

American national identity and national parks history essay



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Natural identity can be simply defined as the individual's sense of belonging to a nation. It is the thread that binds the citizens of a particular nation together and gives them the pride of belonging to the country. According to Smith national identity serves three important functions; it provides an answer to the fear of personal oblivion through identification with a nation since the nation is far greater and stronger than the individual; is this your language? national identity offers the individual personal renewal and self-worth by being a member of a super family politically and thirdly it promotes the realization of fraternity feelings more so through the use of symbols and ceremony[1]. Remember: punctuation inside of note numbers! Make sure you really paraphrase or quote directly. This seems not like your language.

Every nation around the world has its main national identity. For some, it could be talking the same language as it happens in most European countries where nations are defined by their language such as France for the French speakers, Spain for the Spanish speakers, Portugal for the Portuguese speakers among others. [awk and unclear] In other countries national identity is defined by ethnic composition for example Slovakia for the Slovaks, Albania for the Albanians and Armenia for the Armenians. In other countries national identity is defined by religion such as in the Muslim countries and in Israel. [I think this is pretty simplistic - national identity is much more complicated than this] America however is unique because it is a mixture of all. The Americans cannot be judged by race because all races are represented, neither by language because virtually all major languages are represented, neither by culture because America is a boiling [melting?] pot of all major cultures nor by religion because all major world religions are

represented in America by a substantial number[2]. [awk] - is this a point you are making or one that someone else has made that you are using. Make that clear.

Americans often face the great task of establishing national identity for themselves. [think about that different types of national identity coexist - there are battles in all countries about what constitutes Britishness or Americanness or Frenchness. Maybe it's more complicated in the US, but I'm not sure, but I don't think American are unique in having to choose among different ideas of the nation which are presented in a variety of ways]

Because of the importance of nature to American self-identity, [you need to show this, not assert it] environmentalism questions have always tended to take on ideological and national significance. Preservation of natural spaces in America has involved both the creation of an alternative cultural space for the nation and creation of America as a nation[3]. [unclear] Americans found in national parks a unifying factor; a national identity that is to America what culture [culture is a vague term here] is to Europe. Therefore national parks are central to America's national identity. This paper is going to evaluate the relationship that exists between America's national identity and national parks. The paper concludes that national parks are the national identity of the United States of America. National parks express a certain aspect of the national identity of the US? To say they are equivalent may be stretching it . . .

The first national park in the world was established in 1872[4]. This is Yellowstone National Park. Yellowstone National Park became the first large scale wilderness conservation in the interest of the public and more so the <https://assignbuster.com/american-national-identity-and-national-parks-history-essay/>

generations to come. The rest of the world learnt the idea of national parks from America. Each country launched its own version of parks but the American model was the one that was largely used. To Americans, “wilderness” is not only idea but rather it is the objective of many who are seeking outdoor recreational activities. [clarify] According to Roderick Nash, wilderness is a state of mind; the feeling of being far from civilization, from the environment that humans have polluted.[5]

Natural landscapes which form the national parks are fundamental subjects in the understanding of national identity. This is so because nature as opposed to culture has increasingly become a source of national identity. National identity therefore can be seen as a heritage of nature. You need to make these connections clearer - maybe talk about the issue of the frontier thesis?

According to Howard and Graham[6], the role of the natural landscapes in shaping national identity is increased by the fundamental link between ideas of the national, the native and the natural in which the prefix ‘nat’ refers to a notion of birthing. Howard and Graham argue that the nation is therefore logically made up of the natives who have been born as a community of nature that gives the nation its common identity. Cite - and make sure this is your language.

A large number of national songs sing in praise of the nation’s natural landscape, for example ‘America the Beautiful’ which celebrates America’s purple mountain which stands majestically above the plains and stretching

from sea to sea[7]. There are also a great number of museums and theatres that are decorated using landscape images of natural scenes. Such as?

You need to set up a more systematic organization at the outset here : introduction with your thesis; historiography - how have historians written about national parks; and then perhaps background. Right now I feel like you are jumping around a bit too much.

When the European settlers arrived from Europe they settled in the eastern shores of what would become the United States. However with time the population grew rapidly and with it came the need to push further west. This led the settlers into what was referred to as the ' Wild West.' The settlers portray the Wild West as an area that had not been occupied, though we know that the Native Indians occupied the area. By so doing the settlers saw themselves as a new nation in which different people from diverse nationalities were reborn as one nation in the wild nature of the new continent. Citations!

The importance of the Wild West in the history of the U. S cannot be overemphasized. Many Americans identified themselves as Americans from having been born in the continent's Wild nature. Can you show this with primary sources? Due to the importance of the wild nature in rebirth of the U. S [?] it became essential to conserve part of the wilderness undisturbed in order to act like a reminder of the country's rebirth. [could be clearer] This need acted as the ideological basis for forming national parks in the 1880s. The national parks were started in large areas with wild nature. The aim was to preserve these areas for future generations. Citations!

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The national parks exist to protect salient natural areas from threat of human destruction through political social and economic development. This preserves the wilderness as it was when the European settlers took possession of the land. Indeed it is this wilderness that defined America's national identity from the time the nation was established[8]. [you need to SHOW this through analysis - -not assert it] Construction of the American national identity is rooted deeply in nature that the two are inseparable. Awk This is in contrast to European nations, whose national identity is derived from sharing a common language, ethnic or racial heritage, religion or cultural history. America is a nation of diverse languages, diverse ethnic groups, of all races race, with virtually every religion represented and of a people with diverse cultural background[9]. Repetitive Race, language, ethnic group, religion and culture could not therefore be the American national identity. Americans found a rallying call in nature, in exploring the wilderness in the west and when much of it was getting depleted, the government started the idea of national parks aimed at protecting large swathes of the untamed wilderness for future generations. This gets repetitive - you've made all these points in different places already.

The national park concept has been said to be the most successful idea yet conceived in the protection of the environment. who said this? It is an American idea that spread around the globe[10]. The national parks were started to preserve natural and cultural heritage. Americans were particularly concerned about preservation of the natural environment for the sake of those who would want to vacation outdoors. Nature and sceneries were to be protected for the enjoyment of all human beings. In these

wildernesses, people would find a serene atmosphere to relax away from the pollution that civilization engineered. Connect these themes to national identity - a way for Americans to experience their land? Seeing the "true" America rather than the cities?

The Wild West had been largely cleared by settlers and conservationists realized that unless action was taken, the whole land would be taken over by civilization denying future generations a chance of learning the history of their founding further or the culture. [unclear] Therefore preservationist and conservationist started creating awareness of the need to set aside large portions of the remaining wilderness. This process did not gain momentum until the latter half of the 19th century. From thence the first national park was established in 1872 with others following albeit at a slow pace[11].

[repetitive]

Not all the areas that were designated as national parks were without human habitation; some areas were already inhabited by either the Native Indians or by white settlers also called frontier farmers. When the boundaries of the national parks were drawn, some of these groups met themselves [?] inside the area that had been demarcated as a national park. The federal government had then to move them out. With some resisting to be taken out of what was their rightful possession, the Federal government was forced to apply force in removing them. [awk] This resulted in long standing grudges between the communities that were forcibly removed from the designated parks and the government[12].

In Yellowstone national park, for example, the Indians were forcibly relocated. This caused long standing grudge between the federal government and the Indians and between the Indians and the white population whom they viewed as the government. The Indians responded by firing at tourists who visited the park. Tourists visiting the park had to do so under protection from security agencies[13]. The shepherders and lumbermen had to look for new ways to feed their families. The activities that were legal, the source of livelihood that they had lived on and not only them but the generations of descendants back there was declared illegal and refused. This was of course. ?? You've got good secondary sources - I'm waiting to see what you do with the primary sources.

To these Indians and frontier whites whose farms were taken away as part of parks, they would not understand how the same thing that they were living on in the days gone by could now be declared illegal. Awk The lives of the Indians were shattered. This is because their way of life had been interrupted and declared illegal henceforth. Hunting and fishing, that had always been part of their lives was termed as poaching while foraging would now be termed as trespass both of them now acts punishable by law. Cite.

Examples? The deep-seated anger this action brought to the Indians is manifest today. Some Native Indians that like the Blackfeet, representing about on, have running cases against Glacier national park. They are demanding recognition according to 1895 legislation[14]. Awk; and you cite a source from 1901, so I'm not sure how this reflects feelings of today.

Obsession with pristine and uninhabited wilderness provided many misconstrued ideas and facts that led to brutal confrontations between those
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for conservation and preservation and those trying to provide a decent meal for them and their children. unclearThe National Park Service Act of 1916 established the dogma for park management, the chief policy for philosophy, policies and decision-making[15]. And? What do you want to say in this paragraph?

The use of national parks as a symbol of national identity is based on two-fold role in reinforcing national identity: the national park system helps to passively express that national identity and to passively transmit it. I'm not sure what this means. The national parks are an integral part of American life. Their use is extensive; they are used in post cards, in picture movies, depict and symbolize what America is[16]. Yes The initial impetus for starting the national parks system was the desire to have a unique national identity. Was that stated explicitly? Sources? Preservation of the best scenic sites in the U. S was seen as what would create a differentiation between the United States and the European Countries. Parks would be a way for the young United States to compete with European countries which already had established national identities based of their cultures that they had build over thousands of years. The adventurer's nature of the American people and their love for the wild would also blend well with national parks as a national symbol. Parks express the American identity. In addition to expressing the goals shared by society, parks play a major role in transmitting those values to the society at large and members of the national community[17]. I think all these points are interesting - but you are essentially repeating the same things, and you haven't illustrated your points with supporting evidence from primary sources.

National parks are created through a political process and may even reflect the political thought of the day. Having realized the political dimension involved in the establishment of national parks; conservationists have devised ways of engaging politicians in nature conservation. When? The relationship between politics and national parks is further demonstrated in the construction of nation-states, more so the evolution of national identity. Totally unclear Identity development involves the mobilization of images, myths and so on[18]. [is this your language?] The concept of wilderness was central in the evolution of American identity, with Yellowstone National Park representing American cultural iconography while at the same time creating confidence among the members of the public in the industrializing nation[19]. [watch language] A common political concept of national parks has developed in the area of national identity. Unclear This is not a surprise because earlier concepts of national parks have been permeated with nationalist aspirations. The American landscape, in fact, emerged as a strong source of national identity construction[20]. This paragraph is unclear to me, and it also repeats points you've made earlier.

The appropriation of national parks as an American national symbol, like all other nationalism, was exclusionary. Native Americans were not included in a nationalism that had been established on the very land they occupied. In that sense, Yellowstone National Park was symbolic of a nation that was divided between the settlers and the natives. Interesting point Beinart and Coates argue that Americans attempted to create national identity out of natural grandeur because the United States found it difficult to compete with Europe in high cultural stakes. You've said this. Citation?

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To get a deeper insight into the relationship between America national identity and national parks, it is important to pay closer attention to a number of parks. This is not a paragraph.

Yellowstone national park is the first national park in the world. By next year, the park will be celebrating its 140 years. The park measures 2.2 million acres[21]. The area was sparsely populated at the time of starting the park but the government had an oversight that of how things will be in future. unclear Inside the designated area there was human settlements mostly made up of Native Indians and a few Frontier farmers. You've said this already The government acquired all private land within the demarcated area and evacuated the people. The Native Indians having lived in this area did not welcome the relocation. However the government ensured they do. [?] This left the Indians bitter. To revenge the Indians continued hunting in the protected area as if unaware the new change of status. They also attacked the tourist who came to visit. This prompted the government to send the Cavalry troops there in 1886 to stop poaching and to protect the tourist[22]. The Cavalry soldiers went to Yellowstone and built Fort Yellowstone where they stayed until 1916 when the National Park Service (NPS) was established through the Organic Act of 1916. You've said much of this already. Please combine the same points in one area of the paper.

Yellowstone was used by the 19th century American Indian belonging to the Crow, Blackfoot, Shoshone and Bannock tribes[23]. unclear Some continued to live in the park even after it was designated. However in 1877 there were troubles which occasioned three hundred deaths. The Indians were forcibly removed to the Wind River Reservation. The Cavalry soldiers were brought in <https://assignbuster.com/american-national-identity-and-national-parks-history-essay/>

and they protected the park between 1886 and 1918. Basically repetitive
The removal of Indians follows a pattern of their removal from their
farmlands to give way for settler farmers only that this time they were
removed to provide vacation sites for tourist's majority of them who were
whites. Were the parks explicitly established for tourism? You need to bring
in primary sources to discuss this. The African Americans and the Latinos did
not go to the national parks often because they did not find them
welcoming[24]. When? sources?

Yellowstone is home to over 1100 structures associated with Euro-American
occupation and management of the park. The legacy of early civilian and
army administration and the history of concessions in national parks are
preserved. ? Some of the historic landmarks are; Fishing Bridge Trailside
Museum, Madison Junction Trailside Museum, Obsidian Cliff, Northeast
Entrance Station, Norris Geyser Basin Trailside Museum and Old Faithful Inn.
Why do you need to list these? The park has four National Historic Districts:
Lake Fish Hatchery, Mammoth Hot Springs, Old Faithful and Roosevelt Lodge.
The park is also home to five National Historic Sites: Lake Hotel, Lamar
Buffalo Ranch, Obsidian Cliff Kiosk, Queen's Laundry Bath House and the U. S
Post Office at Mammoth Hot Springs. The park is also home to 200, 000
natural and cultural objects including artwork, ethnographic and
archeological artifacts[25]. I'm not sure why you need this paragraph.

A substantial history of the United States is kept in the national parks. These
are central to the national identity of the nation. How? What is the history
that is preserved there? As seen above the history of Yellowstone national
park is closely intertwined with the history of the United States to the extent
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that the nation can be seen through the park. But you haven't illustrated this with primary sources. It's a good point, but you need to demonstrate it, not assert it.

Glacier National Park with its many peaks, clear waters, and glacial curved mountains reflects America's identity. As previously mentioned, America's national identity is defined by her landscape the most spectacular being protected in national parks. Awk Throughout history, people visited Glacier National Park for the adventure it provides. Evidence of human habitation in this area goes back to 10, 000 years ago. By the time of Europeans' arrival, the area was inhabited by Native Indians of the Blackfeet, Salish and Kootenai tribes. They travelled to the mountains to hunt various kinds of game that were available in this place. Citations? Significance?

The Europeans were attracted to the area primarily for economic gain. Some came as explorers, others as miners and eventually the settlers arrived. The Great Northern Railway reached Montana in 1891 and from thence great number of people flocked to the area attracted by prospects of mining and other economic activities[26]. Around the turn of the century, people began to look at Montana region as an area that was suitable for something more than farming or mining. They recognized that the area was exceptionally beautiful in reference to the landscape. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, influential leader led by George Grill began pushing for the establishment of a national park. Their desire was granted in 1910 when President Taft signed into law the bill establishing Glacier as the 10th national park[27]. But why is this significant in terms of your argument?

The park has many historic buildings that are listed by the National Register of Historic Places. The park is home to 375 historic properties including six that are designated as National Historic Landmarks. The parks museum houses around 6, 000 items related to its natural and cultural history[28]. These historic properties tell the history of the United States. What history do they communicate? Glacier as a national park is therefore related to the national identity of the United States because it is home to some of the most iconic landscape in North America. You can't just state this. . . .

Yosemite is one of the United States most well-known National Parks. It largely covers the eastern parts of Tuolumne, Madera and Mariposa counties of California and covers an area of 761, 268 acres[29]. The national park is governed by National Park Service and is recognized worldwide for its clear streams, groves, granite cliffs, waterfalls and its biological diversity. The park has a range of 648 to 3, 997 meters above sea level and is divided into five major vegetation zones: chaparral/oak woodland, lower montane, upper montane, subalpine and alpine. There are more than 160 rare plants in the park. Most of the landforms in Yosemite are cut from the granitic rock of the Sierra Nevada Batholiths. About 5% of the park's landforms are metamorphosed volcanic and sedimentary rock. The valleys, canyons, domes and other features seen in the park were formed as a result of erosion acting upon different types of uplift-created joints. Citations? Significance?

Yosemite's most outstanding features include the tunnel view, which is the most visited area and also the most photographed; a prominent granite cliff that looms over the valley, the El Captain, which is has diverse range of

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climbing routes and full-yearly accessibility thus making it the most popular rock climbing destination in the world. The high parts of Yosemite contain spectacular areas such as: Dana meadows, Tuolumne meadows, the Clark range, the Cathedral Range and the Kuna crest. In addition, the park has three groves of ancient Giant Sequoia trees, the Mariposa Grove, the Tuolumne Grove and the Merced Grove. These tree species grow larger in volume than any other and is one of the tallest and longest lived. Citations? I just found some of this information on a website, and you are not citing . . .

Yosemite falls under a Mediterranean climate with mean daily temperatures ranging from 25 to 53 degrees Fahrenheit. Most precipitation occurs during the mild winter, and the remaining seasons stay almost dry. Snow accumulates all winter and into March and April. It however does not persist on the ground until November in the high country. At areas above 8, 000 feet, the hot and dry temperatures are moderated by frequent thunderstorms, during summer, along with snow in July. This combination of low relative humidity, dry vegetation and thunderstorms results in frequent lightning-caused fires[30].

The park contains about 3200 lakes, two reservoirs and 1, 700 miles of streams. Landforms in the park have been created as a result of hydrologic processes, including glaciations, flooding and fluvial geomorphic response. Yosemite is popular for its high concentration of waterfalls in a small area. These include: Yosemite falls and Ribbon falls both found in the Yosemite Valley, Bridal veil fall that is seen from the Tunnel View viewpoint and Wapama Falls in Hetch Hetchy Valley[31].

Paiute and Sierra Miwok are the people who lived in Yosemite area long before the whites explored into the region. The Ahwahneechee, who were Native Americans, lived in Yosemite Valley when the first foreign people entered. White travel increased in the area in the mid-19th century due to the California Gold Rush[32]. Jim Savage of the States Army led the Mariposa Battalion in 1851 to the west end of Yosemite Valley in while pursuing around 200 Ahwahneechees led by Chief Tenaya as part of Mariposa wars. Chief Tenaya founded the Pai-Ute colony of Ah-wa-nee. The Miwoks, most white settlers, saw the Ahwahneechee as violent owing to frequent territorial disputes. Tenaya and all the Ahwahneechee were later captured and their village burned; they were moved to a reservation in California near Fresno[33].

When some were later allowed to return to Yosemite Valley, they attacked a group of gold miners, which got them into trouble. They fled to the east and sought refuge with the Mono tribe at Mono Lake but were tracked down and most killed by Mono Paiutes after they stole some of their hosts' horses in 1853. Chief Tenaya was killed in the attack and survivors were taken back to Mono Lake and they were absorbed into Mono Lake Paiute tribe. 'An Indian Village of Ahwanhee' was reconstructed and is located behind the Yosemite Museum next to Yosemite Valley[34].

In 1855, James Mason Hutchings, an entrepreneur and artist Thomas Ayers toured the Yosemite Valley area. They created articles and magazine issues about Yosemite Valley thus responsible for most of the earliest publicity about Yosemite[35]. Wawona was an Indian encampment, now in the southwestern part of the park. Mariposa Grove of Giant Sequoia was <https://assignbuster.com/american-national-identity-and-national-parks-history-essay/>

discovered Galen Clark, a settler. Simple lodgings and roads were built in the area. The number of trails and hotels increased as tourism increased.

Prominent citizens including Galen Clark and Senator John Conness, concerned by the effects of commercial interests, advocated for protection of the area. A park bill was passed by both houses of the U. S congress and was signed by President Abraham Lincoln on June 30, 1864, creating the Yosemite Grant. The park was to be set aside specifically for public use and thereby creating the first national park.

It is believed that man lived in the Rocky Mountains about 10, 000 years ago. The Ute's lived in the mountains of West Colorado. As the Arapaho, who were plains Indians who came to the Estes Park frequently in summer to hunt, migrated westwards the Americans moved out from Appalachian[36]. With the arrival of Americans, Indians avoided Estes Park and Grand Lake area. Rufus Sage is the first American to have visited the region. He spent three years exploring the Rockies. Joel Estes, a Kentuckian, was the first settler. He brought his family in 1859 and eventually settled as a farmer near Fort Lupton. A few homes were set up in the upper Colorado Valley in 1879 and by 1880 people moved in to Lulu city where some gold discoveries had been made. A few homes were set up in the upper Colorado Valley in 1879 and by 1880 people moved in to Lulu city where some gold discoveries had been made[37]. In 1883 the town was deserted. As a result of publicity and political pressure, a bill was passed in 1915 and signed by President Wilson to establish the Rocky Mountains National Park the Park's dedication was conducted in September 4, 19