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The Parks Belong to Us:
A Study of National Identity and National Parks Through
A Qualitative Analysis of Popular Nature Writings 1929-1940

by
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Thesis Abstract – Idaho State University (2020)

The national parks of the United States maintain a position of reverence in the national mind. From the expansive natural parks in Alaska to the smaller, historical parks of the East coast, the National Park Service is tasked with providing both enjoyment and preservation for the American people. Solidified as an agency by the addition of national monuments, battlefields, and other historic sites in 1933, the National Park Service experienced a surge in visitation. Aided by an unstable European continent, accessible automobile travel, and a need for inexpensive vacations due to the Great Depression, the national parks became the ideal destination. Through a qualitative analysis of language used to describe national parks in magazine articles written between 1929 and 1940, I examine the relationship between national parks and American national identity. Utilizing a mixed-methods approach with the qualitative analysis software Atlas.ti, I contribute to the broader study of environmental identity.

Key Words:

National Parks

Great Smoky Mountains National Park

American National Identity

Environmental Identity

Atlas.ti

Qualitative Analysis

Chapter I

Introduction

Searching for a parking space in a national park during the busy summer season is an experience that is as reliable as watching Old Faithful Geyser shoot thousands of gallons of water into the air at Yellowstone National Park. The search for an open space plays out like a blockbuster film. There is initial excitement, several hopes dashed, with the final culmination of finding what appears to be the last available parking space. However, in the midst of the anticipation of enjoying the park and the frustration that accompanies finding a parking space, one begins to notice the license plates of the hundreds of cars. License plates from nearly every state, from Maine to Hawaii, can be found. The “national” in national park is strikingly evident in the parking lot. Outside of Congress, a person would be hard pressed to find a place in the United States where every state is represented. And yet, the sixty national parks of the United States succeed in physically bringing the citizens of the country together. There is something gravitational about the national parks that draws people. While the National Park Service manages over 400 designated units, those designated as national parks possess the prestige and receive the exposure that brings millions within their boundaries each year. Federally owned and managed, national parks are understood to belong to the people, the citizens of the United States. The Yellowstone National Park Protection Act of 1872 reflects the idea of national ownership, stating concretely that the land would be “dedicated and set apart as a public park or pleasuring-ground for the benefit and enjoyment of the people.”¹ This legislation established the precedent for language used when the United States created the National Park Service. Similarly, the

¹ "An Act to set apart a certain Tract of Land lying near the Head-waters of the Yellowstone River as a public Park." *U.S. Statutes at Large* 17, (1872): 32–33.

Organic Act of 1916, the founding legislation of the National Park Service, directed the National Park Service “to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.”² The authors of these acts of legislation recognized that there was a relationship between the citizens of the United States and the natural environment that went beyond resource development. The national parks, their intrinsic value evident in record-breaking visitation numbers in recent years, exist in unique relationship with the national identity of the United States. This relationship merits a deeper analysis and study.

Building from this body of work, this thesis seeks to examine further the relationship between national identity and environment. Specifically, this thesis will examine the relationship between the National Park Service and national identity. Centered on the time frame of 1930s, I examine popular media interpretations of the national parks in the United States. The 1930s represent a defining moment in the United States. Plagued by the effects of the Great Depression, the United States seemingly had more pressing problems to address than the maintenance of the national parks. However, the federal government was invested in the Park Service. Eight new national parks were created between 1929 and 1940. Thousands of individuals were put to work in the national parks through the Civilian Conservation Corps. The federal government was clearly invested in retaining and expanding the National Park Service. Did popular periodicals share this desire? By examining popular accounts of the national parks, I hope to answer the question how the national parks of the United States contribute to the formation and maintenance

² *Organic Act, U.S. Code* 16 (1916), §1 et. Seq.

of U.S. national identity in the mid-20th century. More specifically, using qualitative analysis, this thesis will examine how popular publications of the 1930s reflect American opinion of the national parks along with searching for evidence that the national parks contribute to a national identity.

The relationship between national identity and the national parks fits into the larger academic discussion of environmental history. The United States established a unique cultural identity from the country's national boundaries. In response to Europe's castles, ruins, and centuries old history, the United States strived to form an identity that stood apart. Seemingly absent of the human history and architectural wonders, the United States turned to the abundant and varied natural environments. Landscape paintings, national parks, and literature became instrumental in the formation of a national identity centered around the natural environment. However, the ideas revolving around environment and American identity are not that simplistic. An examination of several works on American identity and the environment demonstrate the complexity of the topic. The scholarship expands in several directions. However, most of the scholarship can be grouped into three distinct categories. Examples of each group exist in modern scholarship, but there is a broad chronological development of the field as well. The first argues that the environment's intrinsic value became a crucial component in shaping American identity. Aligning with Romantic ideals, this group of scholarship provides readers with an ideal relationship to the environment. The second, on the other hand, takes a different approach. Rather than nature having an intrinsic influence on American identity, the works focus on the environment's agency. Culture defines landscape, environment, and wilderness for various purposes. Environment is utilized by governments, interest groups, and individuals for a wide

range of purposes. A synthesis of the previous two, the third group argues that the natural environment and humans interact with each other to form an American identity.

Defining American identity through the natural environment has historical roots in early Western Civilization. Simon Schama's work, *Landscape and Memory*, sets the stage for the environment's influence on identity. Though Schama's main focus is not on the United States, his work explains the connection between American identity and the environment. He argues that our cultural legacy and posterity is "not the repudiation, but the veneration, of nature."³ Culture is born out of human perception of nature. Without nature, American culture would lack some of its most iconic components. The National Park system provides a poignant example. Schama discusses Mount Rushmore as the "ultimate colonization of nature by culture, the alteration of landscape to mandscape."⁴ Immortalizing some of the nation's most influential leaders in the mountainous backbone of the nation represents nature's importance to culture. Otherwise, those homages to the nation would not be carved out of the physical environment of the nation. Schama's work traces the history of some Western Civilization's greatest pieces of art, all influenced or inspired by man's relationship with nature. Those pieces of art in turn influence national identity. While Schama goes on to discuss the broader world, his ideas about culture and identity fit well in the scholarship of American identity and nature.

Foundational to the American experience with nature and identity is Roderick Nash's *Wilderness and the American Mind*. Nash's work falls into the first group of scholarship, espousing that the humans interact with the environment is a subjective, personal experience. When defining wilderness, Nash explains "the term designates a quality...that produces a certain

³ Simon Schama, *Landscape and Memory*, (London: Harper Collins Publishers, 1995), 18.

⁴ Schama, *Landscape*, 396.

mood or feeling in a given individual and, as a consequence, may be assigned by that person to a specific place.”⁵ That definition reflects the American experience with wilderness. Each individual relates to the environment in their own way. The nation was first a proponent of conquering and transforming the land into something productive. However, the perception of wilderness has changed. Nash follows the transformation of ideas of wilderness. In the United States, wilderness went from a thing to be conquered to a transcendental connection with the environment. Nash argues that once wilderness became the topic of preservation, the “rationale...was gradually catching up with the ideology of appreciation.”⁶ Wilderness became a convenient metaphor to describe American’s changing identity. In response to the change in identity, Nash argues that there was a “rise of popular interest in preserving portions of the American wilderness” that prompted a nostalgic response and “belated recognition of the wilderness values of the first national and state reservations in Wyoming and northern New York.”⁷ The identity is fluid and subjective, like the definition of wilderness Nash gave earlier in his book. Citing Frederick Jackson Turner’s contribution to the environmental history, Nash states, “his greatest service to wilderness consisted of linking it in the minds of his countrymen with sacred American virtues.”⁸ Wilderness is inexorably linked with American identity.

No greater expression of American identity expressed through nature exists than the National Park Service. Alfred Runte in *National Parks: The American Experience*, utilizes the creation of the national parks to define American identity. As the United States completed its march towards Manifest Destiny in the nineteenth century, Americans gained a new appreciation

⁵ Roderick Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind*, (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1967), 1.

⁶ Nash, *Wilderness*, 120.

⁷ Ibid., 149

⁸ Ibid., 146.

of the newly acquired land. In an effort to move past the muddled management of Niagara Falls, Runte argues “Americans grew eager to know what new scenery the country owned” and “committed nationalists had at last found their vindication.”⁹ The creation of National Parks is linked to the national identity. Like other exports of the United States, “practically every country faced with the loss of landscape has embraced the principle of national parks”¹⁰ The landscape is an indisputable component to creating national identity. The United States set the precedent for setting aside important cultural and natural landscapes. A result of the National Parks and Recreation Act of 1978, the National Park system expanded greatly. Runte notes that the Act also increased access to the park service to a large population of the nation. The park service serves a larger purpose than simple preservation. The park service represents the best of the United States. Runte argues that “if ever the American psyche survived losing the parks, the United States would be a very different country indeed.”¹¹ The inherent value of the national parks contributes to the definition of American identity.

Capturing the inherent value of America’s natural landscape can be a challenging task. Authors Tim Barringer and Andrew Wilton analyze landscape paintings during the 19th century in their work *American Sublime: Landscape Painting in the United State, 1820-1880*. The authors use the paintings as a means to understand American identity. These paintings represent the idyllic American landscape. Barringer argues that the seemingly untouched environments of the United States became the crucible that bound opposing identities together. One of the artists examined is Frederick Church. In his painting *Twilight in the Wilderness*, Barringer and Wilton

⁹ Alfred Runte, *National Parks: The American Experience*. (Maryland: Taylor Trade Publishing, 2010), 17.

¹⁰ Runte, *National Parks*, 239.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 235.

argue that the painting is representative of the turmoil in nineteenth century America. They write that the “essence of America could be found only in an area with no Americans, either indigenous people or settlers.”¹² Church’s painting is void of any human presence, even the “noble savage” a popular artistic tool, was absent. Barringer and Wilton note that the American landscape painters were striving to capture the sublime, “the attractions of the untamed American landscape, which differed from those of familiar European scenery, where the traces of history—castles, abbeys, battlefields—were commonplace.”¹³ The landscape painters ensured that the nation would be able to connect with the landscapes of the country, even if they were not able to physically experience the scenery. Though “it was not until about 1820 that the aesthetic qualities of the American landscape came to be widely appreciated and to be represented by artists” their impact on defining American identity through nature is evident.¹⁴

Moving past the Romanticism-inspired scholarship on American identity and the environment, a second group of scholarship exists. This group focuses on the human aspect of American identity. This group argues that ideas of nature and wilderness are culturally constructed. Consequently, the part of American identity derived from the natural environment is created, not an inherent value.

William Cronon’s work, “The Trouble with Wilderness: Or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature” explores the antithesis to romantic arguments about the environment. Cronon argues that the idea of “wilderness embodies a dualistic vision to which the human is entirely outside the

¹² Andrew Wilton & Tim Barringer, *American Sublime: Landscape Painting in the United States, 1820-1880*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002), 129.

¹³ Wilton, *American Sublime*, 67.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 42.

natural.”¹⁵ By separating humans from wilderness, civilization effectively ignores the human relationship to the natural environment. Cronon goes on to the history of the term wilderness, and that each iteration was by human design, not an accurate description of the environment. The natural environment encompasses everything from a planted tree in a park to a tree in a national forest. However, the dualism that Cronon mentions represents a significant problem in “the ways we think about ourselves.”¹⁶ Americans desire to protect wilderness and any use on that land has a negative connotation. Cronon notes that this way of thinking creates an “other.” The other concept is a harmful and detrimental ideology, and the environment is no exception. By “idealizing a distant wilderness” Cronon argues that the environment that we actually live in is ignored. By defining remote, impressive landscapes as “wild,” the rest of the landscape falls away from the public mind.

Richard Grusin’s work, *Culture, Technology, and the Creation of America’s National Parks*, interprets the national parks as a form of human technology. Grusin argues that national parks are “technologies for the reproduction of nature.”¹⁷ Continuing with the theme that ideas of the environment are culturally constructed, Grusin examines Yosemite, Yellowstone, and Grand Canyon National Parks. Grusin argues that “aesthetic agency...works by setting aside tracts of land in which human purpose must be relinquished to the laws of nature in order to realize the purpose of setting aside these tracts of land.”¹⁸ Grusin describes the national park system as an “organic machine” exactly like Richard White does in his book on the environmental history of

¹⁵ William Cronon, “The Trouble with Wilderness: Or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature.” *Out of the Woods: Essays in Environmental History*. Edited by Char Miller and Hal Rothman. (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1997), 40.

¹⁶ Cronon, “The Trouble with Wilderness,” 45.

¹⁷ Richard A. Grusin, *Culture, Technology, and the Creation of America’s National Parks*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 14.

¹⁸ Grusin, *Culture, Technology, and the Creation of America’s National Parks*, 53.

the Columbia River.¹⁹ While still natural, the national parks do not exist in a separate world from the one outside of the park boundaries. Grusin notes that the differences are not intrinsic, but “are the product of complex assemblage of heterogeneous technologies and social practices, the aim of which is the production or reproduction of a culturally and discursively defined and formed object called ‘nature.’”²⁰ The American identity is a carefully culled and constructed culture identity and the connection with the national landscape is created through the same means.

Grusin’s earlier work, an article “Reproducing Yosemite: Olmsted, Environmentalism and the Nature of Aesthetic Agency,” follows similar themes. His purpose in the article is to highlight that “American cultural origins are simultaneously constructed and destabilized through the act of reproducing nature.”²¹ Though not expressly discussing American identity, Grusin does provide an important discussion on how some of the nation’s most important cultural heritage was created. His article explores human agency and the agency of nature and he claims that preservation “reproduces nature as a public park in which individual human agency can be simultaneously produced and elided by means of the aesthetic agency of nature.”²² The creation of national parks is for aesthetic reasons, but not in the Romantic preservationist way. The parks were created to preserve the most scenic landscapes for the population to enjoy, not for environmental concerns. While Grusin acknowledges the aesthetic appreciation of the environment, he notes that the individual agency and national culture contributed to the creation of the aesthetic value.

¹⁹ Richard White, *The Organic Machine*, (New York: Hill and Wang, 1995).

²⁰ Grusin, *Culture, Technology, and the Creation of America’s National Parks*, 3.

²¹ Richard Grusin, "Reproducing Yosemite: Olmsted, Environmentalism, and the Nature of Aesthetic Agency," *Cultural Studies* 12, no. 3 (July 1998), 333.

²² Grusin, “Reproducing Yosemite,” 335.

Thomas Leakan's chapter in *The Turning Points of Environmental History*, outlines the roll that the nation-state has played in the relationship between humans and the environment. Leakan utilizes James Scott's *Seeing Like a State* as a framework to analyze the influence of the nation-state.²³ The nation-state should not be disregarded in examining environmental identity in the United States. Though Leakan's scope is much larger than the United States, his observations still apply. Leakan asserts that "putting the state back in as an agent of environmental transformation enables scholars to assess the ecological foundations of modern territoriality in a fresh light."²⁴ The state acts as the body that sets aside tracts of land. Leakan argues that "although Romantic nationalism had helped to create...national parks...such seemingly benign acts of preservation were predicated on the state's ability" to control and change the physical landscape. ²⁵ The state is the entity that has the power to set aside land for the population. Though Romantic ideals are clearly influential, the nation state creates national parks as a means to control. Leakan argues that the state used Romanticism as means to lay "the foundation for a thoroughly modern and managerial approach to the natural environment and its human inhabitants."²⁶ The nation-state is the curator and creator of national identity in relation to the natural environment.

Out of the two opposed ideologies, a new area of scholarship arose. Scholarship formed a synthesis of the romantic and modernist groups. The scholarship in this synthesis acknowledges the inherent value of nature and its role in shaping identity. However, it also argues that nation

²³ James Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998).

²⁴ Thomas Leakan, "The Nation State." *Turning points of Environmental History*. Edited by Frank Uekoetter, (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2010), 58.

²⁵ Leakan, "The Nation State," 67.

²⁶ Ibid, 68.

states and individuals shape culture and identity. Juxtaposed, the two camps appear to alienate one another. However, this third group of scholarship unites the ideologies into a compelling argument about the formation of American identity through the environment.

Gunther Barth incorporates this synthesis into his work, *Fleeting Moments: Nature and Culture in American History*. Barth focuses on moments where nature and culture have interacted harmoniously. Taking a step further, Barth examines less recognizable moments of environmental history. The people Barth examines “lived on the edge of nature or on the edge of culture. Thus, they experienced momentarily a balance between the two.”²⁷ Through these experiences, the formation of the American identity can be seen. In his last section, Barth discusses the development of the city park movement, specifically the park cemetery. In response to the increased industrialization and urbanization, cities on the East Coast looked to bring back a bit of nature into culture. The park cemetery was the precursor to the larger city park movement. Barth notes that “nature seemed to appear as if it were a cultural construct...however, even during the engineering of nature in the city, nature dominated in its elementary form...independent of and external to human design.”²⁸ This complicated relationship informed the way American’s viewed themselves. Like nature and culture, the American identity is a composite of seemingly opposed ideas. However, at the borders of these ideas, harmony is found and identity created.

Similar to Barth, Dorothy Zeiler-Vralsted’s book, *Rivers, Memory and Nation-Building: A History of the Volga and Mississippi Rivers*, examines two colliding principles of environmentalism and civilization. Vralsted compares two iconic rivers of the world, the Volga

²⁷ Paul Gunther Barth, *Fleeting Moments: Nature and Culture in American History*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), xxi

²⁸ Barth, *Fleeting Moments*, 126-127.

in Russia and the Mississippi in the United States. Though on opposites ends of the globe, “the multifaceted nature of the rivers endures as both were and are conduits for trade while simultaneously conveying a sense of freedom inherent in the flowing rivers.”²⁹ Rivers provide prevalent examples of the growth of civilizations. Though more of a comparative history of the two rivers, Vralsted successfully demonstrates how national identity, environment, and nation building can co-exist. Both the Mississippi and the Volga “conveyed impressions of power captured through the tales of travelers and folklore” while that power also represented a resource to exploit through dams and locks. There were “shared...beliefs regarding the large-scale water projects to improve cultures” and that the United States’ “relationship with nature was a model to replicate.”³⁰ In the United States, the natural environment exists in both national myth and industrial society. Vralsted concludes that “rivers offer a past rich with...sources for cultural and national identity” and “prompts for technological innovation.”³¹ The river provides a relevant examination of how national identity, both environmental and industrial, is formed.

Robert Gottlieb’s chapter “Reconstructing Environmentalism: Complex Movements, Diverse Roots” explores how the definition of environmentalism has and needs to change in order to retain relevancy in American society. Gottlieb argues that narrow views and definitions of environmentalism create the “problem...[of] who is left out and what it fails to explain.”³² Environmentalism can fail to address the modern world and the civilization that we live in. The opposing view fails to consider the importance of the environment. Holding a narrow view of the

²⁹ Dorothy Zeisler-Vralsted, *Rivers, Memory, and Nation-Building: A History of the Volga and Mississippi Rivers*, (New York: Berghahn Books, 2014), 9.

³⁰ Zeisler-Vralsted, *Rivers*, 147.

³¹ Ibid, 157.

³² Robert Gottlieb, “Reconstructing Environmentalism: Complex Movements, Diverse Roots,” *Out of the Woods: Essays in Environmental History*. Edited by Char Miller and Hal Rothman. (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1997), 146.

environment excludes a significant portion of groups and individuals equally invested in the environment. By excluding populations, environmentalism protects the land only for the members that subscribe to the same definition of environmentalism. A redefinition of environmentalism, according to Gottlieb, “leads toward an environmentalism that is democratic and inclusive...of linked natural and human environments.”³³ A new definition of environmentalism parallels the course of the scholarship. Holding narrow views of American identity and nature excludes the reality. By synthesizing the various arguments surrounding American environmental identity, the scholarship represents a greater scope of the identity.

My work falls within the synthesis of environmental identity ideas. Understanding that both environment and the population influence and are influenced by the other, I argue that identity is created as a result of the interaction between people and the environment. This study explores the relationship between national identity and national parks, using Atlas.ti to perform a qualitative analysis on a total of fifty-four magazine articles written between 1929 and 1940. This chapter placed the study within its historiographical setting and explained the development of environmental identity in the United States. Chapter 2 serves as an explanation of methodology. Atlas.ti, qualitative analysis, and the broader field of digital history are explained. The efficacy of using Atlas.ti in historical research is also examined. Chapter 3 dives into the analysis of magazine articles focused on national parks in the United States as a whole. One code “Purpose of National Parks,” was the most frequently assigned and is examined in detail. How language used to describe the purpose of national parks changed between 1929 and 1940 is discussed, along with how that language contributes to American national identity. Chapter 4 follows the same methodology of Chapter 3, but focuses on articles written about Great Smoky

³³ Gottlieb, “Reconstructing Environmentalism,” 160.

Mountains National Park. Again, this chapter examines a specific code, “Emotional Value on the Natural Environment,” and traces the changes in language over the timeframe of the study. The focus on the individual park serves to explain how the language surrounding a single park still relates and contributes to American national identity. The concluding chapter offers a brief discussion on the overlap of the two case studies, some useful outputs of the Atlas.ti software, and how the results of this study contribute to the broader discussion of and American environmental national identity.

Chapter II

Methods

This study uses a qualitative analysis software to examine popular environmental writings from the 1930s. The software used plants this study firmly into the larger framework of digital history. Digital history is the incorporation of digital technology into the traditional analysis of primary source documents. The field of digital history is broad, involving everything from geographic information systems (GIS) to Twitter. Digital tools allow historians to examine primary sources through different lenses, and as a result, make unique observations. Digital history produces maps, educational websites, 3D models of ancient cities, and digitally accessible collections of primary source documents. On the other hand, digital history also incorporates the study of the digital landscape: computers, artificial intelligence, social media, etc. As a consequence, an overlap exists “between scholars who use digital technologies in studying traditional humanities objects and those who use the methods of the contemporary humanities in studying digital objects.”³⁴ This study falls firmly in the “using digital technologies in studying traditional humanities objects” category. Digital tools are precisely that-tools that improve and expand on historians’ powers of critical analysis and synthesis. These tools provide a link between historians and their audience. An audience now has similar levels of access to primary source material thanks to online, digitized archives. Students and enthusiasts “have access to literally millions of primary sources” for far cheaper “than a handful in a published anthology.”³⁵ The way in which technology should influence the field of history is wrapped up in

³⁴ Kathleen Fitzpatrick, “The Humanities, Done Digitally,” in *Debates in the Digital Humanities*, ed. by Matthew K. Gold. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012), 13.

³⁵ Roy Rosenzweig, *Clio Wired: The Future of the Past in the Digital Age*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 7.

the larger competition between digital and analogue. However, “instead of thinking in terms of digital vs analogue, the specific affordances of each form should be understood and used together.”³⁶ With the increasingly digital landscape of history, historians must adapt and learn to incorporate relevant technologies into their research. Technological methodologies need to be used in inter-disciplinary studies, striving towards producing relevant, excellent research.

In that vein, this study utilizes both quantitative and qualitative analysis methodology and technology. This study analyzes the language used to describe the relationship between national identity and national parks. Quantitative and qualitative analysis are both useful for interpreting that relationship. Though the approaches appear to be at odds with one another there is a methodology that connects the two approaches. More specifically, this study uses content analysis, which “is a careful, detailed, systematic examination and interpretation of a particular body of material in an effort to identify patterns, themes, biases, and meanings.”³⁷ Content analysis is performed on forms of human communication including photographs, written documents, and audio/visual recordings.³⁸ Because of the scope of material studied, several disciplines incorporate content analysis. Regardless of the discipline, content analysis “is chiefly a coding operation and data interpreting process.”³⁹ By using content analysis to bridge qualitative and quantitative approaches, the examination of “ideological mind-sets, themes, topics, symbols, and similar phenomena” grounds such examinations in the data.⁴⁰ The same approach is taken in this study. National parks and the relation to national identity is certainly an

³⁶ David M. Berry & Anders Fagerjord, *Digital Humanities*, (Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2017), 2.

³⁷ Bruce L. Berg & Howard Lune, *Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc, 2012), 349.

³⁸ Berg & Howard. *Qualitative Research Methods*, 350.

³⁹ Ibid, 350.

⁴⁰ Ibid, 354.

exploration of ideological themes and mind-sets. The research is also grounded in the gathered data. Utilizing content analysis, this study benefits from the mixed-methods approach, revealing more about the data set than either approach would have independently. The use of content analysis for this study fits into the larger framework of historical methodology, but also incorporates a digital program that aids in analyzing the large body of material used in this study.

The digital program used for this content analysis-based study is Atlas.ti. Atlas.ti is a qualitative analysis software that allows researchers to study the relationship between historical documents, interviews, and even photographs. A more specific definition of Atlas.ti follows: “Atlas.ti belongs to the genre of Computer-Aided Qualitative Data Analysis Software...Atlas.ti – like any other CAQDAS program – does not actually analyze data; it is simply a tool for supporting the process of qualitative data analysis.”⁴¹ Atlas.ti can be accessed with a free trial, but a license must be purchased after that. Atlas.ti is compatible across operating systems, which eases the ever-divisive Microsoft or Mac, Android or iOS debates. The software allows researchers to upload multiple materials into the program and apply “codes” to the body of material. Codes are not computer codes, but categories that are developed by the researcher after reading of the material and identifying themes. These categories are used to analyze the body of material. The codes (categories) reflect themes and ideas that are found after reading a few of the documents. The codes are then applied to the rest of the documents, revealing relationships and connections between the documents. Nine codes were developed for this study. Conventional content analysis was used to develop these codes. Codes were “derived directly and inductively from the raw data itself.”⁴² The nine codes developed were: “American Perseverance,”

⁴¹ Susanne Friese, *Qualitative Data Analysis with Atlas.ti*, (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc, 2014), 1.

⁴² Berg & Howard. *Qualitative Research Methods*, 352.

“Attendance as Measure of Value of NPS,” “CCC Work in National Parks,” “Emotional Value on the Natural Environment,” “Natural Environment as American Identity,” “Purpose of National Parks,” “Reason for Visiting National Parks,” “Uniquely American Nature,” and “Use Conflict in National Parks.” Because this study utilizes historic primary sources, the codes were applied to quotations manually. This represents one limit of Atlas.ti that is discussed later in this chapter. Atlas.ti will only read and code certain document types. One benefit of using Atlas.ti is that the program will compile a codebook for the codes used to analyze the data set. A codebook defines the codes, and provides examples of the types of phrases that have been coded. The codebook is a crucial component to any qualitative study utilizing content analysis. The codebook establishes the framework through which each primary source document is examined. However, the definitions of each code were not created by Atlas.ti. Researchers either utilize a codebook that already exists, or in the case of this study, create a codebook for the specific study. Codebooks ensure each quotation that is coded is relevant to the study. The following is the codebook created for this study.

Codebook for National Parks and American Identity

American Perseverance

Definition: Depiction of resilience and success in the United States despite the effects of the Great Depression.

Typical Quote: “The Northwest like the rest of the country has taken a beating, but it has not taken the count. Men who keep fences like these do not sit down and wail in fallow fields.”

Attendance as Measure of Value of NPS

Definition: Used to categorize any statements that demonstrate how attendance levels are used as a way to measure and determine the value of the National Park Service.

Typical Quote: “Unfortunately, the national parks are the victims of an attendance complex. The staff of superintendents includes many capable, devoted and idealistic men. But they watch attendance figures like batting averages.”

CCC Work in National Parks

Definition: Any statement that describes the explicit involvement and work of the Civilian Conservation Corps in the national parks.

Typical Quote: “What, next year, CCC may find to feed upon no one can guess, and a second term of the New Deal may leave practically no primeval area in America.”

Emotional Value on the Natural Environment

Definition: A broad code used to categorize statements that use language that have emotional weight behind them when discussing the natural environment.

Typical Quote: “There can be no doubt that people in the larger cities will someday, as they spread out in America, rediscover the United States and the wonderful advantages that Nature has bestowed upon us for healthy living and play in the great outdoors.”

Natural Environment as American Identity

Definition: The object of the analysis. Used to identify statements that directly include the natural environment as a major component of American national identity.

Typical Quote: “I am by no means sure that it is not our best contribution to the democratic ideal. You’re an indifferent American if you don’t feel something of it when you see the flag blowing in the sunshine against a back ground of Yosemite’s walls. James Bryce, the Englishman, said—I quote from Col. John R. White, of Sequoia—that the American park system would be more valuable than all the libraries in the land.”

Purpose of National Parks

Definition: Used for statements that describe the reason national parks exist and/or the purpose the parks should serve.

Typical Quote: “National parks are maintained for their national importance and interest, not to provide athletic fields for the Northwest, the Southwest or any other section.”

Reason for Visiting National Parks

Definition: Describes any statement that provides motivation for visiting the national parks.

Typical Quote: “There are those who visit the parks because they are on a need vacation from work and responsibility, and who feel that these outstanding areas will give them the change and stimulus which they desire.”

Uniquely American Nature

Definition: Defines statements that present examples of the natural environment that are described as unique to the United States.

Typical Quote: “For the Tetons get right down to the business of being mountains without any whereases and be-it-resolveds. They have no foothills; no faldas or skirts, as they say in the Andes.”

Use Conflict in National Parks

Definition: Statements that address differences of use in the national parks, especially when these uses are compared or brought into direct conflict with each other. Recreation, educational, and industrial uses all fall under this code.

Typical Quote: “There can’t be too many visitors who go to the parks in the right frame of mind and for the right purpose. But contrariwise, there can’t be too few of those who, after a hasty and uninterested look around, want the very amusements which they could find in even greater volume in the resort nearest their home town or city.”

Along with codebooks, Atlas.ti also produces other types of data. The program crunches the numbers and produces code occurrence and cooccurrence tables. The program will then export the data to Excel where graphs and charts can easily be produced. For a more visual, digital product, the program produces word clouds. While not the most academic product, word clouds are effective graphics for explaining research to a wider audience. All of these outputs aid in a greater understanding of the documents being studied.

With the framework of content analysis established, and Atlas.ti summarized, let’s move into a discussion of the data set. The body of material used for this study is popular nature writings from the United States. Forty-five magazine articles were selected for this study. They were all published between 1929 and 1940. The articles focus on national parks in the United States. The articles are found in a wide range of popular publications. The publications are as follows: *The Saturday Evening Post*, *National Republic*, *The Scientific Monthly*, *The National Geographic Magazine*, *Scholastic*, *Science*, *The American Magazine of Art*, *The Literary Digest*,

Nature Magazine, Current History, Arts & Decoration, Art And Archaeology, School Life, Travel, and Recreation. Besides fitting in with the timeline of this study, all of these articles discuss individual national parks and/or the National Park Service as a whole. Though the articles do not explicitly address the relationship between American national identity and the national parks, Atlas.ti and the defined codes reveal that there is a relationship. In addition to analyzing articles focused on national parks as a whole, I also applied the same methods to an individual park. Great Smoky Mountains National Park was selected as an individual case study to compare to the national study. Ten articles that focused on Great Smoky Mountains National Park were used in the study, and met the same qualifications as the articles used in the national study. Articles were selected from: *Science, Natural History, Nature, Home Geographic Monthly, Time, and Vital Speeches of the Day.* Established in 1934, Great Smoky Mountains represents a park established in the middle of this study's timeline. In addition, the park is the National Park Service's largest unit in the eastern United States. Comparable to the larger units located in the West, Great Smoky Mountains represents a unifying force between the eastern and western United States. Consequently, Great Smoky Mountains National Park provides an effective case study in the study of the relationship between national identity and the natural environment.

After coding and analysis, the forty-five articles from the broader national study demonstrate a national interest and appreciation of the national parks. While the results do not definitively prove that the national parks are essential to American identity, the results show that there is a connection. Using the data from Atlas.ti, simple clustered bar graphs were developed. The graph shows the relationship of the codes over the time frame of the study. Though a relatively simple representation of the project, the results are meaningful. Along the x-axis, the

time of the study, 1929-1940, is shown. The y-axis represents the number of times each code was used. Simply, the graph shows how many times each code appeared in a given year. On a deeper level, however, the graph demonstrates the change (and consistency) in the language used to discuss national parks. For example, the code “Purpose of National Parks” can be found in at least one article from every year. While consistently represented, the tone of individual quotations changes over time. Henry Baldwin Ward, in a February 1929 article in *Science* argued for the National Park Service to retain its rigorous standards in establishing new parks. Responding to what he describes as mistake to alter those standards, Ward wishes “to see preserved forever in its original unaltered condition as much of the remaining American primeval forest...but for those parts of it which the national parks system cannot admit without endangering its own precious standards, we must find some other method of preservation.”⁴³

Now that the framework of this study has been established, the question remains: Is Atlas.ti an effective tool to use in historical studies? For a program designed for sociological, qualitative studies, Atlas.ti provides some unique perspectives along with some challenges. Beginning with some positives, Atlas.ti aids the historian with analyzing language in historical documents. Historians already have critical and analytical reading skills. We are trained to read primary sources and interpret the meaning of the text in its historical context. When there are multiple sources to read and analyze, Atlas.ti begins to reveal its usefulness. Atlas.ti can read documents and code them with a few keystrokes. Once the historian has established the codes and their boundaries, Atlas.ti can take over, freeing the historian from reading hundreds of documents individually and enabling more time to develop solid ideas and contributions to the

⁴³ Henry Baldwin Ward, “Maintaining the Standard and the Scientific Usefulness of the National Parks,” *Science* 69, (1929): 14.

field. Atlas.ti doesn't read the documents independently, but once the historian has established the parameters, the historian can then type in key phrases and the program will search the selected document. However, the program does have some limitations in this area. While Atlas.ti can read documents, only Word or readable PDF documents are able to be read by the program. Scanned historic primary source documents cannot be searched by the program. These documents can still be coded and entered into the program, but each document has to be read in its entirety by the historian. While the data produced by Atlas.ti is useful, the limitations of the program using historic primary sources are evident. Historians would still have to read every document individually and apply codes themselves, or transcribe the documents into a format that is able to be read by Atlas.ti.

Another benefit of using Atlas.ti are the outputs produced. The previously mentioned word clouds and codebook are just a sample. The program counts the number of times each code is used overall, in an individual document, or in relationship to other codes. That data can then be exported to an Excel document where graphs are easily created. The program can also show the relationship between codes and the coded quotations or if a quotation has had multiple codes applied to it. All of the data and products provides the historian with multiple angles from which to analyze primary sources. Instead of only reading the documents, Atlas.ti provides plenty of data and more avenues to interpret primary sources. Overall, Atlas.ti is a useful tool for historians. Though there are some significant limitations, historians wanting to conduct multi-disciplinary research will find Atlas.ti a viable option, especially if analyzing a great number of primary source documents.

Chapter III

National Perspective of National Parks

By 1929, the National Park Service had established national parks as a powerful attraction to visitors across the country. To be specific, 2,757,419 visitors set foot in units with the “national park” designation that year.⁴⁴ At the cusp of the Great Depression, the National Park Service was experiencing record visitation numbers. In fact, those numbers continued to rise through the 1930s. The most significant drop came after the United States officially became involved in the Second World War.⁴⁵ The end of the scope of this study, 1940, saw national parks welcome 7,358,080 visitors.⁴⁶ That is almost two and half times the number of visitors in 1929. While the nation was experiencing its worst economic crisis, the National Park Service was thriving. Executive Order 6166 brought national monuments, battlefields, cemeteries, and Washington, D.C. memorials under the management and protection of the National Park Service in 1933. The National Park Service became a truly “national” government agency.

However, visitation and unit numbers only reveal part of the story. On the surface, the visitation numbers reveal that national parks were popular and that visitation was relatively immune to an economic crisis. Digging a little deeper, more qualitative than quantitative, the numbers reveal that American citizens were invested in their national parks. During the interwar period, “Americans on all points of the political spectrum lauded nature as a source of civic virtue.”⁴⁷ Americans had an emotional attachment to “nature” that superseded political strife.

⁴⁴ B. Street, “Table 3,” *Public Use of the National Parks; Statistical Abstract: 1904-1940*, (Fort Collins, CO, 1941), 5.

⁴⁵ Street, “Table 1,” *Statistical Abstract: 1904-1940*, 1.

⁴⁶ Street, “Table 4,” *Statistical Abstract: 1904-1940*, 7.

⁴⁷ Paul Sutter, *Driven Wild: How the Fight Against Automobiles Launched the Modern Wilderness Movement*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2002), 52-53.

The Great Depression and political partisanship clearly influenced the operation, structure, and physical appearance of national parks. But an undeniable pull existed. Analyzing and defining that pull is the purpose of this chapter. Analyzing the language found in magazine articles from 1929-1940, American's attachment to national parks stems from the national parks' contribution to American national identity. The relationship between national parks and national identity can be fleshed out using findings from Atlas.ti. As discussed in "Chapter Two: Methods", forty-five magazine articles published between 1929 and 1940 were analyzed using nine separate codes. These codes are: "American Perseverance," "Attendance as Measure of Value of National Parks," "CCC Work in Parks," "Emotional Value on the Natural Environment," "Natural Environment as American Identity," "Purpose of National Parks, Reason for Visiting National Parks," "Uniquely American Nature," and "Use Conflict in National Parks" (please refer to the codebook in Chapter Two: Methods for definition and explanation of the codes). After coding, the program produced intriguing results.

Among the forty-five articles, the code used the most times was Purpose of National Parks. This code was used 134 times, close to three times the amount of the next most frequently used code. Between 1929 and 1940, Purpose of National Parks code is found in articles from every single year. In fact, the Purpose of National Parks code is the only code that is found in every year. In the search for national identity, the purpose of national parks is the most obvious and consistent theme among these articles. While not the intended focus of this study, it is not surprising that the purpose of the national parks is the most discussed in the popular literature. The purpose of the national parks is a topic of debate that has existed from the establishment of Yellowstone National Park. The Yellowstone National Park Protection Act of 1872 defines the purpose as a "public park or pleasuring-ground for the benefit and enjoyment of the people"

along with protecting the land from permanent human settlement and occupation.⁴⁸ Fast-forward sixty years and an editorial in the *Saturday Evening Post* describes the purpose of national parks as “serving the people intelligently, in bringing into highest use the outstanding features of nature, the choicest shrines of history.”⁴⁹ In an address at the 25th Annual Convention of the American Federation of American Arts in 1934, Director of the National Park Service Arno B. Cammerer offered his opinion. He stated the purpose of national parks as the way to “preserve those areas as nearly as possible in all their primitive beauty, so that our children and our children’s children may have at least a glimpse of the America that our pioneer forefathers knew. Equally, by the same law, we must help our American citizens of today to enjoy these areas to the full.”⁵⁰ Cammerer was hearkening back to the language used in the Yellowstone National Park Protection Act of 1872.

While some articles in the earlier part of the decade followed Cammerer’s lead, the tone changed by the end of the decade. This reflects the increased scope of management ceded to the National Park Service. Following 1933, the National Park Service managed historical along with the traditional nature parks. In 1933, President Franklin D. Roosevelt transferred “more than fifty historic sites, battlefields, and national monuments from the War Department and other federal agencies to the Park Service.”⁵¹ For example, in an article found in the April 1940 issue of *Recreation*, Carl P. Russel quoted the recommendations made by national park superintendents: “The interpretation of natural and human history in national park areas is recognized as a

⁴⁸ "An Act to set apart a certain Tract of Land lying near the Head-waters of the Yellowstone River as a public Park." *U.S. Statutes at Large* 17, (1872): 32–33.

⁴⁹ “In the Tradition,” *Saturday Evening Post* 206, no. 10 (September 2, 1933), 22.

⁵⁰ “Proceedings of the Twenty-Fifth Annual Convention of the American Federation of Arts.” *American Magazine of Art* 27, no.12 (December 1934), 8.

⁵¹ Robert B. Keiter, *To Conserve Unimpaired: The Evolution of the National Park Idea*, (Washington D.C: Island Press, 2013), 46

primary objective...National Park Service problems are national in scope...They pertain to mental health, constructive living, social traditions, enjoyment of life, and other basic matters bearing on the health, education, recreation and psychology of America's population."⁵² Victor Cahalane, writing for a May 1940 issue of *Nature* agreed, arguing that "With the spread and change of civilization, however, the first yardstick of specifications became no longer adequate. There was felt a growing need to preserve archaeologic, geologic and historic values that were threatened with destruction."⁵³ Though the defined purpose of national parks changed and evolved alongside the National Park Service during the decade, the importance of defining that purpose did not subside. Thomas Vale, a professor emeritus of geography writing in 2005, supports this argument. Vale offers this viewpoint

"The ideal of the national parks remains not simply alive but dynamically fluid: the system struggles with new concepts in protection and implements new policies in human use of its landscapes. Criticism generates reflection and change as the Park Service reaches out to a broad spectrum of visitors and struggles with honest interpretations of nature and American society. Celebration generates enthusiasm for continued wonderment about what types of landscapes should be added to the system, what the parks are for."⁵⁴

The purpose of national parks changed between 1929 and 1940. However, defining that purpose, as evidenced by this study, remained the focus of popular nature writings of the time. That "Purpose of National Parks" was the most frequently assigned code does not mean that national

⁵² Carl P. Russell, "Perspective in National Park Affairs," *Recreation* 34, (April 1940): 11.

⁵³ Victor H. Cahalane, "Your National Parks—and You," *Nature* 33, no. 5 (May 1940): 258.

⁵⁴ Thomas R. Vale, *The American Wilderness: Reflections on Nature Protection in the United States*, (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2005), 118.

identity-based ideas were not found. Instead, the data shows that purpose and national identity statements were closely related.

Before examining the link between purpose and national identity statements, it is important to explain the other important codes in this study. The second most frequently used codes were “Uniquely American Nature” and “Natural Environment as American Identity,” both used fifty-three times. Both of these codes relate only to the United States. The “Uniquely American Nature” code was developed after seeing many descriptions of national parks as something only to be found in the United States. For example, a 1936 article in the *Saturday Evening Post* describes Yosemite National Park as “a national asset so absolutely unique that it is worth protecting against all jarring and incongruous effects, at any cost.”⁵⁵ Similarly, *The Literary Digest* in 1934 argues that “nowhere in the world will the vacationist find such a vast and varied display of natural phenomena as are preserved in the national parks of the United States.”⁵⁶ Popular magazines were heavily promoting national parks.

Influenced by the “See America First” campaign, which promoted American domestic tourism to American citizens, a May 1940 issue of *Nature* offered this logical promotion: “With most of the rest of the world torn by wars, and with oceans places of debatable safety, America is the place for Americans. Nowhere in the world are there such places of beauty, set aside for the enjoyment of the people, than in the United States and Canada.”⁵⁷ Though this specific article also promotes some Canadian national parks, the focus is primarily on national parks in the United States. Leveraging a time of global unrest into a promotional opportunity for national

⁵⁵ Albert W. Atwood, “Can the National Parks be Kept Unspoiled?” *Saturday Evening Post* 208, no. 46 (May 16, 1936):116.

⁵⁶ “National Parks: Nature in Primeval Mood,” *The Literary Digest* 117, (June 9, 1934): 34.

⁵⁷ “See America First,” *Nature* 33, (May 1940): 273.

⁵⁸ Runte, *National Parks*, 80-85.

parks was not a necessity in 1940. However, the need for vacation and an escape from war and economic turmoil was great. Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal played a crucial role in cementing the role of the national parks in the nation's recovery. The New Deal "sought a kind of security for the land itself, adding some twelve million acres of national parklands, including Olympic National Park in Washington State, Isle Royal in Lake Superior, the Everglades in Florida, and King's canyon in California."⁵⁹

Even more powerful was the commitment to isolationist principles in foreign policy. The United States, after reluctantly entering the First World War, retreated to its previous state of isolationism in international affairs. Driving isolationist thought and practice was that "Americans had thought of themselves as not simply distant from the Old World but different from it as well. That difference, indeed, defined for many the essence – and the superiority – of the American national identity."⁶⁰ Unsurprisingly, given this idea of American superiority, the revival of the "See America First" campaign was timely and effective. For example, in 1940, the year the *Nature* article quoted above was published, over 7 million visitors were reported.⁶¹ The next year, before the United States' declaration of war at the end of 1941, national parks saw nearly 8 and half million visitors.⁶² As Americans were increasingly focused on the problems in the United States, popular nature writers utilized the isolationist feelings of the public to contend that national parks were crucial to American national identity.

⁵⁹ David M. Kennedy, *Freedom from Fear: The American People in Depression and War, 1929-1945*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 379.

⁶⁰ Kennedy, *Freedom from Fear*, 387.

⁶¹ B. Street, "Table 4," *Public Use of the National Parks; Statistical Abstract: 1904-1940*, (Fort Collins, CO, 1941), 7.

⁶² B. Street, "Table 1," *Public Use of the National Parks Statistical Abstract: 1941-1953*, (Fort Collins, CO, 1954), 1.

Similar to the “Uniquely American Nature” code, the code “Natural Environment as American Identity” is focused singularly on the United States.⁶³ However, “Natural Environment as American Identity,” was intended to be the main code focused on in this study. In trying to examine American national identity and the relationship between that identity and national parks, there was a need for way to define that relationship. Out of that need came the “Natural Environment as American Identity” code. A quote from the oldest article in this study epitomizes both the code and the relationship between national parks and national identity that is the focus of this study. In a January 1929 letter to *Science*, Hendy Baldwin Ward wrote that “the first national park administration ranked national park purposes as ‘the stimulation of national patriotism’ and the ‘fostering of knowledge and health.’”⁶⁴ Invoking the ideals of the first national park administration, Ward powerfully reminded readers that one of the initial, primary purposes of the national parks was to stimulate national patriotism. Maintaining similar arguments as Ward, Carl P. Russel wrote in a *Recreation* article in April of 1940, “Most conservationists now agree that it should be the purpose of the Nation to select and preserve, while it is still possible to get them, those areas of national significance which give expression to all things American. Great archeological relics are not less distinctly national in importance and interest than are the granite cliffs of Yosemite or the abysmal depths of the Grand Canyon of the Colorado.”⁶⁵ Though written eleven years apart, the authors of these articles expressed a similar idea about American national identity and national parks: national parks contributed to American

⁶³ The definition of the code: The object of the analysis. Used to identify statements that directly include the natural environment as a major component of American national identity. For further explanation of codes, please refer to Chapter 2: Methods.

⁶⁴ Henry Baldwin Ward, “Maintaining the Standards and the Scientific Usefulness of the National Parks,” *Science* 69, no. 1775 (January 4, 1929): 14.

⁶⁵ Carl P. Russell, “Perspective in National Park Affairs,” *Recreation* 34, (April 1940): 9.

national identity by preserving both landscapes and places that were of national importance. In a 2014 discussion of environmental patriotism, Anne Marie Todd notes that American “national identity is indelibly connected to our national landscape. In this way, patriotism is fundamentally an environmental concept, based on a sense of place. Patriotism establishes a connection to place base on a commitment to community and obligation to the land.”⁶⁶ Through a commitment and obligation to the national landscape, national parks became a connection point for Americans during the 1930s to a national identity. Consequently, the purpose of national parks became intertwined with the American national identity.

Though descriptions of “Uniquely American Nature” and “Natural Environment as American Identity” remained consistent between 1929 and 1940, the quotations that described “Purpose of National Parks” changed during the same period. The purpose of the national parks, from a legal, government standpoint did not change. According to the Organic Act of 1916, the official purpose of the national parks is to “conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.”⁶⁷ However, the ways in which that directive were thought to be carried out grew and transformed along with the National Park Service. Out of the 134 times that the “Purpose of National Parks” code was assigned to a quotation, seventy of those times saw another code assigned to the same quotation. That quantitative relationship underscores the idea that the discussion around the purpose of national parks occurred across multiple popular magazines and would have reached a wide swath of the American public. Out of those seventy code cooccurrences, twenty were

⁶⁶ Anne Marie Todd, "A Call for Environmental Patriotism," *Taproot Journal* 23, no. 2 (Fall 2014): 4.

⁶⁷ *Organic Act, U.S. Code* 16 (1916), §1 et. Seq.

associated with the code “Natural Environment as American Identity” and twenty-one were associated with the code “Use Conflict in National Parks,” the third most frequently assigned code. By diving deeper into the relationships between these codes and the language used in the articles used in this study, the link between American national identity and national parks becomes clear.

The relationship between the codes “Purpose of National Parks” and “Use Conflict in National Parks” is apparent. What is or is not appropriate in national parks has been influencing the national park idea from 1872 and Yellowstone National Park Protection Act. In a time of increased visitation and access to national parks, 1929 through 1940 served as solidification of old ideas and the introduction of new ones. For example, in a 1930 *Arts & Decoration* article, Henry Wellington Wack writes that in Yellowstone National Park “there is abundant hotel and lodge accommodation in the park; many foot and auto trails, lectures by naturalist foresters; camp sites for campers, government regulation of all charges and strict supervision against fire and vandalism. It is a vast public playground forever dedicated to the American people who use it and enjoy in a *proper* manner” (emphasis original to source).⁶⁸ The word “proper” used by Wack is the real pinch point in the discussion of use. Wack described a variety of activities, but the activities are not in conflict. In Wack’s estimation, as long as the American people used and enjoyed Yellowstone within the bounds dictated by government regulations, hotels, foot and auto trails, and educational programming could all happily co-exist. Stephen Mather, the first director of the National Park Service, strove to promote visitation and similar ideals espoused by Wack. Mather saw visitation and recreation as the key to insuring the survival of the National Park

⁶⁸ Henry Wellington Wack, “Travel Through Our National Parks and Scenic West,” *Arts & Decoration* 33, (June 1930): 69.

Service. In the 1918 Lane letter, Mather was instructed to “work with the railroads, chambers of commerce, tourist bureaus, and automobile associations to inform the public about how to reach the parks. [The letter] acknowledged an ongoing role for national park concessioners in providing a range of accommodations to visitors.”⁶⁹ The letter was written in 1918 by the Secretary of Interior, Franklin Lane. Addressed to Stephen Mather, the letter serves as the document that drove early National Park Service management and policy for the foundational period of the NPS. The dual role of the National Park Service influenced these ideas, but also proved to be a consistent point of contention.

The contention between park purpose and park use is observed in the popular writings used in this study. The previously cited 1929 *Science* article written by Henry Baldwin Ward is, in part, a response to Dr. Willard G. Van Name’s view that national parks catered to vacationists.⁷⁰ Ward contends that Van Name is “over impressed” with that assumption and that in reality “considering the immensity of the combined park wildernesses enjoyable only by devotees of the trail...recreation will be properly classed merely as a by-product.”⁷¹ This debate was far from stifled and continued through the 1930s (and after). A 1935 article summarizes one side of this argument succinctly, stating “*The National Park theory is not multiple use but single use*” (emphasis original to document).⁷² In other words, the National Park Service was focused entirely on recreation use of the land, and potentially removing material-rich land from access, limiting actual conservation practices from occurring. More importantly, the author of this article

⁶⁹ Keiter, *To Conserve Unimpaired*, 45.

⁷⁰ Henry Baldwin Ward, “Maintaining the Standards and the Scientific Usefulness of the National Parks,” *Science* 69 no. 1775 (January 4, 1929):15.

⁷¹ Ward, “Maintaining the Standards and the Scientific Usefulness of the National Parks,” *Science*, 15.

⁷² “Conservation and Use,” *Nature* 26, (September 1935): 171.

argues against the development of “so-called comforts and conveniences of modern civilization” within the parks in a “bid for otherwise unwilling tourist travel.”⁷³ Further bolstering the argument, the author connects the increased development to American health and well-being.

Instead of positively impacting American lives, such development does “not lead to a true appreciation of Nature, but rather to a regimentation of so-called recreation until the real pioneer instinct, which is the strength of our nation, is weekend to a false standard of artificiality.”⁷⁴ The quote reflects some of Bob Marshall’s criticism of road building in 1926. After realizing that the remnant trail used by the Nez Perce and Lewis and Clark over Lolo Pass would be replaced by a road, Marshall “rued the fact that a road along the trail would ruin the chance for others to experience the pass as [Lewis and Clark], and he, had.”⁷⁵ The article was not intended as a slight against recreation in general, but an attack on what the author viewed as insincere forms of recreation. The author connected recreation to the “pioneer instinct” and claimed that instinct to be vital to the nation. Even though the article was focused on use and purpose of national parks, the argument was supported by an appeal to a pillar of national identity, the pioneer. The pioneer image evoked images of covered wagons crossing untraversed land towards a more promising future and a spirit of indomitability in the face of danger and challenges. American national identity is tied to that “pioneer instinct” and a reader would make that connection between national parks and national identity.

Continuing the pattern of appealing to American national identity in an argument about use conflict and national parks is a 1939 opinion piece found in *Nature* titled “Practical Idealism and Our Parks.” Again, this article discusses the debate between providing enjoyment and

⁷³ “Conservation and Use,” *Nature*, 172.

⁷⁴ “Conservation and Use,” *Nature*, 172.

⁷⁵ Sutter, *Driven Wild*, 207.

preserving the protected landscape. Using more direct and harsh language than the previously discussed *Nature* article, the author does not veil his critique of the current management of the National Park Service. The author argues that “through over-civilization and over-development, the inspiration to be derived from our National parks is seriously diluted as is, also, the opportunity for real recreation. The spirit of adventure is supplanted by ‘all the comforts of home.’ The progressive ‘sissyfication’ of the American people is abetted.”⁷⁶ Taking a step further than the 1935 *Nature* article, this quote uses language that takes a direct shot at the status of American capability and strength. Though the 1935 article addresses a decline in “pioneer instinct” the 1939 quote argues that there is already a decline, and that national parks are actively contributing to that decline. The appeal to national strength and “spirit of adventure” is, like the use of the pioneer, a powerful argument for readers. According to both authors, recreation should have been an experience that connected Americans to their idyllic, legendary past and propelled them towards a strong and successful future. And while the state of national parks was not conducive to such idealism, the authors had hope that the purpose of the parks would be realized and American identity would be rescued.

The articles in this study often utilized appeals to national identity in arguments surrounding use and recreation in national parks. While use conflict and purpose of national parks are connected, the arguments still relied on appeals to national identity. That leads into the discussion of the relationship between the codes “Purpose of National Parks” and “Natural Environment as American Identity.” As the primary focus of this study is to examine how popular writings discussed national parks through the lens of national identity, it is important to note some of the quantitative aspects of this study. Out of the fifty-three times the code “Natural

⁷⁶ “Practical Idealism and Our Parks,” *Nature* 32, (February 1939): 97.

Environment as American Identity” was used, twenty of those quotations were also coded with “Purpose of National Parks.” Those twenty quotations were found in eleven different articles in nine separate publications in nine separate years in the timeframe of the study. The quantitative data provides more than just numbers. That nine individual publications over the course of nine years utilized similar language to discuss national parks is striking. National parks contribute to national identity, especially in popular magazine articles written between 1929 and 1940. Diving into the language used in the articles expands what the quantitative data hints at. The earliest article establishes the precedent. Discussed earlier in this chapter, Henry Baldwin Ward wrote an opinion piece for *Science* in 1929. Ward summarized the views of the first park administration, noting that the purpose of national parks was to stimulate national patriotism and to foster knowledge and health.⁷⁷ Ward wrote this before the National Park Service was granted control over national monuments, historic battlefields, and other sites across the country. However, Ward statements support the idea that the national parks were important to American national identity. In 1930, the country celebrated the centennial of the Oregon Trail. Henry Wellington Wack in his travel piece for *Arts and Decoration* connects the centennial to national identity. Wack writes that “of all American centennials, this is one of the most romantic, most significant and worthwhile in our history” and as a result “the American people seem at last to have awakened to the thrilling grandeur of their own country.”⁷⁸ Wack makes the argument that travelling to visit national parks is a worthwhile undertaking, and like those that travelled west along the Oregon Trail, Americans are experiencing something with historic value. Utilizing the

⁷⁷ Ward, “Maintaining the Standards and the Scientific Usefulness of the National Parks,” *Science*, 14.

⁷⁸ Wack, “Travel Through Our National Parks and Scenic West” *Arts & Decoration* 33, (June 1930): 106.

mythos of the Oregon Trail to appeal to a broad swath of the population, Wack underscored the connection between the national parks and American identity. Just as the Oregon Trail was something to be remembered and revered as a nation, so too are the areas that are protected by the National Park service.

Referring to the 1918 Lane Letter as the Magna Carta of the national parks, Hancock Adams believed that the national parks in 1932 “live up to the ideal laid down by Franklin K. Lane in 1918.”⁷⁹ Adams, writing an overview of the various national parks and national monuments in 1932, argued that the national parks were something that Americans could take pride in. The national parks in 1932 offered “even larger opportunities for recreation and inspiration this year than they ever did before, and give new point to the pride of Americans that live under the Stars and Stripes.”⁸⁰ Adams does not use an appeal to American history or legend in his argument. Instead, he directly states that national parks should inherently be a point of pride to Americans. With no comparison needed to bolster his argument, Adams argued that the purpose of national parks was to inspire pride in being an American and consequently, the American national identity would be rooted in the natural environment found in national parks. Anne Cameron utilizes the same argument structure as Adams in a 1933 travel article found in *The Saturday Evening Post*. Cameron argues that “You’re an indifferent American if you don’t feel something of it when you see the flag blowing in the sunshine against a background of Yosemite’s walls.”⁸¹ The national parks were a patriotic experience and should evoke an appropriate response from American visitors. For Cameron, the national parks were the nation’s

⁷⁹ Hancock Adams, “Our Great National Parks,” *National Republic* 20, no. 2, (June 1932): 7.

⁸⁰ Adams, “Our Great National Parks,” *National Republic*, 7.

⁸¹ Anne Cameron “A Vacation Tour Through the National Parks” *The Saturday Evening Post* 206, (August 12, 1933): 14.

best contribution to the democratic ideal.⁸² Though the purpose of Cameron's article was to describe the national parks to the nation in an attempt to promote visitation, the appeal that she makes is relevant. If for no other reason than to spark a bit of patriotic pride in the minds of her readers, Cameron reasons that a proud American would want to support and visit a place that represents the democratic ideals that motivated the country. Cameron effectively made that appeal, along with strengthening the tie between American national identity and the national parks. A *Scholastic* article written in 1936 agrees with the argument made by Cameron in 1934. The author of this piece did not shroud their intent, titling the article "The Supremacy of Our National Parks." Though the author certainly describes various national parks in terms of their physical attributes, the conclusion offers the readers something more. More than just beautiful places that the government set aside, the parks are "every one of them, and each in its own way, supreme examples not to be duplicated in any other land. It will be America's everlasting boast that the Government created these parks for the enjoyment of their rightful and appreciative owners – the American people."⁸³ The *Scholastic* article advanced the argument further than the previous articles. The author reminds readers that the American people own the national parks, and that should be a source of boasting. The American people own the varied and supreme examples of landscape in the country and can boast that their government protected those landscapes. Ownership breeds responsibility, which grows pride and contributes to a sense of identity. By reminding readers that they own national parks, the author reaffirms that the national parks are integral to American national identity.

⁸² Cameron, "A Vacation Tour Through the National Parks" *The Saturday Evening Post*, 14.

⁸³ "Supremacy of Our National Parks," *Scholastic* 28, (April 1936): 16.

Building off of the arguments of the previous years, a familiar name, Henry Baldwin Ward, appears again to offer his insight. Where the *Scholastic* article was more idealistic about the American people owning the national parks, Ward is specific. In arguing against the private interests that threaten national parks, Ward emphasizes that “each one of the 130 million Americans owns an equal amount – one share of stock in Yellowstone Park, in each of the other parks and properties that belong to the nation.”⁸⁴ In a time when owning stock was not accessible to everyone, referencing stock ownership in terms of national parks would have resonated with readers. Owning a share of stock meant that a person had say and influence in how the company was run. Ward made sure that his readers understood that they had say and influence in how the national parks were run. And instead of having their “shares” be taken by private interests, Ward argued that “these rights and privileges must be protected and kept unimpaired under the control of the nation to whose citizens they belong. Individual or local interests must not be gratified at the expense of the national welfare.”⁸⁵ Along with being shareholders of national parks, Ward commissions the American people to protect the national parks from individual and local interests in an effort to ensure national welfare. In Ward’s estimate, protecting national parks was equal to protecting national welfare. As a reader, that argument is a direct call to protect American national identity. If national parks are lost to local and individual interests, national welfare declines, and American national identity suffers. These ideas were developed and shaped over time and coalesced into the final example of the code pairing “Purpose of National Parks” and “Natural Environment as American Identity.” In a 1940 *Nature* article written by Victor H. Cahalane, the national parks are areas that deserve to be preserved and protected from large

⁸⁴ Henry Baldwin Ward, “What is Happening to Our National Parks?” *Nature* 31, (December 1938): 612.

⁸⁵ Ward, “What is Happening to Our National Parks?” *Nature*, 612.

commercial interests. The value of the national parks is underappreciated, according to Cahalane. However, “instead of locking up resources, as has been so often charged, the parks are primarily utilitarian in purpose.”⁸⁶ Far removed from the useless lands argument of Yellowstone era, Cahalane argued the exact opposite. The national parks are incredibly useful, but not in the vein of resource and material extraction and production. Instead, the national parks serve a utilitarian purpose, one that benefits the nation as a whole. National parks are “meant to be used as part of the machinery of our national life.”⁸⁷ According to Cahalane, national parks are a vital cog in the machinery of the United States. National parks are inscribed into the American national identity. Cahalane lists the benefits extracted from the national parks as “incalculable harvest of enjoyment, recreation, and inspiration...they yield rich crops of mental and physical stimulus to the growth and power of their owners – the American People.”⁸⁸ The effects of the production of the national parks are “regeneration of body and mind; reservoirs of national spiritual and physical strength; natural laboratories of scientific research.”⁸⁹ National parks represented something that contributed to the nation, and Cahalane’s choice to use the comparison of a machine is important. The United States was coming out of the Great Depression and was attempting to keep the “machine” of the economy operating. The national parks, though providing opportunities for the spiritual, mental, and physical growth that Cahalane discussed, also provided a real economic value to the nation in terms of tourism, travel, and recreation spending. The national parks were contributing to national economic recovery, and as a result,

⁸⁶ Victor H. Cahalane, “Your National Parks – and You,” *Nature* 33, no. 5 (May 1940): 262.

⁸⁷ Cahalane, “Your National Parks – and You,” *Nature*, 262.

⁸⁸ Cahalane, “Your National Parks – and You,” *Nature*, 303.

⁸⁹ *Ibid*, 303.

helped to raise the morale of the country. By contributing both economically and mentally to the American people, the national parks increasingly became a staple of American national identity.

Between 1929 and 1940, the national discussion surrounding the purpose of national parks changed. Moving from a more idealistic description of the benefits of national parks and how they relate to national identity, the discussion moved towards ownership and economic production. One consistent point found in the qualitative analysis was the code “Purpose of National Parks.” As previously discussed this code was assigned the most amount of times out of the nine codes used in this study. The graph at the end of this chapter showcases the dominance of language that was used that matched the guidelines of the code “Purpose of National Parks.” The green bar, representing the code “Purpose of National Parks,” appears in every year of the study and is most or second-most frequently assigned code in every year. Though the language changed surrounding the purpose of national parks, the idea consistently remained the most frequently discussed in popular magazine articles about the national parks. The “Purpose of National Parks” code was not expected to be the primary focus of this study. However, through an examination of the code and the language used in various quotations the importance of the code is discovered. The purpose of national parks became a vehicle through which broader discussion about use and identity took place. Much like the automobiles that opened the parks to a broader swath of the American population, the idea of purpose allowed arguments about use and identity to become more accessible to the general public.

Though national identity was not the most prevalent theme in the articles, there is evidence that national identity was influenced by the national park discussion. The United States was in the midst of the Great Depression and under the growing threat of another world war. The writers of the articles used in this study utilized current affairs to connect readers with issues

concerning national parks. As a result, the national parks became associated with the health of the nation and the patriotism of the citizens. Like popular nature writings before them, these authors placed the American landscape in the forefront of the minds of the American people. Their introduction of ideas and arguments about purpose, use conflict, and identity contributed to the belief that the national parks really did belong to the people and that the people had a voice in what happened within the boundaries of the parks. If the parks belonged to the people, then the parks were a piece of the American national identity.

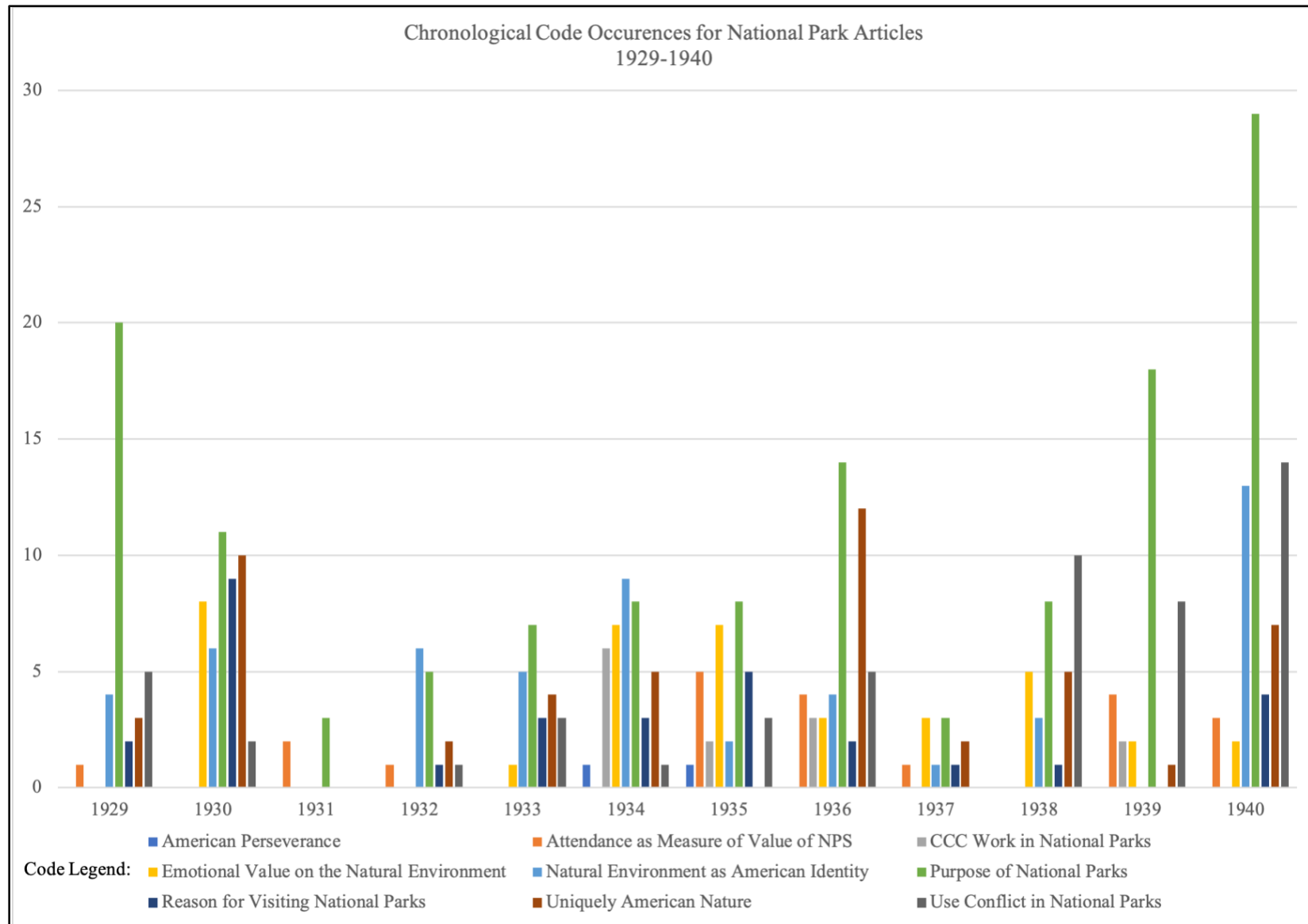


Figure 3.1

Chapter IV

Focus on Great Smoky Mountains National Park

Straddling the state line between Tennessee and North Carolina, ridge after ridge of ancient mountains stretches endlessly. For the population east of the Mississippi River, the stretch of the southern Appalachian Mountains that are now contained within the boundaries of Great Smoky Mountains National Park possess as much emotional weight as Yellowstone National Park. Horace Kephart, a major proponent of the park, described the Great Smokies in 1913 as “an Eden still unpeopled and unspoiled.”⁹⁰ Prolific advocate of the National Park Service, Robert Sterling Yard described Yellowstone as “wild in the extreme” and “a wilderness...unequaled.”⁹¹ Great Smoky Mountains and Yellowstone National Parks were described using similar, lofty language, despite the stark ecological and geographic differences. Kephart, describing the mysteriousness of the Great Smoky Mountains in a 1925 article wrote, “the wildest and most picturesque highland east of the Rockies remained virtually unknown until about ten years ago. Even today there are gulfs in the Smokies that no man is known to have penetrated.”⁹² The pull of the unknown and hidden features of the Great Smoky Mountains was just as alluring as the primordial volcanic activity of Yellowstone.

In addition to the broader analysis of popular publication articles focused on national parks in the United States, this study included a smaller case study on Great Smoky Mountains National Park. A smaller case study is relevant to the study of park and national identity creation.

⁹⁰ Horace Kephart, *Our Southern Highlanders*, (New York: Outing Publishing Company, 1913), 50.

⁹¹ Robert Sterling Yard, *The Book of the National Parks*, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1919), 205, 206.

⁹² Horace Kephart, “A National Park in the Great Smoky Mountains,” Swain County Chamber of Commerce, 1925.

By examining a specific park, one can understand what the American population read about national parks in general and about individual parks. The comparison provides insight into whether or not similar language was used in describing existing parks versus writing about creating parks. In an effort to maintain similar analysis conditions, the same nine codes used to analyze articles about national parks in general were used to analyze articles focused on Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Great Smoky Mountains National Park was chosen for a few factors. The first, is that the creation of the park largely took place within the chosen time frame between 1929 and 1940. Investigative committees for a park in the Southern Appalachian range began in the mid-1920s and the park wasn't fully established until 1940, following a formal dedication ceremony given by President Franklin Roosevelt. The process of creating this park spans the scope of this study. Besides the convenience of fitting within the timeframe, Great Smoky Mountains National Park is an example of the shifting ideas of the national park ideal. From the useless land argument that protected Yellowstone to the monumentalism movement that defined the early years of the National Park Service, Great Smoky Mountains National Park represents yet another example of a national park ideal. The eastern park was carved out of privately owned, occupied land, with some of the land purchased by the federal government. Finally, the establishment of Great Smoky Mountains National Park, took place during a time of national turmoil and uncertainty. Parks did not have to be a priority, and yet President Roosevelt issued an executive order that enabled the federal government to purchase land for preservation and created work programs that put citizens to work in national parks, including Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

At the turn of the twentieth century, the land that would become Great Smoky Mountains National Park was where “white and Cherokee farmers created a patchwork of homes, fields, and

woodlands in the valleys” of the mountains.⁹³ This land was far from the uninhabited utopia that the national park ideal conjures. Preserving Yellowstone was not about protecting wilderness.⁹⁴ Instead, Yellowstone’s “uselessness to civilization” persuaded Congress to protect the area.⁹⁵ Conversely, the Great Smoky Mountains area was already established as useful and productive. The Cherokee people called this landscape home for thousands of years and by 1900 nearly 7,000 people lived within the boundaries of the future park.⁹⁶ Farms and logging operations dotted the landscape. However, like the park’s older siblings in the National Park Service, the landscape of the Smoky Mountains captured the imagination and fictional depictions of the past. Horace Kephart fueled the creation of the idealized landscape. In his writings during the first decade of the 1900s, “Kephart and presumably his readers admired a frontier-like ability to conquer nature, to survive in a place without ‘civilization.’”⁹⁷ Much like other environmental literature of the period, the descriptions of the Great Smoky Mountains leaned heavily on Romantic, pastoral ideals of nature. Similar to Thoreau’s excursion into the not-so-wild Walden Pond, the mysteriousness of the Great Smoky Mountains outshined the obvious evidence of human existence.

As the country began a major shift to urban areas, people were drawn to descriptions of wild places, of pastoral scenes where man only had himself to rely on for survival. Yearning grew for a place distant (both physically and mentally) from the growing urban and industrial hum of the large population centers in the country. The Great Smoky Mountains garnered

⁹³Margaret Brown, *The Wild East: A Biography of the Great Smoky Mountains*, (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2000), 12.

⁹⁴ Roderick Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind*. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1967), 149.

⁹⁵ Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind*, 112.

⁹⁶ Brown, *The Wild East*, 12.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 83

interest as such a place and “by the early 1920s the federal government started to take the initiative to expand access into mountain areas for all Americans. To a new class of tourists, the temperate Appalachian range appeared an ideal site for the development of national recreation lands.”⁹⁸ Roderick Nash describes this sentiment as a “national cult” of wilderness.⁹⁹ Long idolized as a symbol of American identity, the pioneer was being lost in the growing urban, industrial jungle. As a response to the perceived loss of a national hero, “many Americans came to understand that wilderness was essential to pioneering: without wild country the concepts of frontier and pioneer were meaningless.”¹⁰⁰ Frederick Jackson Turner further connected American identity and wilderness. Writing in 1920, Turner argued that an individual of the United States was unique because “out of his wilderness experience...he fashioned...the freedom of the individual to seek his own.”¹⁰¹ But, as Turner contended, the United States was rapidly changing. The unexplored frontier had shrunk and “it is with a shock that the people of the United States are coming to realize that the fundamental forces which have shaped their society up to the present are disappearing.”¹⁰² The availability automobiles and the building of new roads, combined with popular literature (like Turner’s) and escapism, drove the increase of tourism to the Great Smoky Mountains.

This increase of people visiting the Great Smoky Mountains coincided with the establishment of the National Park Service. Luring in large numbers of tourists, national parks

⁹⁸ Sara M. Gregg, *Managing the Mountains: Lands Use Planning, the New Deal, and the Creation of a Federal Landscape in Appalachia*, (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010), 3

⁹⁹ Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind*, 143.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 145.

¹⁰¹ Frederick Jackson Turner, *The Frontier in American History* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1921), 213.

¹⁰² Turner, *The Frontier in American History*, 311.

began to be viewed as a valuable source of economic growth by park boosters. Encouraged by the numbers revealed by the National Park Service, park boosters attempted to gain the attention of the Southern Appalachian Park Committee, formed in 1924 to decide upon the worthiest location to be designated as a national park. Influential economic drivers like future North Carolina governor Locke Craig, Southern Railroad representative M.V. Richards, and textile magnate Moses Cone “latched onto the idea of putting the surrounding mountain land to a new use...Stephen Mather had given them the map to an El Dorado they always had known lay hidden” in the Great Smoky Mountains.¹⁰³ The developing relationship between national parks and economic potential was not lost on national park advocates. Margaret Brown argues “by the 1920s, national park enthusiasts in the western states had learned that a strong economic rationale in the form of tourism development could be used to gain much wider support for national parks.”¹⁰⁴ As a result, “a strong, popular, and politically powerful national park movement caused many parts of the nation—including the southern Appalachian region and especially the region surrounding the Great Smoky Mountains—to welcome, covet, and even demand the establishment of national parks in their area.”¹⁰⁵ Especially aware of the idea of economic development through tourism was the first director of the National Park Service, Stephen Mather.¹⁰⁶ Mather believed that he should create an “administration which shall develop to the highest possible degree of efficiency the resources of the national parks both for the pleasure and the profit of their owners, the people.”¹⁰⁷ Mather capitalized on the First World War disrupting

¹⁰³ Daniel S. Pierce, *The Great Smokies: From Natural Habitat to National Park*, (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2000), 55.

¹⁰⁴ Brown, *The Wild East*, 87.

¹⁰⁵ Pierce, *The Great Smokies*, 34.

¹⁰⁶ Brown, *The Wild East*, 87.

¹⁰⁷ Pierce, *The Great Smokies*, 46.

the opportunities for European vacations, wealthy citizen's desire to travel, and the railroads desire to sell tickets to promote and solidify the national park idea in the American mind. Constructed to haul timber out of the Smokies, railroads began to transport tourists into the mountains. Logging railroads added passenger cars on the weekends, responding to growing demand for transportation to the Smokies in the nineteen-teens and twenties.¹⁰⁸ In an effort to shore up national support for the National Park Service, Stephen Mather understood that he must have the support of southern representatives and senators, as they represented the most cohesive voting bloc in Congress at the time. ¹⁰⁹ The economic draw of a national park in their backyard was an influential incentive for southern representatives and senators, as their constituents vocalized their desire for a national park.

While Mather succeed in forming long-lasting support for the National Park Service, most of the parks were inaccessible to all but the wealthy. A park in the southern Appalachian area would be accessible in a day's drive to two-thirds of the American population in the late 1920s.¹¹⁰ An Appalachian national park "in many important respects...embodied the democratization of recreation, offering accessible, low-cost vacations for people from the eastern cities."¹¹¹ Travel to parks in the west was expensive, limiting access to those that could afford to take that much time away from work and the expense of travel. However, carving a national park out of the population centers in the eastern United States was not a small task. With bills calling for the establishment of a national park in the region piling up without review from the National Park Service and opponents fearing the diminishment of the national park standard, Mather

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 33.

¹⁰⁹ Pierce, *The Great Smokies*, 49.

¹¹⁰ Pierce, *The Great Smokies*, 50.

¹¹¹ Gregg, *Managing the Mountains*, 3.

announced in his 1923 director report, “I should like to see additional national parks established east of the Mississippi, but just how this can be accomplished is not clear.”¹¹² Not only was Mather describing the process of determining and upholding the standards for establishing a national park, but he was describing the legal, political, and financial difficulties of obtaining the land needed for the new parks. Western parks were carved out of land that was generally unimproved and publicly owned. Native Americans had been removed from their land, but the federal government largely did not have to deal with multiple land owners and corporations in the West due to the smaller population. The Southern Appalachian region was home to thousands of people, however, and private property is protected by the 5th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.¹¹³ The national park would have to be “etched from the holdings of eighteen unwilling timber and mining companies and the homesteads of more than 1,100 small landowners” leading to the state’s unprecedented use of eminent domain power.¹¹⁴ While western parks had been carved out of reservations and public lands, Mather believed that the taking power of the federal government could not be used to create national parks. Land east of the Mississippi would have to be donated or through individual states’ taking power.¹¹⁵

In order to acquire the necessary land for the park, two separate commissions were formed by North Carolina and Tennessee. The North Carolina Park Commission and the Tennessee Great Smoky National Park Commission were tasked with negotiating with the private land owners in the Great Smoky Mountains. The May 22, 1926 act of Congress deemed

¹¹² Stephen Mather, *Report of the Director of the National Park Service*, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1923), 14.

¹¹³ The 5th Amendment states “...nor shall private property be taken for public use, without just compensation.”

¹¹⁴ Brown, *The Wild East*, 92.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 92.

that while protection and administration of the proposed park could be undertaken when 150,000 acres of land had been acquired, 427,000 acres were needed for general development to begin.¹¹⁶ Purchasing 427,000 acres would require \$10 million dollars to be raised. Both commissions began to actively pursue land owners with offers for their land, hoping to avoid major opposition and exorbitant prices. The state commissions worked actively to raise funds to purchase land. By 1927, around \$1 million in private donations along with \$2 million each from Tennessee and North Carolina left them with less than half of the necessary funds.¹¹⁷ Where funds were lacking or land owners were unwilling to sell, the state commissions began the practice of acquiring land through condemnation. The states flexed their power of eminent domain. Under eminent domain, the state could claim land for the public good. Because of the 5th Amendment, the state would also have to provide just compensation for the land. Larger land owners that could fight against this action in the court system often earned a better price for their land. However, as the condemnation process continued to provide victories for the states' park commissions, smaller land owners became increasingly reluctant to resist the states' power of eminent domain. However, the efforts of the state commissions and fundraising efforts begin to stall. Creation of Great Smoky Mountains National Park would need help on a federal scale to succeed.

Larger federal assistance came in several forms. The most significant in terms of financial support came from John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Rockefeller was already an active supporter of the National Park Service. He gave more to national parks than anyone in history, having donated tens of millions of dollars to Acadia, Grand Teton, Sequoia, Shenandoah, Yellowstone,

¹¹⁶ Ray Lyman Wilbur and Horace M. Albright, "General Information Great Smoky Mountains National Park North Carolina-Tennessee," (1932), 1.

¹¹⁷ Brown, *The Wild East*, 94.

and Yosemite national parks.¹¹⁸ Arguably more important than the money was the lands themselves that Rockefeller donated. With around \$5 million dollars between the two states and private donations, another \$5 million was needed to buy the required land. After initially only pledging \$1 million to the park, Rockefeller decided to match the gifts of the states and donated \$5 million to Great Smoky Mountains. Serving as a “‘living memorial’ to his mother, Laura Spelman Rockefeller,” the donation “made the Great Smokies a reality two years before Shenandoah became a national park.”¹¹⁹ Though not a direct contribution from the federal government, the Rockefeller donation signaled a wider appeal for the creation of the park. As an individual with substantial wealth, Rockefeller was an established sponsor of parks and conservation work across the country. With nation-wide name recognition, the Rockefeller bequest contributed to the widespread, largely positive, national publicity of the park; after park establishment was secured by the bequest, articles appeared in “practically every magazine of mass circulation in the country.”¹²⁰

Efforts to establish Great Smoky Mountains National Park shifted from the state park commissions to the federal government in 1933.¹²¹ This shift is significant for a couple of reasons. The first is straight forward. The power and influence of the federal government out matched that of the state commissions, especially in terms of legal and financial clout. More importantly, the federal government’s role in the establishment of Great Smoky Mountains National Park set a precedent for future park creation. On December 28, 1933, President Roosevelt issued executive order No. 6542, which “authoriz[ed] the purchase of land for

¹¹⁸ Pierce, *The Great Smokies*, 125.

¹¹⁹ Brown, *The Wild East*, 95.

¹²⁰ Pierce, *The Great Smokies*, 129.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 147.

emergency conservation work.”¹²² Executive Order 6542 might get lost in a broader study of executive orders. However, the importance of this executive order in terms of Great Smoky Mountains National Park and the National Park Service in general should not be understated. Prior to the issuance of Executive Order 6542 and “in spite of the decade-long history of acquisition of private property for national forests, first established under the 1911 Weeks Act, there was no precedent for creating a national park from privately held lands.”¹²³ The federal government had gained a clear path to purchasing lands specifically for a national park. National parks no longer needed to be carved out of public land in the West. Roosevelt’s executive order transformed the national park system, allowing expansion of parks in the East.¹²⁴

Great Smoky Mountains National Park is the largest park in the eastern United States and by far the most visited. Established as a national park in 1931, Great Smoky Mountain National Park quickly outpaced the jewels of the National Park Service, Yellowstone and Yosemite, by 1935 as the most visited national park.¹²⁵ While the numbers reflect the proximity to the majority of the U.S. population, the numbers are quite remarkable. By 1935, Great Smoky Mountains National Park had eclipsed the 500,000 visitors mark. Both Yosemite and Yellowstone didn’t reach that mark until 1940, decades after they were designated as national parks. This eastern park, established during the Great Depression was competing with parks that had decades worth of advertisement, emotional weight, and national memory behind them. Western nature was not the only environment worthy of preservation and enshrinement in the National Park Service. The

¹²² Franklin D. Roosevelt, Executive Order 6542, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1933).

¹²³ Gregg, *Managing the Mountains*, 115.

¹²⁴ Pierce, *The Great Smokies*, 148.

¹²⁵ B. Street, “Table 4,” *Public Use of the National Parks; Statistical Abstract: 1904-1940*, (Fort Collins, CO, 1941), 7.

almost immediate explosion of visitor use within Great Smoky Mountains National Park confirmed that the Eastern landscape contained land worthy of inclusion in the preservation mission of the National Park Service. Robert Sterling Yard argued in 1919 that “certainly the mountain topography and the rich deciduous forest of the eastern United States should be represented in the national parks by several fine examples.”¹²⁶ Yard went on to express hope that the United States would recognize areas for historical significance or extraordinary scientific significance, along with the standard of supreme scenery.¹²⁷

Much like the previous chapter, the language used to describe Great Smoky Mountains National Park is crucial to understanding the creation of environmental identity. Like in the previous chapter, nine codes were used to analyze the specific language used in magazine articles that focused on Great Smoky Mountains National Park between 1929 and 1940. As a quick summary, the codes are: American Perseverance, Attendance as Measure of Value of NPS, CCC Work in National Parks, Emotional Value on the Natural Environment, Natural Environment as American Identity, Purpose of National Parks, Reason for Visiting National Parks, Uniquely American Nature, and Use Conflict in National Parks.¹²⁸

Set against the backdrop of the United States’ looming entrance into the Second World War, President Franklin Roosevelt delivered a speech dedicating Great Smoky Mountains National Park on September 21, 1940. Rather than a purely political speech or one solely focused on the new park, President Roosevelt’s speech blended the two, and reinforced the tie between the environment and the American national identity. Towards the end of his speech, President

¹²⁶ Robert Sterling Yard, *The Book of the National Parks*, (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1919), 133.

¹²⁷ Yard, *The Book of the National Parks*, 133.

¹²⁸ For a more in-depth definition and explanation of these codes, please refer to Chapter 2: Methods.

Roosevelt emphatically hoped “that one hundred years from now the Great Smoky National Park will still belong in practice, as well as in theory, to the people of a free nation. I hope it will not belong to them in theory alone and that in practice the ownership of this park will not be in the hands of some strange kind of government puppet to an overseas overlord.”¹²⁹ This particular quote was categorized under three codes: “Emotional Value on Natural Environment,” “Purpose of National Parks,” and “Natural Environment as American Identity.” These are three out of the four most frequently assigned codes within this data set. No other quotation from the data set was coded with the same code grouping. This quote also comes from the edge of the time frame of this study in September of 1940. A little over a year away from a declaration of war and official military involvement in the Second World War, Roosevelt utilized the establishment of a national park to unite the nation against the looming threat of war.

Taking a step back, a *Time Magazine* article, written in February of 1930, laid the groundwork for how President Roosevelt would eventually describe the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. North Carolina governor Oliver Max Gardener emphasized the significance of preserving the park, stating, “the mountain forests in the park area were full grown when Columbus discovered America.”¹³⁰ Connecting the creation of Great Smoky Mountains National Park with Christopher Columbus is powerful. On par with other historic events that transformed into legends (like the Pilgrims, the Oregon Trail, and others) Columbus is a crucial component to the American sense of identity. The quote above was categorized with the codes “Natural Environment as American Identity” and “Uniquely American Nature.” The connection between Great Smoky Mountains National Park and broader ideals of national identity can be observed

¹²⁹ Franklin D. Roosevelt, “We Must Prepare,” *Vital Speeches of the Day* 6, no. 23 (Sept. 15, 1940): 713.

¹³⁰ “Great Smokies,” *Time Magazine* 15, no. 17, (February 17, 1930): 20.

from the above description given by Governor Gardner. Though ten years before President Roosevelt dedicated Great Smoky Mountains National Park, both quotes are representative language that connects national parks with American identity. It is important to note, however, the difference between the context of the two articles is crucial. While the February 1930 *Time Magazine* article was being written in the context of trying to formally establish the park, President Roosevelt was utilizing the established park as a rhetorical tool to promote national unity in the face of impending entry into the Second World War.

The change in language of the articles written between 1930 and 1940 is an important distinction. Much like the evolution of the national park idea from “worthless lands,” to “monumentalism,” to “complete conservation,” the language used to describe Great Smoky Mountains National Park to the American public transformed through the decade.¹³¹ As discussed in the preceding paragraph, the language used in the early 1930s was focused on promoting the establishment of the park. For example, in an August 1932 *Home Geographic Monthly* article, Isabelle F. Story writes, “The great mountains are not the only scenic feature of the park area. The forest and plants, the beautiful mountain streams, and the mossy dells like bits of fairyland, all are lovely. Nowhere else in the world, it is believed, is there such a variety of plant life.”¹³² Much like the *Time Magazine* article of February 1930, Story’s article uses vivid, emotional language to describe the Great Smoky Mountains. Though not overtly promoting the establishment of the park, Story conveyed the idea that out of the other areas considered for national park status in the Eastern United States, the Great Smoky Mountains had landscapes that

¹³¹ For a more in-depth discussion of these terms, refer to Alfred Runte’s work, *National Parks: The American Experience*, specifically, chapters 3, 4, and 5.

¹³² Isabell F. Story, “The Park of the Smoking Mountains,” *Home Geographic Monthly* 2, (August 1932): 44.

could only be found in the United States, with no worthy comparison in the world. The language used to describe Great Smoky Mountains National Park was used to introduce a national audience to a landscape worthy of protection instead of resource extraction. As a result, the language is weighty, emotional, and persuasive. In an October 17, 1930 article in *Science*, Great Smoky Mountains National Park was described as “a vast, unspoiled primitive region, with spectacular mountains...Particularly impressive are the luxuriant forests which clothe the peaks to their very summits.”¹³³ The Great Smoky Mountain region was not the “unspoiled primitive region” described in *Science*. However, that language conjured up an image of a quintessential national park landscape that would resonate with the general American public. Unsurprising then, is that the “Emotional Value on the Natural Environment” code was the second most frequently assigned code of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park data set.

Moving ahead in the time line, the language used to describe Great Smoky Mountains National Park language continues to transform. Chapter 3 demonstrated the variability of language that can be found within the single code, “Purpose of National Parks.” The language used in popular articles transformed over time. As was observed with the language used to describe the purpose of national parks, language that placed an emotional value on the natural environment also changed over time. Language in the early half of the decade described the park in an effort to increase awareness and support of the new park. By 1935, Great Smoky Mountains National Park was already the most visited park in the United States. No longer needing to justify the existence of the park, writers began to use emotional language to describe the park in an effort to solidify its contribution to the national park system. Great Smoky Mountains National Park was mired in controversy surrounding the land obtained for the park.

¹³³ “The Great Smoky Mountains National Park,” *Science* 72, no. 1868 (October 17, 1930): 392.

Thousands of land owners were bought out or taken to court through eminent domain lawsuits. The park needed good press, and not just to introduce the park or garner support for its creation. Great Smoky Mountains National Park needed a justification for its existence. F. R. Dickinson argues in a February 1935 *Natural History* article that “from March to November smaller plants, both annuals and perennials, provide a pageant of flowers which for variety and profusion rival those of the Rocky Mountains.”¹³⁴ The Rocky Mountains were already steeped in myth and legend from the idea of Manifest Destiny to the Wild West. By comparing the Great Smoky Mountains to the Rocky Mountains, F. R. Dickinson immediately connects his readers to the new park by placing an emotional value on the park. Mentioning the Rocky Mountains would have immediately conjured up images of tall mountains, thick evergreen forests, and the untamed landscape Dickinson’s readers would have observed in post cards and advertisements about the western parks. Dickinson continued to use emotional language to describe Great Smoky Mountains National Park. In a caption below a picture showing the Smoky Mountains in the winter from the top of Mount Le Conte, Dickinson describes the viewshed as “a sight never to be forgotten.”¹³⁵

Dickinson’s use of emotional language is not unique to his writing in *Natural History*. The National Park Service, in response to declining visitation to parks and money being spent at park concessions, ramped up advertising efforts. The National Park Service reverted to ideas from the “See America First” advertising campaign of the nineteen-teens. Declaring 1934 “A National Park Year,” the Park Service “launched an advertising campaign designed to make the

¹³⁴ F. R. Dickinson, “Down Among the Smokies,” *Natural History* 35, no. 2, (February 1935): 162.

¹³⁵ Dickinson, *Natural History*, 164.

parks into places for renewing national confidence.”¹³⁶ Franklin Roosevelt supported this advertising campaign and encouraged Americans to visit national parks as a patriotic gesture.¹³⁷ Though not entirely an altruistic endorsement of the Park Service, Roosevelt’s statements epitomized the return of nationalistic rhetoric in discussion of national parks. The emphasis on connecting an American citizen’s views of national parks and ideas of nationalism resulted in a fight over the foundational ideas of wilderness and preservation. While the debate was national in breadth and reach, individual parks like Great Smoky Mountains National Park were prominent sticking points that proponents from all sides of the argument latched on to.¹³⁸ As a result, the language used in articles about Great Smoky Mountains National Park transformed again.

As the 1930s came to a close, popular writings about Great Smoky Mountains National Park began to focus on the purpose of the park along with use conflict within in the park. In this study, “Use Conflict in National Parks” was the third-most assigned code. Assigned twelve different times, the quotations that met the definition of the code almost entirely appear in two articles written in 1939. However, no assumption should be made that debates about the multiple uses of Great Smoky Mountains National Park were limited to 1939. Arguments of use in Great Smoky Mountains National Park go back to the first rumblings of the park’s creation. Instead, the concentration of quotations should be observed through the larger lens of the growing wilderness movement in response to the rising numbers of trails and roads being built. The two

¹³⁶ Sutter, *Driven Wild*, 136.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 137.

¹³⁸ For further reading on tourism, automobiles, national parks, and the modern wilderness movement, please refer to Paul Sutter’s work, *Driven Wild: How the Fight Against Automobiles Launched the Modern Wilderness Movement* and David Louter’s *Windshield Wilderness: Cars, Roads, and Nature in Washington’s National Parks*.

articles represent both sides of the issue, and represent park-specific debates that took place within the broader national discussion.

Both articles were published in *Nature Magazine* in 1939, the first in February and the second in the June/July issue. Bernard Frank, the author of the February article, titled his article “Farewell to the Smokies.” Convinced that Great Smoky Mountains National Park was seriously threatened, Frank wrote, “During the past five years, a series of highly artificial developments have been undertaken that have already caused considerable damage, and in some cases irreparable injury to the primeval and wilderness character of the area. And if continued as planned, these developments threaten to nullify the very purposes for which the Park was created.”¹³⁹ Fearing for the future of the park, Frank condemned the growing number of projects that built roads and trails within the park. Frank reassures the readers that he supports making the park accessible to visitors, as long as that goal “conforms with basic primeval principles.”¹⁴⁰ Instead, the problem stems from an unbalanced approach to a recreational program that focused on “satisfying the demands of local tourist-boosting organizations.”¹⁴¹ In a direct response to Frank’s article, Carlos Campbell used the following heading to begin his article: “A Real Wilderness: Trails of Great Smokies protect, as well as reveal, primeval charm of rugged mountains and virgin forests.”¹⁴² Campbell argued that majority of visitors to Great Smoky Mountains National Park supported the trails and that the constructed trails would protect the park by keeping visitors on designated paths instead of creating irresponsible paths that lead to greater damage.¹⁴³ Visitor-created trails were not properly built and did not have adequate

¹³⁹ Bernard Frank, “Farewell to the Smokies,” *Nature Magazine* 32, (February 1939): 99.

¹⁴⁰ Frank, “Farewell to the Smokies,” 100.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 100.

¹⁴² Carlos C. Campbell, “A Real Wilderness,” *Nature Magazine* 32, (June/July 1939): 341.

¹⁴³ Campbell, “A Real Wilderness,” 344.

drainage, which led to erosion and more visitor created trails. Campbell concludes “the rugged mountains were beautiful and impressive then. They are doubly so now. And being more easily accessible, it is possible for great numbers of nature-hungry people to come and drink of the primitive beauty without damaging the source of their inspiration.”¹⁴⁴

Frank and Campbell argued over use and development in Great Smoky Mountains National Park. The debate between the authors over the Skyline road reflects the larger national argument of access, development, recreation, conservation, preservation, wilderness, and preservation. Groups like the Wilderness Society (established in 1935) were grappling with these terms their definitions. The definition of the wilderness idea decided upon by the founders of the Wilderness Society was the federal government should preserve large areas of nature that were roadless and undeveloped.¹⁴⁵ Aside from the ideological battles that influenced the creation and development of Great Smoky Mountains National Park, there is a physical link between the national discussion of wilderness and the park. The idea of the Wilderness Society was created on the side of a road, heading to a Civilian Conservation Corps camp outside of Knoxville, Tennessee around thirty miles away from Great Smoky Mountains National Park.¹⁴⁶

The language used to describe Great Smoky Mountains National Park between 1929 and 1940 developed and transformed as much as the park itself. The Great Smoky Mountains went from a landscape dotted with human habitation and industry to a proposed national park to a landscape that landed in the middle of the wilderness debate. Paralleling the transformation of the landscape, the language used to describe Great Smoky Mountains National Park changed. Language that placed an emotional value on the environment was consistent, but the purpose

¹⁴⁴ Campbell, “A Real Wilderness,” 353.

¹⁴⁵ Sutter, *Driven Wild*, 6.

¹⁴⁶ Sutter, *Driven Wild*, 4.

behind the emotional language evolved. As the graph (displaying code occurrence during the time frame of the study) below demonstrates, the code “Emotional Value on the Natural Environment” appears in every year that an article focused on Great Smoky Mountains National Park.¹⁴⁷ ¹⁴⁸ The progression of language discussed in this chapter can be seen in the graph. In 1939, for example, the code “Purpose of National Parks” was assigned the most frequently, followed closely by the code “Use Conflict in National Parks.” The “Emotional Value on the Natural Environment” code follows in third. This reflects the place Great Smoky Mountains National Park had in the broader discussion of wilderness that began to take shape at the end of the 1930s and the beginning of the 1940s. Leading up to the 1939, the language used to describe Great Smoky Mountains National Park focused on justifying the creation and existence of the park. By 1940, language that surrounded Great Smoky Mountains National Park had again changed, an adjustment influenced by the growing threat of the Second World War. In 1940, “Emotional Value on the Natural Environment,” “Natural Environment as American Identity,” and “Purpose of National Parks” were the three most assigned codes. Franklin Roosevelt’s speech in September of 1940 is the culmination of the transformation of the language used to describe Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

¹⁴⁷ While the date range of the study is 1929 to 1940, only 5 years were represented in the articles focused on Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

¹⁴⁸ The graph was created using Excel. Data generated by Atlas.ti software. For more detailed explanations about the data set and Atlas.ti, please refer to Chapter 2: Methods.

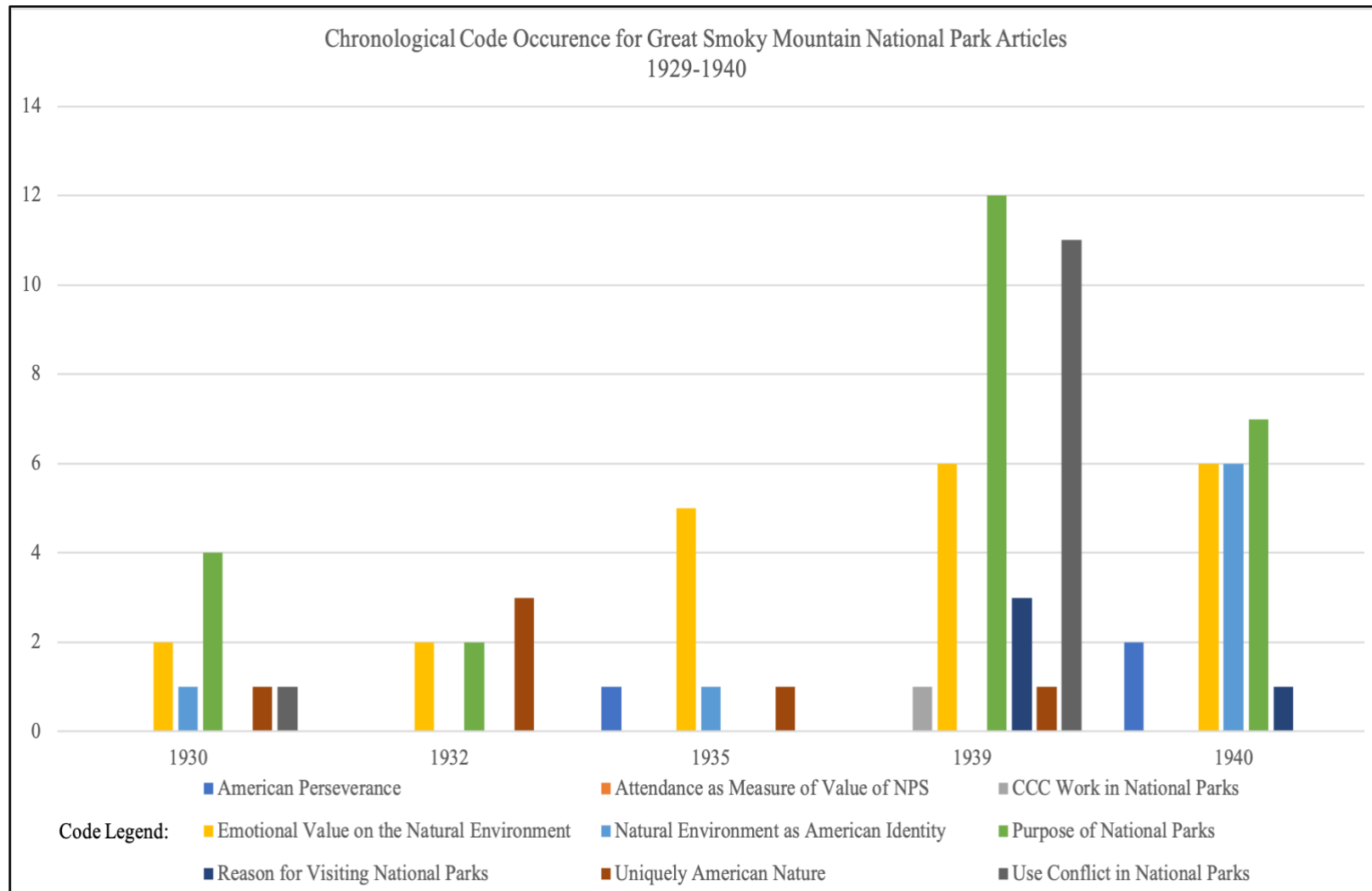


Figure 4.1

As Roosevelt delivered his speech to formally dedicate Great Smoky Mountains National Park, the United States was coming out of the Great Depression and on the brink of involvement in the Second World War. Roosevelt chose to weave together the topics of patriotism, national identity, and national parks into one speech, designed to encourage and motivate the country at a turning point. The connections Roosevelt made are not coincidental. Roosevelt connected the idea of the frontiersman, who carved out a living in the Great Smoky Mountains, with the rugged perseverance that Roosevelt argued formed a pillar of American identity. The frontiersman would not exist without the natural landscapes that they explored, and consequently the rugged perseverance Roosevelt hoped to inspire would not exist without the landscape either. The language that surrounded Great Smoky Mountains National Park supports the idea that individual parks contributed to the definition of American national identity.

Chapter V

Conclusion

Both Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 revealed that the evolution of the language used to describe national parks connected the parks to American national identity in the mind of the American public. These articles had a variety of purposes: travel pieces, opinion pieces, responses to other articles, and words from National Park Service officials. The articles would have reached a variety of readers, from wider read publications like *Time* and *The Saturday Evening Post* to more tailored publications like *Arts & Archeology*. However, similar themes run through the articles, regardless of date, author, purpose, or publication. The unifying theme in all fifty-four articles is the purpose of national parks. The results of the Atlas.ti analysis provide further insight into the relationship between the theme of purpose and the articles. Though a smaller sample size, the articles focused on Great Smoky Mountains National Park have similar language use and code relationships as the broader analysis of the articles Chapter 3. In both sets of articles the “Purpose of National Parks” code is the most frequently assigned code. Out of the eighty quotations coded about Great Smoky Mountains National Park, twenty-five of those quotations were coded under “Purpose of National Parks.” In the analysis of articles discussing U.S. national parks in general, 134 out of 397 quotations were assigned the same “Purpose of National Parks” code. That is 31% and 33% of the quotations, respectively. With one-third of the quotations fitting within the parameters of the definition of the “Purpose of National Parks” code, there is a final point to consider.

The first data set was focused on articles that discussed the national parks as a whole, not focusing on a singular park. The second data set shifted, with the focus entirely on one park, Great Smoky Mountains National Park. The connection between the two is the overlap in

language. Both data sets were coded with the same codebook and parameters on the codes. The code “Purpose of National Parks” was the most frequently used in both data sets. In both sets of articles, more specific arguments about use, creation, and preservation were wrapped in the language of purpose. For example, two articles written in 1939 and 1940 demonstrate this type of message packaging. The first quotation comes from *The Saturday Evening Post* in a 1940 article written by Richard L. Neuberger (later a U.S senator from Oregon in 1954). Neuberger focuses on the issue of conservation and the limits of conservation principles. The following quote was coded with both “Purpose of National Parks” and “Use Conflict in National Parks.” Neuberger argues that “conservation has always been a vital reason for the establishment of national parks. Yet a greater factor has been the desire to set aside unique natural wonders...Alarmed lumber and livestock communities maintain that parks are being promoted in their localities not so much because of rare or breathtaking landscapes, as to take rich accumulations of natural resources out of production. A lot of park promoters admit the charge and defend it vigorously.”¹⁴⁹

Neuberger’s article is a clear critique of the national park system. The quote takes the purpose of national parks, the setting aside of unique natural wonders, and uses that as a vehicle to drive home the argument that just because there is land to conserve, does not mean that land needs to be conserved. The purpose of national parks, according to Neuberger was being transformed into one that took productive land away from the American people. Similar to Neuberger, Carlos C. Campbell utilized the purpose of national parks to advance his argument in the discussion of use. In a 1940 article in *Nature*, Campbell discussed the building of trails and roads within Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Addressing the controversy between building too many roads

¹⁴⁹ Richard L. Neuberger, “How Much Conservation?” *The Saturday Evening Post* 212, no. 51 (June 13, 1940): 12.

and not enough, Campbell wrote “to build all of the roads would definitely ruin the area. To build no roads would deny entrance to a vast majority of the nation’s citizens – citizens who may not be able to take a wilderness hike but who...have the faculty for real appreciation of the true values of a primeval wilderness.”¹⁵⁰ Campbell, much like Neuberger, used the purpose of national parks (providing enjoyment to the people) to argue for the development of roads and trails that would allow the most citizens to experience Great Smoky Mountains National Park while protecting the primeval quality of the landscape. Both articles utilized the purpose of the national parks (or at least their view of the purpose) to support their argument and connect with their readers based on the idea of purpose. A similar pattern is consistently found throughout both data sets.

Authors used language that described the purpose of national parks in a manner that would resonate with audiences while advancing their arguments. Emotionally weighty language was used to discuss national parks in order to register a powerful, emotional response from readers. This is witnessed in the data set focused on Great Smoky Mountains National Park. As seen in Chapter 3, this tactic was effectively utilized. National identity and purpose became intertwined, in an effort to advertise national parks, debate use, and promote visitation. These articles demonstrate that the national parks are connected to national identity. Though the authors had other motivations, the way they described parks and framed their arguments firmly cemented the national parks to American national identity. The national parks serve as a landscape that the American population connects to. As Simon Schama states “National identity...would lose much of its ferocious enhancement without the mystique of a particular landscape tradition: its

¹⁵⁰ Campbell, “A Real Wilderness,” 342.

topography mapped, elaborated, and enriched as a homeland.”¹⁵¹ The national parks discussed and described in the data sets served as the landscape tradition that supports the American national identity. Through a qualitative analysis of popular magazine articles using Atlas.ti, that connection becomes clear. The parking lot of a national park serves as the physical representation of what these pages explain: national parks were intrinsically linked to American national identity through the effective use of language in popular magazine articles.

¹⁵¹ Schama, *Landscape*, 396.

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