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1901-1907



*Lake Memphremagog--Owls Head*, Currier & Ives, [between 1840 and 1880]. LC-USZC2-2739

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1901

Congress passes what is known as the Right of Way Act, permitting the use of rights of way through forest reserves and national parks for electrical power, telephone and telegraph communication, and irrigation and water supply.

Theodore Roosevelt becomes President of the United States upon the death of President McKinley on September 14, and conservation becomes a cornerstone of his domestic policy.

President Theodore Roosevelt's First Annual Message outlines his goals of forest conservation and preservation (including the use of forest reserves as wildlife preserves), and the need for government-sponsored irrigation projects in the arid West.

John Muir publishes *Our National Parks*, a beautifully-written portrait of some of the nation's great scenic wildernesses by their greatest defender; the book goes through a dozen printings and establishes Muir's reputation in the public mind.

The American Scenic and Historic Preservation Society is founded in New York, developing out of the state-level Trustees of Scenic and Historic Places and Objects which had been founded by Andrew H. Green, president of the Commissioners of the State Reservation at Niagara, in 1895, and modelled after Britain's National Trust; the new organization advocates protection of both scenic places and historic sites throughout the nation, demonstrating--like the American Antiquities Act of 1906--the relationship between the movements for natural and cultural preservation in turn-of-the-century America.

The periodical *Country Life in America* begins publication under the editorship of Liberty Hyde Bailey; its pragmatic celebration of the suburban pastoral soon brings it widespread popularity.

## 1902

Congress passes "An Act Appropriating the receipts from the sale and disposal of public lands in certain States and Territories to the construction of irrigation works for the reclamation of arid lands," known as the Newlands Reclamation Act in honor of its chief sponsor, Sen. Francis G. Newlands, which designates proceeds from the sale of public lands in sixteen Western states as a fund for the development of irrigation projects; settlers are to repay the costs of these projects, thus creating a permanent revolving fund. This Act commits the Federal government to support and, ultimately, control of the large-scale irrigation which transforms the landscape, economy, and social and political structure of much of the West.

Congress passes a bill establishing Crater Lake National Park, Oregon.

In one of a series of acts designed to regulate harvesting of Alaskan wildlife, Congress passes "An Act For the protection of game in Alaska, and for other purposes," known as the Alaska Game Act, protecting certain game animals in Alaska; these provisions are strengthened by an act amending the Alaska Game Act in 1908.

Bernhard E. Fernow publishes *The Economics of Forestry: A Reference Book for Students of Political Economy and Professional and Lay Students of Forestry*, a comprehensive overview of forestry principles and their contemporary and historical relationship to public policy, written at a time when forestry practices were in the vanguard of conservationism.

Reflecting the popular fascination with nature-based recreation and concern with wild nature as a resource for character development, Ernest Thompson Seton publishes a series of articles in the *Ladies' Home Journal* calling for the creation of a boys' organization to be named the Woodcraft Indians; this directly inspires Sir Robert Baden-Powell's founding of the Boy Scouts in Britain in 1908 and helps launch the scouting movement in the United States.

John Wesley Powell dies in Maine, shortly after Congress passes the Newlands Reclamation Act.

### 1903

On March 14, President Roosevelt establishes a Federally-protected wildlife refuge by executive order setting aside Pelican Island on Indian River, Florida, as a preserve and breeding ground for native birds; it is the first of fifty-three wildlife sanctuaries Roosevelt creates while President, and establishes the precedent on which the system of national wildlife refuges will be based. Roosevelt's keen interest in birds and their conservation is documented by contemporary film footage [not yet available] of his visits to bird sanctuaries.

Concern about the administration of public lands in the West, particularly the question of grazing leases for cattlemen, prompts the Roosevelt administration to appoint a Public Lands Commission to study and report on public lands issues; the Commission's members are W.A. Richards, F.H. Newell, and Gifford Pinchot.

Congress passes a bill establishing Wind Cave National Park, South Dakota.

Mary Austin *The Land of Little Rain*, a classic celebration of the desert country of California.

John Burroughs publishes an influential essay in the *Atlantic Monthly*, "Real and Sham Natural History," attacking sentimental popular nature-writers such as Ernest Thompson Seton and William J. Long as "nature fakers;" Roosevelt later joins the controversy in support of Burroughs.

### 1904

The American Civic Association is founded June 10 by merging the American Park and Outdoor Art Association with the American League for Civic Improvement; under the leadership of J. Horace McFarland, a civic activist and newspaperman from Harrisburg, Pa., its activities include leading campaigns for the creation and protection of national, state, and municipal parks.

Congress passes a bill which leads to the establishment of Sullys Hill National Park, North Dakota.

### 1905

Acting under the influence of Gifford Pinchot, The American Forestry Association sponsors the American Forest Congress in Washington; attended by leaders of lumbering, mining, grazing, and irrigation industries and by leaders in education and government, the Congress underscores the prominence of questions of natural resource management in the economic concerns of the nation; the Conference's *Proceedings* are published later in the same year.

In accordance with one of the Forest Congress's principal recommendations, Gifford Pinchot succeeds in having the oversight of national forest reserves transferred from the

Department of Interior (General Land Office) to his own jurisdiction, the Bureau of Forestry (formerly known as the Division of Forestry) in the Department of Agriculture, and transforms the Bureau into the Forest Service; this is accomplished by "An Act Providing for the transfer of forest reserves from the Department of Interior to the Department of Agriculture", known as the Transfer Act of 1905. This change also symbolizes a shift of emphasis from preservation to scientific forestry, and Pinchot's dominance in public conservation policy.

The Public Lands Commission appointed by President Roosevelt publishes its *Report*, recommending adjustments in the law and administrative procedure governing Federally-held lands based on a belief in the value of rationally-managed public control of natural resources.

Congress passes a by "Joint Resolution Accepting the recession by the State of California of the Yosemite Valley Grant and the Mariposa Big Tree Grove in the Yosemite National Park," appropriating \$20,000 for the re-acquisition of these lands by the Federal government; this transaction is confirmed by another by Joint Resolution enacted in 1906, which reconfigures the boundaries of Yosemite National Park.

J. Horace McFarland, President of the American Civic Association, publishes a series of articles in *Ladies' Home Journal* advocating preservation of Niagara Falls from the threat posed by water power demands, which generates a huge favorable response from readers and inaugurates a campaign that provokes the Congressional action on Niagara of the following year.

The National Association of Audubon Societies for the Protection of Wild Birds and Animals is founded in New York, officially uniting the numerous state groups which have sprung up since 1896, and establishing a strong national voice for conservation. (In 1940, the organization's name was changed to the National Audubon Society.)

Nathaniel Southgate Shaler publishes by *Man and the Earth*, a prophetic scientific and philosophical exploration of mankind's relationship with the earth which anticipates the writings of such figures as by Liberty Hyde Bailey and, much later, Aldo Leopold; Shaler predicts that in the future humanity's relations with the earth will be characterized by a new consciousness of man's ethical responsibility to the natural world, and he directs attention to problems of ecology, biodiversity loss, and the need for worldwide efforts toward scenic and wildlife preservation.

## 1906

Congress passes by "An Act For the preservation of American antiquities," known as the American Antiquities Act, authorizing the President to establish national monuments for the preservation of features of historic, prehistoric, and scientific interest, and forbidding unauthorized injury of objects of antiquity.

by President Roosevelt issues a by Presidential Proclamation establishing Devil's Tower National Monument, Wyoming, as the nation's first National Monument; later in the year,

he issues another by Proclamation, establishing Petrified Forest National Monument, Arizona.

Congress passes by a bill establishing Mesa Verde National Park, Colorado, and by a Resolution designating Sulphur Springs Reservation, Oklahoma, as Platt National Park.

Congress passes by "An Act To extend the irrigation Act to the State of Texas," extending the provisions of by the Newlands Act to Texas.

Responding to the campaign of public concern about the depletion of Niagara Falls orchestrated by J. Horace McFarland and supported by the Sierra Club and the Appalachian Mountain Club, Congress passes both a by Joint Resolution instructing the American representatives to an international commission on Niagara to work with their Canadian counterparts to preserve the Falls; and by "An Act For the control and regulation of the waters of Niagara River, for the preservation of Niagara Falls, and for other purposes," restricting the diversion of water from the sources of the Falls and requesting the President to undertake the necessary treaty negotiations to guarantee the Falls' protection by both the United States and Canada; though it permits greater water diversion than preservationists like McFarland had hoped, a final treaty is signed in 1909 which limits the total amount of water diverted from the Falls by both nations to 56,000 cubic feet per second, a limitation which remains in effect until 1950.

This year and the following, by Gifford Pinchot prepares bills for Congress placing the national parks under the Forest Service so that they may be open for resource development; these measures are successfully opposed by by Rep. John F. Lacey, Chairman of the House Public Lands Committee and Congressional spokesman for the preservationist approach to conservation; Pinchot's effort ultimately backfires by sparking the preservationists' campaign to establish a permanent separate bureau to administer the national parks.

## 1907

John Muir publishes "The Tuolumne Yosemite in Danger" in *Outlook*, the opening salvo in his campaign to save Hetch Hetchy Valley from damming as a reservoir for San Francisco; the campaign becomes a national focus for conservation efforts and thought during the next several years, and signals the ideological bifurcation of the conservation movement between advocates of preservationist conservationism (those who seek to retain natural areas in their "natural" state) and advocates of utilitarian conservationism (those who seek to manage the sustainable harvesting of natural resources for human benefit).

Through provisions embedded in the Forest Service sub-section of an Agriculture appropriations act, Congress renames Forest Reserves "National Forests," and forbids their further creation or enlargement in six Western states (Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Montana, Colorado, or Wyoming), except by act of Congress; when the bill passes Congress on February 25, Pinchot and his staff work feverishly to identify sixteen million acres of

forest in these six states which are designated as national forests by President Roosevelt before he signs the bill into law on March 4.

Heralding the growth of organized opposition to conservation policy, the Colorado legislature and Governor Henry Buchtel sponsor the Denver Public Lands Convention; it is attended by representatives of Western ranching and mining interests who call for cession of public lands to the states and restriction of national forests; the Convention's *Proceedings* are published later in the same year.

President Roosevelt issues a Proclamation establishing Cinder Cone National Monument, and a Proclamation establishing Lassen Peak National Monument, both in California.

President Roosevelt appoints an Inland Waterways Commission to study the nation's declining river navigation and recommend measures to revive it; the Commission's *Report*, submitted by the President to Congress the following year, supports a carefully planned multi-purpose approach to the use and development of the nation's rivers, to be coordinated by a single executive agency.

In his Seventh Annual Message, President Roosevelt makes the case for utilitarian conservationism especially forcefully, asserting that "the conservation of our natural resources and their proper use constitute the fundamental problem which underlies almost every other problem of our National life," and that his administration has been trying "to substitute a planned and orderly development of our resources in place of a haphazard striving for immediate profit."

At the request of the Massachusetts legislature, with which he worked to prepare model bird-protection laws, ornithologist Edward Howe Forbush publishes *Useful Birds and Their Protection*, the first major work by an American to analyze the economic importance of birds and the strategies necessary for their protection.