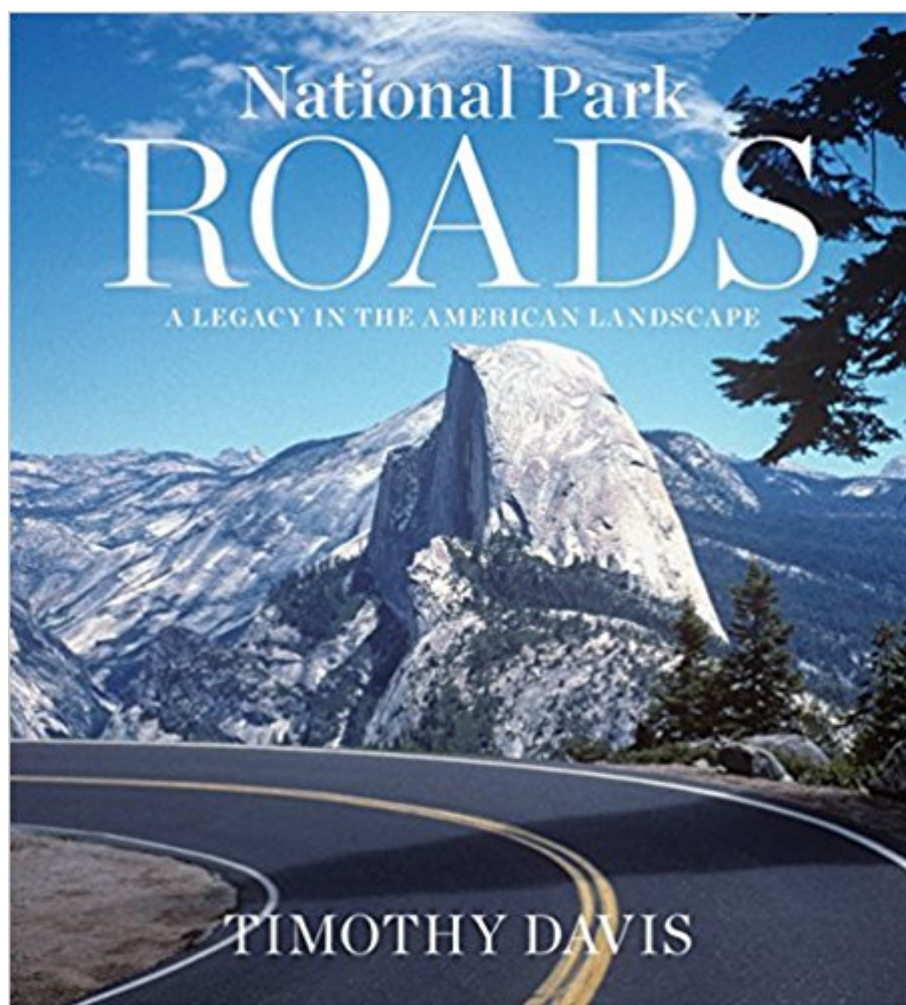


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National Park Roads: A Legacy In The American Landscape



Synopsis

From Acadia and Great Smoky Mountains to Zion and Mount Rainier, millions of visitors tour America's national parks. While park roads determine what most visitors see and how they see it, however, few pause to consider when, why, or how the roads they travel on were built. In this extensively researched and richly illustrated book, national parks historian Timothy Davis highlights the unique qualities of park roads, details the factors influencing their design and development, and examines their role in shaping the national park experience—from the Blue Ridge Parkway and Skyline Drive to Glacier National Park's Going-to-the-Sun Road, Yellowstone's Grand Loop, Yosemite's Tioga Road, and scores of other scenic drives. Decisions about park road development epitomize the central challenge of park management: balancing preservation and access in America's most treasured landscapes. Park roads have been celebrated as technical and aesthetic masterpieces, hailed as democratizing influences, and vilified for invading pristine wilderness with the sights, sounds, and smells of civilization. Davis's recounting of efforts to balance the interests of motorists, wilderness advocates, highway engineers, and other stakeholders offers a fresh perspective on national park history while providing insights into evolving ideas about the role of nature, recreation, and technology in American society. Tales of strong personalities, imposing challenges, resounding controversies, and remarkable achievements enliven this rich and compelling narrative. Key players include many of the most important figures of conservation history—John Muir, Frederick Law Olmsted, wilderness advocates Aldo Leopold, Bob Marshall, and Ansel Adams, and NPS directors Stephen Mather and Horace Albright among them. An engrossing history, *National Park Roads* will be of interest to national park enthusiasts, academics, design professionals, resource managers, and readers concerned with the past, present, and future of this quintessentially American legacy. As the National Park Service celebrates its centennial, this book offers a fascinating and illuminating account of the agency's impact on American lives and landscapes.

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The history of gaining access to our National Parks

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