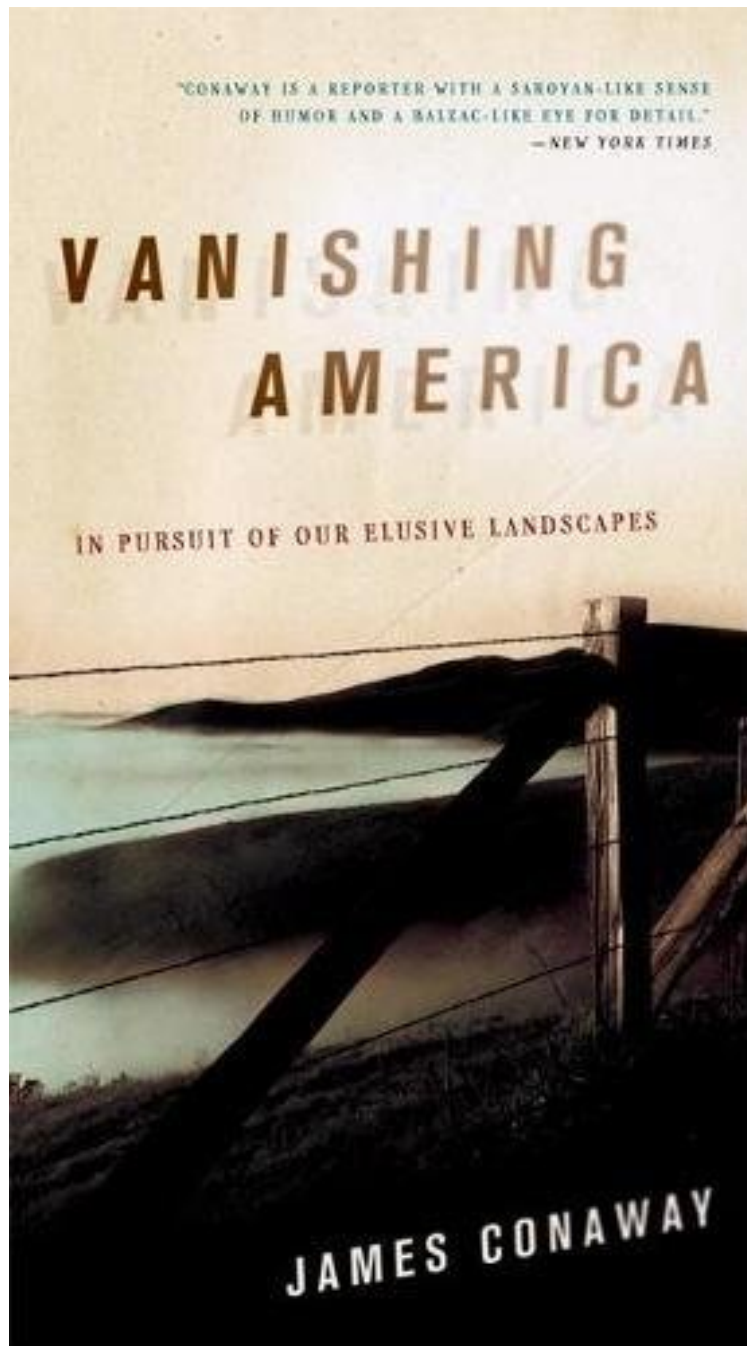


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Vanishing America: In Pursuit of Our Elusive Landscapes

James Conaway

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James Conaway : Vanishing America: In Pursuit of Our Elusive Landscapes before purchasing it in order to

gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised *Vanishing America: In Pursuit of Our Elusive Landscapes*:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. *Haunting* By Carolyn Martini A nostalgic tour reminding us that no matter where you live, times are changing, and the pressure of population, commerce and conflicting interests is the only constant. Conaway is a very good journalist. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. *Wake Up and See America Before It's Gone* By C. Davis This is a fascinating though shameful account of how much we take for granted in the scope and variety of U.S. geography - and how much of it is disappearing forever. Get out there and see all the great and unique places before they are desecrated or destroyed altogether.

The rich American landscape, both natural and cultural, is being threatened and in some cases wiped away completely. Preservation Editor-at-Large James Conaway takes to the road in *Vanishing America*, exploring the places, people, and traditions that have helped to shape our national identity. Part personal narrative and part travelogue, his journey offers a smart and informative account from across the country. From D.C.'s National Cathedral to a deserted cabin in Big Sur, from dinosaur bones in New Mexico's Bisti Badlands to the weatherworn facade of New Orleans, along the way Conaway meets cowboys, hippies, real estate developers, and many others whose stories weave into a national identity at once created, disappearing, destroyed, and continually redefined. Many of the best reflections of what the country once stood for lie around us abused, exploited, or ignored. How do we resolve the notion of preservation within a culture so dependent on growth and prosperity? With wit and acute urgency, Conaway reminds us that every bit of property, historic landmark, and distinct community, is vulnerable. These essays serve as a lament for what's being lost, a prompt for what we still have to preserve, and a celebration of our nation's unique characteristics.

From *Publishers Weekly* In these perceptive essays, Conaway (*The Far Side of Eden*) shows how development and tourism are laying waste to America's natural and cultural landscapes. Entertaining as well as astute, the pieces revolve around his impressions of exceptional places he considers physical and spiritual barometers of the country's health, including the Boise River in Idaho (overused and polluted), Napa Valley in California (disfigured by gigantic wineries and McMansions) and national parks (considered saleable products by elected officials and adversely affected by too many tourists, toilets, buses, concessionaires and paved highways). On Western communal lands that should be preserved by the Bureau of Land Management, such as New Mexico's Bisti Badlands and Wyoming's Big Piney, energy exploration and extraction, grazing and all-terrain vehicles are taking their toll. On the grounds of Washington, D.C.'s National Cathedral, development needs have resulted in new buildings, accommodations for tour buses and a huge gymnasium, so that an institution supposedly dedicated to saving souls has been turned into an engine of tourism, development, and controversy. Conaway argues persuasively that these irreplaceable landscapes stand for the real America, but because we are sacrificing them to material concerns, we're losing our culture along with the very ground upon which America was built. (Oct.) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.