



Robert Sterling Yard

The Book of the National Park

## The Book of the National Parks

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Robert Sterling Yard (February 1, 1861 – May 17, 1945) was an American writer, journalist, and wilderness activist. Born in Haverstraw, New York, Yard graduated from Princeton University and spent the first twenty years of his career in the editing and publishing business. In 1915, he was recruited by his friend Stephen Mather to help publicize the need for an independent national park agency. Their numerous publications were part of a movement that resulted in legislative support for a National Park Service (NPS) in 1916. Yard worked to promote the national parks as well as educate Americans about their use. Creating high standards based on aesthetic ideals for park selection, he also opposed commercialism and industrialization of what he called "America's masterpieces". In 1935, he became one of the eight founding members of The Wilderness Society and acted as its first president from 1937 until his death eight years later. Yard is now considered an important figure in the modern wilderness movement.

In the preface to this book, published in 1919, he writes, "In offering the American public a carefully studied outline of its national park system, I have two principal objects. The one is to describe and differentiate the national parks in a manner which will enable the reader to appreciate their importance, scope, meaning, beauty, manifold uses and enormous value to individual and nation. The other is to use these parks, in which Nature is writing in large plain lines the story of America's making, as examples illustrating the several kinds of scenery, and what each kind means in terms of world building; in other words, to translate the practical findings of science into unscientific phrase for the reader's increased profit and pleasure, not only in his national parks but in all other scenic places great and small." (summary from wikipedia)

**Read by J.M. Smallheer    Running Time: 10:15:15**

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