

Restoring a Presence: American Indians and Yellowstone National Park.

By Peter Nabokov and Lawrence Loendorf. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2004. xvii + 381 pp. \$39.95.)

WHEN I FIRST BEGAN TO CONDUCT archaeological investigations in Yellowstone in 1989, I was confronted with the view that my work was not necessary since Indians were never a part of our first national park—being terrified of the geysers. This concept was not isolated, but was well grounded in the lore among visitors and members of the National Park Service. The publication of *Restoring a Presence* should finally put to rest this enduring myth. The archaeological record indicates that Native American groups have been part of what is now Yellowstone National Park for over ten thousand years, and while the archaeological record is often discussed, the main focus of Nabokov and Loendorf's research is the ethnographic record and ethno-history of Native American use of the region. They accomplish this important task through myriad sources from the files of the Yellowstone National Park office to the National Archives to interviews with contemporary members of regional tribes. While the concept of our national parks was a bold and noble one, it came at a high cost to members of the Native American community, characterized by anthropologists as "green imperialism." Nabokov and Loendorf provide us with a historical context for this complex aspect of the national park story.

The research for this book was initiated in 1994 as part of the National Park Service's Ethnography Program, to provide an overview of the role of Native Americans in the Yellowstone region. This research is an essential contribution to the growing body of literature on native peoples and their relationship to national parks and preserves. Nabokov and Loendorf are well suited to the task. Nabokov has extensive ethnographic and ethno-historical experience among North American tribes, while Loendorf has been conducting archaeological research in the region for four decades, most notably on northern Plains rock art sites.

Yellowstone National Park was created in 1872 during a period of conflict between northern Plains tribes and the U.S. Army—it would be four more years before the Battle of the Little Bighorn was fought. This was a tumultuous period for northern Plains tribes who were under extreme pressures from a diminishing fur trade, expansion of miners, settlers, cattle ranching, and railroads into their territories, treaties, and the creation of the reservation system, plus expanded conflict among the tribes for shrinking resources. Exclusion from Yellowstone National Park was another aspect. For example, the Crow were officially estranged from Yellowstone under the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868. And in 1886, when the U.S. Army took over administrative control of the park, along with preventing poachers from killing animals and keeping "Indian marauders" away. Even the U.S. Supreme Court weighed in providing state and federal authorities the power to keep Indians on reservations and out of public lands, such as Yellowstone National

Park. While it is unfortunate that it has taken this long for a formal recognition that native peoples have been an intimate part of the ecosystem, *Restoring a Presence* takes an important leap in explaining the historical circumstances of this process.

The authors dedicate five chapters to tribes with historic and contemporary ties to Yellowstone—Crow, Blackfeet, Flathead, Sheep Eaters, Bannock and Nez Perce, and Shoshone. Each chapter provides a discussion of the tribes' arrival in the region based upon archaeological, historic, and ethnographic evidence. The discussions also include information on seasonal use of Yellowstone for various social, spiritual and economic purposes. Despite being excluded from Yellowstone for over one hundred years, tribal members often have had profound, behind-the-scenes impacts on our heritage. For example, Nabokov and Loendorf relate how the North American bison was arguably saved from extinction through the efforts of Pend d'Oreille (Sam) Walking Coyote, half-Piegan Michael Pablo, and part-Indian Charles A. Allard. This tradition has continued with the formation of the Intertribal Bison Cooperative in response to the "buffalo crisis" in Yellowstone.

This is an important book for scholars and interested persons of the complicated and interwoven history of Native Americans, the Euro American settlement of the west, and the nascent years of the world's first national park and the conservation movement. A postscript to Nabokov and Loendorf's work is the expanding role of native groups in the management and interpretation of Yellowstone's cultural and natural resources.

KENNETH P. CANNON
National Park Service
Midwest Archeological Center
Lincoln, Nebraska