United States took pride in the knowledge that it was both the inventor and exporter of the national park idea." During Yellowstone's centennial, Runte pointed out that "the inconsistencies of the Washburn Expedition aside, major newspapers, magazines, television networks, and government reports told and retold its story literally in heroic terms. The explorers 'could not have anticipated,' one said, 'that their idea would flower into a new dimension of the American dream and would capture the imagination of men around the world."[25] As Park Service senior official E. T. Scoyen explained, it was highly desirable to credit the birth of national parks with "a wonderful and interesting group of rugged western pioneers."[26]

FAULT LINES PERSIST

It is important to point out that Native Americans were not beneficiaries of Lincoln's "new birth of freedom" and that most of the first western federal parks, forests, and refuges were established on the homelands of Native peoples. All too often the occupants were forcibly displaced. So any founding narrative must also acknowledge this painful legacy as part of the story.

For other reasons as well, the fate of our national landscape has never been a chronological narrative of progress, with one legislative landmark following the next. Efforts to establish national parks have nearly always been met by resistance and, even when successful, subject to undermining and reversal. When Congress did pass legislation creating a park, it rarely had the political will to appropriate funds to adequately staff and manage these lands.



"THE FIRST VOTE," BY ALFRED R. WAUD, *HARPER'S WEEKLY*, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS, LC-DIG-PPMSCA-37947

The Civil War and the subsequent fight for civil rights, which resulted in constitutional amendments providing citizenship and the right to vote for African Americans, affected how the founding narrative of the national parks was told a half-century later.

It took Congress nearly eight years after establishing Yellowstone to appropriate funds for the national park's basic operation.

Congressional ambivalence over funding has not been the only challenge for national parks. Every now and again fault lines emerge that run through the foundations of our political system, calling into question the legitimacy and efficacy of government institutions from public schools to public lands. These fault lines have been with us since the Civil War and they remain with us today. States' rights, private property rights, and antigovernment attitudes echoing back to the Civil War era surfaced again in 2016 with the occupation of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge in Oregon. Terry Tempest Williams reflected in her book, *The Hour of the Land*, "I am just beginning to understand how the Civil War shaped our ideologies and identities as Americans."

That is one more reason for paying attention to history. History reminds us never to become complacent. What has been authorized can also be deauthorized. Given the unraveling of historical bipartisanship on issues related to the environment and public lands, it is not inconceivable that more than a century of landmark environmental legislation, from the Antiquities Act to the Endangered Species Act, might be reversed. The continuation of our public land systems as we know them today cannot be taken for granted. Weakening these systems will make progress on climate resiliency, and related progress on large landscape conservation, increasingly difficult, if not impossible.

MOVING TOWARD A MORE INCLUSIVE NARRATIVE

It is a good time to revisit the words of Mary Belle Sherman, who clearly saw how central national parks could be to continual lifelong learning—so critical in our current age of destabilizing climate and global changes. Public education and civic engagement have always been a fundamental benefit of public land stewardship. And let us not forget Horace McFarland, who repeatedly emphasized that public lands are the heritage of all Americans and are essential to the health and well-being of our democracy, or as he said, "a plain necessity for good citizenship."[27]

It is also time to recognize the principal sponsor of the embattled Antiquities Act, Congressman John Lacey. Lacey made profound contributions to American conservation and reminds us all that the Park Service cares for places with multiple values and layers of meaning. Other landmark legislation that Lacey sponsored includes the Yellowstone Park Protection Act of 1894,

which protects wildlife in the park, and the Lacey Act of 1900, which prohibits trafficking in wildlife nationwide—two laws that ensure that national parks are not landscapes devoid of buffalo and bald eagles, the two iconic animals that represent the National Park Service and the United States, respectively. (If Lacey had lived a few more years and remained in Congress, one can only speculate whether the final legislation that established the National Park Service in 1916 would have been named for him as well.) In our current era of scaled-up landscape conservation, there are lessons to be learned from the way Lacey brought natural, scientific, cultural, spiritual, recreational, and ethnographic interests together in a big conservation tent.

And finally, we would be wise to pay more attention to the Olmsteds. Frederick Jr. called for an agency with the highest ethical and professional standards and understood and consistently promoted the advantages of a strong and unified system of national parks. Fifty years earlier, Frederick Sr. wrote his landmark Yosemite Report, one of the most instructive documents of American conservation. His words remind us that the idea of protecting special places for the benefit of all people, not only a privileged elite, has always been an idea worth fighting for. Meaningful change does not arise from a campfire conversation. The country's early conservation measures were associated with what Abraham Lincoln once described as a "remorseless revolutionary struggle" for a renewal of American democracy.[28] The conservation gains that have been made over time have been sustained only by public vigilance and determination.

Expanding the founding narrative of the National Park Service beyond Theodore Roosevelt and John Muir may also help the Park Service with its centennial goal of "reintroducing" itself to a broader cross-section of the American public. This is the time to recognize and incorporate a more inclusive narrative that harks back to Lincoln and emancipation, to a larger American conservation movement, and to the fundamental responsibility of government to advance, as Olmsted hoped, the pursuit of happiness against all obstacles, for all people. □

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NOTES

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