



Yosemite and Sequoia: A Century of California National Parks

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A century and a quarter ago, the national park idea was born when Abraham Lincoln signed legislation setting aside Yosemite Valley and the Mariposa Grove of giant sequoias "for public use, resort, and recreation inalienable for all time." Over the next decade, the Yosemite park commissioners had to fight private land claims to the valley. By 1890, however, a public park system was firmly established in California when the Yosemite high country and much of what is now Sequoia and King's Canyon National Parks were set aside as federally protected, public preserves.

This collection of essays and photographs, originally published as a special issue of *California History*, documents the creation and management of California's first three national parks. As the essays remind us, the issues of park development so hotly debated today were raised first in Yosemite nearly a century ago. Yosemite's significance in landscape art, its role in the development of western tourism, and its promotion as one of the great icons of American culture are among the other major themes discussed here.

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