

鉄道・自動車・散策・環境意識—大西洋の両岸で—

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## Wordsworth and the Invention of the National Parks

### 1) National Parks, America's Best Idea?

We borrow the title of this panel from 2009's award-winning PBS documentary, *The National Parks: America's Best Idea*. It echoes the words of Wallace Stegner, who called the national parks "the best idea we've ever had." In the companion book to the PBS documentary, Dayton Duncan writes, "America's national parks spring from an idea as radical as the Declaration of Independence: that the nation's most magnificent and sacred places should be preserved, not for royalty or the rich, but for everyone." Yet our exhibit complicates the view that national parks were strictly America's idea. To be sure, the United States was first, beginning with Yellowstone in 1872, to create national parks by statute, and that visionary action sparked a movement that would spread across the world. Nonetheless, the ideas that inspired the national parks grew out of large, international conversations about nature writing, landscape art, Romanticism, and environmental activism, many of which can be traced back to William Wordsworth. In fact, Wordsworth's *Guide to the Lakes* includes what may be the earliest published call for a national park: "a sort of national property, in which every man has a right and interest who has an eye to perceive and a heart to enjoy."

'Wordsworth and the Invention of the National Parks', Brigham Young University, Curated by Maggie Kopp and Paul Westover (<http://exhibits.lib.byu.edu/wordsworth/>)

### 2) Criticism against Wordsworth's anti-railway sonnets, 1844

It is monstrous ... that fourteen miles of railway, which will enable thousands to enjoy the beauties of the lake district who never could otherwise have that opportunity, should be stopped by fourteen lines of metre, claiming a monopoly of those beauties for Mr Wordsworth and his neighbour ...

(*Kendal Mercury*, 9 November 1844)

### 3) Wordsworth's letters against the Kendal and Windermere Railway, 1844

Rocks and mountains, torrents and wide-spread water, and all those features of nature which go to the composition of such scenes as this part of England is distinguished for, cannot . . . be comprehended . . . without processes of culture or opportunities of observation in some degree habitual. ... the humbler ranks of society are not, and cannot be, in a state to gain material benefit from a more speedy access than they now have to this beautiful region.

(W. Wordsworth, *Guide to the Lakes*, ed. E. de Selincourt, New Preface, S.Gill (2004), 138)

What can, in truth, be more absurd than that either rich or poor would be spared the trouble of travelling by the high roads over so short a space, according to their respective means, if the unavoidable consequence must be a great disturbance of the retirement, and in many places a destruction of the beauty of the country, which the parties are come in search of? . . . The staple of the district is, in fact, its beauty and its character of seclusion and retirement. (140)

## The Anti-Railway Campaigns in the Lake District and the American National Parks

### 4) Wordsworth's spirit of protest

... there was evidence that Wordsworth's spirit of protest against railway invasion of one of the few retiring-grounds left to the old age of buy men ... one of the recreation-grounds open to, and within easy distance for, the toilers of our northern towns, --there was evidence, I repeat, that the Wordsworthian spirit of protest was keenly alive...

(Rawnsley, 'The Lake District Defence Society', 1883, 71)

### 5) Niagara, Yellowstone, Yosemite, and the English Lake District

A very interesting piece of land nationalization was transacted in the United States on Wednesday, when the strip adjoining **the Falls of Niagara** was formally conveyed to New York State. .... We hope that the example of America will confirm the similar drift in public opinion over here, which has declared itself several times lately in the rejection by the House of Commons of railway bills. After all, what is the good of "civilization" if it cannot protect itself against the Vandals?

(*The Rescue of Niagara*, *Pall Mall Gazette*, 17 June 1885)

The example of the United States in preserving the **Yellowstone** and **Yosemite** Valleys free from the intrusion of railways as great national parks is for ever being held up to us, and it seems to be one worthy of being followed. Our Lake country, however, is something more to educated men, and it ought to be something more to all Englishmen, than any Yellowstone Valley can be to the Americans; for not only is it a tract of landscape beauty ... but nearly every hill and every stream, every glen and hamlet, every nook and corner ... is steeped in the memories of some of the greatest and purest lights of English literature... (W.H. Hills, 'A New Lake District Railway', *The Times*, 21 December 1886)

## Motorcars in the American National Parks

### 6) Emerson and the Railway, Muir and the Automobile

John Muir and his Sierra Club embraced the automobile as a way to expand the political support for parks and to counter arguments for purely utilitarian uses of parks with their own that auto tourism to national parks would promote economic growth.... Like Ralph Waldo Emerson a half century before, Muir entertained the possibility of harmony between nature and machines. As Emerson reasoned, the machine in the landscape (which in Emerson's time was symbolized by the train) was not an unresolvable conflict, at least philosophically.... Evidently Muir saw automobiles the way Emerson saw trains. ... the presence of auto seems to have assured the ascendancy of a then new preservationist norm that accommodated nature and automobiles. This vision excluded the industrial extraction of natural resources, but incorporated the modern machine into the enjoyment of the natural world through outdoor recreation and nature tourism. In this light parks were a kind of national commons for nature and machines. ... Like Emerson's train, the automobile brought people to nature in national parks, where the possibility of an accord between the machine and wilderness outweighed the potential for destruction. (David Louter, *Windshield Wilderness*, 2006, 26)

### 7) Park Roads

Within the context of nineteenth-century ideas of nature, advanced by park designers such as **Frederick Law Olmsted**, roads were expressions of the natural world as “scenery,” artistic compositions of the picturesque and sublime, and not nature as wild and unpredictable. In this sense, roads provided a scenic narrative: they selected views for park visitors. ... [Roads] protected these [national parks] by regulating use—concentrating people in specific areas—and presenting nature. ... Routed like paths in a garden, [park] roads were considered less as a disturbance and more as a dramatic contrast to each park’s primeval setting. Roads, in effect, “produced” the space we know as a national park. (Louter 13–14)

### 8) Automobiles for the Appreciation of nature

For better or worse, many agreed that autos popularized national parks, making them truly democratic by opening them to more Americans. Moreover, autos promoted the use of parks for the appreciation of their scenic wonders and in turn protected them from resource development. In the nation’s emerging consumer culture, parks had economic value as tourist attractions and wilderness reserves. (Louter 13)

### 9) Olmsted and Romantic poets

Olmsted, who regarded the beneficial influence of nature not so much as an article of faith as a simple empirical truth, would arguably do more than anyone else ... to implement and realize the romantic / transcendentalist creed of nature by making charming and salubrious rural scenery accessible to the men, women, and children of the burgeoning American cities of the second half of the nineteenth century. (George L. Scheper, ‘The Reformist Vision of Frederick Law Olmsted and the Poetics of Park Design’, *The New England Quarterly* (1989), 374-75)

## Outdoor Movements, and Re-evaluation of Romantic Pedestrianism in Britain

### 10) Motor tourism and the Countryside

Do you know any other petrol company which encourages motorist to walk? ... Last year once again, thousands of people got out of their cars and started walking. Along cliff-tops, through deep rich woodlands and down by the seashore. They were following Shell-National Trust Nature Trails. A trail followed by thousands of motorists before them. For Shell and the countryside are old friends. No other company since the invention of the motor car can claim to have done so much to help open up the countryside to the ordinary motorist. Or to have helped to preserve it for future generations of motorists to enjoy. ... (from Shell advertisement, 1973, looking back its preservationist history since the early 1920s. Quoted in Patrick Wright, *On Living in an Old Country* (2009), 52-53)

### 11) The return of the walking habit

It is the age of motor transport, of the car, the motor-coach, the motor-omnibus. There is always the railway train. So we were getting into the habit of travel by wheel, and but for **the new fashion of the hike** we might in a few generations have become what learned men had predicted we would become—people with very large heads and very meagre, delicate bodies... To walk is to see things. To ride is to glimpse them. This England of ours is so full of gracious beauty that its savour should be sipped slowly and not gulped down. ... **Let us welcome the return of the walking habit.**

(‘Hiking’, *Wiltshire Times*, 14 May 1932)

## 12) The Poetics of the Open Road

Give me the clear blue sky over my head and the green turf beneath my feet, a winding road before me, and a three hours' march to dinner—and then thinking! ... I laugh, I run, I leap, I sing for joy.

(Hazlitt, 'On Going a Journey', *Table Talk* (1822), 182)

O there is blessing in this gentle breeze,  
A visitant that while he fans my cheek  
Doth seem half-conscious of the joy it brings  
From the green fields, and from yon azure sky.

.....

**The earth is all before me. With a heart  
Joyous, nor scared at its own liberty ...**

(Wordsworth, *The Prelude*, 1850, Bk.1, 1-15)

Afoot and lighthearted I take to **the open road,**  
**Healthy, free, the world before me'**

(Whitman, 'The Song of the Open Road' (1856), 1-2)

I cannot preserve my health and spirits unless I spend four hours a day at least—and it is commonly more than that – sauntering through the woods and over the hills and fields **absolutely free from all worldly engagement.**

(Thoreau, 'Walking', 1851, 1862)

Walking is among recreations what ploughing and fishing are among industrial labours: it is primitive and simple; it brings us into contact with mother earth and unsophisticated nature;

(Leslie Stephen, 'In Praise of Walking' (1902)

## 13) Rights of way

The best part of the land is not private property; the landscape is not owned, and **the walker enjoys comparative freedom**....But possibly the day will come when it will be partitioned off into so-called pleasure grounds, in which a few will take a narrow and exclusive pleasure only... walking over the surface of God's earth shall be construed to mean trespassing on some gentleman's grounds. To enjoy a thing exclusively is commonly to exclude yourself from the true enjoyment of it.

(Thoreau, 'Walking', 1862)

Their [Englishmen's] land is threaded with paths which invite the walker, and which are scarcely less important than the highways ... the path could not be closed or move ... and every pedestrian have the right of way there still.

(John Burroughs, 'The Exhilarations of the Road' (1873)

## The National Park campaigns for the English Lake District

### 14) H.H. Symonds

Many now preach the gospel '**Preserve the countryside**'. Let us then preserve it in the best possible way, by teaching as many as we can to use and value it; not by locking it up, or by making a museum of it ... **we can only learn liberty by the use of liberty**; and until we get this to the open country back again into our city life, we shall be still unsatisfied. ... To the unconscious memory of man the country is more than something which separates one town from the next; you cannot learn about it ... by riding through it in a motor 'bus.... **we learn the country as friends only if we walk it in the sweat of our brow, or with cold hands and frosty noses.**

(H.H. Symonds, *Walking in the Lake District* (1933), vii–viii)