CHAPTER 6

Preserve the Wilderness!

> Friends at home! I charge you to spare, preserve and cherish some portion of your primitive forests; for when these are cut away I apprehend they will not easily be replaced.
>
> Horace Greeley, 1851

APPRECIATION of wilderness led easily to sadness at its disappearance from the American scene. What to do beyond regretting, however, was a problem, especially in view of the strength of rationales for conquering wild country. But as the Romantic and nationalistic vindications of wilderness developed, a few Americans conceived of the possibility of its deliberate preservation. Perhaps society could legally protect selected areas, exempting them from the transforming energies of civilization. Such a policy, of course, completely countered dominant American purposes. For the pioneer, wilderness preservation was absurd, and even those who recognized the advantages of reservoirs of wildness had to admit the force of civilization's claims. This ambivalence, moreover, was no idle matter. Preservation entailed action. The dilemmas which had previously been chiefly philosophical now figured in the very practical matter of land allocation. In confronting them Americans began to deepen their understanding of wilderness. In fact, since the middle of the nineteenth century the preservation issue has been the major vehicle for national discussion of wilderness.

Concern over the loss of wilderness necessarily preceded the first calls for its protection. The protest originated in the same social class that led the way in appreciating wild country: Easterners of literary and artistic bents. John James Audubon is a case in point. His *Birds of America* (*1827–38*) marked him as a leader in calling attention to natural beauty. As he traveled through the Ohio Valley in the 1820s in search of specimens, Audubon had many occasions to observe "the destruction of the forest." Even though he sensed that this meant the end of what he loved, he hesitated about

condemning the westward march. "Whether these changes are for the better or worse," he wrote, "I shall not pretend to say." But as he heard "the din of hammers and machinery" and saw "the woods . . . fast disappearing under the axe," Audubon put restraint aside. "The greedy mills," he concluded, "told the sad tale, that in a century the noble forests . . . should exist no more."[1]

The writers responsible for the Romantic interpretation of the American wilderness joined Audubon in his lament. Cooper expressed similar sentiments in *The Prairie,* while with Thomas Cole the denunciation of an all-consuming civilization attained the proportions of a tirade. Indifference to wilderness, Cole declared in 1836, was symptomatic of the "meagre utilitarianism" of the age. The landscape already revealed the "ravages of the axe," and no end appeared in sight. Drawing on a favorite image of wilderness advocates, Cole pleaded with his countrymen to remember "we are still in Eden; the wall that shuts us out of the garden is our own ignorance and folly."[2] Five years later he attempted to be the mouthpiece of the virgin continent in a poem entitled "Lament of the Forest." Speaking through Cole, the forest grieved at the way man, "the destroyer," invaded its New World sanctuary. "Our doom is near: behold from east to west the skies are darkened by ascending smoke; each hill and every valley is become an altar unto Mammon." In only "a few short years" the wilderness would vanish.[3] William Cullen Bryant was equally pessimistic. After touring the Great Lakes region in 1846 he sadly anticipated a future in which even its "wild and lonely woods" would be "filled with cottages and boarding-houses." In view of the poet's earlier concern for maintaining his country's "wilder image," this was cause for alarm.[4] And Charles Lanman, the Romantic traveler and essayist, minced few words in recounting the fate of places "despoiled by the hand of civilization of almost everything which gives charm to the wilderness."[5]

1. Audubon, *Delineations of American Scenery and Character,* ed. Francis Hobart Herrick (New York, 1926), pp. 4, 9–10. These descriptive essays, written from 1818 to 1834, supplemented Audubon's *Birds of America:* Alice Ford, *John James Audubon* (Norman, Okla., 1964), pp. 41 ff.

2. Cole, "Essay on American Scenery," *American Monthly Magazine, 1* (1836), 3, 12. See also Cole to Luman Reed, March 26, 1836 in Noble, *Cole,* pp. 160–61.

3. Cole, "Lament of the Forest," *Knickerbocker Magazine, 17* (1841), 518–19.

4. Bryant, *Letters of a Traveller; or Notes of Things seen in Europe and America* (New York, 1850), 302.

5. Lanman, *Letters from the Allegheny Mountains* (New York, 1849), p. 171.

Washington Irving also deplored the elimination of wildness from the American landscape. He assisted in 1837 in preparing for publication Captain Benjamin L. E. Bonneville's journal of western exploration because of a desire to preserve something of "the romance of savage life." Weaving his own impressions into Bonneville's account, Irving observed that geography had provided wild country with one remaining hope. The Rocky Mountains constituted a "belt" of uninhabited land "where there is nothing to tempt the cupidity of the white man." While civilization sprang up around it, this region would remain "irreclaimable wilderness" and a refuge for Indian, trapper, and explorer. In Irving's estimation the advantages of having such a primeval resource far outweighed the loss to civilization in lumber and other raw materials.[6]

For the Bostonian Francis Parkman, Jr. sadness at the disappearance of wilderness stemmed from personal tastes combined with a keen sense of the historical process. As long as he could remember, Parkman was, by his own admission, "enamored of the woods."[7] Wildness tantalized his imagination, possibly because it contrasted so sharply with his ultra-sophisticated Brahmin milieu. As a Harvard student he indulged his passion with a series of summer camping trips into northern New England and Canada. In a journal account of an 1841 excursion in the White Mountains, Parkman explained that "my chief object in coming so far was merely to have a taste of the half-savage kind of life . . . and to see the wilderness where it was as yet uninvaded by the hand of man."[8] During his college years Parkman also decided on a career, history, and a subject for research, the conflict between France and Great Britain for the North American continent. He hoped to write a book that would be distinctively American because of its central concern with wilderness. "My theme fascinated me," Parkman remarked, "and I was haunted with wilderness images day and night." The French

6. Irving, *The Adventures of Captain Bonneville USA in the Rocky Mountains and the Far West, digested from his journal by Washington Irving*, ed. Edgeley W. Todd (Norman, Okla., 1961), p. 372.

7. Parkman to George E. Ellis, c. 1864 in *Letters of Francis Parkman*, ed. Wilbur R. Jacobs (2 vols. Norman, Okla., 1960) *1*, 176. For Parkman's life see Mason Wade, *Francis Parkman: Heroic Historian* (New York, 1942), especially pp. 23–75; Howard Doughty, *Francis Parkman* (New York, 1962); Lewis, *American Adam*, pp. 165–73; and David Levin, *History as Romantic Art* (Palo Alto, Calif., 1959), passim.

8. *The Journals of Francis Parkman*, ed. Mason Wade (2 vols. New York, 1947) *1*, 81.

and Indian Wars only gave him an excuse to pursue his real interest, "the history of the American forest."[9] But before settling into a career, Parkman used the summer of 1846 to make an arduous but memorable journey across the Oregon Trail. Although it broke his health, the trip readied him intellectually to give wilderness the Romantic interpretation in history that Bryant had given it in poetry, Cooper in fiction, and Cole in art.

As an historian Parkman was especially sensitive to change; as a lover of wilderness he deplored the effects of civilization in North America. In an oration delivered at his Harvard graduation in 1844, Parkman revealed his emotions. He began with an ecstatic celebration of the New World on the eve of discovery: "when Columbus first saw land, America was the sublimest object in the world. Here was the domain of Nature." But, he sadly concluded, "the charm is broken now. The stern and solemn poetry that breathed from her endless wilderness is gone; and the dullest plainest prose has fixed its home in America."[10] In 1851, in the preface to his first volumes, Parkman stated his aim as the portrayal of the American forest and Indian "at the period when both received their final doom." A year later, in a review of Cooper's novels, he found an opportunity for forthright criticism of the civilizing process. "Civilization," in Parkman's opinion, had "a destroying as well as a creating power." Among its casualties were the Indian, the buffalo, and the frontiersman, "a class of men . . . so remarkable both in their virtues and their faults, that few will see their extinction without regret."[11] Parkman illustrated his point with Cooper's protagonist, Leatherstocking.

In 1849, after serialization in *Knickerbocker Magazine*, Parkman's *The California and Oregon Trail* appeared in book form. Its light and breezy tone reflected the buoyancy of the author's spirit in contact with wilderness. In the 1840s it hardly seemed possible that the Far West would be anything but wild. Time, however, altered Parkman's opinion, and the need to write new prefaces for

9. Parkman, "Autobiography of Francis Parkman," *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society, 8* (1894), 351–52.

10. As quoted in Wilbur R. Jacobs, "Francis Parkman's Oration 'Romance in America,'" *American Historical Review, 68* (1963), 696.

11. Parkman, *History of the Conspiracy of Pontiac and the War of the North American Tribes against the English Colonies after the Conquest of Canada* (Boston, 1851), p. viii; Parkman, "The Works of James Fenimore Cooper," *North American Review, 74* (1852), 151.

subsequent editions of his book provided a chance to express it. In the 1873 edition of *The Oregon Trail* he added a lengthy paragraph to the preface concerning the vanishing wilderness. Although he had omitted it from the initial account, he now recalled a conversation with his traveling companion while riding near Pike's Peak. The wilderness, they agreed, was doomed. Cattle would soon replace the buffalo and farms transform the range of the wolf, bear, and Indian. While pioneers might celebrate such events, the young gentlemen from Boston felt nothing but regret at the prospect. Returning to 1873 Parkman added that his earlier premonitions had not suggested the extent of the changes. Not only farms but "cities . . . hotels and gambling-houses" had invaded the Rockies as men sought gold in "those untrodden mountains." Moreover, "polygamous hordes of Mormon" had arrived. Capping it all was the "disenchanting screech of the locomotive" which broke "the spell of weird mysterious mountains." Parkman sadly concluded that "the mountain trapper is no more, and the grim romance of his wild, hard life is a memory of the past."[12]

In 1892 just before his death, Parkman again revised the preface of *Oregon Trail*. There was no longer any doubt: "the Wild West is tamed, and its savage charms have withered."[13] This frame of mind produced the first expressions of the idea of preserving some of the remaining American wilderness.

George Catlin, an early student and painter of the American Indian, was the first to move beyond regret to the preservation concept. In 1829 he began a series of summer excursions in the West; during the winters he completed his sketches and journal in an Eastern studio. The spring of 1832 found Catlin impatient to leave once more for the frontier where his brush and pen could capture "the grace and beauty of Nature" before the advance of civilization obliterated it.[14] Setting out from St. Louis on board the *Yellowstone* for the headwaters of the Missouri River, Catlin arrived at

12. Parkman, *The Oregon Trail: Sketches of Prairie and Rocky-Mountain Life* (Boston, 1873), pp. vii–viii. Marx, *Machine in the Garden*, alerted me to the significance of the railroad-disrupting-nature theme in American letters. But in Parkman's case it was wilderness, not a pastoral paradise, that was invaded. More exactly, in his mind wilderness had reversed its traditional role and become a sort of paradise.

13. Parkman, *The Oregon Trail* (Boston, 1892), p. ix.

14. George Catlin, *North American Indians: Being Letters and Notes on their Manners, Customs, and Conditions, written during Eight Years' Travel amongst the*

Fort Pierre, South Dakota, in May. A large number of Sioux were camped near the Fort, and when Catlin observed them slaughtering buffalo to trade for whisky, it confirmed his suspicion that the extinction of both Indian and buffalo was imminent. Saddened at this thought he climbed a bluff, spread a pocket map of the United States before him, and considered the effects of an expanding civilization. "Many are the rudenesses and wilds in Nature's works," he reflected, "which are destined to fall before the deadly axe and desolating hands of cultivating man." Yet Catlin was convinced that the primitive was "worthy of our preservation and protection." Keeping it mattered because "the further we become separated from that pristine wildness and beauty, the more pleasure does the mind of enlightened man feel in recurring to those scenes."[15]

Others had said as much, but Catlin's 1832 reflections went beyond to the idea that Indians, buffaloes, and the wilderness in which they existed might not have to yield completely to civilization if the government would protect them in "a *magnificent park*." Fascinated with this conception, Catlin continued: "what a beautiful and thrilling specimen for America to preserve and hold up to the view of her refined citizens and the world, in future ages! A *nation's Park*, containing man and beast, in all the wild[ness] and freshness of their nature's beauty!"[16]

Similar recognition of the value of the American wilderness led to other calls for its preservation. In the late 1840s Thomas Cole, whose European travels dramatized the fate of unprotected wilderness in a populous civilization, proposed to write a book concerning, in part, "the wilderness passing away, and the necessity of saving and perpetuating its features." Contact with the Old World in 1851 also prompted Horace Greeley to charge Americans "to spare, preserve and cherish some portion of your primitive forests." If

Wildest Tribes of Indians in North America (2 vols. Philadelphia, 1913) *1*, 2–3. These volumes were published originally in London in 1841 as a collection of articles which Catlin had written in the 1830s.

For Catlin's life see Marion Annette Evans, "Indian-Loving Catlin," *Proceedings and Collections of the Wyoming Historical and Geological Society*, *21* (1930), 68–82; Loyd Haberly, *Pursuit of the Horizon: A Life of George Catlin* (New York, 1948); and Harold McCracken, *George Catlin and the Old Frontier* (New York, 1959). Catlin's art is treated in Flexner, *That Wilder Image*, pp. 77–102.

15. Catlin, *North American Indians*, *1*, 289, 292–93.

16. Ibid., *1*, 294–95.

these disappeared, he warned, they could not be replaced easily. Seeing Europe carried Greeley's thoughts back to the "glorious . . . still unscathed forests" of his country which he had "never before prized so highly."[17]

Henry David Thoreau, with his refined philosophy of the importance of wildness, made the classic early call for wilderness preservation. Like the others, the disappearance of wild country made him uneasy. Of course primitive places might still be found in Maine and the West, but every year brought more lumbermen and settlers into the forests. Maine was tending toward Massachusetts and Massachusetts toward England. "This winter," Thoreau commented in his journal for 1852, "they are cutting down our woods more seriously than ever. . . . It is a thorough process, this war with the wilderness." Faced with the prospect of a totally civilized America, Thoreau concluded that the nation must formally preserve "a certain sample of wild nature, a certain primitiveness." His thoughts came to a head in 1858, in an *Atlantic Monthly* article describing his second trip to Maine five years previously. Near the end of the essay Thoreau defended wilderness as a reservoir of intellectual nourishment for civilized men. Next he asked: "why should not we . . . have our national preserves . . . in which the bear and panther, and some even of the hunter race, may still exist, and not be 'civilized off the face of the earth'—our forests . . . not for idle sport or food, but for inspiration and our own true recreation?"[18] Along with Catlin, Thoreau desired to prevent the extinction of Indians and wild animals, but he went beyond this to the position that protecting wilderness was ultimately important for the preservation of civilization.

In 1859 Thoreau again advocated reserving wild areas, this time with reference to the Massachusetts townships in which he lived. Each of them, he contended, "should have a park, or rather a primitive forest, of five hundred or a thousand acres." The public should own such places and make them sacrosanct. Thoreau's defense for this proposal climaxed several decades of American nationalism: "let us keep the New World *new*, preserve all the advantages of living in the country." As a parting thought Thoreau urged that a few wild places be kept wild "for modesty and reverence's sake, or if only to suggest that earth has higher uses than we put her to."[19]

17. Noble, *Cole*, p. 299. Noble does not make clear if these were Cole's actual words or a paraphrase. The book in question was never written. See also Greeley, *Glances at Europe* (New York, 1851), p. 39.

18. Thoreau, *Maine Woods*, *Writings*, *3*, 208; Torrey and Allen, eds., *Journal*, *14*, 306; *3*, 125, 212–13, 269; Thoreau, *Maine Woods*, *Writings*, *3*, 212–13.

Even those who desired to protect wilderness were not exempt from divided loyalties. In the work of Samuel H. Hammond, an Albany lawyer, preservation sentiments conflicted with a pride in the material aspects of American civilization. Starting in the 1840s Hammond made annual summer camping trips into the Adirondack Mountains with friends who, like himself, "loved the old woods, the wilderness, and all the wild things pertaining to them." Amidst wildness he found relief from the anxieties of civilized existence. "I have generally gone into the woods," he declared, "weakened in body and depressed in mind. I have always come out of them with renewed health and strength, a perfect digestion, and a buoyant and cheerful spirit." On these trips he found the chance "to lay around loose for a season, vagabondizing among the wild and savage things of the wilderness." This was a necessity for health and happiness, Hammond reasoned, because it permitted the indulgence of the "streak of the savage" which all men possessed.[20]

As a device for ridiculing the utilitarian credo that considered wilderness valueless, Hammond created an imaginary conversation which took place on an Adirondack lake at sundown. His boating companion, the materialist, asked:

> What inspiration can there be . . . in a desolate wilderness. . . . Can you grow corn on these hills, or make pastures of these rocky lowlands? . . . Can you convert these old forests into lumber and cordwood? Can you quarry these rocks, lay them up with mortar into houses, mills, churches, public edifices? Can you make what you call these "old primeval things" utilitarian? Can you make them minister to the progress of civilization, or coin them into dollars?

Hammond replied in the name of beauty and non-utility: "Pshaw! You have spoiled, with your worldliness, your greed for progress, your thirst for gain a pleasant fancy, a glorious dream, as if every-

19. Torrey and Allen, eds., *Journal*, *12*, 387; *14*, 305.

20. Hammond, *Wild Northern Scenes; or Sporting Adventures with the Rifle and Rod* (New York, 1857), pp. x, 23, 90–91. Occasionally Hammond put his discussion of wilderness in the form of a dialogue between members of his camping party, but for purposes of simplification I have attributed all remarks to him.

thing were to be measured by the dollar and cent standard." Yet on other occasions Hammond embraced the very values he apparently rejected. In campfire discussions he and his friends applauded the retreat of the forest in pioneer terms: "the march of civilization has crossed a continent . . . making the old wilderness blossom as a rose." The result of this "progressive influence" was not only miracles like locomotives, telegraphs, and photography but "moral prestige" as well.[21]

Given his simultaneous attraction toward wilderness and civilization, Hammond understandably desired conditions under which both could flourish. Preservation of limited wild areas resolved his dilemma. Describing his plan, Hammond declared he would "mark out a circle of a hundred miles in diameter, and throw around it the protecting aegis of the constitution." This land would be "a forest forever" in which "the old woods should stand . . . always as God made them." Lumbering or settling would be prohibited.[22] Wilderness was to be maintained, but immediately Hammond made clear that he had no intention for civilization to suffer. The "circles" of primitive forest, while insuring the continued existence of some wild country, at the same time served to keep wilderness out of the path of progress. Civilization could expand unimpeded "in regions better fitted for it. . . . Let it go where labor will garner a richer harvest, and industry reap a better reward for its toil. It will be of stunted growth at best here."[23] In this roundabout way Hammond justified wilderness preservation without gainsaying the values of civilization.

While Hammond and Thoreau talked of compromising between the conflicting interests of wilderness and civilization, George Perkins Marsh contended that in the case of forests wildness served utility. He expounded his influential thesis in *Man and Nature: or, Physical Geography as Modified by Human Action* (1864). In a varied career[24] Marsh observed how man had abused his power to alter nature. The disruptive effects of civilization on natural harmonies appeared everywhere. Endeavoring to present an alternative to the pioneer interpretation of Genesis 1:28, Marsh declared: "man has too long forgotten that the earth was given to him for

21. Ibid., pp. 33–34, 158, 216, 309–11.

22. Ibid., p. 83. Hammond came close to this idea in an earlier statement in his *Hunting Adventures in the Northern Wilds* (New York, 1856), p. v.

23. Hammond, *Wild Northern Scenes*, pp. 83–84.

24. David Lowenthal's *George Perkins Marsh: Versatile Vermonter* (New York, 1958) is excellent.

usufruct alone, not for consumption, still less for profligate waste." This was not an academic or even an ethical question to Marsh, but involved the earth's ability to support mankind.

As his principal illustration Marsh chose the effects of indiscriminate lumbering. Clean cutting of the forests on the watersheds of rivers resulted in drought, flood, erosion, and unfavorable climatic changes. Such disasters, Marsh believed, were responsible for the decline of Mediterranean empires in power and influence. The New World must school itself in history. "Let us be wise in time," Marsh pleaded, "and profit by the errors of our older brethren." In Marsh's opinion, the sponge-like qualities of a primeval forest made it the best possible regulator of stream flow. Wilderness preservation, consequently, had "economical" as well as "poetical" justifications. With the Adirondacks in mind, Marsh applauded the idea of keeping a large portion of "American soil . . . as far as possible, in its primitive condition." Such a preserve could serve as "a garden for the recreation of the lover of nature" and an "asylum" for wildlife along with its utilitarian functions.[25]

Primarily because it made protecting wilderness compatible with progress and economic welfare, Marsh's arguments became a staple for preservationists.[26] Even Romantics recognized their force. The year after *Man and Nature* appeared, William Cullen Bryant wrote: "thus it is that forests protect a country against drought, and keep its streams constantly flowing and its wells constantly full."[27]

Along with sentiment for saving wilderness, the idea of governmental responsibility was necessary to set the stage for actual preservation. As early as 1832 a natural object, the Arkansas Hot Springs, was set aside as a national reservation.[28] Far more important from the standpoint of the subsequent history of wilderness,

25. Marsh, *Man and Nature; or, Physical Geography as Modified by Human Action* (New York, 1864), pp. 35, 228, 235. For further analysis of Marsh's ideas see Stewart L. Udall, *The Quiet Crisis* (New York, 1963), pp. 69–82, and Arthur Ekirch, Jr., *Man and Nature in America* (New York, 1963), pp. 70–80.

26. For example, see Chapter 7, pp. 118–19; I. A. Lapham, et al., *Report of the Disastrous Effects of the Destruction of Forest Trees* (Madison, Wis., 1867); "Forest Preservation," New York *Times*, May 30, 1872; "Spare the Trees," *Appleton's Journal*, 1 (1876), 470–73; and Felix L. Oswald, "The Preservation of Forests," *North American Review*, 128 (1879), 35–46.

27. "The Utility of Trees," *Prose Writings of William Cullen Bryant*, ed. Parke Godwin (2 vols. New York, 1884) 2, 405.

28. John Ise, *Our National Park Policy: A Critical History* (Baltimore, 1961), p. 13.

however, was the 1864 federal grant of Yosemite Valley to the State of California as a park "for public use, resort and recreation."[29] The reserved area was only about ten square miles, and a flourishing tourist-catering business soon altered its wild character, but the legal preservation of part of the public domain for scenic and recreational values created a significant precedent in American history.

Frederick Law Olmsted, in the process of becoming the leading American landscape architect of his time, recognized the importance of the Yosemite reservation. He went to California in 1863, became familiar with the Valley, and received an appointment as one of the first commissioners entrusted with its care.[30] In 1865 Olmsted completed an advisory report on the park for the California Legislature. It opened with a commendation of the preservation idea which precluded "natural scenes of an impressive character" from becoming "private property." Olmsted next launched a philosophical defense of scenic beauty: it had a favorable influence on "the health and vigor of men" and especially on their "intellect." Of course, Olmsted agreed with previous exponents of wilderness that "the power of scenery to affect men is, in a large way, proportionate to the degree of their civilization and the degree in which their taste has been cultivated." Still, almost everyone derived some benefit from the contemplation of places like Yosemite. Capping his argument, Olmsted declared: "the enjoyment of scenery employs the mind without fatigue and yet exercises it; tranquilizes it and yet enlivens it; and thus, through the influence of the mind over the body, gives the effect of refreshing rest and reinvigoration to the whole system." If areas were not provided where people could find the glories of nature, he added, serious mental disorders might well result. There was a need to slough off the tensions

29. U.S., *Statutes at Large, 15,* p. 325. The present-day Yosemite National Park composed of some two million acres of wilderness in the high Sierra was not created until 1890 (see Chapter 8). In 1906 California receded Yosemite Valley to the federal government, and it became part of the national park.

For the full story of the 1864 grant see Hans Huth, "Yosemite: The Story of an Idea," *Sierra Club Bulletin, 33* (1948), 47–78; Ise, *National Park Policy,* pp. 52–55; and especially Holway R. Jones, *John Muir and the Sierra Club: The Battle for Yosemite* (San Francisco, 1965), pp. 25 ff.

30. Frederick Law Olmsted Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., Box 32; Diane Kostial McGuire, "Frederick Law Olmsted in California: An Analysis of his Contributions to Landscape Architecture and City Planning" (unpublished M.A. thesis, University of California, Berkeley, 1956).

and cares of civilization. California and the Yosemite Commissioners, Olmsted concluded, had a "duty of preservation."[31]

At least one early visitor to Yosemite recognized that it might be a model for a nationwide system of reservations. Samuel Bowles, editor of the Springfield, Massachusetts, *Republican,* toured the Valley in August 1865 and hoped the park would stimulate concern for other scenic places. Niagara Falls occurred to him as an obvious candidate. But Bowles went on to state the need of preserving from "destruction by settlement" a "fifty miles square of the Adirondacks in New York, and a similar area of Maine lake and forest."[32] With the idea of saving wild country gaining momentum and the precedent of Yosemite State Park established, actual wilderness preservation, such as Bowles envisaged, was not far off.

31. Olmsted Papers, Box 32. Olmsted's report has been published as "The Yosemite Valley and the Mariposa Big Tree Grove," *Landscape Architecture, 43* (1952), 12–25.

32. Bowles, *Our New West* (Hartford, Conn., 1869), p. 385.

CHAPTER 7

Wilderness Preserved

> [The Yellowstone region] is hereby reserved and withdrawn from settlement, occupancy, or sale . . . and set apart as a public park or pleasuring ground for the benefit and enjoyment of the people. . . . [The Secretary of the Interior] shall provide for the preservation . . . of all timber, mineral deposits, natural curiosities, or wonders within said park . . . in their natural condition.
>
> United States Statutes at Large, 1872

THE world's first instance of large-scale wilderness preservation in the public interest occurred on March 1, 1872, when President Ulysses S. Grant signed an act designating over two million acres of northwestern Wyoming as Yellowstone National Park.[1] Thirteen years later the State of New York established a 715,000-acre "Forest Preserve" in the Adirondacks with the stipulation that it "shall be kept forever as wild forest lands."[2] With these milestones in the early history of American wilderness preservation, the ideas of Catlin, Thoreau, Hammond and Marsh bore fruit. Yet in neither case did the rationale for action take account of the aesthetic, spiritual, or cultural values of wilderness which had previously stimulated appreciation. Yellowstone's initial advocates were not concerned with wilderness; they acted to prevent private acquisition and exploitation of geysers, hot springs, waterfalls, and similar curiosities. In New York the decisive argument concerned the necessity of forested land for an adequate water supply. In both places wilderness was preserved unintentionally. Only later did a few persons begin to realize that one of the most significant results of the establishment of the first national and state park had been the preservation of *wilderness.*

1. For Yellowstone's seminal importance in the history of world preservation see Ise, *National Park Policy,* pp. 658–69; C. Frank Brockman, *Recreational Use of Wild Lands* (New York, 1959), pp. 259–311; Carl P. Russell, "Wilderness Preservation," *National Parks Magazine, 71* (1944), 3–6, 26–28; Lee Merriman Talbot, "Wilderness Overseas" in *Wildlands in Our Civilization,* ed. David Brower (San Francisco, 1964), pp. 75–80; and Charles E. Doell and Gerald B. Fitzgerald, *A Brief History of Parks and Recreation in the United States* (Chicago, 1954), pp. 12–22.

2. *New York Laws,* 1885, Chap. 238, p. 482.

Only a few white men had visited the Yellowstone region during the first six decades of the nineteenth century, but enough information filtered back from a handful of trappers and prospectors to excite the interest of several residents of Montana Territory.[3] Fear of Indian attack discouraged the first projected expeditions, but in the summer of 1869 David E. Folsom, Charles W. Cook, and William Peterson explored the fabled area. Their reports of the waterfalls and canyons along the Yellowstone River as well as the spectacular eruptions of geysers stimulated several acquaintances to plan a major exploration the following summer.[4] Of those who participated in the 1870 expedition, Nathaniel P. Langford and Cornelius Hedges were later to spearhead the movement to establish Yellowstone National Park. Both were Easterners who went to Montana in the early 1860s and rose to positions of some political importance. Langford received an appointment as territorial governor but differences between the Senate and President Andrew Johnson denied him the actual office.[5] Hedges graduated from Yale in 1853 and also held a degree from the Harvard Law School. He served as United States District Attorney in Montana and presided over the state's historical society.[6]

In August 1870 Langford and Hedges joined a nineteen-man Yellowstone party under the leadership of Henry D. Washburn and Gustavus C. Doane.[7] For over a month the group wandered

3. Merril J. Mattes, "Behind the Legend of Colter's Hell: The Early Exploration of Yellowstone National Park," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review, 36* (1949), 251–82; Hiram M. Chittenden, *The Yellowstone National Park* (Cincinnati, 1915), pp. 1–73; Merrill D. Beal, *The Story of Man in Yellowstone* (Caldwell, Idaho, 1946).

4. C. W. Cook [i.e., David E. Folsom], "The Valley of the Upper Yellowstone," *Western Monthly, 4* (1870), 60–67; David E. Folsom, "The Folsom-Cook Exploration of the Upper Yellowstone in the Year 1869," *Contributions to the Historical Society of Montana, 5* (1904), 349–69. An excellent recent edition of the accounts stemming from the 1869 exploration is Aubrey L. Haines, ed., *The Valley of the Upper Yellowstone . . . As Recorded by Charles W. Cook, David E. Folsom, and William Peterson,* American Exploration and Travel Series, 47 (Norman, Okla., 1965). A secondary study is W. Turrentine Jackson, "The Cook-Folsom Exploration of the Upper Yellowstone, 1869," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly, 32* (1941), 307–22.

5. Olin D. Wheeler, "Nathaniel Pitt Langford," *Collections of the Minnesota Historical Society, 15* (1915), 631–68; Chittenden, *Yellowstone,* p. 339.

6. Wyllys A. Hedges, "Cornelius Hedges," *Contributions to the Historical Society of Montana, 7* (1910), 181–96; Louis C. Cramton, *Early History of Yellowstone National Park and its Relation to National Park Policies* (Washington D.C., 1932), p. 13.

7. W. Turrentine Jackson, "The Washburn-Doane Expedition into the Upper Yellowstone, 1870," *Pacific Historical Review, 10* (1941), 189–208.

through the wilderness marveling at what they termed "curiosities" and "wonders"—the geysers, hot springs, and canyons.[8] On September 19, as they were leaving for home, the explorers participated in a campfire discussion of Yellowstone's future. Most said they intended to file claims on the land around the geysers and waterfalls in anticipation of the demands which tourists would make to see them. But Hedges dissented. According to Langford, he proposed that instead of being divided among private speculators, Yellowstone "ought to be set apart as a great National Park."[9] Langford added that he lay awake most of the night thinking about the idea. He felt a reservation was possible if Congress could be persuaded of the uniqueness of Yellowstone's natural attractions. The "park" Hedges and Langford envisaged consisted of a few acres around each of the geysers and along the rims of the canyons. In this manner the right of the public to see these sights would be safeguarded and the scenery itself saved from defacement. *Wilderness* preservation did not figure in the 1870 plans.[10]

During the winter following his trip, Nathaniel P. Langford lectured several times in the East in an effort to arouse enthusiasm for the park proposal.[11] In addition, he published two articles on Yellowstone in *Scribner's Monthly*, complete with engraved illustrations of its canyons and geysers.[12] The public was interested, but some of the things Langford reported as fact seemed beyond credence. One of those who heard Langford lecture and was in a position to test their validity was Ferdinand Vandiveer Hayden, director of the Geological and Geographical Survey of the Territories. Hayden was leading annual scientific expeditions in the West, and determined to include Yellowstone on his 1871 trip. He persuaded Thomas Moran, the landscape artist, and William Henry Jackson, a pioneer photographer of outdoor scenes, to accompany him and gather a pictorial record.[13]

8. The following accounts of participants substantiate the *lack* of interest in wilderness: Nathaniel P. Langford, "The Wonders of the Yellowstone," *Scribner's Monthly*, 2 (1871), 1–17, 113–28; Langford, *The Discovery of Yellowstone Park, 1870: Diary of the Washburn Expedition to the Yellowstone and Firehole Rivers in the Year 1870* (St. Paul, Minn., 1905); Walter Trumbull, "The Washburn Yellowstone Expedition," *Overland Monthly*, 6 (1871), 431–37, 489–96; Gustavus C. Doane, *The Report of Lieutenant Gustavus C. Doane upon the so-called Yellowstone Expedition of 1870*, 41st Cong., 3d Sess., Senate Ex. Doc. 51 (March 3, 1871); and "Journal of Judge Cornelius Hedges," *Contributions to the Historical Society of Montana*, 5 (1904), 370–94.

9. Langford, *Discovery of Yellowstone*, pp. 117–18.

10. Aubrey L. Haines, Park Historian, Yellowstone National Park, sustained this analysis in a letter to the author, March 24, 1964. Neither was preserving the wilderness a factor in the previous suggestions by Acting Territorial Governor Thomas E. Meagher (1865) and David E. Folsom (1869) that a park be established: Francis X. Kuppens, "On the Origin of the Yellowstone National Park," *Jesuit Bulletin*, 41 (1962), 6–7, 14; Aubrey L. Haines, "History of Yellowstone National Park," (mimeographed Ranger Naturalist Training Manual, Yellowstone National Park, n.d.), pp. 110–18; Cramton, *Early History*, p. 11; W. Turrentine Jackson, "The Creation of Yellowstone National Park," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, 29 (1942), 188–89.

11. Washington, D.C. *Daily Morning Chronicle*, Jan. 20, 1871; New York *Times*, Jan. 22, 1871.

12. Langford, "The Wonders of the Yellowstone," 1–17, 113–28.

Hayden's expedition generated considerable interest in the East. In an editorial in the issue of September 18, 1871, the New York *Times* seemed vaguely aware of the wilderness qualities of the Yellowstone country. "There is something romantic in the thought," it declared, "that, in spite of the restless activity of our people, and the almost fabulous rapidity of their increase, vast tracts of national domain yet remain unexplored." But more typical of the general reaction was the *Times'* subsequent description of the "New Wonder Land" as a place whose attractions were limited to unusual natural phenomena such as geysers.[14]

The firm of Jay Cooke and Company, financeers of the Northern Pacific Railroad through Montana, also evinced an interest in a Yellowstone park. In October a Cooke representative wrote to Hayden with the proposition that he lead a campaign for an act that would reserve "the Great Geyser Basin as a public park forever—just as it has reserved that far inferior wonder the Yosemite Valley and the big trees." The railroad interests hoped that Yellowstone would become a popular national vacation mecca like Niagara Falls or Saratoga Springs with resulting profit to the only transportation line serving it.[15] A wilderness was the last thing they wanted.

13. Richard A. Bartlett, *Great Surveys of the American West* (Norman, Okla., 1962), pp. 4 ff.; Wallace Stegner, *Beyond the Hundredth Meridian: John Wesley Powell and the Second Opening of the West* (Boston, 1954), pp. 174 ff.; Wilkins, *Moran*, pp. 57–71; William Henry Jackson Papers, State Historical Society of Colorado, Denver, Colorado; Clarence S. Jackson, *Picture Maker of the Old West: William H. Jackson* (New York, 1947), pp. 81 ff.; William Henry Jackson, *Time Exposure: The Autobiography of William Henry Jackson* (New York, 1940), pp. 196 ff.

14. New York *Times*, Oct. 23, 1871.

15. As quoted in Bartlett, *Great Surveys*, p. 57. The Northern Pacific Railroad was interested in Yellowstone from the time of the first expeditions. Jay Cooke helped finance the lectures that Langford gave early in 1871 and quite probably paid the expenses necessary to insure a speedy passage of the park bill through Congress: Ellis P. Oberholtzer, *Jay Cooke: Financier of the Civil War* (2 vols. Philadelphia, 1907) 2, 226–36, 316; Henrietta M. Larson, *Jay Cooke: Private Banker* (Cambridge, Mass., 1936), pp. 254 ff.

The suggestion that he father a national park movement appealed to the publicity-hungry Hayden. Along with Nathaniel P. Langford (whose initials and enthusiasm inevitably earned him the sobriquet "National Park") and Montana's Congressional delegate William H. Clagett, he began to build pressure for a reservation. Wilderness preservation did not figure in the appeal the park proponents made before Congress. They argued that speculators and squatters who were allegedly ready to move into the Yellowstone region endangered what Hayden called "the beautiful decorations." When the question of park boundaries arose, legislators called on Hayden as the man most familiar with the region. His reason for including over three thousand square miles had no relation to wilderness preservation, but rather stemmed from the feeling that there might be other "decorations," as yet undiscovered, in the vicinity of the known ones.[16]

On December 18, 1871, Congress began consideration of a park bill. The brief debate that followed focused on the need for protecting "remarkable curiosities" and "rare wonders" from private claims.[17] Supporters of the bill assured their colleagues that the Yellowstone country was too high and cold to be cultivated; consequently its reservation would do "no harm to the material interests of the people."[18] The strategy was not to justify the park positively as wilderness, but to demonstrate its uselessness to civilization. Before voting, the legislators received copies of Langford's articles in *Scribner's* and William H. Jackson's photographs.[19] Since neither these documents, nor the Congressional debate, nor the text of the bill itself made mention of wilderness, it is clear that no *intentional* preservation of wild country occurred on March 1, 1872, when President Grant signed an act creating "a public park

16. F. V. Hayden, "The Hot Springs and Geysers of the Yellowstone and Firehole Rivers," *American Journal of Science and Art*, 3 (1872), 176. In his other published writings Hayden failed to demonstrate the slightest awareness of the wilderness attributes of Yellowstone: see "The Wonders of the West II: More About the Yellowstone," *Scribner's Monthly*, 3 (1872), 388–96; *Preliminary Report of the United States Geological Survey on Montana and Portions of Adjacent Territories; being a Fifth Annual Report of Progress* (Washington, D.C., 1872); and *The Great West* (Bloomington, Ill., 1880), pp. 1–88.

17. As quoted from the report on the Yellowstone bill by the House Committee on the Public Lands in Hayden, *Preliminary Report*, p. 163.

18. *Congressional Globe*, 42d Cong., 2d Sess., 1 (January 30, 1872), p. 697.

19. Jackson, "The Creation of Yellowstone National Park," 187 ff.; Cramton, *Early History*, pp. 24–28; Jackson, *Picture Maker of the Old West*, pp. 145–58.

or pleasuring ground." Yet the stipulation that "all timber, mineral deposits, natural curiosities, or wonders" within the park be retained "in their natural condition" left the way open for later observers to construe its purposes as preserving wild country.[20]

The initial public reaction to the creation of Yellowstone National Park also ignored wilderness. It was praised as a "museum" and "marvellous valley," an area where people could see the "freaks and phenomena of Nature" along with "wonderful natural curiosities." Far from recognizing the park as a wilderness preserve, *Scribner's* anticipated the time when "Yankee enterprise will dot the new Park with hostelries and furrow it with lines of travel."[21] And a Montana newspaper went so far as to *regret* the park because it tended to keep the Yellowstone country wild and undeveloped.[22] A few joined Hayden in regarding the act as "a tribute from our legislators to science," and one writer in the *American Naturalist* felt its value lay in the provision of a habitat where bison might be saved from extinction. Others pointed out that the forests within the park were situated on the watershed of both the Missouri and the Snake Rivers and served to regulate their flow.[23]

Gradually later Congresses realized that Yellowstone National Park was not just a collection of natural curiosities but, in fact, a wilderness preserve. Yet indifference and hostility persisted. In 1883, for example, Senator John J. Ingalls of Kansas attacked Yellowstone as an expensive irrelevancy. Speaking in opposition to an appropriation for its upkeep, he declared there was no need for the government to enter into the "show business." "The best thing the Government could do with the Yellowstone National Park," Ingalls contended, "is to survey it and sell it as other public lands are sold." George G. Vest of Missouri arose to reply. He referred to the park as a "mountain wilderness" and defended it in the Romantic manner as esthetically important in counteracting America's ma-

20. U.S., *Statutes at Large*, 17, p. 32.

21. *Ohio State Journal* as quoted in Jackson, "The Creation of Yellowstone National Park," 199; New York *Herald*, Feb. 28, 1872; Edwin J. Stanley, *Rambles in Wonderland* (New York, 1880), p. 63; New York *Times*, Feb. 29, 1872; "The Yellowstone National Park," *Scribner's Monthly*, 4 (1872), 121.

22. Helena, Mont., *Rocky Mountain Gazette*, March 6, 1872.

23. Hayden, *Preliminary Report*, p. 162; Theodore B. Comstock, "The Yellowstone National Park," *American Naturalist*, 8 (1874), 65–79, 155–66; George Bird Grinnell to the editor of the New York *Times*, New York *Times*, Jan. 29, 1885; Arnold Hague, "The Yellowstone Park as a Forest Reservation," *Nation*, 46 (1888), 9–10.

terialistic tendency. After touching this raw nerve of the national conscience, Vest argued that a nation whose population was expected to exceed 150,000,000 needed Yellowstone "as a great breathing-place for the national lungs."[24] Ingalls had no rejoinder, and the Senate passed an appropriation of $40,000 for the park.

In the mid-1880s, debate in Congress concerning Yellowstone centered on the attempt of the Cinnabar and Clark's Fork Railroad Company to assist several mining ventures by securing a right-of-way across park land. Representative Lewis E. Payson of Illinois, who approved the railroad's plans, pointed out on December 11, 1886, that no harm could come to the geysers and hot springs. In his opinion the question was whether or not a mine "whose output . . . will be measured by millions upon millions of dollars, shall be permitted to have access to the markets of the world." A spokesman for the railroad appeared before the House to express his astonishment that anyone would question hallowed American values. "Is it true," he demanded, "that the rights and privileges of citizenship, the vast accumulation of property, and the demands of commerce . . . are to yield to . . . a few sportsmen bent only on the protection of a few buffalo."[25] Previously wilderness had always succumbed to arguments such as these.

Samuel S. Cox of New York replied to the demand for a right-of-way. "This is a measure," he declared, "which is inspired by corporate greed and natural selfishness against national pride and beauty." In Cox's opinion utilitarian criteria were irrelevant in evaluating Yellowstone. In the tradition of the Transcendentalists and Frederick Law Olmsted, he saw support of the park as a matter of keeping inviolate "all that gives elevation and grace to human nature, by the observation of the works of physical nature." Posterity had a stake in the park's "marvelous scenery," he concluded. The House burst into applause.

Representative Payson leaped back to his feet to assure the House that, except for Mammoth Hot Springs, which was four miles away, there was not "another object of natural curiosity within 40 miles" of the proposed railroad. Along with most of the early commentators, Payson understood the park's function as the protection of curiosities. "I can not understand the sentiment," he admitted, "which favors the retention of a few buffaloes to the development of mining interests amounting to millions of dollars."

24. *Congressional Record*, 47th Cong., 2d Sess., *14* (March 1, 1883), p. 3488. For a discussion of the administrative history of the park see Haines, "History of Yellowstone National Park," pp. 119–37 and his "Yellowstone's Role in Conversation," *Yellowstone Interpreter*, *1* (1963), 3–9, along with Ise, *National Park Policy*, pp. 20 ff.

25. *Congressional Record*, 49th Cong., 2d Sess., *18* (Dec. 11, 1886), p. 94, (Dec. 14), p. 150.

But to Representative William McAdoo of New Jersey, Yellowstone performed a larger function. Answering Payson, he pointed out that the park also preserved wilderness which the railroad would destroy even if it did not harm the hot springs. He added that the park had been created for people who might care to seek "in the great West the inspiring sights and mysteries of nature that elevate mankind and bring it closer communion with omniscience" and that it "should be preserved on this, if for no other ground." McAdoo continued with a vindication of the principle of wilderness preservation: "the glory of this territory is its sublime solitude. Civilization is so universal that man can only see nature in her majesty and primal glory, as it were, in these as yet virgin regions." In conclusion he put the issue in terms that previous advocates of wilderness had long used, pleading with his colleagues to "prefer the beautiful and sublime . . . to heartless mammon and the greed of capital."[26]

A vote followed in which the railroad's application for a right-of-way was turned down 107 to 65. Never before had wilderness values withstood such a direct confrontation with civilization.

Recognition of the wilderness attributes of Yellowstone National Park also appeared in the 1886 report of Secretary of the Interior Lucius Q. C. Lamar. In a manner reminiscent of George Catlin and Francis Parkman, he interpreted the intention of Congress in establishing the park as "the preservation of wilderness of forests, geysers, mountains . . . and the game common to that region in as nearly the condition of nature as possible, with a view to holding for the benefit of those who shall come after us something of the original 'wild West' that shall stand while the rest of the world moves, affording the student of nature and the pleasure tourist a restful contrast to . . . busy and progressive scenes." In fact, Lamar was wrong in his interpretation of Congress' purposes. With the exception of the geysers and game this had not been the reason for action in 1872, but from Lamar's vantage point almost fifteen years later, it seemed increasingly credible that the Park was a wilderness

26. Ibid. (Dec. 14), pp. 152, 153, 154.

preserve and should be defended as such. And in 1892, twenty years after the Yellowstone Act, Senator William B. Bate of Tennessee explained its purpose as protecting a region for Americans who desired to see "primeval nature, simple and pure."[27] Certainly not all Americans at the time agreed, or even cared about Yellowstone, but Bate's opinion was a harbinger.

Westward expansion left a large island of heavily forested, mountainous country in northern New York generally uninhabited. By the 1880s more had been written about the Adirondack country than any other wilderness area in the United States. Charles Fenno Hoffman, Joel T. Headley, and Samuel H. Hammond (see Chapters 3, 4 and 6) were among the first to describe the pleasures of vacations in the area. As the population of the East increased and more people lived in urban situations, the Adirondacks received still more attention. The upland was said to be an "enchanted island" where men in quest of health and refreshment could find relief from "the busy world, away from its noise and tumult, its cares and perplexities."[28] No single statement did more to publicize the region than William H. H. Murray's *Adventures in the Wilderness: or, Camp-Life in the Adirondacks* of 1869. A Yale graduate and pastor of Boston's fashionable Park Street Congregational Church, "Adirondack" Murray's book not only described the hunting and fishing of the area in a manner that sent hundreds of eager sportsmen into it the following summer, but attempted to give his personal reasons for seeking wilderness. For clergymen like himself, Murray declared, "the wilderness provides that perfect relaxation which all jaded minds require." After seeing the works of God in wild nature, the preacher would return "swarth and tough as an Indian, elasticity in his step, fire in his eye, depth and clearness in his reinvigorated voice, [and] wouldn't there be some preaching!"[29]

27. United States Department of the Interior, *Annual Report for 1886* (Washington, D.C., 1886), p. 77; *Congressional Record*, 52d Cong., 1st Sess., *23* (May 10, 1892), p. 4124.

28. New York *Times*, June 10, 1871; "The Wilds of Northern New York," *Putnam's*, *4* (1854), 269.

29. William H. H. Murray, *Adventures in the Wilderness; or, Camp-Life in the Adirondacks* (Boston, 1869), pp. 22, 24. On Murray and the impact of his book see Alfred L. Donaldson, *A History of the Adirondacks* (2 vols. New York, 1921) *1*, 190–201.

The popularity of the Adirondacks focused attention on the disappearance of their wilderness qualities.[30] One anonymous writer, describing the region's charm, sadly concluded that "in a few years, the railroad with its iron web will bind the free forest, the lakes will lose their solitude, the deer and moose will flee to a safer resort . . . and men with axe and spade will work out a revolution."[31] The idea of preservation followed. Samuel H. Hammond's plea for a one-hundred-mile "circle" of wilderness (Chapter 6) came in 1857; two years later the Northwoods Walton Club called for laws protecting "our Northern Wilderness." The result would be a "vast and noble preserve" where fish and game could flourish and where "no screeching locomotive [would] ever startle . . . Fauns and Water Sprites."[32] In 1864 the New York *Times* seconded the idea with an editorial urging the state to acquire this land before it was "despoiled." Lumber mills and iron foundries could operate in places not reserved, the *Times* believed, thus ensuring the balance "which should always exist between utility and enjoyment."[33]

As the editorial in the *Times* suggested, even those who favored wilderness preservation avoided placing themselves in opposition to progress and industry; the argument that eventually secured protection for the Adirondacks had the same characteristic of supporting civilization. The technique appeared in the first report of the New York State Park Commission, created in 1872 to investigate the possibilities of establishing a public park in the Adirondacks.[34] "We do not favor the creation of an expensive and exclu-

30. For a general discussion see William C. White, *Adirondack Country* (New York, 1954), pp. 85–139.

31. "The Wilds," *Putnam's*, 269–70. A similar statement appeared in *The Forest Arcadia of Northern New York* (Boston, 1864), pp. 193–97.

32. Quoted in Harold C. Anderson, "The Unknown Genesis of the Wilderness Idea," *Living Wilderness*, *5* (1940), 15.

33. New York *Times*, August 9, 1864. The editorial is reprinted and the question of its purpose and author discussed in Donaldson, *History of the Adirondacks*, *1*, 350; *2*, 280–82. White, *Adirondack Country*, p. 111, offers another interpretation.

34. For the work of the Commission and the political history of forest preservation in New York for the next several decades there is a large secondary literature: Charles Z. Lincoln, *The Constitutional History of New York* (5 vols. Rochester, N.Y., 1906) *3*, 391 ff.; Marvin W. Kranz, "Pioneering in Conservation: A History of the Conservation Movement in New York State, 1816–1903" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Syracuse University, 1961), pp. 57 ff.; James P. Gilligan, "The Development of Policy and Administration of Forest Service Primitive and Wilderness Areas in the Western United States" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of

sive park for mere purposes of recreation," the commissioners began, "but, condemning such suggestions, recommend the simple preservation of the timber as a measure of political economy." Specifically, the wilderness ensured a regulated water supply for New York's rivers and canals. "Without a *steady, constant* supply of water from these streams of the wilderness," the report continued, "our canals would be dry, and a great portion of the grain and other produce of the western part of the State would be unable to find cheap transportation to the markets of the Hudson river valley."[35] In this manner wilderness preservation and commercial prosperity were tied together.

In 1873 a new periodical for sportsmen, *Forest and Stream,* declared that the watershed argument held the key to success in the matter of an Adirondack wilderness preserve. The most effective way to propose the idea to the state legislature, it added, "is to have them look at the preservation of the Adirondacks as a question of self-interest."[36] However much they might desire the wilderness for non-utilitarian purposes, sportsmen and Romantics realized that arguments on those grounds alone would not suffice. Consequently they were willing to give full support to the watershed rationale.

By the 1880s, evidence of declining water levels in the Erie Canal and Hudson River generated widespread concern. An intensive campaign began in the fall of 1883 with the New York *Tribune* contending that the wilderness to the north must be preserved "seeing that it contains the fountainheads of the noble streams that conserve our physical and commercial prosperity." Other newspapers added to the campaign, and preservation became the local issue of the day. Residents of New York City who were previously indifferent about wilderness, suddenly became incensed at the lumber and mining companies alleged to be stripping the Adirondack forests. It was predicted that without protection of the woodlands municipal water supplies could run dry and periodic droughts render the state waterways useless. At other times disastrous floods might inundate the lowlands. Obviously the effect on commerce would be catastrophic. As the *Tribune* succinctly expressed it, to cut the wild forests in the Adirondacks was equivalent to "tampering with the goose that lays the golden egg."[37]

The New York Chamber of Commerce, led by Morris K. Jesup, joined the fight for preservation and brought the politically powerful business interests of New York City into play.[38] Jesup petitioned the legislature that it was necessary to save the forests because "their destruction will seriously injure the internal commerce of the State."[39] Moreover, the merchants believed that if drought eliminated the Erie-Hudson route as a means of shipping goods, railroads would have a monopoly and be able to raise rates at will. It did not require a love of wilderness to come to the defense of the Adirondacks on these grounds. With business interests applying the necessary pressure, on May 15, 1885, Governor David B. Hill approved a bill establishing a "Forest Preserve" of 715,000 acres that was to remain permanently "as wild forest lands."[40] The aim of the law was the preservation of wilderness, but for commercial ends.

Although indisputably effective, the watershed argument took no account of other values of wild country that many were coming to feel had at least equal importance. For one commentator who felt the Adirondacks should be made a national park instead of a state reserve, the wilderness was "of higher importance to man than that of a mere industrial and commercial utility."[41] And a person who lived near the reserve declared of one location in his neighborhood: "it is the most wild and beautiful spot in the whole wilder-

Michigan, 1953), pp. 25–35; and Roger C. Thompson, "The Doctrine of Wilderness: A Study of the Policy and Politics of the Adirondack Preserve-Park" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Syracuse University, State University College of Forestry, 1962), passim. Some of Thompson's findings have been published in article form: "Politics in the Wilderness: New York's Adirondack Forest Preserve," *Forest History, 6* (1963), 14–23.

35. Commissioners of State Parks of the State of New York, *First Annual Report,* New York Senate Doc. 102 (May 15, 1873), pp. 3, 10. Verplank Colvin of Albany was largely responsible for the report. Toward its conclusion, and in later reports as state surveyor, he interspersed pleas for the Adirondack wilderness on aesthetic and recreational grounds with the watershed argument.

36. "The Adirondack Park," *Forest and Stream, 1* (1873), 73. A similar statement appeared as "The State Park," *Forest and Stream, 1* (1873), 136–37. See also Nathaniel B. Sylvester, *Historical Sketches of Northern New York and the Adirondack Wilderness* (Troy, N.Y., 1877), pp. 41–43.

37. New York *Tribune,* Sept. 2, 1883.

38. Kranz, "Pioneering in Conservation," pp. 152 ff.; William Adams Brown, *Morris Ketchum Jesup: A Character Sketch* (New York, 1910), pp. 40, 60–64, 165.

39. As quoted in Brown, *Jesup,* p. 61.

40. *New York Laws,* 1885, Chap. 238, p. 482.

41. William Hosea Ballou, "An Adirondack National Park," *American Naturalist, 19* (1885), 579.

ness and its beauty should be enough to save it. But," he added, "that sentiment has little chance with our lawmakers."[42] On the contrary, New York's legislators were taking increasing notice of the nonutilitarian values of wilderness. In 1891 the New York Forest Commission suggested that the state consider redesignating the forest preserve as a park. Among its reasons, to be sure, was the standard one about forested watersheds, but the Commission also observed that a park would provide "a place where rest, recuperation and vigor may be gained by our highly nervous and overworked people."[43] A year later the legislature established a state park embracing over three million acres. The wording of the act indicated a change in motivation: Adirondack State Park was to be "ground open for the free use of all the people for their health and pleasure, and as forest land necessary to the preservation of the headwaters of the chief rivers of the state, and as a future supply of timber."[44] The recreational rationale for wilderness preservation had finally achieved equal legal recognition with more practical arguments.

Many New Yorkers were dissatisfied with the protection the Adirondacks received under the park act and desired to have the principle of wilderness preservation written into the state constitution. The constitutional convention of 1894 presented an opportunity. Commercial interests in New York City, that continued to be the mainstay of political support for preservation, sent David McClure, a New York attorney, to the convention as their personal representative on the Adirondack question. McClure headed the committee responsible for Article 7, Section 7, guaranteeing permanent preservation for the Adirondack wilderness. On September 8 he rose to defend this provision. He reiterated all the old points about the importance of the Adirondacks in maintaining the capacity of rivers to carry trade, in providing adequate supplies of drinking water, and in guaranteeing enough water for fire protection in the large cities. But he also gave consideration to "the higher uses of the great wilderness." In fact McClure declared that the "first" reason for preserving it was "as a great resort for the people of this State. When tired of the trials, tribulations and annoyances of business and every-day life in the man-made towns, [the Adirondacks] offer to man a place of retirement. There . . . he may find some consolation in communing with that great Father of all. . . . For man and for woman thoroughly tired out, desiring peace and quiet, these woods are inestimable in value."[45]

Others came to McClure's support, and Article 7, Section 7 received the unanimous consent of the 1894 convention. When New York's voters approved it in November, wilderness values were given preeminence in an area the size of Connecticut. Unquestionably the watershed argument had been the preservationists' mainstay, but by the 1890s those justifying the Adirondack wilderness, like Yellowstone's supporters, began to turn to nonutilitarian arguments. The rationale for wilderness preservation was gradually catching up with the ideology of appreciation.

42. New York *Times*, July 12, 1889.

43. *Special Report of the New York Forest Commission on the Establishment of an Adirondack State Park*, New York Senate Doc. 19 (Jan. 28, 1891), p. 29.

44. *New York Laws*, 1892, Chap. 709, p. 1459.

45. *Revised Record of the Constitutional Convention of the State of New York*, ed. William H. Steele (5 vols. Albany, N.Y., 1900), 4, 132–33.