DAVID HARMON, FRANCIS MCMANAMON, AND DWIGHT PITCAITHLEY (EDITORS)

The centennial year is over, although the celebratory venues have not entirely gone away. The Department of Interior Museum opened an exhibit on 7 June 2006 about the National Park Service’s role in protecting cultural and natural resources as provided for in the Antiquities Act. The summer 2006 issue of Common Ground has a long cover article entitled “Monumental Endeavor: The Life and Times of the Antiquities Act.” The symposium, put together by Frank McManamon and Hilary Soderland for the Puerto Rico SAA conference, ended with an after-papers lively discussion amongst the presenters and the audience about the importance of vigilance, making sure that the heritage of the Antiquities Act was not lost through lack of attention to what is presently going on in Congress. Finally, if “Antiquities Act 1906–2006” is put into a Web search engine, links to the National Park Service (NPS) website as well as one by Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) will appear.

Even if readers think they know all about the Antiquities Act—it is, after all, not complicated, containing only four sections and a total of 269 words—reading this book will give them insights and set them straight on a number of things. It provides detail, background, and gossip far beyond the preservation of “antiquities” (the editors point out at the beginning that the title is misleading).

In addition to an introduction and a final assessment by the editors and an interesting appendix on “Essential Facts and Figures on the National Monuments,” there are four parts: The Origins and Architects of the Act (4 chap.); Presidential Audacity and Its Discontents: The Act’s Legacy of Controversy (4 chap.); More than Monuments: The Act’s Impact on Archaeology, Historic Preservation, and Nature Conservation (4 chap.); and New Horizons for the Act (3 chap.).

Part 1 has an abridged version of Ronald Lee’s administrative history of the act published in 1970; an “abbreviated” version of Ray Thompson’s (2000) longer article (“Edgar Lee Hewett and the Political Process,” Journal of the American Southwest 42[2]:260–318), here titled “Edgar Lee Hewett and the Politics of Archaeology” (did you know that Congress passed the draft of the act, which Hewett had written, without changing a word?); Rebecca Conard’s (a public historian at Middle Tennessee State University) review of the life and status in Congress of Senator John F. Lacey the sponsor of the bill; and Chad Miller’s (professor of history at Trinity University in San Antonio) assessment of the power given to the president by Congress to create national monuments. Miller considered this part of the act to be a “landmark decision” by which Theodore Roosevelt set precedent (which has not been challenged successfully in 100 years) by creating “sacred spaces” such as the first declared monument, Devil’s Tower in Wyoming. By the time he left office, Roosevelt had created 18 monuments that all together contained more than 1.2 million acres. (Is this really what Congress meant to do? Read Section 2 of the act.)

All the authors of part 2 discuss the controversy over the years created by the presidential authority to declare monuments and how various presidents handled the problem, or side stepped it, or listened to what Congress, states, and the public were saying. No archeologists in this section—an historian, two lawyers, and Cecil Andrus, a politician (also Secretary of the Department of Interior in the Carter Administration), and his coauthor, a political scientist. This section gives new insight into the history of the politics of preservation legislation and
executive power, and the intricacies of both Department of Interior and NPS working with Congress and the executive branch of government. Fascinating stuff.

Part 3 is equally as interesting. Frank McManamon provides the long view of the impact of the act on federal archeology and the NPS in particular; Jerry Rogers discusses the act as setting new policy relative to the government’s responsibilities to preserve significant historic properties, rather than “getting rid of public land” as had been the policy prior to 1900. (It was the Government Land Office’s job to find buyers or homesteaders for all “public” land.) Rogers also discusses the relationship among the many land-managing agencies that must now deal with historic properties. Joe Watkins presents the Native American perspective, indicating, among other things, that the act reinforced the contemporary attitudes toward Native Americans by not giving them any say in what should be preserved, much less why. Finally, David Harman (a conservationist and executive director of the George Write Society) discusses how the act influenced attitudes toward the conservation of natural resources.

Part 4 covers matters that are more contemporary. Until President Carter’s administration, all national monuments were under the administrative management of NPS. Two of Carter’s declared 15 monuments were under the jurisdiction of the USFWS and two under the U.S. Forest Service (USFS). President Clinton declared 20 areas as national monuments and gave authority to BLM for 12 of them; one each to USFWS and USFS, but then went even further and designated joint authority in three cases—two to BLM and NPS, and one, the President Lincoln and Soldier’s Home National Monument, to the Armed Forces Retirement Home and NPS.

The chapter by Elena Daly and Geoffrey B. Middaugh, both BLM administrators, discusses BLM’s struggles to take on this new responsibility for protection/preservation, given its mission of multiuse as outlined in its organic act, the Federal Land Policy and Management Act. Darla Sidles (BLM) and Dennis Curtis (NPS) describe the successes, failures, and frustrations of working out a plan for administration of the Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument (containing more than one million acres). They admit that the differing “cultures” of the two agencies produced some major hurdles to overcome. Anyone with experience in or of these agencies can read between the lines and imagine the headaches these two superintendents went home with after the myriad of meetings. They say their first naive idea was to create “one filing system, one budget, one computer system,” etc., for use by both agencies, but that did not work (p. 242). The bureaucracy could not handle it. “The transition has been a little rocky …” (p. 247).

The final chapter in this part is devoted to “The Application of the Antiquities Act to the Oceans.” One presumes that in 1906 this possibility had not been thought of, and it was not until Kennedy’s administration that the first coral reef (Buck Island in the Virgin Islands) was named a national monument. The authors (Brad Barr of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and Katrina Van Dine, a marine scientist, currently “research counsel at the Roger Williams University School of Law Marine Affairs Institute” [p. 316]) review the problems of protecting underwater ecosystems, which include cultural resources such as shipwrecks that can be “irretrievably altered and resources depleted in a surprisingly short period of time” (p. 256). They discuss the example of the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Coral Reef Ecosystem Reserve, created by President Clinton through two executive orders, one in 2000 and one in 2001. This presumably was to buy time for NOAA and others to build constituencies, needed for declaration by Congress of a National Marine Sanctuary. The reserve covers 100,000 square miles, “believed to contain 70% of the nation’s coral reefs, along with Native Hawaiian cultural resources” (p. 257). The difference in protection, management, and administration between a reserve, a sanctuary, and a national monument is not clear, but an executive order can be “vacated” by another president. The authors do not think, however, that monument status would work because authority might be given jointly to NOAA and NPS, and “agency cultures have not yet evolved sufficiently to make such a collaboration work effectively” (p. 261).

Before reading this chapter, however, this reviewer had seen in the newspaper that, on 15 June 2006, President Bush had used his
authority to declare national monuments by creating the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Marine National Monument. It is, indeed, to be administered jointly (but not with involvement of NPS) by NOAA (Commerce Department) and USFWS (Department of Interior). There is a website on this latest, and largest, national monument.

All in all, it is fascinating reading from which much can be learned. For example, despite all the controversy about establishment of monuments by presidential decree, there has never been any serious effort to amend the Antiquities Act, not even when the word antiquities was declared by the Ninth Circuit Court to be “fatally vague,” which essentially negated the protection to archaeological sites. Archaeologists went to work on this problem, and the 1979 Archaeological Resource Protection Act resulted, but someone must have advised them to stay clear of touching the Antiquity Act itself. Good advice. The other good thing to say about this book it that it is one of the few in this reviewer’s experience where there is very little redundancy, yet the theme is intact. The fact that the authors’ expertise spans history, public history, law, political science, politics, conservation, and archaeology makes it that much more interesting. Knowledge of the political system that is needed to get laws passed has certainly not changed significantly over the last 100 years, and as a consequence, if for no other reason, this book should be required reading for any history of archaeology, historic preservation, nature conservation, or CRM courses.

HESTER A. DAVIS
ARKANSAS ARCHEOLOGICAL SURVEY
2475 N. HATCH AVENUE
FAYETTEVILLE, AR 72704