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Preserving Different Pasts: The American National Monuments, by Hal Rothman, University of Illinois Press, Urbana and Chicago, 1989; xxi + 258 pp., maps, photographs, end notes, appendix, bibliographic essay, index. \$29.95 (Cloth)

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The national monuments that exist today within our national parks are often perceived as icons of a romantic or even a mythic past. Seldom, however, do very personal crusades that were waged to preserve these natural and culture resources intrude upon the public consciousness. Even less frequently are the preservation efforts of the past valued for what they tell us about American culture and how the values of that culture have changed over time. But the archaeological, historic, and natural history sites that comprise our national monuments have layered meanings. Quite apart from their intrinsic value as heritage sites, our efforts to preserve perceptions of the past. It is somewhat surprising, therefore, that scholarship on the national monuments proper has remained an historiographical backwater. This situation has been rectified, however, with the publication of Hal Rothman's *Preserving Different Pasts: The American National Monuments*. These national treasurers have at last found an able historian to tell their story.

Preserving Different Pasts is an account of the American national monuments and how they became an integral part of the American preservation movement. It is a chronological narrative of federal preservation from inside the government, from the infancy of the monuments category of reserved public lands in the early twentieth century down to the 1980s. The work provides much-needed definition of the role which the national monuments have played in the development of the National Park Service. The author shows how precarious have been many of the victories that led to the establishment of American national monuments, and the often quirky manner in which the preservation movement has inched its way to the present. Readers will learn of the classic encounters between pothunters and professors that led to the passage of the Antiquities Act of 1906, the establishment of the first national monuments under its provisions, and of later turf wars between the National Park Service and the Forest Service regarding their administration.

The most original feature of this work is Rothman's treatment of the American Antiquities act and changes in the national monuments category down to the present. The only previous work dealing with the subject is Ronald F. Lee's *The Antiquities Act of 1906* (1971), which deals only with the circumstances leading to the origin of the act. Rothman's research is far broader in its scope and purpose. This is a work of revisionist history that aims at rehabilitating the reputation of the much-maligned Antiquities Act. According to Rothman, the Antiquities Act

... has been undervalued, ignored, and discounted by both contemporary observers and historians. The Antiquities Act, in fact, is the most important piece of preservation legislation enacted by the United States government. Although its title suggests significance only in archaeological matters, in practice the law became the cornerstone of preservation in the federal system. Without it, there would have been little flexibility in the preservation process, and many areas of significance would have been destroyed long before Congress passed legislation to protect them (p. xi).

That act and the evolution of its applications over time is the central subject of this book.

The American Antiquities Act provided the mechanism for the designation of national monuments by executive order. This meant that preservation goals could be achieved without waiting for popular or congressional support. The Antiquities Act, therefore, provided a means of preservation that was more immediate and responsive than national park bills. Significantly, however, the act also preserved more than archaeological sites. It became the means for establishing the broadest category of park areas, enabling the president of the United States to set aside public lands as prehistoric, historic, and natural reserves. As the values of the American preservation movement changed, so did the application of the Antiquities Act. The flexibility of the act "allowed the preservation of different pasts—archaeological, natural, historical, as well as differing aspects of each of these categories. Its amorphous nature gave it a significance that belies its narrow title" (p. xiii).

The readers of the *Bulletin* will find much interest in these pages, since the history of American archaeology figures very prominently in the origin of the Antiquities Act and the first national monuments. The contributions of Edgar L. Hewett to early preservation efforts in the Southwest, for example, are well-known. The architect of the American Antiquities Act, Hewett's career will likely be familiar to readers of the *Bulletin*. Despite his importance in the history of American archaeology, however, Rothman correctly notes that Hewett "remains largely unstudied (p. 243). The author shows an appreciation for the historical value of Hewett's own works, especially his *Ancient Life in the American Southwest* (1930), as providing "considerable insight into this volatile and influential figure (p. 243)." Curtis M. Hinsley, Jr.'s "Edgar Lee Hewett and the School of American Research in Santa Fe, 1906-1912" in *American Archaeology Past and Future*, David J. Metzger, Don D. Fowler, and Jeremy A. Sabloff (1986) is noted here as a significant contribution toward a larger study of Hewett.

The passage of the American Antiquities Act and its early applications do indeed frame an interesting and vitally important era within the history of American archaeology. 1906, Rothman observes, was "the year of archaeology in Congress, the one moment in American history when archaeological ruins were important enough to merit the action of national legislators" (p. xii). Mesa Verde National Park, the only national park ever created solely for its archaeological significance, was established almost immediately after the passage of the Antiquities Act. Not until Congress passed the Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979 would archaeology benefit from federal legislation designed to preserve cultural resources found in the public domain. Significantly, when the Protection Act passed Congress the section of the earlier Antiquities Act that empowered the president to establish national monuments remained unchanged (p. 230).

It was the coming of the New Deal in the 1930s, however, that ushered in a new era in the history of national monuments, the National Park Service, and public archaeology. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt centralized the administration of all national monuments within the National Park Service. Money from federal relief programs invigorated the system and the camps of the Civilian Conservation Corps provided a new pool of labor for park projects. More importantly, the arrival of those new resources changed the preservation ethic of the park system in significant ways. Preservation no longer meant just protecting areas from development but also tourism. Some of Rothman's readers might be disappointed that more attention is not given to the Civilian Conservation Corps. This is more a matter of deference to a predecessor, however, than of omission. Rothman does direct the readers attention to John C. Paige's *The Civilian Conservation Corps and the National Park Service, 1933-1942* (1985), a work which closely examines the impact of the CCC on the National Park Service system.

In conclusion, this is a very fine book. It is an excellent example of how not to make institutional and administrative histories dry-as-dust. Rothman enlivens his narrative by relating the story of the national monuments to the contemporaneous social and cultural developments that have shaped the American preservation movement throughout the twentieth century. He has done an admirable job of piecing together the history of the national monuments from the annual reports of agency directors, proceedings of national parks conferences, and the records of the National Park Service found in Record Group 79 of the National Archives. This book is certain to prompt further work in this underdeveloped field of history.