

Photo
scapes

Edited by Frédéric Pousin

The Nexus between Photography
and Landscape Design

Photo scapes

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Frédéric Pousin

Milestones for an Intercultural Approach

Frédéric Pousin

The aim of this book is to explore the subtle links woven between photography and landscape projects. Following on from a three-year joint research project, it attempts to consider the role that photography plays in the management and transformation of landscapes and in the debates that may ensue. Changes to the countryside often reflect changes in society, be they economic, social or cultural. For Augustin Berque, geographer and expert on Japan, landscape expresses the relationship between a society and its environment.¹ Yet perception of a landscape is also an eminently subjective reality, often emotionally

charged: whether we think of familiar, political or even wartime landscapes. And finally, it is a living reality that continuously evolves and changes. Landscape projects are the result of foresight, of a vision that guides action so as to meet a need or a desire for transformation. Historically speaking, they were rooted in garden design and then in urbanism, with parks becoming urban and public. Park projects were major levers for town development, as can be seen from the exemplary works of Olmsted: his first plans for a park system for the city of Buffalo in 1868 or the creation of Jackson Park on the shores of Lake Michigan in Chicago² inspired the thinking and projects of numerous French landscape architects, from yesteryear's Jean Claude Nicolas Forestier to Michel Desvigne today. Closely linked to town and country planning, the scale of landscaping projects has grown – in France, to that of a commu-

nauté de communes (a grouping of local authorities), a nature park or a *département* (county). But a landscaping project is characterized by the overall vision and coherency that it channels, and by the convergence of opportunities for action that it organizes within a region. The objectives that it sets itself are developed and discussed at length; landscape projects thus generate argument and debate – a debate that has many different forms of expression and in which photography is taking an ever-increasing part.

The role of photography is of course eminently variable, depending on the cultural context and the historical period. From its very beginnings, photography was solicited for regional planning purposes. Was the purpose of the first aerial pictures taken by Nadar not to help in the creation of a land registry?³ In the United States, photography was used in geological and geographical missions commissioned by the Government, to take account of the progress in prospection and exploration during the second half of the 19th century. The role that photographers played in the creation of natural parks is well known,⁴ particularly that of Carleton Watkins, who was the first person to arouse national interest in the Yosemite Valley. Photographic reportages proved crucial in the promotion of conservation policies. The same was true of William Henry Jackson's pictures with regard to the creation of Yellowstone Park in 1872, and the emblematic works of Ansel Adams in the 1930s. Photography also accompanied the construction of railways and roads, and parkways⁵ in particular.

1

See Augustin Berque, *Les raisons du paysage. De la Chine antique aux environnements de synthèse*, Hazan, Paris, 1995.

2

See Charles E. Beveridge and Paul Rocheleau, *Frederic Law Olmsted, Designing the American Landscape*, Universe Publishing, New York, 1998.

3

Stephen Bann, "La vue aérienne de Nadar", in Mark Dorrian and Frédéric Pousin (eds.), *Vues aériennes. Seize études pour une histoire culturelle*, MétisPresses, Geneva, 2008, p. 69–78.

4

See Jamie M. Allen, *Picturing America's National Parks*, George Eastman Museum, Rochester, New York, 2016.

5

See Timothy Davis, *National Park Roads. A Legacy in the American Landscape*, The University of Virginia Press, Charlottesville, 2016.

At the turn of the 20th century in France, photographers were also involved in a context of defending and preserving sites and landscapes – urban in particular – as can be seen in the *Casier archéologique et artistique de Paris et du département de la Seine*, implemented by the *Commission historique du vieux Paris* between 1916 and 1928.⁶ With a dual objective of study and preservation, several thousand photographs were taken to document buildings or complexes under threat. The dossiers compiled in this way were used to develop plans for the future expansion of Paris. The inventory of all of the city's components, landscapes included, covered not only Paris but also the municipalities that made up the Greater Paris of the future.

In such situations, photography participates in the development of an archive that serves to create inventories which in turn serve heritage policies. The archive is not, however, the sole objective of these commissions. In France, after the Second World War, public commissions were intended to serve a national land policy. Ensuring the promotion of the reconstruction and modernization of the country, photography found itself being integrated into modes of communication targeting the general public – such as the *Salon des arts ménagers* (houseware exhibition) in Paris.

These various photographic productions related to various commissioning situations, which should not be confused with one another. The initiative of a photographer such as Eugène Atget – who sells his pictures to a private clientele, to municipal institutions and to museums – is different from a public commission – such as that of the *Commission des Monuments Historiques*, which in 1851 asked five well-known photographers to document an inventory of the country's architectural and artistic heritage.⁷ And this mission undertaken by artist-photographers, which remains famous under the name of *Mission héliographique*, cannot be equated to the case of technician-operators working for an institution – such as the *Eaux et Forêts* engineers in the *Service de restauration des terrains de montagne* (department for the restoration of mountain lands) – who between 1866 and 1940 took series of photos which were essentially intended for professional use in the field of landscape management.⁸

In a comparative study of photographic missions in France and the United States, Raphaële

Bertho established a dividing line between commissions that call upon technicians and those that appeal to creative artists for their unique perspective and viewpoint.⁹ However enlightening it may be, this dividing line nonetheless merits close examination, in terms of the historical and social acceptance of the notion of creative artist. In France in the 1980s, the *Mission photographique de la DATAR* (DATAR Photographic Mission) called upon highly renowned photographers in a cultural context who were endeavoring to gain artistic recognition. Two historical antecedents were used: DATAR's prestigious Heliographic Mission and the no less famous commission from the Farm Security Administration (FSA), which had come into being in the late 1930s in the United States, at the time of the Great Depression when photographers were struggling to achieve artist status. In inaugurating a commission for artist-photographers, DATAR triggered numerous initiatives, including that of the landscape photography observatories in France, most of which were implemented within regional nature parks.

We have chosen to explore certain historical moments and representative processes of the role that photography has played in the manufacture of landscapes: above and beyond viewpoint or the production of documents, it is a question of a photography expanded to include commissions, the photographer's perspective, and vectors of dissemination.

American national parks are an excellent laboratory for observing the diversity of photography's functions and uses, as well as the status of the photographers themselves. Timothy Davis explores an underappreciated period between the discovery of the national parks (the creation of the NPS) and the growing influence of Ansel Adams during the 1930s – that particular moment when the parks' commercial and salaried photographers were endeavoring to express a popular perception of nature that would henceforth become the official perception. The NPS's strategy for disseminating pictures made use of various media so as to create a symbol proper to America's national parks.

In the history of photography and landscape, photography has often been solicited to accompany and promote projects. But its value cannot be limited to this instrumental function, because

the pictures also help to develop – or challenge – cultural norms. Public commissions have fueled a debate on these norms. Taking a cross-section of commissions from 1994, Raphaële Bertho analyzes the policies behind these photographic projects. 1994 proved to be a landmark year, both for France and internationally, with numerous commissions being placed simultaneously by institutions in charge of town and country planning. The author presents both the moment at which thinking about landscape became established in France – principally in the 1990s – and the institutional background for these commissions, via the DATAR Photographic Mission. She finds an evolution in commissioning that forsakes land planning issues and shifts more towards the cultural stakes of regional valorization.

Geographer and landscape theorist J. B. Jackson provides a strong link between the essays in this book, which discuss different geographical, institutional and artistic contexts. Indeed, John Brinckerhoff Jackson's thinking constitutes both a cultural reference and a theoretical foundation for articulating the photography of cultural, natural or inhabited landscapes with the role that photography plays in landscape, management or transformation projects pursued by professionals and activists.¹⁰ With the journal *Landscape*, which he created in 1951, J. B. Jackson was one of the leading promoters of the notion of cultural landscape in the United States. But he was also able to link reflection on the cultural landscape to the culture of urbanism and planning.

In his essay, Chris Wilson shows how, depending on the period of his life, J. B. Jackson devel-

oped several different understandings of photography. As a publisher, his initial approach was utilitarian – to his eyes a print was merely a document – which made him less than open to the emerging world of fine-art photography. It was in a later period, when the success of his conception of the cultural landscape allowed him to give lectures and teach courses, that Jackson, using thousands of color slides, turned to photography as a means of documenting the cultural landscape of North America as he encountered it during his travels. Finally, his contact in universities with the counterculture generation and new artistic trends further modified his perception of photography.

Bruno Notteboom's careful reading of the journal *Landscape* shows that Jackson relies on a conception of landscape that is both complex and ambiguous, being based on actual examples. To this end he analyzes the construction of a discourse made up of interwoven text, images and intertextuality. It was Jackson's responsibility as editor to assemble the texts and pictures for each issue and this allowed him to have a discourse parallel to the text. Notteboom's analysis focuses mainly on articles relating to the urban landscape; he shows that by widening the field to include the urban sphere, i.e. to disciplines other than geography, Jackson offered, through his journal, a non-hegemonic view of landscape that was open to emerging theories and practices.

This book contains several contributions that focus on the circulation of ideas between different cultural milieus, via publications, exhibitions and conferences – three forms of mediation that make use of photography.

Laurie Olin looks back at the post-war period in the United States, where the broad dissemination of landscape projects in specialist and general publications defined a veritable "photographic landscape". Indeed, the manner in which these forms of media "framed" the projects contained therein shaped the "perceptive apparatus" of an American public keen on design and landscape architecture. As a landscape architect active throughout the 1960s, he also attests to photography's impact on his work. He describes the methods employed within his own agency, Olin Studio, to classify and archive the photographic documentation of projects, prior to

6

See, Laurence Bassière, "Prémices d'un urbanisme patrimonial. L'épisode du Casier archéologique et artistique de Paris et du département de la Seine, 1916–1928", in Actes du colloque des 5 et 6 décembre 2013, Cité de l'architecture et du patrimoine, <http://www.inventer-legrandparis.fr/panorama-mas-historiques/1911-1919/>

7

See Anne de Mondenard, *La mission Héliographique. Cinq photographes parcourent la France en 1851*, Monum, Éditions du patrimoine, Paris, 2002.

8

See Luce Lebart, "La restauration des montagnes. Photographies de l'Administration des forêts au XIXe siècle", *Études photographiques*, no. 3, Revue de la Société française de photographie, p. 82–101, 1997. <http://etudesphotographiques.revues.org/96>

9

See Raphaële Bertho, "From the American Survey to the French Mission, What Photographic Landscape Policy?" talk given at the *PhotoPaysage/Landscape Representation* conference, 15–17 October 2015. <http://photopaysage.huma-num.fr/from-the-american-survey-to-the-french-mission-what-photographic-landscape-policy/>

10

See the *PhotoPaysage/Landscape Representation* conference, *op.cit.* See also, Janet Mendelsohn, Christopher Wilson, *Drawn to Landscape. The Pioneering Work of J. B. Jackson*, The University of Virginia Press, Charlottesville, VA, 2015.

the advent of digital photography. Finally, establishing a link between the post-war "photographic landscape" and the current period, Olin underlines the veritable "photographic utopia" that is now available through the internet.

Representations of projects through photography form a structural theme of the book. Culturalist theories of landscape have stressed the role that representations play in constructing the fact of landscape – whether they consider artistic expression to be a prerequisite for the manifestation of landscape or as the translation of a physical reality into a society's collective imaginary.¹¹ Both reality and representation, landscape is conducive to the coming together of professional and artistic practices whose boundaries are becoming increasingly porous.

Frédéric Pousin posits that photography is an instrument of choice for transforming a project into fragments of discourse. He examines the uses that Gilles Clément makes of the slide, which is more of a tool for communicating about project experiences than a project instrument. It is by studying Clément's conferences that we can see the extent to which photography contributes to the theoretical discourse of the landscape architect. Indeed, in an original fashion and in terms that differ from publication or exhibition, the conference as a medium touches on the interplay between word and image. As a channel for disseminating landscape culture, it also raises the issue of the relationship with the audience.

Marie-Madeleine Ozdoba's close reading of landscape projects reveals novel ways of using photography in landscape design; ordinarily, the latter tends to see photography as a means of recording, from the documentation of the site through to that of the completed project. She examines the approach used by Bas Smets, a landscape architect in Brussels, who on the contrary considers photography to be a field of creation and expression in its own right. He develops a relationship between photography and reality, following a culturalist conception of landscape as a constructed representation, the relevance of which is supported by the critical apparatus of contemporary theories of photography.

Nowadays, landscape design is an increasingly complex task that involves numerous professions,

photographers included, which participate in the process of land transformation. Their practices vary, combining the creative stance with participation in public debate. We know that the construction of a field, be it professional or artistic, is founded on veritable media strategies.¹² Interaction between photographers and landscape architects has proved fruitful and we are able to see how a landscape is built within this interaction. It therefore makes sense to examine the way in which one field – landscape design – shakes up the other – photography – and vice versa.

For Sonia Keravel, project photographers have long been confined to the role of technician. The inventive aspect of their work has until now been overlooked. Yet more often than not, in books and exhibitions, it is through the photographer's eye that we learn about landscaping projects. Keravel studies the relationships between photographers and landscape architects who work together on town and country planning projects. Duos are formed, with complex attachments often interwoven with friendship. In examining the partnership between Alain Marguerit and Gérard Dufresne, she finds a veritable coproduction of the landscape project.

Franck Michel makes a detailed analysis of Bertrand Carrière's *Après Strand* photographic project, which is both an encounter with a leading figure of photographic history and an examination of a region that is dear to the author – the Gaspésie. This photographic project looks at both the human and geographical experience of appropriating a region and at a voyage through the historical depth of places and perspectives. The project moves beyond the photographs and their idiosyncrasies, into the strategies developed to share, exhibit and publish. Bertrand Carrière's project is a self-commission that caught the attention of a cultural institution, that of the *Musée régional de Rimouski*. It differs from an institutional project designed to valorize a region, by offering a critical perspective that uses only the levers of photography.

The relevance of a fresh debate on landscape and photographic projects – a debate that this book hopes to reflect and nurture – was confirmed by a round table with photographers, landscape architects and researchers. The discussions were

organized around the various forms of media coverage that a project might have triggered. Publication was found to be the most shared form, with exhibition relating more to photographers and conferences relating more to landscape architects. The round table was an opportunity to talk about collaborations between these professionals and, above all, to clarify the reciprocal expectations. Photography was felt to be a flexible medium that can create pictures with different statuses. Because ultimately it is the use of photography – the integration of the document into a process of design or communication, or into artistic projects that may take different forms – that allows the document to exist in an environment that goes beyond the mere world of images. Photography nevertheless has its own distinctive characteristics which, according to Catherine Mosbach, constitute its value to landscape architects. As Geoffroy Mathieu points out, a photograph is a fixed image that invites consideration and leaves no one indifferent. Its limits are its strength. For Pascale Hannetel, the landscape project calls for a photographic eye capable of revealing its hitherto unnoticed aspects, and of mobilizing people around how best to manage it. The numerous actors involved are invited to discuss it on the basis of representations (mainly

maps and photos), as Valérie Kauffmann notes, with the expectation that they will then sign off on it collectively. The photographic project is inevitably framed in very different terms, in light of the “creative photography” approach that Raphaële Bertho sees as being so pervasive nowadays, leading her to dissociate the photographic project from photographic practice. With Édith Roux, visual forms tend towards a performativity which, precisely, does not relate to regional actors. The articulation around the region’s social and political reality is of course variable, with the photographic project also acting within the imaginary – an imaginary that is just as much photographic as it is territory and landscape oriented. By the end of the round table, we find permeabilities emerging, first and foremost of which is the need to question the very terms used in discourses relating to professional practices. The modalities through which photographic images exist – archives, the revelation of the non-visible, interdiscursivity – are widely shared.

Finally, through visual discourse, a certain number of image portfolios, accompanied by brief argumentation, shed light on the encounter between photographic project and landscape transformation.

11

See Alain Roger (ed.),
*La Théorie du paysage en
France*, 1974, 1994, Champ
Vallon, Seyssel, 1995.

12

See Beatriz Colomina,
*Privacy and Publicity: Modern
Architecture as Mass Media*,
MIT Press, Cambridge,
MA, 1994.

Filling in the Picture: A Broader Perspective on National Park Photography

Timothy Davis



National park photography is such a well-known genre that the topic would seem to be thoroughly exhausted. From Carleton Watkins' emblematic Yosemite images and William Henry Jackson's role in the establishment of Yellowstone to Ansel Adams' monumental oeuvre, the masterworks of national park photography have generated a wealth of academic interest and popular acclaim. The emphasis on prominent artists and pioneering practitioners is understandable, but this narrow focus provides a limited perspective on national park photography. Much can be gained by examining the undervalued interlude between the discovery era and Adams' ascendancy, when commercial photographers and government employees played prominent roles in shaping popular and official perceptions of the nature and meaning of America's national parks. Eschewing the traditional filter of aesthetic evaluation to focus on the ways in which the federal government employed photographs to promote national parks and advance institutional agendas illuminates the broader role of photography in the construction of landscape values and social relations. Informal collaborations between federal officials, commercial interests, and professional image-makers gave way to more structured arrangements after 1916 as the newly formed National Park Service (NPS) relied heavily on photographic imagery to cultivate support, expand its influence, and celebrate its achievements.

The influence of Jackson's photographs on the establishment of Yellowstone National Park is one of the most celebrated episodes in the annals of both photography and conservation, but the role of photography in the authorization and popularization of the more broadly conceived U.S.

National Park System has been largely overlooked, at least by chroniclers of the photographic medium. Several contributors have attracted interest from park historians and regional institutions, but technical factors have combined with scholarly and critical biases to marginalize an important aspect of the relationship between photography and America's national parks. Initial efforts relied heavily on commercial photographers, who were more intent on pleasing popular tastes than acquiring artistic accolades. Along with employing conventional compositional strategies that did little to advance the aes-

thetic aspects of the genre, they focused on marketable commodities such as post cards, stereo views, souvenir albums, and other items that were considered beneath the dignity of artistic consideration. Not only did their mercantile orientation detract from efforts to define photography as a fine art, but they exhibited little enthusiasm for the soft-focused fancies of the contemporary photographic avant-garde.

The National Park Service (NPS) photographers who succeeded them combined traditional landscape imagery with depictions of tourist activities and even more prosaic documentation of capital improvements, natural specimens, and historical artifacts. While the NPS displayed photographs in visitor facilities and temporary exhibitions, the images were primarily seen in government publications and popular periodicals, where the reproduction quality was marginal at best. Another common method of dissemination – public lectures illustrated by glass lantern slides – has been overlooked due to the ephemerality of the performances and the challenges of storing, viewing and reproducing the medium. Contemporary social reform photographers such as Jacob Riis and Lewis Hine¹ faced similar impediments, but their sensational imagery and humanitarian agendas appealed more strongly to historians of photography and American culture. Similar biases shaped the reception of work produced during the 1930s. Overshadowed by the Farm Security Administration's chronicle of the social and environmental costs of the Great Depression, the efforts of NPS photographers have gone largely unremarked. While these momentous events inspired memorable images by mesmerizing artists such as Walker Evans, Ben Shahn and Dorothea Lange, scholarly and critical preferences for social documentary over landscape photography also came into play.² Despite Ansel Adams' popular appeal, landscape was regarded as a less significant genre throughout most of the 20th century, especially when portrayed in the straightforward mode favored by park photographers. Scholars have become increasingly attuned to the ideological implications of landscape representation, however, and are interrogating the ways in which even the most seemingly benign images serve to construct or contest cultural norms and values. Coupled with growing interest in the ways in which the production and dissem-

¹ See: Maren Stange, *Symbols of Ideal Life: Social Documentary Photography in America, 1890–1950*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 1989.

² See: F. Jack Hurley, *Portrait of a Decade: Roy Stryker and the Development of Documentary Photography in the Thirties*, University of Louisiana Press, Baton Rouge, 1972; Alan Trachtenberg, *Reading America Photographs: Images as History*, Matthew Brady to Walker Evans, Hill & Wang, New York, 1989.

ination of photographic imagery influences its cultural impact, this emphasis on looking beyond aesthetic filters and outdated perceptions affords an opportunity to examine National Park Service photography in an illuminating new light. The 100th anniversary of the establishment of the National Park Service provides additional incentive for reflection on this pivotal period in the relationship between parks, people and the photographic medium.

Prior to 1916 national parks were technically under the control of the U.S. Department of the Interior, but administered by military officers and politically appointed private citizens with widely varying aims and abilities. With no comprehensive management policies or unified leadership, they were often poorly managed and subject to threats from mining, grazing, and water development interests. They were also seen as under-utilized and elitist. Not only did the expense of traveling in the pre-automotive era restrict visiting to those who could afford lengthy vacations, but it created the impression that national parks were of limited value to the broader public. Tourists typically traveled cross-country by train and spent a week or more staying at park hotels that offered similar service to private resorts and charged accordingly. Yellowstone and Yosemite were by far the most popular destinations, along with the Grand Canyon, which was not a national park but a national monument under the jurisdiction of the Department of Agriculture. Many viewed the parks as individual resorts operated by and for the railroad companies and concessionaires rather than as national institutions “for the benefit and enjoyment of the people,” as Yellowstone’s founding legislation proclaimed.

Park advocates believed the best way to protect existing parks and create new ones was to establish a fully-fledged government agency to oversee them and expand the constituency of

park supporters by emphasizing their appeal to the growing ranks of middle-class Americans seeking to enjoy modest vacations along with the increased mobility afforded by the proliferation of automobiles. They also sought to underscore the broader value of national parks as economic assets and cultural institutions. During a series of conferences leading up to agency’s creation, park advocates emphasized the need for improvements in three key areas: transportation, accommodation, and public relations. While everyone from the Sierra Club to the Secretary of the Interior agreed that automobiles were the wave of the future, existing roads would require significant upgrades to accommodate automobile traffic. Newly established parks such as Glacier had hardly any roads at all. Park hotels, meanwhile, charged exorbitant rates and were too few and far between to accommodate significant increases in patronage. Proponents lamented that American national parks possessed the finest scenery in the world, but inadequate infrastructure prevented these fantastic sights from being seen. The drive to improve the physical infrastructure of national parks has been amply documented by historians of landscape architecture and engineering, but park advocates understood that constructing a conceptual infrastructure for understanding and appreciating national parks was equally important – and that photography would play an indispensable role.³

Federal officials realized that they were ill-equipped for the task. While William H. Jackson, Timothy O’Sullivan and other pioneering expositors of park landscapes conducted their most famous work for official geologic surveys, the government exhibited little interest in funding ongoing photographic activity in national parks. Private photographers filled the void, but the nature of the imagery and relationships between photographers and their audiences evolved as

well. Instead of authenticating the existence of supreme spectacles in need of federal protection, photographers sought to emphasize their touristic appeal. Eye-catching images of geysers, cliffs and waterfalls remained popular, but as emblems of touristic experiences ranging from the ridiculous to the sublime. Exotic attractions such as Yosemite's Tunnel Trees and Yellowstone's bears joined the mix, while images showing visitors enjoying park landscapes began to proliferate.

Many photographers developed long-time associations with individual parks, either visiting frequently or setting up concessions that catered to tourists' demands for film developing and ready-made souvenirs. F. J. Haynes established

the first official national park photographic concession in Yellowstone in 1884. By the turn of the 20th century Haynes was operating "picture shops" in multiple locations in conjunction with his son Jack, who succeeded him in 1916 | FIG. 1|. Along with catering to tourists' demands, the Haynes supplied promotional imagery to magazines, railroads, and other park concessionaires. They also worked closely with park officials, photographing roads, bridges and other improvements, along with special events and notable visitors. While it was clearly in the Haynes's interest to amplify their customer base, both father and son were genuinely committed to popularizing the park. They were also highly conscious of their role as the primary creators and curators of Yellowstone's visual history. During their 60 year reign as the dominant purveyors of Yellowstone photography, they produced thousands of negatives chronicling the transition from trackless wilderness to bustling resort, the birth of the National Park Service, and the dawn of the automobile age. Both the military officers who oversaw the park prior to

1916 and the National Park Service officials who succeeded them recognized the crucial role played by the Haynes operation, routinely characterizing father and son as "the park photographer" or "the official park photographer". There was no legal basis for the designation, but it reflected the Haynes's status as Yellowstone's primary photographic concessionaire and their willingness to perform the duties a federally employed photographer would normally fulfill, if park authorities had the means to engage one.⁴

Similar relationships existed between photographers and federal officials in other parks. Yosemite's most noted practitioners in the post-Carleton Watkins era were George Fiske, Julius Boysen, Harry Best and Arthur Pillsbury | FIG. 2|. Pillsbury was the most active during the early decades of the 20th century, taking an energetic role in promoting Yosemite and national parks in general. Lindley Eddy was Sequoia's primary photographic concessionaire, while Fred Kiser played a similar role at Crater Lake. Kiser's photographs had been instrumental in the authorization of both Crater Lake and Glacier National Parks. His Glacier work was funded by the Great Northern Railway, whose president Louis Hill was the driving force behind the park's authorization and the popularization of the See America First movement, whose argument that Americans should spend their tourist dollars at home rather than abroad played a key role in the establishment of the National Park Service. Asahel Curtis was not only Mount Rainier's primary photographer, but its most ardent booster, serving as chairman of the organization that promoted the park's interests in Congress and advertised its attractions to the public at large. Federal officials freely admitted that railroads, concessionaires and local boosters bore the brunt of the effort to popularize national parks. They also agreed it was time for the government to take a more prominent role,

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The development of national park infrastructure is detailed in Ethan Carr, *Wilderness by Design: Landscape Architecture and the National Park Service*, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, NE, 1998; Linda McClelland, *Building the National Parks: Historic Landscape Design and Construction*, Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, MD, 1998; and Timothy Davis, *National Park Roads: A Legacy in the American Landscape*, University of Virginia Press, Charlottesville, VA, 2016.

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Haynes's interactions with park officials can be traced in National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), Record Group 79, NPS Central Files, Yellowstone, Boxes 225–26, 490–500, 1780; the NPS holdings in NARA's Still Pictures Branch contains an extensive collection of Haynes photographs. The Montana Historical Society is the primary repository of Haynes material. See: Aubrey Haines, *The Yellowstone Story*, vol. 1, Yellowstone Library and Museum Association in cooperation with Colorado Associated University Press, Yellowstone National Park, WY, 1977; Montana Historical Society, *F. J. Haynes, Photographer*, Montana Historical Society Press, Helena, MT, 1981; Carl Schreier (ed.), *Yellowstone: Selected Photographs 1870–1960*, Homestead Publishing Company, Moose, WY, 1989.



[FIG. 1]



[FIG. 2]



[FIG. 3]

[FIG. 1]
 Jack Haynes,
 Haynes Picture Shop,
 Yellowstone National Park,
 c. 1920.

[FIG. 2]
 Julius T. Boysen, Stagecoach
 on Big Oak Flat Road,
 Yosemite National Park, 1903.

[FIG. 3]
 Herbert W. Gleason,
 Hetch Hetchy Valley,
 Yosemite National Park,
 published in *Sierra Club Bulletin* 7,
 June 1910, plate LXXXV.

emphasizing that they were national assets and instruments of civic betterment, educational improvement, and spiritual uplift.⁵

The initial effort to employ photography in this vein was undertaken by the Department of the Interior's Clerk in Charge of Publications, Laurence F. Schmeckebier.⁶ At the first national park conference in 1911, Schmeckebier observed that the annual reports submitted by park superintendents reached such a small audience and were so dry and technical that they did little to advance the cause. He urged park officials to ply the press with news releases aimed at raising public awareness of park activities, whether it be the completion of a bridge or information about natural features or fishing opportunities. Illustrated Sunday supplements were to be especially targeted. Noting that the government had relied on the tourist industry to provide guidebooks, which were often self-serving and outdated, he called on the assembled superintendents to provide information from which the department could produce more authoritative and up-to-date circulars. He also advocated issuing illustrated handbooks highlighting the attractions of individual parks. Finally, he emphasized the importance of promoting the parks by means of photographic exhibitions, lantern slides, and moving pictures.

By the end of the year Schmeckebier had compiled a modest exhibition that the department made available to interested institutions. The program was so successful that a second set was created the following year. To reach an even broader audience, he produced a heavily illustrated article for *National Geographic Magazine*.⁷ While a number of photographs were credited to the U.S. Geological Survey, most came from independent sources. Haynes contributed to the Yellowstone section; Best and Boysen provided Yosemite images; Kiser and the Great Northern Railroad were co-credited for Glacier; Asahel Curtis sent some of his signature Mount Rainier shots; the Southern Pacific Railroad supplied additional Yosemite images along with several of Sequoia. The series concluded with photographs of the newly designated

Petrified Forest and Devil's Postpile National Monuments, the latter taken by Sierra Club member Walter Huber. Along with presenting eye-catching images of soaring cliffs, spouting geysers and towering trees, Schmeckebier emphasized that America's natural beauty was not meant to be marveled at from afar but enjoyed in person. The classic format of foreground spectators admiring distant views was augmented with images of hikers, climbers, horseback riders, a stagecoach passing through a tunnel tree (automobiles were not yet allowed in Yosemite when the article appeared in 1912), and, in a sign of things to come, automobile tourists winding their way to Mount Rainier. A photograph of Yosemite's cavalry troop arrayed along a fallen Sequoia underscored the magnitude of the marvels visitors would encounter and while assuring them that they could view them in peace and safety. Lest anyone doubt the article's underlying intent, Schmeckebier noted that Congress was considering a bill to authorize a dedicated national park bureau, quoting President William Howard Taft's endorsement of the proposal.

Despite Taft's exhortations, Congress declined to move forward on the park bill. Momentum was building, however, driven in part by widespread disappointment over a 1913 ruling to allow the damming of Yosemite's Hetch Hetchy Valley in order to create a reservoir for the city of San Francisco. John Muir and other conservationists fought the measure, enlisting the Boston-based photographer Herbert Gleason to give supportive slide lectures and illustrate articles and pamphlets decrying the desecration of this little-known region, which rivaled Yosemite Valley in scenic splendor | **FIG. 3** |. Gleason illustrated handsomely published volumes of writings by Muir and Henry David Thoreau, but his primary medium was the lantern slide lecture. This engaging blend of education and entertainment was employed by social reformers, educators and other professional speakers to reach middle- and upper-class audiences in search of edifying diversions. Women's clubs, civic associations, and

social organizations were popular targets. Gleason and his contemporary George Peabody crisscrossed the country offering uplifting presentations on national parks, nature appreciation, and the patriotic and educational value of American scenery. Both men employed hand-colored slides for more compelling and realistic effects. Gleason's wife Lulie Rounds Gleason was his principal colorist, accompanying him on travels and taking meticulous notes to guide her application of watercolor tints. Muir, Gleason and their allies were unable to prevent the inundation of Hetch Hetchy Valley. The campaign broadened the base of the park movement, however, with photographs by Gleason and others testifying to the paradise lost through inadequate protection for America's national parks.⁸

While Taft did not win reelection, Woodrow Wilson's Secretary of the Interior Franklin K. Lane embraced the cause. His choice to lead the push for a national parks bureau was Stephen Mather, an ardent park supporter who had made a fortune in the borax industry and was looking for new outlets for his prodigious energy and promotional talents. Arriving in early 1915, he threw himself into the effort, lobbying Congress and currying favor with journalists, businessmen, automobile

enthusiasts and other potential supporters. *National Geographic Magazine* publisher Gilbert Grosvenor was an early convert. Grosvenor published an entire issue on American scenery while the bill to establish the park service was being debated, devoting considerable space to national parks and monuments. Haynes, Kiser, Curtis, Pillsbury and Eddy were again featured, along with several photographs by Grosvenor himself. Rather than directly press the case for the park service bill, the text combined broader See America First rhetoric with descriptions of existing parks and proposed additions. Grosvenor continued to feature park-related subjects and gave an extended lecture on the use of photography to increase public appreciation at the 1917 National Parks Conference.⁹

Mather enlisted veteran journalist Robert Sterling Yard to bolster the publicity effort. An old friend from Mather's days as a journalist for the *New York Sun*, Yard had gone on to edit *Century Magazine* and the *Sunday New York Herald*, where he honed his facility for combining compelling photographs with engaging prose.¹⁰ Building on Schmeckebier's handbook concept, Yard put together a series of pamphlets showcasing individual parks, devoting 20 to 30 photographs to each

area. Gathered together in an attractive wrapper and introduced by effusive testimonials from Mather and Lane, the full set was dubbed the *National Parks Portfolio* | FIG. 4 | and distributed to politicians, chambers of commerce, women's clubs, professional organizations, prominent businessmen and anyone else deemed likely to support the national park bill or promote national parks in general.¹¹ Since there was no allowance in the Department of the Interior's budget for publications of this kind, Mather paid the \$5,000 cost of the initial plates himself and cajoled railroad companies into contributing \$43,000 to have 275,000 copies printed by an independent publishing house.¹² While this was hailed as a grand patriotic gesture, the

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Horace Albright and Margaret Albright Schenk, "Photographers in the National Parks", unpublished manuscript, NPS Historic Photograph Collection; Fred H. Kiser file, NPS Historic Photograph Collection NARA RG 79, NPS Central Files, Yosemite Privileges: A.C. Pillsbury; NARA RG 79, NPS Central Files, General Records, Publicity. U.S. Department of the Interior [USDOI], *Proceedings of the National Park Conference Held at the Yellowstone National Park, September 11 and 12, 1911*, Government Printing Office, Washington, DC, 1911.

6
Laurence F. Schmeckebier, "Our National Parks", *National Geographic Magazine*, 23, 1912, p. 532–79; Robert Shankland, Steve Mather of the National Parks, 3rd edition, Alfred Knopf, New York, 1970; Margaret Shaffer, *See America First: Tourism*

and National Identity, 1880–1940, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC, 2002.

7
Laurence F. Schmeckebier, *op. cit.*

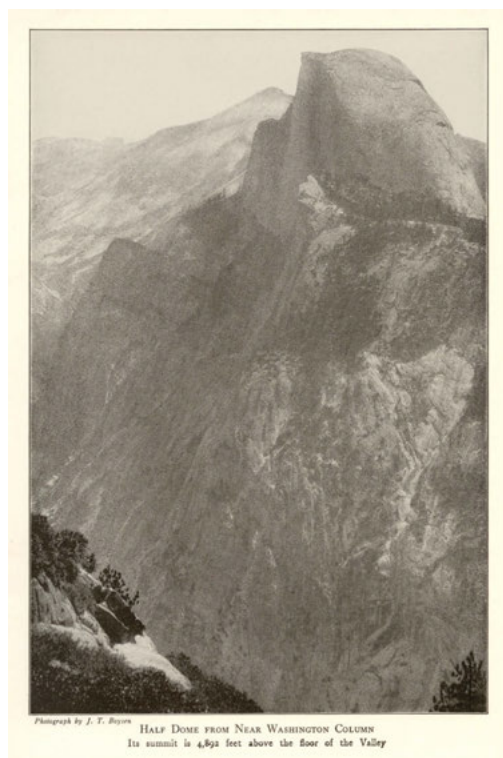
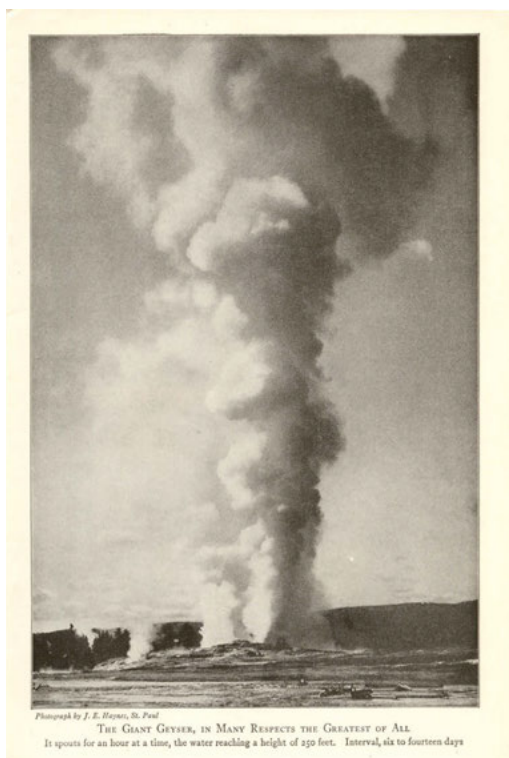
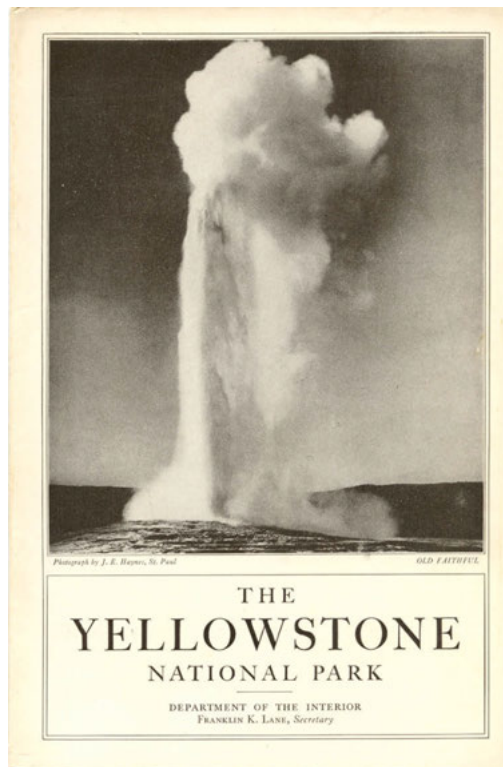
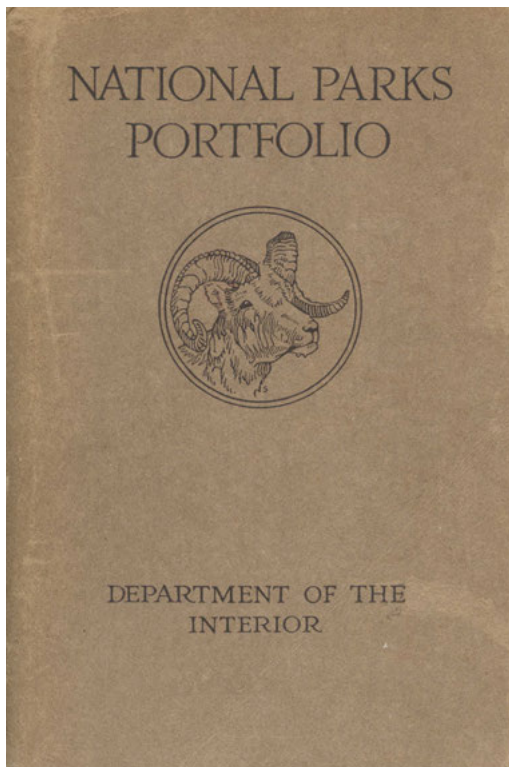
8
The NPS eventually acquired Peabody's glass slides, which are housed in the NPS photographs collection at NARA. See: Sierra Club, "Hetch Hetchy Hearing", *Sierra Club Bulletin*, 7, 1910, p. 260–63; Herbert Gleason, *The Western Wilderness of North America*, introduction by George Crosette, Barre Publishers, Barre, MA, 1972; Leslie Perrin Wilson, "Herbert Wendell Gleason's Negatives in the Concord Public Library: Odyssey of a Collection", *The Concord Saunterer*, 7, 1999, p. 174–99; Finis Dunaway, *Natural Visions: The Power of Images in American Environmental Reform*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL, 2005.

9
Gilbert Grosvenor, "The Land of the Best", *National Geographic Magazine*, 24, 4, 1916, p. 327–430; U.S. National Park Service, *Proceedings of the National Parks Conference, Held in the Auditorium of the New National Museum, Washington, DC, January 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6, 1917*, Government Printing Office, Washington, DC, 1917, p. 130.

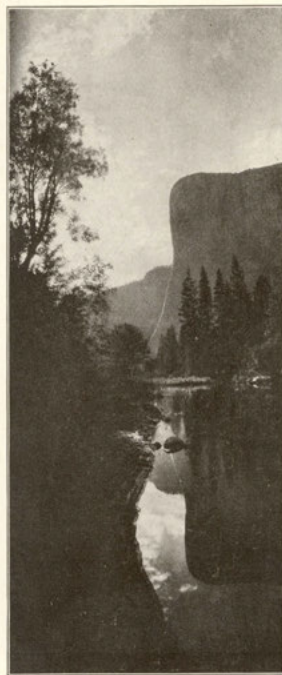
10
Robert Shankland, *op. cit.*

11
U.S. Department of the Interior, *National Parks Portfolio*, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, NY, 1916.

12
U.S. National Park Service [NPS], *National Parks Portfolio*, by Robert Sterling Yard, Government Printing Office, Washington, DC, 1917.



[FIG. 4]
National Parks Portfolio,
U.S. Department of the Interior, 1916.



Y O S E M I T E

DEPARTMENT
OF THE
INTERIOR
FRANKLIN K. LANE
Secretary



MOUNT RAINIER NATIONAL PARK

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
FRANKLIN K. LANE, Secretary



Photograph by J. E. Baynes, St. Paul

OLD FAITHFUL INN



Copyright by J. E. Baynes, St. Paul

THE MAMMOTH HOTEL



Photograph by J. E. Baynes, St. Paul

THE LAKE HOTEL

THREE OF THE FIVE LARGE HOTELS IN THE YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK



Photograph by A. C. Pillsbury

VERNAL AND NEVADA FALLS AND HALF DOME FROM THE GLACIER POINT TRAIL



Photograph by J. T. Baynes

A BEND IN THE BIG OAK FLAT ROAD

railroads had a long history of supporting park-based photography to increase ridership on their western lines. The back cover of each pamphlet provided a map showing the relationship between the parks and the railroad lines that served them. The introductions by Mather and Lane combined See America First domestic travel promotion with expansive rhetoric about the aesthetic, recreational and educational value of America's national parks. Mather lamented that the American people failed to realize that they possessed more impressive scenic and recreational resources than any country in the world. Casting the portfolio as "the first really representative presentation of American Scenery of grandeur ever published", he proclaimed that the panoramic presentation was destined to transform public perception of the nature and value of America's national parks.¹³

The *National Parks Portfolio* was so well received that the NPS put out a second edition in 1917, this time as an official publication through the Government Printing Office.¹⁴ Yard also produced a cheaply printed and less generously illustrated one-volume compendium, *Glimpses of Our National Parks*.¹⁵ *Glimpses* was provided for free and *National Parks Portfolio* made available for a nominal cost. With no budget or staff allotted to photographic work, these publications relied heavily on images provided by the railroads and private photographers. Haynes was once again the primary source for the Yellowstone. Boysen and Pillsbury contributed classic Yosemite images and Pillsbury joined Eddy in supplying Sequoia scenes. Curtis single-handedly covered Mount Rainier while Kiser provided photographs of Crater Lake and Glacier. Grand Canyon concessionaire Fred Harvey was happy to provide views, while Southern Pacific Railroad photographer H.C. Tibbets contributed scenes of Yosemite, Sequoia and the Kings Canyon and Mount Whitney area, which the NPS was lobbying to obtain from the U.S. For-

est Service. The Grand Canyon pamphlet constituted to an even more conspicuous act of photographic appropriation, since it was officially a national monument under Forest Service control. Yard also prevailed on private individuals with national park ties such as western author Emerson Hough, Rocky Mountain National Park founder Enos Mills, and Sierra Club members Walter Huber and Joseph N. LeConte.

Since the U.S. Reclamation Service was also under the Department of the Interior, Mather was also able to "borrow" reclamation photographer H.T. Cowling for a brief but critical period.¹⁶ Cowling spent the summer and fall of 1915 on an extended tour of national parks, producing photographs and films at Mather's behest. Cowling's films were circulated to promote park travel and Yard employed many of his photographs to illustrate the portfolio's sections on Rocky Mountain, Crater Lake, Grand Canyon, and Glacier National Parks.¹⁷ In addition to producing striking scenic views, Cowling filled a crucial need by supplying images of visitors engaging in park-related pastimes such as fishing, camping and horseback riding | FIG. 5 |. These artistically unremarkable photographs helped promote the perception that national parks were not just elite retreats for scenic contemplation but engaging environments for ordinary people to enjoy wholesome outdoor activities. Commercial photographers had long produced postcards of park visitors, but they were infrequently updated so the subjects often wore conspicuously outdated clothes. Underscoring the transitional nature of the period, the first edition of the portfolio included photographs of visitors traveling by both stagecoaches and automobiles. Both publications received frequent updates. Spectacular landscapes continued to predominate, but automobiles eclipsed equine transportation and there was increasing

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U.S. Department of the Interior, *National Parks Portfolio*, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1916, n. p.

14

U.S. National Park Service [NPS], *National Parks Portfolio*, by Robert Sterling Yard, Government Printing Office, Washington, DC, 1917.

15

U.S. Department of the Interior, *Glimpses of Our National Parks*, Government Printing Office, Washington, DC, 1916.

16

The Hereford T. Cowling file, NPS Historic Photograph Collection, contains additional information on Cowling's career. See: Robert Shankland, *op. cit.*

17

U.S. National Park Service [NPS], *National Parks Portfolio*, by Robert Sterling Yard, *op. cit.*



| FIG. 5 |

| FIG. 5 |
Hereford T. Cowling, Fly Fisherman,
Crater Lake National Park, 1915.

emphasis on visitor activities along with images of newly created amenities such as public campgrounds, budget-priced lodgings, and motor roads.

Mather reprised the idea of a traveling exhibit of national park photographs, again relying on images provided by private photographers and railroads. The NPS also instituted a lantern slide lending program for universities, public schools, churches and other organizations. Mather chafed at the budget constraints that prevented the service from providing enough of these materials to satisfy the demand, much less hire staff photographers to expand and update the collection. Maintaining that early exposure to national park images would not just increase visits but promote patriotism among the native born and help Americanize immigrants, he called for the placement of photographs of park scenery in classrooms and school books. America's entry into First World War bolstered the argument for such inspiration but further constrained federal funding. It also reduced the railroad's ability to supply new images and made it harder for private lecturers such as Peabody and Gleason to attract audiences for their park-related performances. The war's end reinvigorated demand without a commensurate increase in funding for what the NPS was increasingly characterizing as "education" rather than outright promotion.¹⁸

In December 1918 Mather finally secured a temporary appointment for Gleason to serve as an "inspector" for the Department of the Interior. As a genteel Bostonian with a national reputation for employing landscape photography to promote conservation and scenic appreciation, Gleason was just the sort of man Mather was looking for to advance the NPS agenda. Along with photographing existing parks, Gleason was charged with investigating areas under consideration for park designation, for which he prepared illustrated reports of their potential for recreational development. He also gave the NPS access to his earlier slides and negatives and printed photographs taken by other NPS personnel.¹⁹

Gleason covered an imposing amount of terrain during his short but productive appointment. In December 1918 he accompanied Mather on a trip to Yosemite and Mount Rainer to fill a gap in the collection by taking photographs of the parks in winter. Unwilling to relocate for a temporary appointment, he spent the spring in Boston, tending to his own affairs and printing photographs for

an exhibition of national park photographs the agency was mounting to convince Congress of the need for increased support. Mather requested additional enlargements to bestow on key representatives and invited him to give one of his signature slide lectures. Gleason spent the first part of the summer of 1919 in New Mexico, Arizona, southern Utah, and southwestern Colorado reconnoitering existing and proposed parks and monuments including Grand Canyon, Mesa Verde, Natural Bridges, Zion, Bryce, Capitol Reef and Bandelier. The second half of the summer was devoted to California, highlighted by a week-long horseback trip along the partially constructed John Muir Trail, which traversed the backbone of the Sierra Nevada from Mount Whitney to Yosemite | FIG. 6 |. A second swing through the Southwest included Inscription Rock and Petrified Forest and culminated in a presentation at the September 1919 national park conference in Denver.²⁰

Gleason returned to Boston with an impressive array of images and valuable insights about the characteristics and development potential of areas the NPS was considering for park designation. Several, including Bryce, and the sweep of Sierra scenery between Sequoia and Yosemite that the NPS sought to transform into a national park were controlled by the U.S. Forest Service, which strongly resisted efforts to diminish its holding. Since both regions were remote and rarely visited, the NPS believed Gleason's photographs could play important roles in the campaign for park designation. His colored slides and prints of Bryce were particularly compelling,