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The Antiquities Act: A Century of American Archaeology, Historic Preservation, and Nature Conservation, edited by David Harmon, Francis P. McManamon, and Dwight T. Pitcaithley

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Book Reviews

The Public Historian's reviews section strives to define the current state of the field of public history. To that end, we select for review those works that reflect a wide range of theory and practice in public history, as well as selected works from other disciplines that are of particular note to public historians. Reviewers evaluate research in terms of its contribution to historical inquiry as well as for its value as a work of public history. Reviewers are also encouraged to identify emerging trends, problems, and opportunities for public history and its related subfields. The studies under review are most often books, but the journal also seeks to identify and review writings in every form that public historians produce. The editors welcome your comments and suggestions on all aspects of the review enterprise.

L.S.

The Antiquities Act: A Century of American Archaeology, Historic Preservation, and Nature Conservation edited by David Harmon, Francis P. McManamon, and Dwight T. Pitcaithley. Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 2006; ix + 326 pp.; photographs, notes, appendix, bibliography, index; paperbound, \$19.95.

In 2006, the Antiquities Act was one hundred years old. This act was the first law to protect sites of scientific and historical interest on land owned by the United States and to authorize the president to declare them National Monuments. David Harmon (executive director, George Wright Society), Francis P. McManamon (chief archaeologist, National Park Service, and departmental consulting archeologist, Department of the Interior), and Dwight T. Pitcaithley (professor, New Mexico State University and former chief historian, National Park Service), celebrated the act's centennial by publishing *The Antiquities Act: A Century of American Archaeology, Historic Preservation, and Nature Conservation*. This book is a readable and informative collection of articles by experts in public history, anthropology, archaeology, cultural resource management, and nature conservation. As the subtitle indicates, the breadth of this book is testimony to the act's impact not only on public archaeology but also on historic preservation and natural resource conservation. Public historians who wish to understand the prehistory of their profession will find this book engaging. Six of the twenty contributors are, or were, historians in the public sector.

This award winning book is divided into five parts: (1) Origins and Architects of the Act; (2) Presidential Audacity and Its Discontents; (3) More than Monuments; (4) New Horizons; and (5) The Act's First Century. Part

One aptly describes the context of the legislation and how it came to be passed as a result of the efforts of archaeologist Edgar Lee Hewett, Congressman John Fletcher Lacey, and President Theodore Roosevelt. Although administrative history, these chapters are so well written as to be characterized as page-turning.

Part Two focuses on the impact of Roosevelt's precedent in using the act to set aside immense tracts of land as national monuments through his liberal interpretation of the act's wording that monuments be "confined to the smallest area compatible with the proper care and management of the object to be protected" (p. 3). Presidents Franklin Roosevelt, Jimmy Carter, and William Clinton used the act to declare, by my estimate, over 60 million acres of public lands, essentially using the act as a type of Executive Order to preserve acreage without congressional or public approval. James R. Rasband concludes this section with a dissenting opinion on this use, arguing that public input is needed in the process.

Frank McManamon explains why the legislation is the foundation of public archaeology in Part Three. First, the act established public policy that archaeological sites are public resources and that they should be regulated for public benefit rather than private exploitation. Second, it stated that the values inherent in archaeological, historical, and scientific (natural) sites are educational and commemorative, and third, that such sites should be investigated by professionals, linking scientific institutions like universities and museums to government sponsored historic preservation. Again, demonstrating the book's comprehensive approach, Joe Watkins offers a different perspective on the law, pointing out that the act's preservation ethos is a western concept, in conflict with Native Americans' ability to have "exclusive control of their past" (p. 187).

The Department of the Interior, National Park Service, manages most of America's National Monuments. Part Four looks at how other agencies, primarily the Bureau of Land Management, are meeting the challenges of integrating their management policies with the needs of National Monument management under their care. This section ends with an article by Brad Barr and Katrina Van Dine on President William Clinton's creation (through Executive Orders) of the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Coral Reef Ecosystem Reserve. In 2006, President George W. Bush declared an expanded area a National Monument under the Antiquities Act and in 2007, the name was changed to the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument. The ocean monument is currently being managed by a consortium of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and the State of Hawaii.

In Part Five, the editors summarize the articles and reflect briefly on the past and future of the act. In posing the question of whether or not the act is good or bad law, the editors provide a thought-provoking response—"think of what the American landscape would look like today had the act never been

passed” (pp. 281–282). No doubt our landscape would look profoundly different. The editors added a useful appendix listing the monuments created by presidents from Teddy Roosevelt to William Clinton.

For the most part, the Antiquities Act has been the underappreciated, distant ancestor of all modern cultural resource legislation. Frontline cultural resource archaeologists today generally point to the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 and its amendments as the legislation that created their profession. In the cultural resource classroom, the Antiquities Act often gets short shrift, usually as that vague piece of early legislation leading to the more potent Archaeological Resource Protection Act of 1979. This book challenges that common misunderstanding. In fact, the act was the genesis of archaeological and natural resource preservation in the public interest. Furthermore, it established important precedents for succeeding preservation legislation. The editors and authors of this book have made a lasting contribution to the history of cultural resource management by clearly demonstrating the act’s singular influence on archaeological and natural resource management, and by implication on the profession of public history. This book is well worth the price.

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The Politics of Historic Districts: A Primer for Grassroots Preservation by
WILLIAM E. SCHMICKLE. Lanham: AltaMira Press, 2007; x + 260 pp.;
hardback, \$24.95.

It is a typical day at the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), and Mrs. Merck is calling. She is frantic because the City Council of Hertown is meeting tonight and will probably vote to allow the demolition of the oldest building in the historic downtown. She wants the SHPO “to do something.” What she really would like is for someone from the “state” to ride into the meeting on a white horse, wearing a white hat and a big shiny star, glistening six-guns at hand, to rescue the threatened building, make the short-sighted, greedy-for-development city commissioners see the errors of their ways, so that foiled and/or repentant, they vote to preserve old buildings evermore—or at least until the next time.

What is wrong with this picture? Beside the fact that SHPO staff members do not keep horses or carry guns, at least not at work, the SHPO does not have authority over local governments. If the provisions of the zoning ordinance and due process have been followed, the day of decision is too late to ask for outside help. Preservation takes place, or fails to, at the local level as a result of grassroots efforts. Where and when these effects have been successful, it has generally been because of the willingness of local advocates with political skills and visionary leadership to wage a protracted and organized