

West historians, specifically Patricia Nelson Limerick and Donald Worster. This is unfortunate, because the real contribution is in labor history. Discussion of the work of Carlos Schwantes (*Radical Heritage*, 1979; *Coxey's Army*, 1983; *Bisbee*, 1992) or studies of railroad workers such as that of James Ducker (*Men of the Steel Rails*, 1983) about the Santa Fe Railroad would have been more illuminating.

The book contains many distractions and digressions. This reviewer failed to see the need to include brief essays on, for example, what an archaeologist does better than a historian or on what a historian does with dusty old boxes in the courthouse basement. Also, the number of sidebars and inserted brief essays—on Jack Swilling, John Wesley Powell, rattlesnakes, Al Sieber, etc.—all printed on blue pages (comprising one-fourth of the text) should have been better integrated into the monograph.

Still, the effort should be applauded, because too often the work of archaeologists and public historians remains in the gray literature of mitigation documentation projects. The four historical archaeology volumes which accompanied the book are excellent examples of the type of reports that are produced to meet compliance with the National Historic Preservation Act, but most often never reach a wider audience. The four reports may interest specialists, but the general public and the taxpayer have little interest in such gray literature. *Raising Arizona's Dams* is an example of what we need to see more of—publications that result from mitigation efforts, but which have a broader appeal.

The University of Arizona Press has done its usual quality job. Maps and photographs are superbly reproduced.

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Dunes and Dreams: A History of White Sands National Monument. Intermountain Cultural Resource Center Professional Paper Number 55 by MICHAEL WELSH. Santa Fe, N. Mex.: National Park Service Intermountain Field Area, 1995; x + 218 pp., photographs, maps, notes, bibliography, index; paperbound.

Michael Welsh's administrative study, *Dunes and Dreams: A History of White Sands National Monument*, focuses on the details of managing this unique site in New Mexico's Tularosa Basin from its establishment in 1933 to the present. Sixty years ago, Carl P. Russell of the National Park Service described the dunes as one of nature's masterpieces, and over the years both scientists and casual visitors have been intrigued by the dune ecosystem. Yet this remarkable place has eluded precise description; its current superintendent contends that White Sands "has long suffered from an 'identity crisis'" (p. ix). That concept permeates much of Michael Welsh's narrative, although the author never confronts it directly. It is evident, though, even in the monument's comparatively

simple early years, that neither custodians, local boosters, nor perhaps even National Park Service officials were certain about what White Sands represented among the country's parks and monuments.

President Herbert Hoover established the monument by proclamation in 1933 and called for the preservation of White Sands, particularly its "features of scenic, scientific, and educational interest" (p. 32). Too often, those features are described in the most general way, their significance never fully elaborated. Welsh praises White Sands as "a living laboratory that encompasses fields from botany to zoology" but the issues of exploring and interpreting this diverse ecosystem seemingly played only a subordinate role in the monument's history (p. 3). Only a few pages are devoted to science at this site, even though scientists have long recognized the ecological importance of small, undeveloped sites like White Sands.

Instead, the role of custodians, National Park Service personnel, and local boosters dominates the narrative. The monument's first park ranger, a man often caught between the wishes of Alamagordo's boosters and the professionalism of the Park Service, was the first to acknowledge that White Sands was "a victim of parochial interests" (p. 63). The monument catered to the interest of local residents on special occasions like Easter and the annual Play Day, which was initiated for students, teachers, and parents in Otero County. On other occasions, the monument's neighbors felt free to drive their vehicles wherever they wished in the sands.

Incursions by local residents perhaps posed no real danger to the reserve's integrity, and outside threats were minimal until World War II, when the United States Army became a neighbor and established Alamagordo Army Air base and the Alamagordo bombing range. With that, White Sands was caught in a conflict between preservation and development, which persisted for fifty years. Holloman Air Force Base, a major installation, developed to the east, and to the west was White Sands Proving Ground (now White Sands Missile Range), which includes the famous Trinity site. Preparations for World War II and the Cold War dictated the course of development at White Sands, as the Army, Air Force, and eventually NASA all encroached on the monument's independence. When Dennis Ditmanson accepted appointment as superintendent in 1988, he inherited a national monument that bore the impact of a half century of rockets and missiles. "Fragments of test projectiles littered the landscape," Welsh writes, "some still contaminated by hazardous chemicals" (p. 183).

Michael Welsh has clearly documented these postwar decades, when military plans—whether bombing practice, missile firings, or atomic tests—simply took precedence over the Park Service commitment to preservation of natural sites. Surely, this unique set of circumstances shaped White Sands' evolution as a national monument. A reserve that developed in the 1930s as a unique natural site gradually took on a historical dimension as the Trinity site and other military installations attracted attention for their Cold War significance.

Although Welsh has explained the details of administration at White Sands, he does not fully elaborate a broader context that might define the place of White Sands among the myriad Park Service sites in the Southwest. Readers never understand precisely why the monument was developed or what its personnel hoped to achieve over the decades. Clearly this is a good descriptive narrative, rather shaped by reliance on internal sources, but it never quite addresses the prospect raised by Superintendent Ditmanson—that White Sands is a monument with an identity crisis.

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Guardians of the Parks: A History of the National Parks and Conservation Association by JOHN C. MILES. Washington, D.C.: Taylor & Francis and the National Parks and Conservation Association, 1995; xviii + 366 pp., photographs, notes, bibliography, index; clothbound, \$24.95.

In August 1996, the National Park Service (NPS) turned eighty years old. For most of those years, the National Parks and Conservation Association (NPCA) has played a sibling role, simultaneously being its fiercest defender and critic. John C. Miles's *Guardians of the Parks: A History of the National Parks and Conservation Association* details that relationship, giving a history of both organizations as well as a partial history of the evolution of American environmental beliefs. His monograph also details the birth pangs of many of the units of the national park system. ("NPS" refers to the organization, "national park system" to the resources managed by it.)

Miles clearly shows the perennial dilemma such affiliated organizations face. They can be critical of the actions and positions taken by a governmental entity answering both to the Congress and the executive branch, or be supportive even in strong disagreement. They can take advantage of their relatively nonpolitical position to promote a certain purity of beliefs or be horrified when the National Park Service has been affected by political pressures. NPCA has done both. Miles also presents the inherent fragility of such single-orientation organizations. NPCA will always face the challenge of defining its appropriate scope and role in the environmental community and the world. The National Park Service faces that challenge as well. Financially, NPCA's fortunes have been heavily dependent on membership dues, which reflect public interest in and concern about the parks. When membership has decreased, as it has periodically, staff cuts have ensued.

NPCA has long served as the conscience of the National Park Service, providing it a preservation-side pressure that has been reasonably successful in countering the ever-present use and development pressures. NPCA has always been a stalwart defender of the national park system. Simply the National Parks Association until 1970, it initially only sup-