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Glaciers as a Sacred Symbol: An Interaction Ritual Analysis of the Harriman Alaska Expedition of 1899

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ABSTRACT

The preservationist John Muir and the railroad magnate Edward H. Harriman developed an unlikely friendship that can be traced to Harriman's Alaska Expedition in 1899. Primary and secondary sources were interpreted through Collins' (2004) interaction ritual (IR) theory to reconstruct the details and evolution of their relationship. Landscapes, particularly glaciers, emerged as the key ritual outcome of their time together in Alaska. Forged as a result of Muir's announcement of the naming of the first Harriman Glacier onboard the expedition's vessel, glaciers also reflected the zeitgeist of late-nineteenth century American nationalism. Viewing the Muir-Harriman relationship through the IR theory lens provides three unique contributions to the literature: the sacralisation of a topographical element, the value of place-naming to an IR chain, and the connection of two men's IR chain to public policy that impacted the United States' national park system.

KEYWORDS

Muir; Harriman; Alaska; interaction ritual; emotional energy; landscapes; glaciers; topography

Introduction

The preservationist John Muir (1838–1914) and the railroad magnate Edward H. Harriman (1848–1909) developed late in their lives an unlikely friendship, the root of which can be traced to Harriman's Alaska Expedition in 1899. The two men possessed a number of personal differences, yet their experience during the expedition forged a connection that smoothed out their apparent status differences and ultimately affected policy and practices that impacted the United States' national park system. Collins' (2004) interaction ritual (IR) theory is particularly useful for interpreting the evolution of the two men's friendship and its broader impacts and was used as this study's theoretical framework. IR theory is an attempt to account for human interaction through a model of how people engage with one another on an interpersonal level that situates ritual, symbol, and emotion at the centre of analysis. Correspondingly, viewing the Muir-Harriman relationship through this theoretical lens provides three unique contributions to the literature: the sacralisation of a topographical element, the value of place-naming to an IR chain, and the connection of two men's IR chain to public policy. As a consequence of its use in this

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analysis, IR theory serves as a useful framework for exploring such questions as the power of microinteraction to effect larger structural changes in society.

The paper begins with a discussion of the methods used in this analysis, followed by a brief explanation of IR theory. Next, we reconstruct the events both during and after the Harriman Alaska Expedition that were significant in the evolution of the relationship between Muir and Harriman. We then apply IR theory to the details of the two men's relationship before concluding the work.¹

Methods

We used primary and secondary historical sources to gather evidence of the relationship between Muir and Harriman. The historical sources used include the journal written by Muir after the expedition (see Muir 1912), articles published by Muir in the *Sierra Club Bulletin* and in *Century* magazine and other contemporary sources, letters written by Muir to members of the Harriman family and others on the expedition (see Gifford 1996), and recent accounts of the expedition (see Goetzmann and Sloan 1982; Wilkins 1995). Additionally we used biographies of Muir and Harriman (see Clarke 1979; Cohen 1984; Miller and Morrison 2005; Haeg 2013) and historical accounts of the evolution of United States' national park policy (see Ise 1961). Moreover, the Harriman Alaska Expedition has been documented by National Public television and detailed accounts and collections of photographs taken on the expedition provide a comprehensive visual record. The images included in this paper all originate from a souvenir album of which members of the expedition created a copy that is housed in a variety of libraries, including the Smithsonian Institutional Archives. In addition, the importance of western railroads to the formation of American national parks is an important part of the narrative and significant records and descriptions of that history were available for analysis (see, for example, Orsi 2005; Runte 1984).

After examining these data, a timeline of key moments in the relationship between Muir and Harriman was constructed; such timelines can be helpful for researchers who are examining historical data through the IR theory lens (Gordon 2018). Collins (2004) encourages researchers to undertake historical analyses to explain the origins of important, contemporary symbols. Correspondingly, he offers guidelines to ascertain the points at which contemporary symbols became significant through the IR theory framework. Those guidelines are: judging the intensity of the symbolism involved, reconstructing the IRs from which the symbolism emerged, tracing the secondary circulation of relevant symbols, and examining the use of these symbols by group members when they are outside of group IRs (see Collins 2004, 97–99). We attempted to follow these guidelines in this study. We also add some theoretical insights derived from the study of the process of interpersonal attraction to IR theory. These insights stress the significance of developing a common orientation to objects as a means of creating emotional

¹While Muir has historically been lauded as a highly influential preservationist, his framing in his writings of wilderness as 'pristine' included explicitly culturally-insensitive views of Native Americans, some of which were formed during his earlier 1879 trip to Alaska (Pesses 2018). This perspective was manifested in the expedition party's removal of totem poles at Cape Fox Village, a deserted Tlingit community. We wish to acknowledge these facts yet recognise that while discussion of these events would provide additional background and details of the broader ethnocentric context of Muir's trips to Alaska, it would take us too far afield from the substance of this paper to explore them fully.

bonds among individuals (Newcomb 1961; Curry and Emerson 1970). The discussion regarding the Muir-Harriman relationship is structured according to the key moments that emerged from historical accounts of the Muir-Harriman interactions with a particular emphasis on the Harriman Alaska Expedition of 1899, which served as the first encounter between the two men.

Theoretical Frame

We used Collins' (2004) interaction ritual (IR) theory through which to examine the Muir-Harriman relationship. Collins extends Durkheim's broad notion of 'ritual', expands Goffman's concept of 'interaction ritual', and synthesises them with exchange theory to create interaction ritual (IR) theory. Such a perspective, Collins argues, explains micro-behaviour and connects that behaviour to larger social structure. The IR theory model holds that four 'ritual ingredients' are needed in interactions to ensure that participants have a positive experience, the consequence of which yields four 'ritual outcomes' that cause participants in that interaction to seek out similar interactions in the future. The four ritual ingredients are group assemblage, a barrier to outsiders, a mutual focus of attention, and a shared mood. The four ritual outcomes of such interactions are group solidarity, emotional energy in the individuals present, the emergence of sacred objects, and the establishment of standards of morality.

Group assemblage requires two or more individuals to be physically present with one another during the interaction, which provides the greatest potential for a variety of feedback mechanisms to intensify their interaction and yield ritual outcomes. Barriers to outsiders increase the likelihood that feedback mechanisms will facilitate interactional rhythm among those present by limiting both the opportunities for others to enter that interaction ritual as well as limiting the opportunities for current interactants to leave the group for other potential IRs. This exclusivity enables the successful build-up of collective emotion that is necessary for an IR to have a lasting influence on those involved through their joint focus on a common object or activity, which produces a shared mood for the ritual's participants. Collins asserts that a mutual focus of attention and a shared mood reinforce each other, which intensifies the IR's outcomes. The participants' shared mood is heightened when they develop a mutual awareness of their shared focus; they become conscious of their joint attention towards the object or activity at the root of their interaction which intensifies their shared mood.

Of particular significance to IR theory is the ritual outcome of 'emotional energy' (EE), which serves as the primary mechanism that fuels individuals' choices to go from interaction to interaction where they attempt to seek it out. Interaction rituals that yield a high level of such energy in those who engage in them generate collective effervescence and have a particularly strong influence on future EE-seeking behaviour. Symbolic objects play an important role, too. As participants get pumped up with EE, they focus their attention towards the symbol(s) at the root of them. Particularly important to IR theory are 'face-to-face' interactions, which have the greatest potential to yield group solidarity and high levels of emotional energy for those present because of the opportunity for physical symbols to emerge through the course of interaction. The emergence of high EE-yielding symbols through the course of an IR defines a sharp distinction between 'right' and 'wrong' relative to the symbols at the root of their collective experience (Gordon

2018). Imbuing symbols with EE sacralises them, which reinforces the standards of morality that emerge from the emotional connection that participants associate with these now sacred symbols. Standards of morality are thus reified through subsequent IRs, creating an 'IR chain.' These chains, Collins argues, are the foundation of social life.

IR theory thus becomes a framework for exploring such questions as the power of microinteraction to effect larger structural changes in society. An important implication of IR theory that has relevance for this paper is the significance of time to interaction; individuals navigate their lives seeking out 'good' interaction rituals—those that provide emotional energy—while avoiding those interactions that drain EE. This emphasis on the ways in which interactions are temporally linked has been asserted as a significant strength of the theory previously (Clarke and Waring 2018). More specifically, IR theory's emphasis on the connection between emotions and sacred symbols to the sustainability of long-term relationships provides a more effective framework than other theoretical positions, particularly those that emphasise rational approaches to interaction (Curry and Gordon 2017).

Collins' theory has been used to examine interaction across a wide variety of settings and group sizes. Such research includes analyses of the significance of ritual and emotion to the mobilisation of 'Fair Trade' coffee consumers (Brown 2011), the ritualised process inherent to Sacred Harp singing (Heider and Warner 2010), and the lasting effects of EE on National Football League fans in the United States (Cottingham 2012). Recent research involving IR theory has examined the formation and ultimate success of a stadium-related protest (Gordon 2018), how the negative emotions experienced by patients in a mental health setting outside of formal therapy can facilitate personal change (Clarke and Waring 2018), tourists' experiences and their influence on subsequent local action (Sterchele 2020), how broken IRs lead to violence among Danish school children (Jensen and Vitus 2020), and the ways in which tourists symbolise their transformative experiences through visual narratives (Soulard *et al.* 2021).

IR theory may be particularly valuable for historical analyses, as the emergence of ritual outcomes, such as sacred symbols, can be traced through primary and secondary sources to their ritualistic point of origin. Moreover, the work of other social scientists and historians may aid in understanding historically significant interaction rituals by providing broader context(s) that enable more fruitful interpretations than analyses of contemporary data may provide. While Collins addressed historical analyses only briefly in his explanation of the theory, he did provide some useful guidelines for interpreting and unpacking contemporarily significant symbols through historical data, which were addressed earlier: judging the intensity of the symbolism involved, reconstructing the interactions from which the symbolism emerged, tracing the secondary circulation of relevant symbols, and examining the use of these symbols by group members when they are outside of group IRs (see Collins 2004, 97–99).

Our previous research with IR theory applied it to a camping trip taken by John Muir and Theodore Roosevelt to Yosemite in 1903 (Curry and Gordon 2017), and demonstrated that IR theory is a valuable tool for the reconstruction of historically significant events. It is thus particularly pertinent to this study. We applied IR theory to explain how the situation of a camping trip allowed Muir the opportunity to influence Roosevelt to secure his promise to support Muir in his political campaign to transfer control of Yosemite Valley to the federal government. Of particular note was Muir's ability to

leverage, if not outright construct, aspects of the camping trip ritual in such a way that encouraged Roosevelt to engage with the landscape in an effort to elicit emotional responses from him, which contributed to ritual outcomes that ultimately influenced federal policy.

The present paper is similar to our Muir—Roosevelt study in that it accords with Collins' argument that ritually-derived emotional energy can be carried across time and space. Unique to the Muir-Harriman IR, though, is that the emotional outcomes generated by the discovery and exploration of the natural landscape during the expedition were established through a place-naming ritual and reinforced through subsequent interactions between the two men for the next decade until Harriman's death in 1909. The ritual outcomes that were established during the expedition in Alaska were strong enough to create a chain with significant consequences over several decades.

Moments in the Muir-Harriman Relationship

The Harriman Alaska Expedition

At the time of expedition in 1899, Muir was 61 years old, ten years' Harriman's senior. By that time, Harriman, like other American railroad executives during the 'Gilded Age,' had become a well-known member of the East Coast financial elite. He began his career as a broker's clerk in New York and later bought himself a seat on the New York Stock Exchange. His ability to organise railroads was remarkable, and by the end of his career his railroads included over 60,000 miles of track. In 1897, he had taken control of refinancing the bankrupt Union Pacific railroad and he became the president of the Southern Pacific railroad in 1901.

Harriman was noted for being impatient, rude and brusque with a single-minded focus on the business at hand (Haeg 2013). When advised by his physician to take some time off, Harriman decided to explore the coast of Alaska. Harriman intended the expedition to be a family vacation, but he wanted to conduct a scientific exploration as well, so he requested assistance from C. Hart Merriam, a curator of the Smithsonian Institution, to advise him on scientists and experts in numerous fields relevant to Alaska. Twenty-three scientists were invited to accompany his family on the trip. Harriman purchased and outfitted a private steamer, the *George W. Elder*, with lounges, a library, and other luxuries in preparation for the journey (Goetzmann and Sloan 1982) (Figure 1).

Harriman was interested in Alaska as a new and relatively unexplored frontier. He planned on hunting bear and brought with him the hunting equipment he would need for that endeavour. He was also interested in Alaska as a site for constructing more railroad lines, perhaps to create a global network of rail lines extending from Alaska through Russia (Goetzmann and Sloan 1982). Harriman had achieved only, in American terms, a fifth-grade education and so the expedition may also have appealed to him as a way to gain status in the eyes of important people. In sum, an expedition to Alaska could provide him with public recognition and prestige while simultaneously providing him a much-needed break from acquiring and managing railroads, a chance to go bear hunting, and an opportunity for his family to enjoy Alaska's coastal scenery.

Muir had settled in California in 1878 and had lived in Yosemite for two years, exploring the valley and serving as a guide. He earned his living from 1880 to 1890 by managing

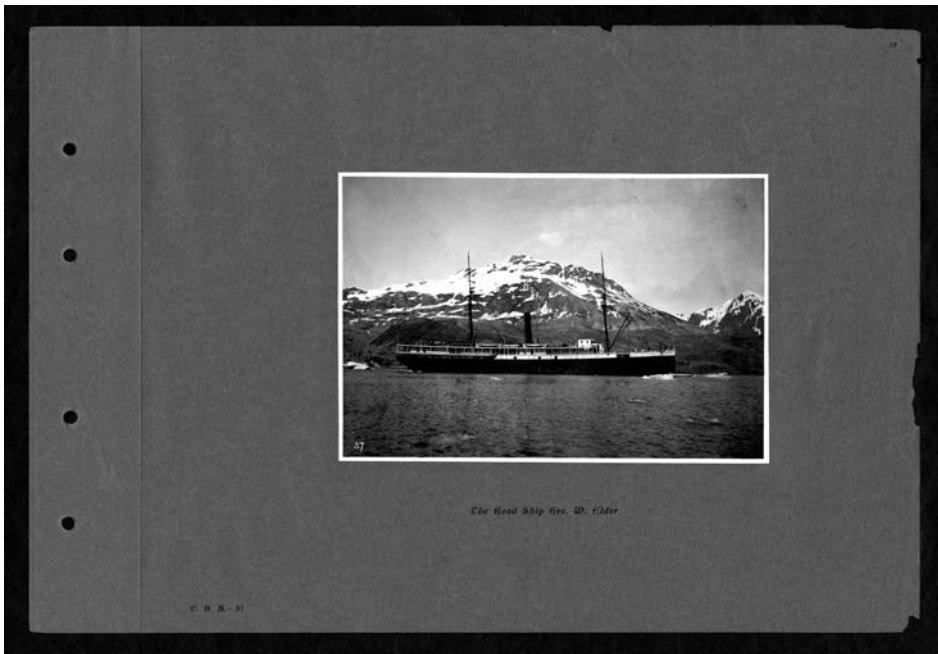


Figure 1. 'The Good Ship Geo. W. Elder,' a page from *Souvenir of the Harriman Alaska Expedition, May-August, 1899, Volume 1, New York to Cook Island*, created by Harriman Alaska Expedition (1899), SIA2012-3641. (Courtesy of Smithsonian Institutional Archives, SIA RU007243, Retrieved on 2021-06-18).

a large fruit orchard owned by the Strentzel family in Martinez, California. He married Louisa Strentzel, who inherited the farm from her father after he passed in 1890. Under their efforts, the ranch flourished.

Muir is well known for his many publications concerning wilderness, particularly Yosemite and the Sierra Nevada mountains. His career as a writer was encouraged by a camping trip to Tuolumne Meadows that he took in 1889 with Robert Underwood Johnson, editor of *Century* magazine. Muir and Johnson formed a friendship and reached an agreement that centred around publishing two articles on Yosemite in *Century*. Johnson understood that to Muir nature was 'one beautiful psalm in praise of the Creator' (Johnson 1905, 304), and time spent in nature was both a sacred and restorative act.

Muir's reputation as an expert in glaciers arose from his early writings about the role of glaciers in the formation of Yosemite. Prior to the Harriman Alaska expedition, Muir had published two books, *Picturesque California* in 1888 and *Mountains of California* in 1894, and had visited Alaska four times between 1879 and 1881. He reached Glacier Bay on his first trip and noted the 'magnificent river of ice' that was subsequently named Muir Glacier (Baker 1903, 372).

The Route and Routine of the Expedition

The assembly of all the invited scientists took some time to arrange. Those located near the East Coast gathered in New York City to board Harriman's train, the *Utopia*, on May

23rd, 1899. The train arrived in Seattle on May 31st, where the West Coast invitees, including Muir, were waiting. Once all were on board, they followed a routine that had been devised by Harriman. Known for his control of details, Harriman anticipated the need for structure and had arranged a number of committees to keep the work of the scientists organised. The committees included such names as Executive Committee, Routes and Plans, Zoology, Botany, Geology, Mining, Geography and Geographic Names, Big Game, Lectures, Library, Literature and Art, and Music and Entertainment. Important for our analysis, Muir was a member of four of these committees: the Executive, Geology, Geography and Geographic Names, and Music and Entertainment. He was thus well-positioned to not only recommend possible routes that the expedition could take, but to provide suggestions for naming new landmarks that the expedition discovered. The expedition began with the departure of the *Elder* from Seattle on May 31st and concluded when the ship returned on July 30th (Figure 2).

An important feature of the routine was an evening lecture. As the *Elder* proceeded up the coast, members of the expedition would explore the coastline in small launches, hike and camp in interesting areas, and then report back to the rest of the group the results of their explorations in the evening lectures. Muir's appraisal of these presentations, however, was lukewarm. He later wrote about the obligation to attend the presentations but felt that no real science was being conducted. He was not alone in his assessment. To most of the scientists on board, the trip was a chance to take in beautiful scenery rather than conduct a comprehensive survey of the Alaska coastline (Goetzmann and Sloan

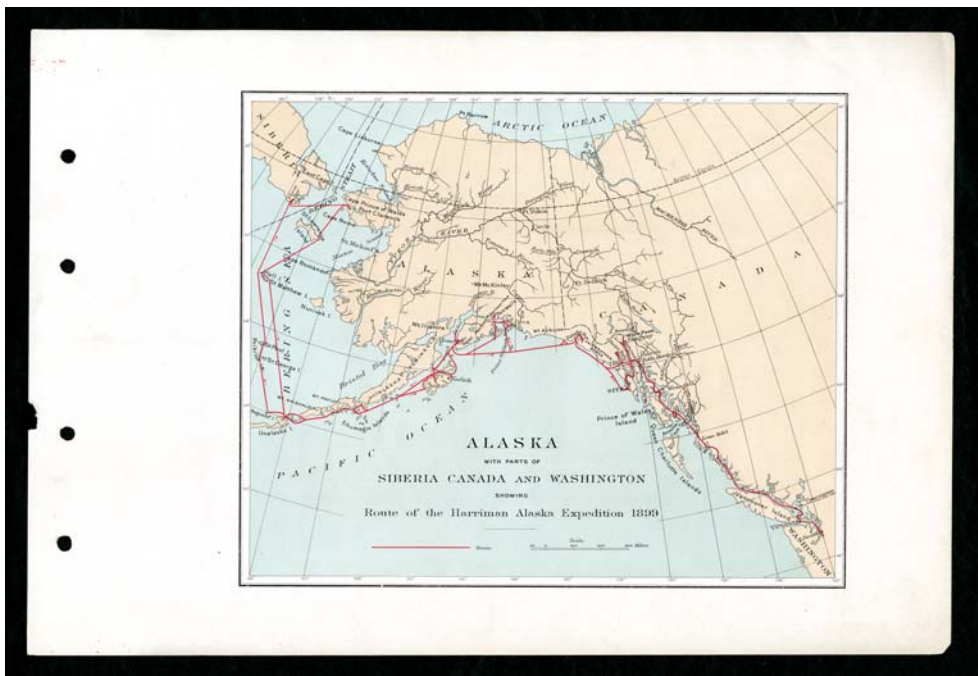


Figure 2. 'Route of the Harriman Expedition,' a page from *Souvenir of the Harriman Alaska Expedition, May-August, 1899, Volume 1, New York to Cook Inlet*, created by Harriman Alaska Expedition (1899) SIA2012-3631 (Courtesy of Smithsonian Institutional Archives, SIA RU007243, Retrieved on 2021-06-18).

1982, 194). We note, however, that these evening lectures provided Muir with a ready audience to present his own work. For example, his story about Stickeen, a pet dog that had accompanied him exploring glaciers on a previous trip to Alaska, was well received and later published (see Muir 1909).

Glacier Bay (June 9th)

During the expedition, numerous landmarks and hundreds of species of insects, flora, and fauna were identified and named (Burroughs *et al.* 1986). The privilege of naming glaciers was felt to be an honour, and several glaciers were named after private universities, such as Harvard and Yale, that had been attended by members of the expedition. Less prestigious public universities were not included in the naming ceremonies, even though there were scientists on board who had graduated from them. While a justification for these naming omissions does not appear in the accounts of the expedition, status and prestige were important to Harriman and his guests. Apparently, the naming of prestigious, private institutions was a way to gain status, and expedition participants appeared to believe that naming glaciers after public universities would not afford the same status as these private institutions.

Muir took the opportunity to name a glacier at the foot of the Grand Pacific glacier after Harriman. Muir made the announcement after an evening lecture and the audience of scientists broke into applause and a chant that became the cheer of the Harriman Alaska Expedition: ‘We are the H.A.E., We are the H.A.E.’ (Goetzmann and Sloan 1982). After the lecture, Harriman came up to Muir, shook his hand, and thanked him for the honour. A group photograph entitled ‘Who are We?’ taken later during the voyage at an abandoned Native American village provides further testimony to the strength of the emotional bonds that connected group members (Figure 3).

Prince William Sound (June 13th)

The most significant discovery lay further on; Harriman explored a fjord in Prince William Sound that had not been named on previous charts. The navigation into the sound was treacherous, and neither the captain of the ship nor the pilot wished to make the attempt. Nonetheless, Harriman insisted, and with Muir’s assistance, he personally directed the ship into the uncharted waters. They discovered a previously unknown fjord with a large glacier at its head. Impressed with Harriman’s courage, Muir and the rest of the scientists agreed to name the fjord and glacier after Harriman (Clarke 1979, 289) (Figure 4).

Harriman was reported to have been pleased to have two glaciers and a fjord named after him on the expedition. Later in the voyage, an incident occurred that revealed further insight about the development of the Harriman-Muir friendship. Reportedly, Muir was talking to some of the scientists while waiting for dinner and he made an off-hand comment about Harriman’s wealth, saying that ‘I don’t think Mr. Harriman is very rich. He has not as much money as I have. I have all I want and Mr. Harriman has not.’ Muir, apparently, felt that he was satisfied with the money and other material items he had and, as such, was content while he believed that Harriman was materialistic, always chasing the almighty dollar.

Harriman heard about the comment later and told Muir that he ‘never cared for money except as power for work.’ What he most enjoys, Harriman said, is ‘the power of creation,

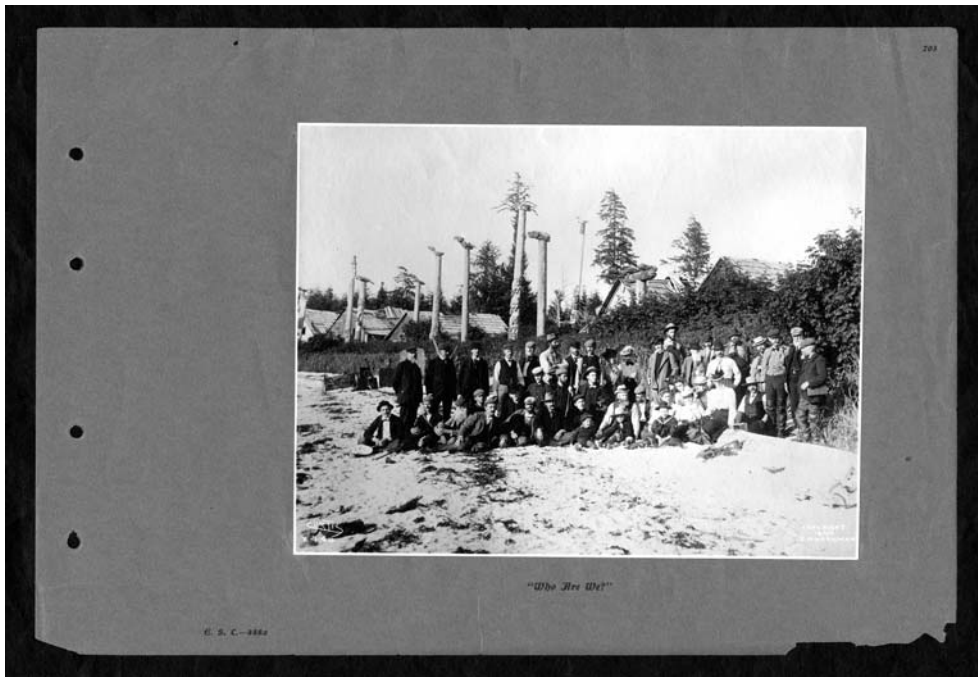


Figure 3. 'Who Are We?,' a page from *Souvenir of the Harriman Alaska Expedition May-August, 1899, Volume 2, Cook Inlet to Bering Strait and the Return Voyage*, created by the Harriman Alaska Expedition (1899), SIA2012-3838. (Courtesy of Smithsonian Institutional Archives, SIA RU007243, Retrieved on 2021-06-18).

getting into partnership with Nature in doing good, helping to feed man and beast, and making everybody and everything a little better and happier' (Muir 1912, 36). Evidently, once Muir understood that Harriman appreciated nature, the interactions between the two men became smoother.

Post-Expedition

The expedition concluded on July 30th when the *Elder* returned to Seattle. After the voyage, Muir visited Harriman several times and the two exchanged letters on a regular basis. As President and co-founder of the Sierra Club, Muir began to campaign for Yosemite to be transferred from the control of the state of California to that of the federal U.S. government. Members of the Sierra Club asked Muir to contact Harriman for his help in the campaign. Harriman had assumed the position of President of the Southern Pacific Railroad in 1901, two years after the expedition, and the Southern Pacific railroad had considerable influence in the California legislation. It was in the railroad's interest to increase tourism to national parks served by their rail lines and once the Southern Pacific made its wishes known, enough votes were secured for passage both at the state and federal levels to shift control of Yosemite to the federal government.

Fourteen letters between the two men from the years 1899 to 1907 (twelve from Harriman, two from Muir) survive among the John Muir papers in the University of the

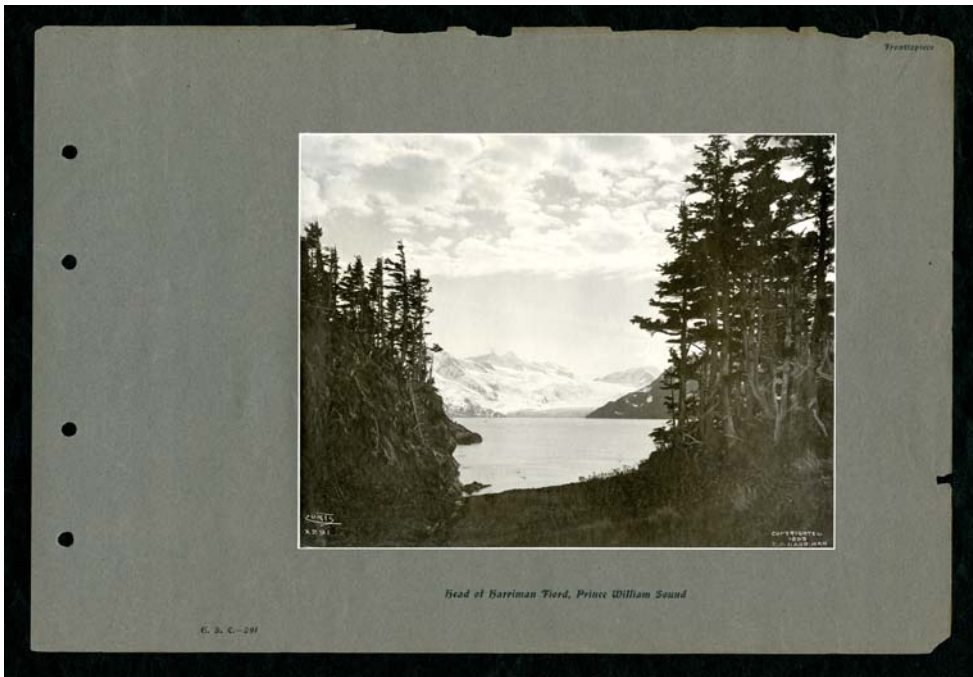


Figure 4. 'Head of Harriman Fjord, Prince William Sound,' a page from *Souvenir of the Harriman Alaska Expedition, May-August, 1899, Volume 1, New York to Cook Inlet*, created by Harriman Alaska Expedition (1899), SIA2012-3632. (Courtesy of Smithsonian Institutional Archives, SIA RU007243, Retrieved on 2021-06-22).

Pacific's Library Collections. The following letter from Muir to Harriman in June 1904 is typical of these communications:

Dear Mr Harriman. I have been anxious to see you ever since I got home, of course I want to tell you something of what I saw in Russia, Siberia, Manchuria, India, Egypt, Australia, New Zealand & the Philippines. These travel things however will keep indefinitely. But sending me that comforting cable message from Salt Lake to make everything easy on the crowded Siberia was mighty good & kind of you & I want to thank you for it face to face. Above all I want to thank you for the letter you sent after me from your sick bed, which reached me at Moscow on my return from Crimea & the Caucasus. That letter full of thoughtful care for me when you were in the midst of infinite mortal trouble was heart-touching. I'll never forget it & shall always be faithfully yours, J.M.

In 1908, Harriman invited Muir to stay with his family at their lodge in Pelican Bay, Oregon. Muir was drafting his autobiography at that time and Harriman provided him with a personal secretary. Muir stayed at the lodge for three weeks (PBS 2011) and dictated 1,000 pages of notes. These notes became the basis for his autobiography, later published as *The Story of My Boyhood and Youth*.

Muir became a friend of Harriman's family. When meeting with Harriman at the Raymond Hotel in Pasadena, California in March 1909, Muir was 'peppered' with questions from reporters, including one who asked him, 'How do you, a nature lover, happen to be visiting a cold-blooded financier?' 'Why, Mr. Harriman has a heart,' Muir replied.

People may not know it, but he loves the flowers and the trees. He loves nature and human nature. I have been with him among the glaciers of Alaska; on the waters of Pelican Bay ... and I have seen him in the privacy of his own family.

Muir continued, asserting that, 'Mr. Harriman knows the needs of the country before him ...' (Kimes and Kimes 1909).

When Harriman died six months later in September 1909, Muir was asked to deliver the eulogy at his funeral. Muir later published the eulogy in booklet form, simply titled *E. H. Harriman*. Harriman's widow, Mary Williamson Averell Harriman, paid for its publication and distribution. The booklet was intended to enhance the reputation of Harriman and, within it, Muir lavished praise upon the career and person of the railroad tycoon. While the lavish praise was a testimony to Muir and Harriman's friendship, it may also have been a reaction to the negative publicity Harriman received because of his reputation as a railroad tycoon (Kennan 2005, 213). Moreover, the praise may have also reflected Muir's acceptance that tourism was important to the national park ideal. Initially in favour of parks as sites to preserve wilderness, Muir had come to realise, as did other members of the Sierra Club, that if he wanted to defend the parks against excessive mining, lumbering, encroachment of farmers, and the like, then he had to argue that the parks were popular destinations for people and not just wilderness preserves (Cohen 1984).

Theoretical Frame Applied to the Muir-Harriman IR Chain

Four ritual ingredients beget four ritual outcomes in any interaction ritual. The four ritual ingredients—group assemblage, barrier to outsiders, mutual focus of attention, and shared mood—are all correspondingly evident in the Muir-Harriman IR chain. The group was physically assembled on the *George W. Elder* while at sea as well as in their various excursions on land, both of which excluded outsiders. The group's hiking, camping, mapping, collection of flora and fauna, and other activities centred their focus on the Alaskan scenery, which was ultimately reinforced during the nightly lectures that the scientists and writers delivered on the ship.

As Collins notes, a mutual focus of attention and shared mood reinforce each other in the cyclical build up and reinforcement of attention and increasingly heightened mood. Of particular relevance for the Muir-Harriman IR is the significance of the two men's shared, daily engagement with the Alaskan landscape during the trip. The mutually pleasurable activities involved therewith played a significant role in the two men's ability to establish rapport. Previous research has documented the importance of engaging in mutually pleasurable activities in developing friendships, and that such participation is a stronger motive in friendship maintenance than is the satisfaction of knowing that the friend agrees with you (Curry and Emerson 1970; Werner and Parmelee 1979). In fact, this 'activity similarity' is an important incentive for continued interaction such that 'shared pastimes' may serve as a valuable backdrop against which friendships grow (Werner and Parmelee 1979, 66). These activities allowed for adjustments of mood and culminated in Muir's decision to name two glaciers and a fjord after Harriman. Muir's announcement of his decision to name the first glacier for Harriman occurred during Muir's portion of one of the nightly lectures that he gave while on the *Elder*. The announcement drew enthusiastic vocal support from the various scientists and writers

present in the audience, for which Harriman demonstrated gratitude. Muir had provided Harriman with status in the eyes of the scientific community aboard the *Elder*, something that money alone could not buy.

This ceremonial deference was significant for Harriman, who wished to position himself and his railroad companies as beneficial to nature as well as humans. Thus, by virtue of Muir's explicit approval, Harriman now had the capacity to draw from Muir's cultural capital as a naturalist because of Muir's validation of Harriman as demonstrated through this naming ceremony. Muir's motivation for legitimising Harriman through this naming ceremony was apparently to show appreciation and deference to the expedition's leader and benefactor; in fact, Muir's rationalism and political deft have been demonstrated by other scholars previously (see, for example, Orsi 1985; Curry and Gordon 2017).

This suggests that Muir's decision to name a glacier after Harriman, along with the announcement of this decision on board the *Elder*, would allow Muir the opportunity to draw various forms of capital (e.g., economic, cultural) from Harriman at some point in the future. Also, by naming a glacier after Harriman, Muir avoids the obvious interactional problem of Harriman's love of hunting. A glacier is inanimate and, thus, cannot be killed. So, by picking this object, Muir symbolised Harriman's adventurous streak without compromising his own values. Or, perhaps, Muir simply felt indebted to Harriman for underwriting the expense of the trip and the lavish treatment of the scientists as his guests. Regardless, Muir had no material way to repay Harriman except through symbolic gestures because Harriman was extremely wealthy and had told everyone that there was no need to financially repay him.

In either case, Muir's engagement with Harriman also had implications for the future development of the national park system. Muir had envisioned protecting the parks as wilderness areas. To secure political support from Harriman's railroads meant increasing tourism and emphasising the value of enjoying the landscapes that the parks had to offer. Preserving parks for their landscapes also implied providing convenient places to stay once access to remote areas had been achieved. Providing roads and railroad lines into remote areas might seem to be anathema to Muir's initial goal of wilderness protection, but Muir, like other members of the Sierra Club, realised that emphasising tourism was necessary to ensure protection (Ise 1961).

The four ritual ingredients lead to four ritual outcomes: group solidarity, emotional energy, sacred symbols, and standards of morality. Group solidarity is a clearly evident outcome, which, if to be encapsulated in a singular act, is most clearly exemplified by Harriman's desire to shake Muir's hand after the announcement of the Harriman Glacier on board the *Elder*. Harriman also expressed a desire to shake Muir's hand in a letter to Muir of 16 April 1906. The emotional energy (EE) between the two men, though, manifested in a variety of compelling ways.

EE is evident, for example, by virtue of the publication of expedition outcomes (i.e., *Harriman Alaska Expedition, Volumes I–XIV*), Harriman's invitation to Muir to write his autobiography at Harriman's lodge in Pelican Bay, Oregon, and the continued communications between the two men until Harriman's death in September 1909. The previously referenced letter from Muir to Harriman in June 1904, where Muir thanked Harriman for his communications with Muir during Muir's world travels, exemplifies this. The results of Harriman's attempts to reach Muir comforted Muir and made him

wish to return to the U.S. to thank Harriman in person. More than the exchange of simple pleasantries between two colleagues, the content of this letter fits an interactional pattern that is held together by a mutual love of nature and buttressed by the emotional energy inherent to 'face to face' interaction.

Harriman's efforts to assist Muir in getting Yosemite Valley federally protected, however, best exemplifies the EE that the two men generated as a consequence of the Harriman Alaska Expedition. As Orsi (1985) demonstrates, the bill to provide Yosemite with federal protections essentially stalled in Sacramento, the California state capital, until Muir asked for Harriman's help, which the latter promptly provided. Muir's bill was languishing in Washington, D.C., as well, until Harriman leveraged his political clout to lobby on Muir's behalf once again. But for Harriman and his professional and political network, Muir's efforts to imbue Yosemite Valley with federal protections would not have been approved in either the state or the federal legislature.

The sacred symbol that emerged from the Muir-Harriman IR is glaciers, which are significant in three ways. First, Muir's announcement that he named the first glacier in Glacier Bay after Harriman is particularly noteworthy for, in addition to being particularly beautiful, the fact that the announcement elicited loud cheers from those in attendance. As Gannett later observed, the Alaskan landscape 'is more valuable than gold or the fish or the timber, for it will never be exhausted' (Gannett 1901, 196). As a member of the expedition, and the Editor-in-Chief of *National Geographic Magazine*, Gannett was in a position to both applaud and publish articles that confirmed that Alaskan glaciers were indeed important in their own right as sacred objects. Thus Muir's attempt to link a glacier with Harriman was emotionally compelling largely because of its natural beauty, enormous size, and significance as a cultural object.

Second, the naming of the first glacier set a precedent for Harriman's name to be attached to the second glacier and fjord. As the primary waterway from the Pacific Ocean to the Harriman Glacier, the approximately eight-and-a-half-mile Harriman Fjord provides seafarers and tourists with awe-inspiring beauty that provides a Durkheimian-like build-up of emotional intensity that climaxes upon reaching the Harriman Glacier.

Finally, glaciers, like other uniquely beautiful natural elements inherent to the American west at that time, fit within a broader, cultural emphasis on natural monuments. According to national park historian, Alfred Runte (2010), Americans found in nature those monuments that enabled it to compete culturally with European countries despite being much younger. What the then-relatively young United States lacked in architecture when compared to European nations, it made up for in striking, natural beauty. This ethos—the connection between nature and nationalism—was highly influential in the formation of the national park system and thus rooted the Muir-Harriman IR chain in a sacred symbol that was ingrained with both natural wonder and nationalistic ideals. While the link between landscape and nationalism has previously been asserted in both American (Olwig 2008) and non-American contexts (Nogué and Vicente 2004; Seidl *et al.* 2021), our use of IR theory allows us to refine that link to the influential relationship between the two men and the symbol that buttressed it.

For Muir and Harriman, who were particularly noted for their individual relationships with wilderness and capitalism respectively, their relationship intersected with nationalism as expressed symbolically through the beauty and rarity of these natural wonders.

This connection between glaciers and nationalism is exemplified in Muir's response, already noted above, to the reporter who asked him how he could 'be visiting a cold-blooded financier?' such as Harriman: 'I have been with him among the glaciers of Alaska' and, in the same breath, 'Mr. Harriman knows the needs of the country before him.'

The way in which Muir eulogised Harriman and wrote about him in a short book to memorialise his friend in 1911, though, best illustrates the perspective of glaciers as monuments, in Runte's sense of the word, within the context of the Muir-Harriman IR chain. As Orsi (1985) notes, Muir referred to Harriman as a 'great builder' who 'fairly revelled in heavy dynamical work and went about it naturally and unweariedly like glaciers making landscapes ... making the Nation's ways straight and smooth and safe, bringing everybody nearer to one another' (Muir 1911, 3–5). As Sheats (1985) argues, Muir's choice to compare Harriman to a glacier was quite intentional; Muir had imbued glaciers with powerful emotional and symbolic meaning in his earlier publications on the role of glaciers in the formation of Yosemite Valley. For Muir, characterising Harriman as a glacier is a remarkably positive metaphor (Orsi 1985). Muir's use of glaciers as a metaphor for Harriman is both the highest of praise from Muir and indicative of the sacred symbol that was a key ritual outcome of their Alaskan IR.

This metaphorical memorialisation of Harriman also exemplifies Collins' fourth and final ritual outcome, standards of morality, which were documented in Muir's intent to memorialise Harriman in book form and to defend Harriman from his many critics. For example, Muir specifically mentions Harriman's support of clubs, schools, churches, public parks, and neglected children, and adds that he 'was always ready to lend a hand' (Muir 1912, 37). He concludes by praising Harriman as 'one of the rare souls Heaven send into the world once in centuries' (Muir 1912, 39).

Discussion

Applying Collins' (2004) IR theory to the Muir-Harriman IR chain yields three key and intertwining interpretations that contribute to the field. These relate to the sacralisation of a specific topographical element, the value of toponymy to this chain, and a connection between these two men's IR chain and public policy.

The first key contribution is that a specific topographical element can emerge as a ritual outcome upon which future interactions in the chain are built. The natural beauty inherent to Alaska's landscape served as the focus of attention for all present on the expedition. Yet, the confluence of Muir's expertise as a glaciologist within the broader cultural context of monumentalism, per Runte's argument, provided the conditions for a sacred symbol to emerge as an IR outcome specifically for Muir and Harriman. While either person could have developed an IR chain with any other expedition attendee, Muir's status as a preservationist provided him with the necessary status to have the authority to name a glacier in Harriman's honour, which was the transformational moment in their chain.

The primary ritual outcome of this chain—glaciers as sacred symbol—also provides IR-based literature with an interesting implication, that the ritual outcome of sacred symbols may simply be a subset of the members' mutual focus of attention, as was the case in the Muir-Harriman IR chain. While perhaps implicit in IR theory, this direct connection

between a specific ritual ingredient and ritual outcome does not appear to be explored in previous IR-based scholarship.

Necessary for the emergence of glaciers as the sacred symbol in the Muir-Harriman IR chain is place-naming, the second key contribution to the field. While toponymy has been explored in previous literature, particularly within the field of geography (see, for example, Rose-Redwood 2011; Light and Young 2014), the ceremonial way in which Muir named the first glacier after Harriman as demonstrated in historical accounts transformed the two men's relationship from one that was rooted in rationalism to one that was fuelled by EE, as indicated by the enthusiastic applause and group cheer associated with the place-naming announcement. While the announcement of the new name for the glacier appears to have been an attempt by Muir either to establish a connection to Harriman to potentially leverage his political capital in the future, or simply to thank him for the invitation on the expedition, it instead facilitated an authentic friendship that connected them along their shared IR chain. This has been demonstrated in multiple ways at the micro level, as was discussed previously. That chain also had the macro impact of policy that influenced preservation and situated nature as a playground through the national park system, which is the third key contribution to the field.

Important to consider is the interaction ritual pretext to the Alaskan expedition *vis a vis* the two men as symbolic representations of broader cultural and economic movements. Prior to the expedition, Muir was well-known as a naturalist. His writings about glaciers generally, and his previous visits to Alaska and corresponding writings specifically, positioned him as a prominent, if not *the* prominent, preservationist of his time. Harriman's work as an executive with the Union Pacific Railroad interested in expansion also made him well-known. Consequently, the two men were themselves symbolic representations; they personified preservationism and capitalism respectively and their corresponding IR chains brought them to the Alaska expedition with one another where they converged to create a new chain.

This IR chain, which was rooted in ritual outcomes that occurred as a consequence of a toponymic ceremony, benefitted each man's own personal and professional pursuits. Muir, for example, was able to leverage Harriman's political capital to accomplish his preservation-based intentions while Harriman was able to expand his transportation empire as the growth of national parks increased tourism across the western United States. By supporting Muir's political efforts, Harriman contributed to the creation of a new market-national park tourism-upon which he was able to capitalise by scaling his business through an increased rail transportation footprint. Consequently, the friendship that developed between Muir and Harriman is an interesting historical tale of two astute men who merged complementary pools of capital to accomplish their respective personal and professional ambitions.

Conclusion

The prominent preservationist, John Muir, and widely-known railroad magnate, Edward H. Harriman, developed a friendship that began during the Alaska Expedition of 1899 despite both possessing different social status and disparate perspectives of the environment and humans' role within it. While they appear to be incompatible at first glance, Collins' (2004) interaction ritual theory provides a lens through which one can

understand how their relationship developed and continued to grow for a decade after the expedition until Harriman's death in 1909. Glaciers emerged as the key ritual outcome of their time together in Alaska. Forged as a result of Muir's announcement of the first Harriman Glacier on board the *Elder*, glaciers also reflected the zeitgeist of late-nineteenth century American nationalism. These factors coalesced such that the two men's friendship was propelled forward and was continuously reinforced by both their mutual appreciation for, and pragmatic perspectives of, the American wilderness with resultant influences on environmental policy.

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