

Automobiling in the Yosemite Valley

ADVENTURING IN A LOCOMOBILE IN 1901

BY DR. W. A. CLARK


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AUTOMOBILING IN THE YOSEMITE VALLEY



EDITOR'S NOTE: The following account by Dr. William A. Clark, a San Leandro physician, appeared originally in the *Overland Monthly* of August, 1902. It describes an adventurous journey made by Dr. Clark and his wife Lola from the Bay Area to Yosemite in their Locomobile in July, 1901 — the fifth automobile to reach the Valley. The text has been slightly edited for brevity by local author Hank Johnston, who furnished both the article and the photographs. Johnston's latest book, *The Yosemite Grant, 1864-1906: A Pictorial History*, was recently published by the Yosemite Association.

Cover: Mrs. Lola Clark and the fifth automobile to arrive in Yosemite Valley, July 1901.

Above: Priest's Hotel was a popular stopping place on the old Big Oak Flat Road.

ON FRIDAY, JULY 19TH, 1901, my wife and I stepped into our automobile to take the 4 p.m. Creek boat from Oakland. We were soon surrounded by an inquisitive crowd, who were especially interested when they were informed that we were en route for the Yosemite Valley.

To Mrs. Clark belongs the honor of driving the machine safely into the Valley and back, a distance of 246 miles. Our equipage attracted particular attention in San Francisco, as it had on its traveling suit of extra wheels, tools, baggage, etc., everything necessary for so long and severe a trip. It therefore did not present its usual attractive appearance. To better stimulate our ardor and also hold for future references, we "sat for our pictures," then amid the best wishes of the assembled friends, we sped down Market for the ferry, to take the steamer *Peters* for Stockton.

On Saturday, July 20, 1901, we arrived at Stockton, leaving at 10:15 a.m. for Knight's Ferry, and were soon flying from our admirers before they could realize that we

had steam up. One does not know how very fast one is traveling until one sees a horse in the distance, comes up to him, knowing him to be a fast one, passes him easily, and leaves him in the dim background. A mile in a minute and six seconds seems a prodigious speed for a road vehicle, but that is what our machine is capable of doing.

To Farmington, eighteen miles from Stockton, was indeed a pleasant run. Here we filled our water tanks and oiled our engine, while the people greeted us warmly. The thermometer registered 106 degrees, and as the road was practically treeless, we had the full benefit of the heat.

From Farmington the roads could be termed park roads. We were greatly surprised to find them in such good condition — this made journeying beyond a doubt perfect. The absolute capabilities of the machine were tested as we pulled over Knight's Ferry bridge in dust fully six inches deep, up a hill which we had been warned against, all of which was successfully accomplished. At the

top several men met us who were astounded to learn that we had made the climb without the aid of horses. All the road to Curtin's was full of rocks, which made us pick our way cautiously for miles. Here we remained over Sunday, enjoying the most generous hospitality and gazing with profound awe at the tone of the melting color, the absolute grandeur of the concentrated harmonies in surrounding mountains and hills.

Lost in the daily light, we spent Sunday evening in getting the auto ready for our next trip to Priest's; 9:30 a.m. saw us on our way, and easily we reached the railroad station, called Cloudman, where the people from the porches of their homes happily greeted us and watched us flying by until we were out of sight.

We finally found ourselves climbing Crimea Hill, where again we encountered ruts, which we were obliged to straddle. The road being full of stones seemed to make the way almost impassable. The carriage bumped faithfully along through Six-bit Gulch, on to Chinese Camp.

The stage company offered to carry any baggage for us, but, declining with thanks, we started downgrade, passing the Scharmot-Eagle mine, where the dust was a foot deep, with loose rolling rocks for company. Nothing lingers like memory, and experience is not at all antagonistic to our human nature.

Meeting several mule teams, we invariably took the outside of the road, gaining the goodwill of all whom we met, and avoiding trouble with both man and mule. Lunch and Jacksonville came next, the thermometer only registering 112 degrees.

Hurriedly we finished, preferring the picturesque Tuolumne River. A refreshing breeze materially increased the popularity of the place. Passing homes and mines, we were soon steaming up the foot of Priest's Hill. Here we filled our tank, oiled up the machine, put in a new gasket in the steam pump, preparatory for the difficult climb.

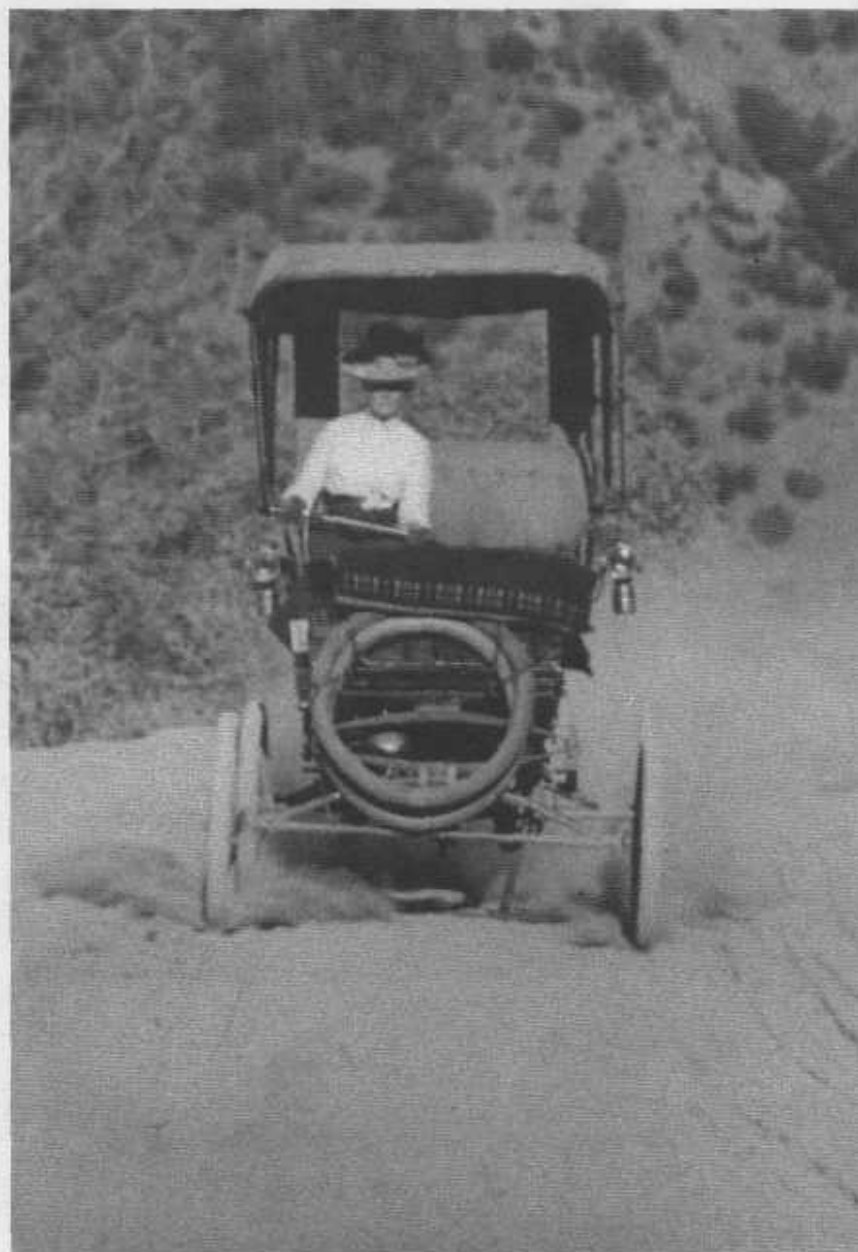
The initial climb to the top, a rise of 1800 feet in two and one-quarter miles, without a level spot in the road, is certainly a commendable undertaking for our carriage.

Within five hundred feet of the summit, the grade was exceedingly steep, averaging 20 percent. This we made without the slightest trouble, with perfect disregard for dubious imaginings. The situation was intensely interesting and dramatic, illustrative of what an automobile can and will do when put to the test. We were welcomed at Priest's with cheers and hearty congratulations by both our generous hostess, Mrs. Priest, and the guests, who had assembled on the verandah with their cameras to do full justice in the way of a frank and impressionable American welcome. The actual running time from the base to the summit was forty-five minutes. The time usually taken with a light horse-drawn buggy is one and one-half hours, while the stage requires from two to two-and-a-half hours.

After a hearty dinner, exchanging the usual remarks with the guests on the hotel porch, we were startled by a most familiar whistle, and in a second Mr. and Mrs. Baird and Mr. and Mrs. Aiken drew up before the hotel in their respective motor cars [both Locomobiles]; objects for the sun's pity they were, beautifully coated with dust and dirt from their long trip. They had left Crocker's at 3 p.m., arriving at Priest's at 8:30 p.m., covering a distance of twenty-seven and one-quarter miles.

Our personal experiences were exchanged with a naive satisfaction which obliterated all else. Their account of the roads they had encountered pleased us immensely. Conceive if you can our thoughts and emotions, as we fully realized what we had to traverse in order to reach the Valley. The extreme position almost kept us from attempting the long, heavy grades. "Nothing attempted, nothing gained," however, so after a good night's rest, with renewed courage we started our journey about 9:15

Mrs. Lola Clark drove along the dusty Big Oak Flat Road to Yosemite Valley, July 1901.



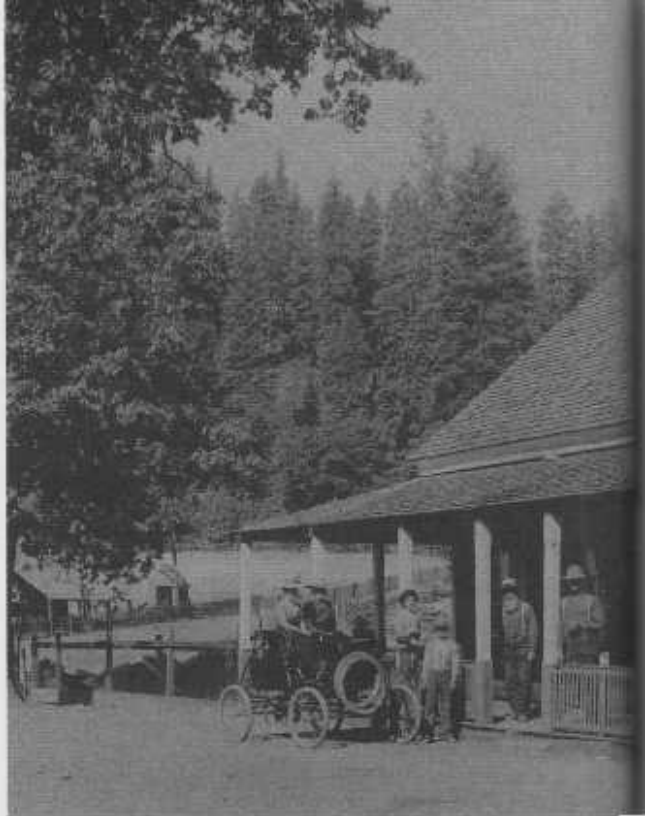
Above right: The Clark Locomobile paused at Hamilton's Station (now Buck Meadows).

a.m. on Tuesday, July 23. We climbed the miserably rugged grade to Big Oak Flat, where we refilled our water tanks. The station-keeper had an abundant supply of water on hand. The machine, up to this point, had consumed twelve and one-half gallons of gasoline, the mileage being 68.3 miles. We reached Groveland at 11 a.m., where we were obliged to have work done upon the frame of our carriage. We sought a first-class blacksmith. Not being able to have the work done until the next day, we spent the time pleasantly, leaving at 6 p.m. Wednesday. Cheer after cheer followed us as we began to climb the heavy grade beyond Groveland.

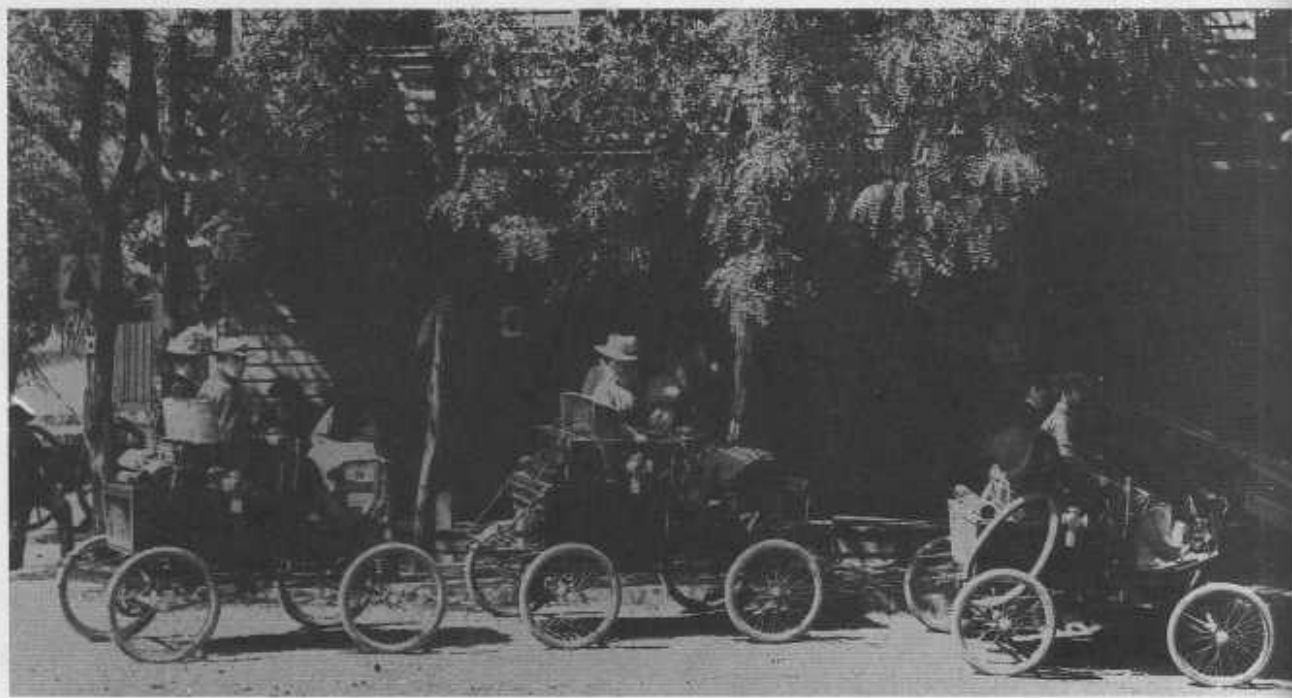
The splendid road, with its magnificent tall pines on either side, was grand beyond description. This part of the journey was the most delightful, in all probability, of the entire trip. The heat of the day, intensified by the accompanying dust, had been dispelled by the coolness of night. The moon had risen; here and there a sweet clear note of some belated bird, calling its mate, awoke in us the tenderest of thoughts.

We soon passed Smith's ranch, reaching Hamilton's, a distance of three miles, and thirteen miles from our day's starting point, making the run in one hour and fifty minutes, including the heavy grades and all the stops. Mr. Hamilton, an old pioneer, considered this time exceptionally good.

Thursday morning we left Hamilton's at 9:45 a.m., traveling the distance from this point to the Toll Gate in 12 minutes. Here we met with one of the down-coming stages. A pleasant chat ensued between the passengers and ourselves, who discussed our undertakings, made note of our past experience and time, trials, and pleasures, while we unblushingly told of our interesting experiences. All were impressed with the trip and the excellent



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Curry Village was the final destination for the Clarks' Locomobile.

work of the carriage. Our delay at this point lost us the right of way, as we were compelled to endure their dust for several miles. At last the stage horses becoming tired, an opportunity presented itself. The automobile being fresh as a daisy, we were able to pass the stage, and soon leave it in the dim distance. Entering now upon the grand view of the Tuolumne Gorge, 3,000 feet below, there was a magnificent picture of old, old days, blissfully sleeping, awaiting the eternal roll call, with tall pines, firs, and redwoods for sentinels. This run took us through such scenery until Crocker's was reached. We arrived 45 minutes ahead of the stage. Luncheon over, we fed the machine its fuel, and duly inspected by tourists, both to and from the Valley, we took our departure some twenty minutes behind the stage. The same tactics were pursued in following the stage as in the morning. The passengers being doubtful of our ability to climb the heavy grades, caused a flow of comment, original in degree, and spiced with pleasantries — with a cheerful disregard of actual facts soon to be presented, for we again passed the stage, making the most excellent time to Crane Flat, then on to Gin Flat. This is the highest point of the Big Oak Flat Road, 7,500 feet above the level of the sea.

Individually our souls were inspired; mentally, we

were enchanted; personally, we could say nothing, for words fail when the Creator lays before us the sublime in the highest sense.

Again water was taken before starting for the Valley, and noticing a puncture in one of our tires, we stopped for repairs. The tire was easily mended and caused only a slight delay.

The road down into the Valley led past Inspiration and "Oh, My" points. This run being made without incident, we reached the floor of the Valley at 7:20 p.m. Here our worst roads were encountered, the granite dust being inches deep. Nevertheless, the four miles to the Guardian's Office was made in thirty minutes. Here we received our mail, then wended our way to Curry Camp, about one and one-quarter miles from the Guardian's Office. At Curry Camp, we ran our machine into the midst of a circle of Eastern tourists, seated around a large camp fire. To say that the apparition of an automobile suddenly appearing among them called forth generous applause and hearty congratulations but feebly expresses it. One and all praised the workmanship and great endurance of the little carriage, which had done such wonderful climbing with so little trouble to its occupants.



Ostrander Ski Hut to Open for Season

The Ostrander Ski Hut will open for the winter season on December 22, 1995 after having been closed for a year because of concerns about the waste disposal system. A permanent solution has not been determined, but the National Park Service (NPS) has approved the opening of the hut for the 1995/96 season under an interim arrangement.

The hut, operated for the NPS by Yosemite Association, is open and staffed during the winter to encourage ski touring. The trip into the hut is approximately nine miles and requires considerable stamina and cross-country skiing experience. The hut accommodates 25 people and is equipped with bunks and mattresses, a small kitchen, and a woodburning stove. Visitors to the hut ski in with their own sleeping bag, food, water filter and personal gear. The charge per person/per night is \$20.

Reservations for the hut are made on a lottery basis for weekend space. Phone reservations for remaining openings and weekdays can be made after November 27, 1995. If you have questions or wish further information, please write: Ostrander Reservations, P.O. Box 545, Yosemite, CA 95389, or call: (209) 372-0740.

Association Dates

March 30, 1996: YA Spring Forum, Yosemite Valley*
September 7, 1996: 21st Annual Meeting, Wawona*

*Members can make their own room reservations with Yosemite Concession Services (209) 252-4848.

Yosemite Association: 209 379-2317

If you're planning a trip to Yosemite and have questions, give our phone line a call between the hours of 9:00a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. We don't make reservations, but we can give appropriate phone numbers and usually lots of helpful advice.

Yosemite Association Mission

The Yosemite Association supports interpretive, educational, research, scientific, and environmental programs in Yosemite National Park, in cooperation with the National Park Service. Authorized by Congress, the Association provides services and direct financial support in order to promote park stewardship and enrich the visitor experience.

PUTTING SOME WORK IN YOUR LEISURE

HOW WOULD YOU LIKE a week in Yosemite including: a place to camp, great companions, delicious meals, informative evening programs, and some free time for hiking or relaxing?

How would you like six days featuring all of the above, plus work? If that four letter word doesn't change your response, you should consider joining—as I did—a summer Work Trip offered for Yosemite Association members and sponsored cooperatively by YA, Yosemite Concession Services, Yosemite Institute, and the National Park Service.

The successful and popular Work Trip program is eight years old. This year there were five trips scheduled from July to October. Participants' responses have been so positive that many—perhaps 50%—return in subsequent years. Typically, there are 15 people in each group. Ours in July, due to last minute cancellations, had only 12 participants. There were eight men and four women, ranging in age from 22 to 77.

Our group was originally scheduled to camp at Tuolumne Meadows (8,600 feet elevation), but the late snow melt and a major campground sewer project forced a change in plans. We slept and ate at the Yosemite Institute at Crane Flat (about 6,200 feet elevation). From there we commuted to our work sites on Monday,

Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. Wednesday was a free day for an optional group hike or for some rest and relaxation. On that day three of us from our group chose to hike out to the top of Yosemite Falls. The view was spectacular, but we might have profited from a little more "R and R" on our day off.

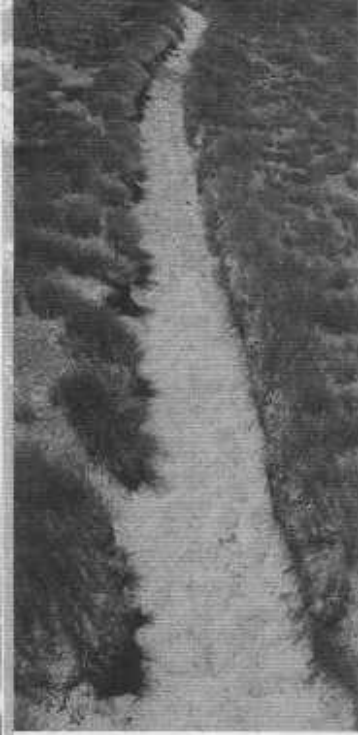
While on the subject of free time, our evenings were filled with delights unavailable from a TV viewing chair: programs on rock climbing, bears, stars and the nighttime sky, and an entertaining fire-side account of some of the death-defying adventures of John Muir. In addition, there was also a lot of good conversation around the dining room tables at mealtimes.

So there was play, but there was still that contrasting "w" word. There is an awesome amount of work waiting to be performed in Yosemite, and the work groups are variously deployed to tackle parts of it. Primarily, the YA groups work on restoration and revegetation projects under the direction of the Resources Division of the National Park Service.

Our first three work days were devoted to the removal of a trail near the Tuolumne Meadows Visitor Center. Horses, mules, people, etc. are all supposed to use a trail behind the Center, not the one closely paralleling the highway. Our job: to put the surplus trail out of business,



One of five work parties, here is the 1995 Sunrise Backcountry Work Trip crew.



a task much easier said than done. Several of our fittest hombres shoveled six pick-up loads of soil. Load after load was transported, shoveled into wheelbarrows and pushed into depressions along the trail. When the surrounding ground had been leveled, we harvested clumps of native grasses from close by and planted them in the fresh earth. Then we hand-carried many buckets of water to the transplanted grasses and sedges. Finally, we gathered forest duff—twigs, cones, needles—and spread it lightly over the used-to-be trail. All this was done under the supervision of the National Park Service. Seeing the transformation of an estimated 140 yards of trail brought great satisfaction, as well as aching muscles.

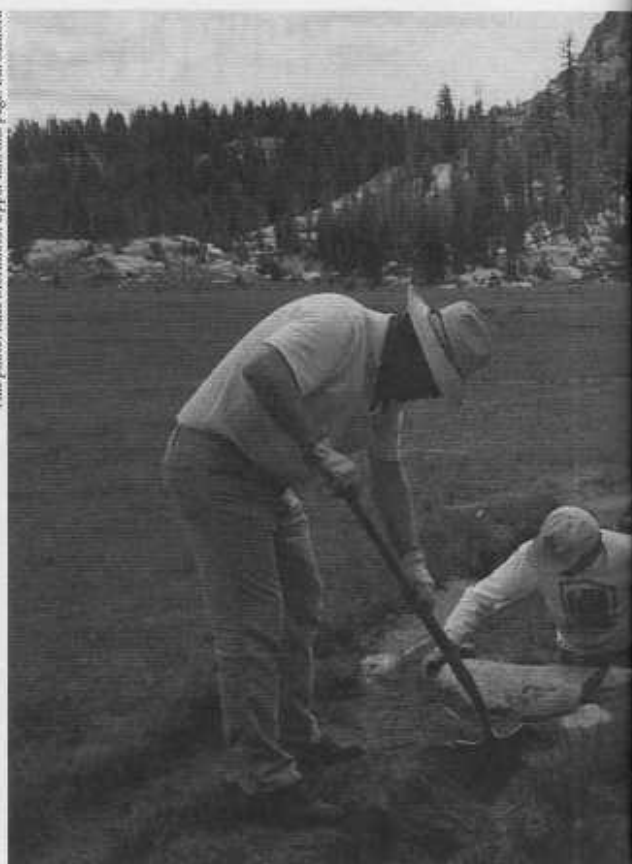
Our last day took us to Foresta and to a lower elevation on a very hot day. There we worked on taking out bull thistles, an exotic

plant which has ocean-hopped from its native Scotland and has become *flora non grata* in Yosemite. Wearing heavy gloves as defense against the ubiquitous sharp thorns, we first plucked off any seed pods showing purple and placed them in plastic bags. This was necessary because the seeds in these pods could be mature enough to germinate. Next we pulled the plant up roots and all. Or, if it resisted our tugs, we sheared it off at ground level. The footing was quite uneven. Trees downed by the vast 1990 fire in the area served to trip us. Stickers hitched rides on our pants, sleeves, socks and shoe strings. Shade was limited to what burned tree trunks cast, and nary a sheltering cloud cruised over all day. We packed water bottles with us as defense against dehydration, but it was



Edith Simonson

This photo: Russ Morimoto. Upper left, this page: Bill Sanford

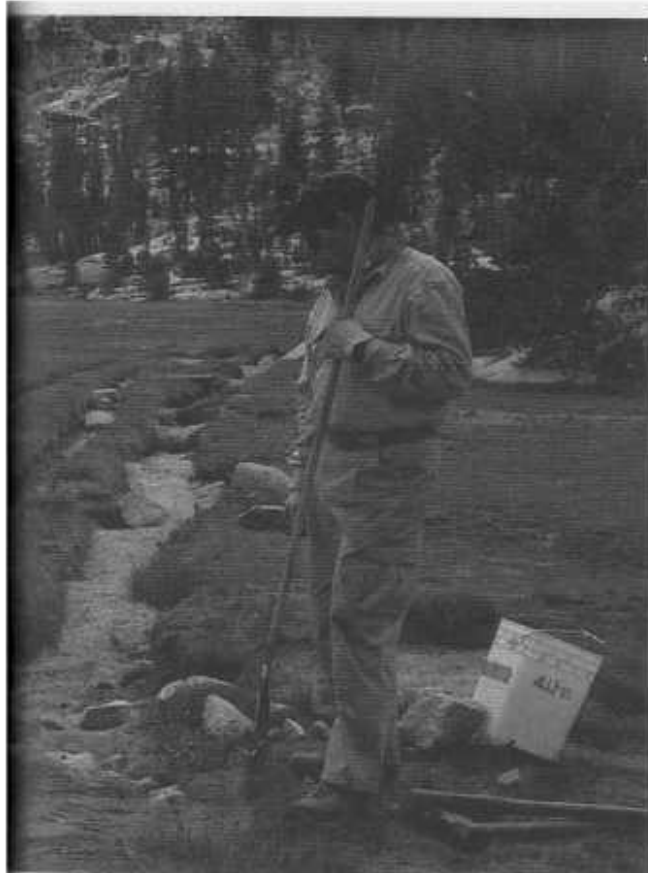


hot, hard work.

So then, why come to these work trips—and come back three and four times as several in our group had done? People offered a range of reasons. Said one: “Almost all year I work indoors. For me, it’s a treat to be outdoors and I enjoy the physical work for a change.” Another: “It’s so nice to be free of cooking for a week.” Several said they appreciated the chance to live and work in the midst of such beautiful surroundings. Many agreed—that having been enriched by Yosemite over many years—it was a pleasure “to give something back.”

Some remarked on how stimulating it was to make new friends among folks from a variety of places and professions. For example, among our self-described “dirty dozen,” we had a cancer researcher who flew in for a fourth time from Houston, Texas. Another returnee was a missiles tester from the Naval Warfare Center in China Lake, California. There were several teachers, a structural engineer, an accountant for one of California’s counties, two people who had written books, a couple of younger men still pursuing graduate studies—quite a variety!

During the week, the volunteers received appreciation from many sources. On Tuesday evening spokespersons for all four sponsors came to dinner and spoke briefly: Steven Medley, President of the Yosemite Association; Pete Devine of the Yosemite Institute; Gary Faker, CEO of Yosemite Concession Services; and Louise Johnson, representing the National Park Service. All praised the volunteers’ efforts. Each year, it was reported, somewhere



*Clockwise, from top left:
 A "before" shot shows the well-worn path.
 The work crew fills in the old trail bed with soil.
 The "after" photograph shows the reclaimed meadow with clumps of transplanted native grass.
 All in a day's work, a trusty hand takes a well-deserved break.
 The crew hard at work shovelling six pick-up loads of soil.*

Bill Sanford



around 15,000 hours of volunteer labor (from YA Work Trips and other groups) are given to the Park. Especially in these days of "bare bones" park budgets, this contribution is highly valued and greatly appreciated. Without volunteer labor, little restoration work would be accomplished each year.

As the week ended, our group felt very proud to have been part, albeit a small part, of the larger effort to restore some of Yosemite's fragile beauty.

Bill Sanford is a retired Methodist minister who lives in Atwater, California. He is the author of The San Joaquin, the Sierra and Beyond (a guide to 40 one and two day trips in Central California) published by Western Tanager Press.

EDITOR'S NOTE: The 1996 schedule for YA Work Trips will be listed in the Winter issue of Yosemite.



James M. Ridenour was Director of the National Park Service from 1989-92. This article is excerpted from his book, The National Parks Compromised, and is used with permission of the publisher. A review of the book appears on page 11.

A LOT HAS BEEN WRITTEN on overcrowding in the national parks. There is no doubt that some parks are overcrowded on some days of the year. Those present there and then are unlikely to be consoled by the fact that the parks are not overcrowded on average. On average, the man standing with one foot on ice and the other on a bed of hot coals should feel okay, but in reality he is pretty uncomfortable.

Much, too, is made of the problem of overcrowding in Yosemite. Certainly Yosemite is nationally, even interna-

tionally, one of the most treasured places to visit in the United States. Yosemite always seems to get the most media attention when the subject of overcrowding comes up, but there are other parks that face much the same problem. Grand Canyon and Yellowstone are prime examples. The surprising attendance at Ellis Island has given meaning to overcrowded park facilities in the East.

When people say that Yosemite is overcrowded, they are referring to the impact of mankind on the valley, which is seven square miles and is less than 7 percent of the total acreage of the park. (Yosemite National Park covers 1,169 square miles.) If you insist on going to Yosemite Valley at peak times you will most definitely feel that you are in an overcrowded park. But even on the most crowded days in the valley, there are places elsewhere in Yosemite where you can explore and run little risk of seeing another human being.

Major attractions such as El Capitan, Half Dome and Bridalveil Fall bring people to Yosemite from all over the world. Longtime Yosemite visitors have learned to go to other, less-visited parts of the park for a more rewarding, natural experience.

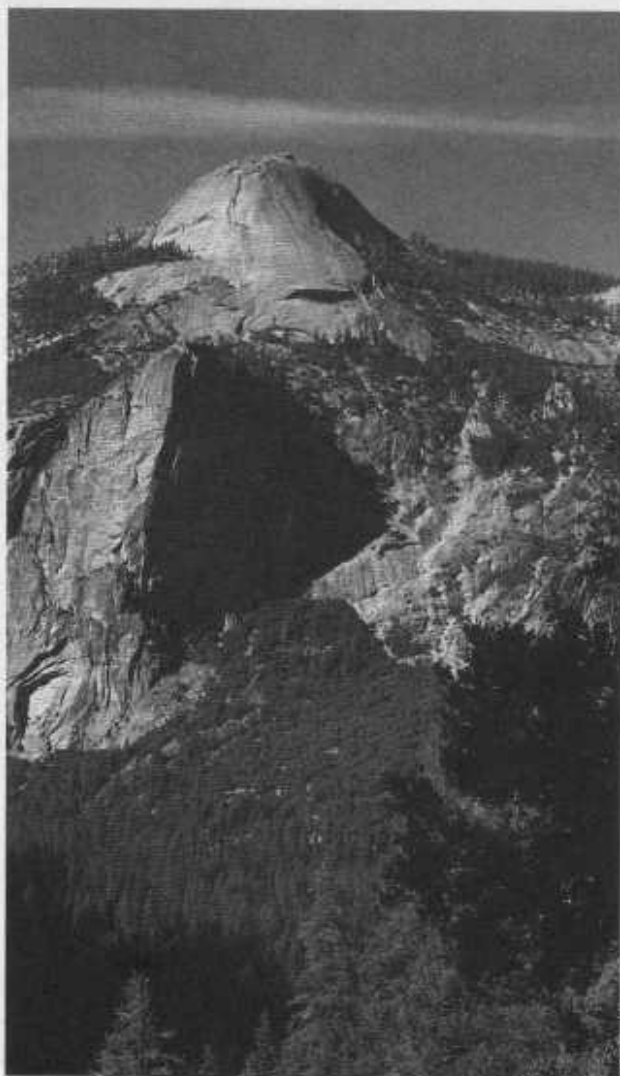
On occasion I've spent the night in Yosemite Valley and found it noisier than my condo near the Iwo Jima Memorial in Arlington, Virginia. Those tour buses fire up early as they hurry out of the valley to see the next great attraction on the itinerary.

When he learned that I worked with the National Parks, a new acquaintance of mine once launched into stories of his many hiking and camping trips into Yosemite and how much fun he had wandering the great California parks. He told about arriving in Yosemite Valley late one Friday night and getting confused about the location of his campsite. Not wanting to disturb others, he threw his sleeping bag out on the ground and turned in for the night. The next morning he awoke to the roar of engines and the smell of diesel smoke, he had camped next to the parking lot for the tour buses.

The day will come when we will have to make reservations for day use of some of our great parks. The Park Service can control the amount of night use by deciding how many overnight accommodations will be allowed in the parks. It's not the night use that bothers me, it's the day use.

The thousands who jam into Yosemite Valley during the day are the crowds that the media should worry about. Starting a reservation system for day use will not be easy or pleasant. Can you imagine shutting the gate in

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NPS photo

BOOK REVIEW

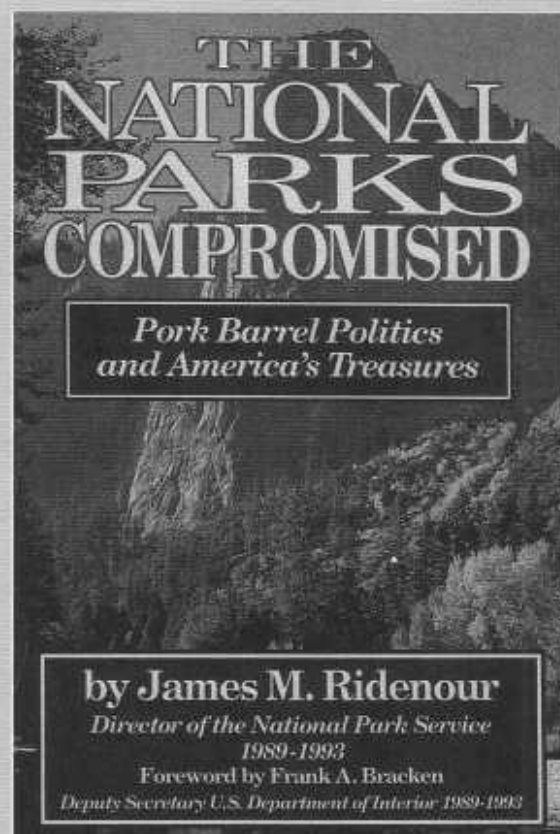
James M. Ridenour, *The National Parks Compromised: Park Barrel Politics and America's Treasures*. Foreword by Frank A. Bracken. Merrillville, Indiana: ICS Books, Inc., 1994, 254 pp., \$14.99. Reviewed by Robert Pavlik.

JIM RIDENOUR was appointed Director of the National Park Service in 1989 and served four years under President George Bush and Secretary of the Interior Manual Lujan. Despite the somewhat misleading title, the book is a highly personal account of his years as director, told in a clear, highly readable and enjoyable manner. He gives us "deep background" into some of the more complex and controversial issues that he faced during his tenure, including the renegotiation of the Yosemite concession

director of Indiana's Department of Natural Resources. During that time he also functioned as that state's historic preservation officer, an experience that imbued in him an appreciation for historical and cultural resources. Ridenour had the right combination of academic training, work experience, and political connections (in Vice President Dan Quayle's home state) to be chosen for the top job at the NPS.

Ridenour's approach to the management of parks is one of balance, common sense, and fiscal responsibility. A recurrent theme throughout his book is a concern for the "thinning of the NPS blood," or the addition of park units to the system that are not on a scale or level of significance to justify their inclusion.

This is a concern that dates to the early 1970s, when nontraditional units started to be added to the



The addition of numerous historical sites across the United States reflects the growing recognition of people, places, and events that constitute important and tangible contributions to our nation's history. In fact, some of these parks may well serve as "safety valves" for the larger national parks.

contract, the restoration of Yellowstone following the fires of 1988, and the fiftieth anniversary of the bombing of Pearl Harbor. The former director focuses considerable attention on Yosemite as well as other California parks, the Great Smoky Mountains, and the National Capitol Parks.

Prior to his arrival in Washington, Ridenour worked for eight years as

National Park System. The term "park barrel" came into vogue to describe some of the techniques used by members of Congress to bring local units into the system that may not be worthy or deserving of National Park status.

Ridenour, however, unfairly targets some of those units, applying an outdated criteria of grandeur alone, brushing aside the recognized need

to maintain biological diversity and to preserve precious open space in close proximity to some of America's largest urban areas. The addition of numerous historical sites across the United States reflects the growing recognition of the people, places, and events that have not traditionally been recognized, but that constitute important and tangible contributions to our nation's history. In fact, some of these parks may well serve as "safety valves" for the larger national parks, attracting visitors to quality recreational experiences close to home and relieving the pressure on places like Yosemite, which are already seriously overcrowded.

While it is true that the Park Service's infrastructure is in a fragile state, the elimination of those parks not deemed to be the "best" of the system would do little to improve conditions. It is not so much the thinning of the blood, as the lack of vitamins (read: dollars) needed to keep the system healthy. Whereas Ridenour's predecessor, the late William Penn Mott, Jr., preferred the

Continued on page 13



the face of a family of four who started their trip from New York not knowing exactly when they would arrive at Yosemite? I can see it now: "We've driven two thousand miles to see this place and we only have one day to see it! Throw someone out and let us in!"

The idea of a day-use reservation system shouldn't be that foreign to us. After all, most of us are used to making reservations to go out to dinner or to a play. We buy our tickets *ahead of time* to go to a ball game.

One major problem is the logistics of setting up a reservation system. The Park Service has not had great luck with its campground reservation program. It would appear to be a simple task, especially in these days of computer communications, but for some reason it has not worked as well as you would think. The campground reservation program is run by a private contractor, as it doesn't make sense to burden our limited park staff with this responsibility. Unfortunately, the contractor tends to hire employees who don't stay around long enough to become familiar with the product, the parks. I called the reservations number just to see how informed the clerks were in offering suggestions and alternatives. Maybe I caught an employee on a bad day, but my impression was

There must be a creative way to bring people to Yosemite safely and with minimal impact on the environment. Personally, I think day use will have to be curtailed during peak times and that a totally new transportation system will have to be devised.

term "367 jewels in the crown" when referring to the national parks, Ridenour tends to place a greater emphasis on the "crown jewels:" Yosemite, Yellowstone, Everglades, and the Alaska parks.

(For an excellent examination of the growth and development of the National Park System in the 1960s and 1970s, see Judith Robinson, *You're In Your Mother's Arms: The Life and Legacy of Congressman Phil Burton* (1994). Ridenour credits Burton with adding 76 units to the National Park System in the 1970s, saying "while one can question whether all of these units deserved national status, it is hard to question the effective leadership Phil Burton lent to this effort.")

Ridenour devotes considerable space to examining the role of concessions in national parks. An entire chapter is dedicated to the Yosemite Park and Curry Company and the Park Service's negotiations with parent company MCA following its acquisition by Matsushita, Inc. Ridenour writes, "How we dealt with the principal Yosemite concessionaire changed the way the National Park Service will do business with all concessionaires in the future. It was among the most important accomplishments of my four years as director." You'll have to read the book to learn "the art of the deal."

The author concludes his book with a brief synopsis of his accomplishments (which are considerable).

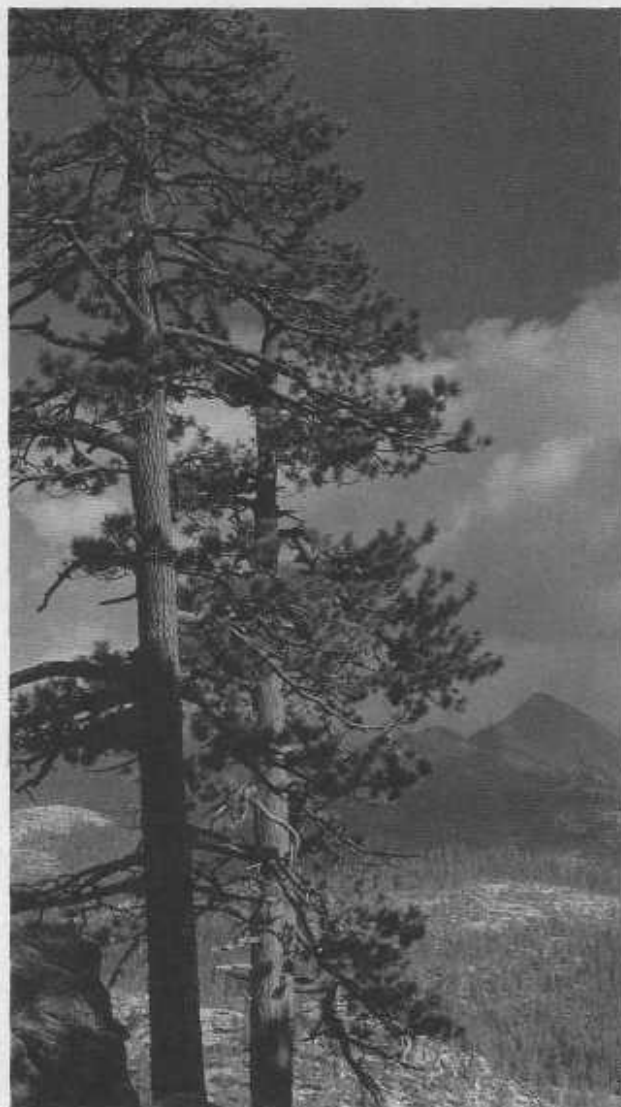
The appendices contain Ridenour's "Philosophical Thoughts on (the) National Park Service," as well as a list of national parks. *The National Parks Compromised* is an important addition to the literature of the national parks, and should be read by anyone interested in the history—and the future—of the national parks.

Bob Pavlik is an historian for the California Department of Transportation in San Luis Obispo, and a regular contributor to this journal. He worked for several years in Yosemite on historical research projects for the NPS.

that he was poorly oriented to the parks and the range of opportunities for camping. It would be nice to be able to call one 800 number and get information about camping at all federal sites, not just the national parks, but the private sector has yet to tackle that task.

One idea that might make sense is to place the computers and switchboards in a few of the lower-risk federal corrections facilities and train the prisoners to operate the system. You would have a better idea of what the staff turnover rate would be, and the training and work experience would be good for the inmates. There might be a concern about allowing them access to the telephones, but I'm sure some technical genius could figure out a way to solve that problem.

At Yosemite, traffic, especially the automobile, is a major problem in the valley. Sometimes it seems as though people are driving around and around just looking for a place to park. There is a definite need for some sort of an alternative transportation plan. Some people argue that providing more tour and shuttle buses to bring people into the valley while forcing passenger cars to park elsewhere is the answer. I'm not sure I follow their logic. While I am in sympathy with the idea of banning cars in the valley, I am not ready to endorse buses as the answer to the problem. If bumper-to-bumper cars jam the roads in the valley, we can assume the cars will not average more than four occupants per car. With a no-car policy and bumper-to-bumper buses, the number of individuals in the valley would greatly increase. Simple math will show that buses averaging forty passengers per bus will crowd the valley faster than cars. I resisted cries



NPS photo



from the tour-bus operators to kick their automotive competition out of the valley.

There must be a creative way to bring people to Yosemite safely and with minimal impact on the environment. Personally, I think day use will have to be curtailed during peak times and that a totally new transportation system will have to be devised. This issue has been and will continue to be studied. Innovative ideas such as the possible use of light rail need to be explored. As new technology becomes available the NPS should be ready to adopt and adapt creative ideas.

Tour operators make a great deal of money bringing international tourists to our parks. I don't begrudge them this, for tourism is one of the few areas in which we run an international trade surplus. But I do think that the operators and the Park Service have a responsibility to channel more tourism to lesser-known parks.

There are many great sites that go relatively unvisited as the tour operators stick to the same routes they have been selling for years. Some creative marketing on the part of the operators would help. Of course, the concessions people would need to be involved in planning the changes, and Park Service people must be in on the ground floor of the discussion. But we could take a lot of pressure off our most fragile park areas if we did a better job of coordinating tours.

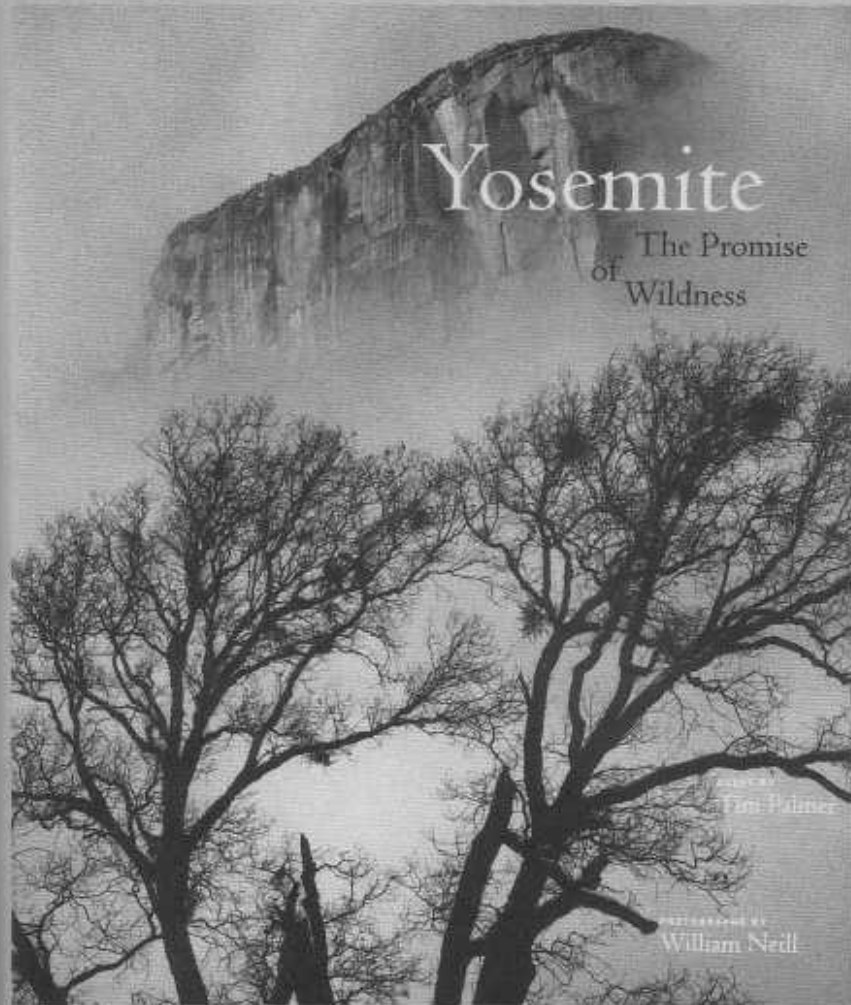
Besides the tour bus controversy, a part of the problem of crowding at Yosemite is internally generated. At the peak season, over 2,835 employees are in the park and become part of the congestion problem. Of that number, approximately 735 are NPS employees and the rest are employees of the concessionaire. Of the 2,835 employees,

approximately half work in the valley.

A difficult problem to address lies with the food-service people. One day I decided to knock on doors of concessionaire housing to get a better feel for the kind of hours these people worked. Since I chose midmorning to start my informal survey, I found my knocking brought many sleepy-looking employees to the doors. I found that some worked late in the dining rooms and were sleeping in. Others had been serving breakfast to early risers and had just gotten off their morning shift and were catching a few winks before heading back to serve the noon lunch crowd.

I don't think all of these people can be relocated away from the valley. They would spend all their time on shuttles going back and forth to work, further aggravating the traffic problem. This is a problem that deserves more thought. Moving the headquarters operations of the concessionaire out of the valley does make sense. With all the convenience of modern communications, there is little reason that many administrative functions of the concessionaire need be in the park at all.

Many other employees do not need to actually be in the valley on a daily basis. For example, there is no reason the NPS employees who are serving mainly an administrative function need to be in the valley. The same is true for people working in the motor pool. My goal was to move as many of these functions out of the valley as soon as possible. This goal has to be a long-range one as the dollars it will take to move all of the infrastructure from the valley to locations less environmentally sensitive will take much debate and time to provide.



02457 Yosemite - The Promise of Wildness

with photographs by William Neill and an essay by Tim Palmer

This fine gift book combines the breath-taking and inimitable imagery of William Neill with the insightful optimism of essayist Tim Palmer to present a unique study of Yosemite's meaning and prospect for humankind today and for coming generations.

The selection of photographs (a total of 70 in full color) includes a variety of striking images, from close-up details of natural objects to monumental portraits of Yosemite's world-famous landmarks. To enhance the reader's appreciation of his work, Neill has contributed lengthy "Photographic Notes," providing fascinating observations and technical data.

Tim Palmer's essay grew from his many experiences at Yosemite, which have provided him a deep knowledge of the park. He visited during all seasons to better understand the many faces that Yosemite assumes. In two parts, the essay comprises an appreciation of the park's uniqueness as well as a plea for the continued well-being of this amazing natural wonderland.

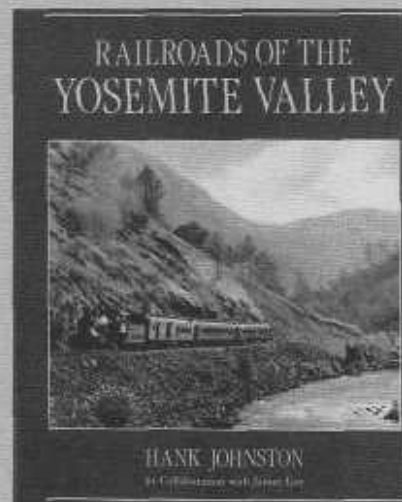
The blending of Palmer's words with Neill's photographs has resulted in a work that has strong impact and that evokes powerful personal response. 120 pages, Yosemite Association, 1994. Clothbound, \$29.95

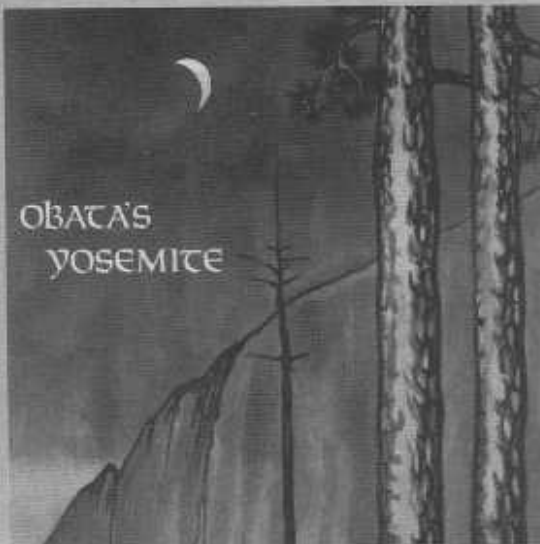
01700 Railroads of the Yosemite Valley

By Hank Johnston in collaboration with James Law

This is a reprint of a classic historical work detailing the intriguing story of the four short line railroads that operated in the Merced River canyon to serve Yosemite National Park. Originally published in 1963, the volume offers a wealth of photographic material, including over 200 black and white images of trains, tracks, stations, and related structures and objects. Because the advent of the automobile meant the demise of all four railroad lines, Railroads of the Yosemite Valley documents an important chapter in California history never to be known again.

One of the rail lines carried thousands of visitors, including notables and celebrities, to Yosemite Valley, while the others were integral to logging and mining operations in the area. The story of each, describing both the individuals and their machines, is detailed here with remarkable photographs that bring the narrative richness and life. 206 pages, Yosemite Association, 1995. Paperback, \$19.95





01400/01401 Obata's Yosemite - The Art and Letters of Chiura Obata from his Trip to the High Sierra in 1927 with essays by Janice T. Driesbach and Susan Landauer

When Chiura Obata, a gifted California artist born in Japan, made his first visit to Yosemite in 1927, the experience deeply affected his life. Not only did he produce a remarkable collection of sketches and paintings, but he recorded the details of the trip in a fascinating series of letters and post cards.

The volume presents Obata's high Sierra journey in his own words and art. Included are 85 full-color reproductions of pencil sketches, watercolor paintings, and woodblock prints, plus a detailed narrative of the six-week Yosemite visit as told through Obata's letters and cards to his family.

This beautifully printed book has been recognized with several publishing awards including its selection as one of the "Fifty Best Books of 1993" by the American Institute of Graphic Arts. 156 pages, Yosemite Association, 1993. Cloth, \$44.95; paper, \$24.95.

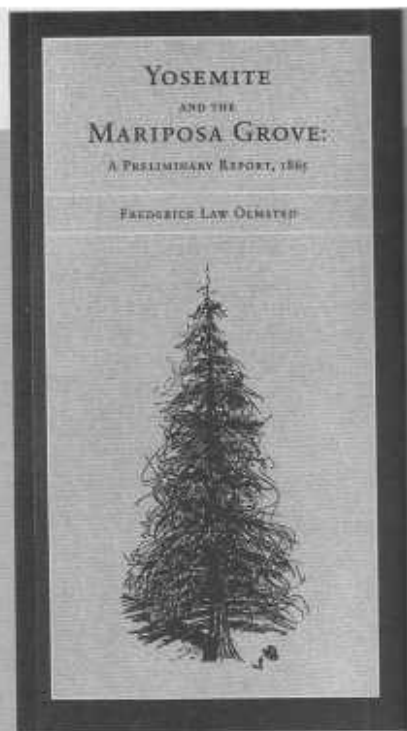
02467/02468 Yosemite and the Mariposa Grove: A Preliminary Report, 1865

By Frederick Law Olmsted, with an introduction by Victoria Post Ranney

Originally issued as a finely printed book limited to 400 copies, this report was recently published in a paperback version. Prepared on behalf of the Yosemite Valley Commissioners to recommend management guidelines for the newly-reserved Yosemite Valley and Mariposa Grove of Big Trees, the document many have been suppressed.

Amazingly, Olmsted's proposals remained undiscovered and unpublished from 1865 to 1952. Just as astonishing, the report has never been made available to the public in separate book form until now. What makes it so significant is that Olmsted formulated for the first time a philosophic base for the creation of state and national parks, setting forth the policy underlying the preservation of areas of unique natural beauty for the benefit of the public.

Olmsted historian, Victoria Post Ranney, has provided an insightful introduction to the report, and Wayne Thiebaud, a noted California artist, undertook three line illustrations especially for this edition. 56 pages, Yosemite Association, 1994 and 1995. Paperback edition, \$6.95. Limited edition (unsigned), hardbound, \$85.00.



13073/13072

The Sounds of Yosemite

By Orange Tree Productions

In a unique recording, the natural sounds of Yosemite have been woven together with music inspired by the place to create what the musicians call a "symphony with nature." The producers spent hundreds of hours exploring and recording throughout Yosemite National Park to capture the natural soundscape that is unique to this locale.

Interestingly, a special binaural microphone was used for this recording that creates a three dimensional effect for the listener. Eight selections are included ranging from "Daybreak" to "Waterfalls" to "A Quiet Place" to "Tuolumne Dreams." Instrumentation consists of piano, acoustic guitar, violin, and keyboards. 46 minutes, Orange Tree Productions, 1995. Compact disc, \$14.95; cassette tape, \$9.95



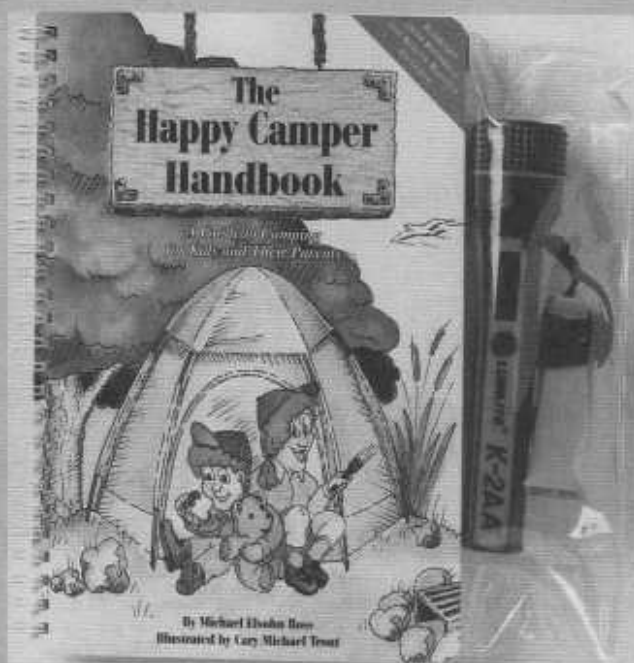
YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK



11702 Yosemite National Park 1996 Calendar

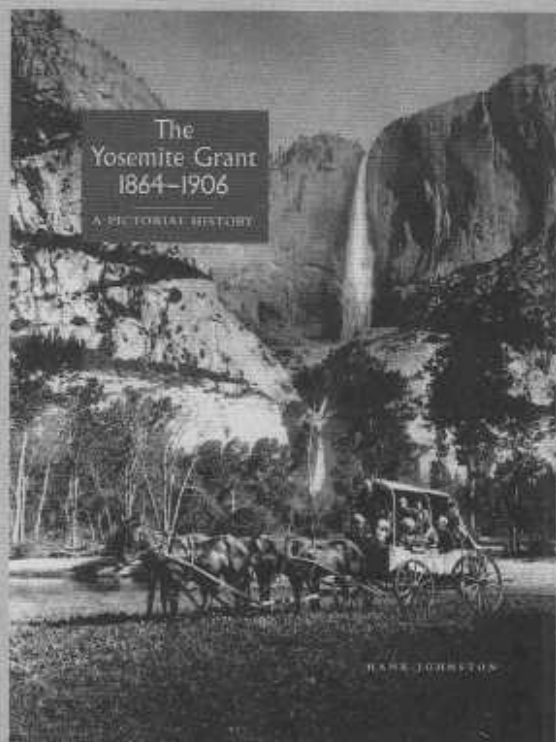
It's almost time to replace your 1995 wall calendar, and this handsome production by Browntrout Publishers is replete with dramatic full-color images by some of Yosemite's best

photographers including Howard Weamer, Galen Rowell, and David Muench. As usual, the calendar features a remarkable photograph of a Yosemite landmark or scene for each month, plus notations of holidays and moon phases. All of 1996 is presented with elegance and simplicity in this handsome wall-hanging calendar. Browntrout Publishers, 1995. \$9.95



00800 Happy Camper Handbook — A Guide to Camping for Kids and Their Parents by Michael Ross

This is a fun and informative introduction to the pleasures and rewards of camping for both children and adults. With tips on equipment, clothing, setting up camp, dealing with bears, first aid, and hiking, it's practically a camping encyclopedia for beginners. Kids will love the activities, riddles, camping games, campfire songs—all illustrated with light hearted, full-color drawings. The book comes with a quality Lumilite® flashlight and a sturdy rescue whistle. 64 pages, Yosemite Association, 1995. Paper, \$15.95



02447 The Yosemite Grant, 1864-1906: A Pictorial History by Hark Johnston.

Never before has the early history of Yosemite Valley been so well-documented or so well-illustrated. This informative work provides an in-depth treatment of important historical figures, plus extensive coverage of hotels and businesses that operated between 1856 and 1904, as well as telling the story of the grant itself. This historical record (which corrects many earlier versions) is complemented with some 210 photographs (many not previously published) and seven maps. For historians and Yosemite-philes the collection of photographs alone should prove a fascinating and invaluable resource. 288 pages, Yosemite Association, 1995. Cloth, \$29.95



400 Sierra Nevada Field Card Set

Illustrated by Elizabeth Morales

These handy field identification cards depict the most commonly seen birds, mammals, trees, and wildflowers from the Sierra Nevada region. Illustrated with color drawings and including information about the size, habitat, and other field marks of each, the cards are unbreakable, waterproof vinyl plastic and fit conveniently in one's daypack or glove compartment. Particularly helpful for newcomers to the Sierra as regularly observed flora and fauna can be quickly identified. Four plastic cards printed on both sides, Yosemite Association, 1991 and 1995. \$11.00

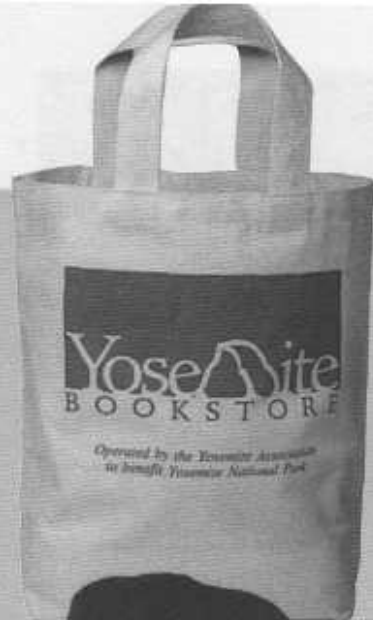
07800 Yosemite Wilderness Pin.

Here's a beautiful enamel pin commemorating Yosemite's unparalleled wilderness. It's circular in shape with a high country scene rendered in blues, grays, and greens. A real treasure for collectors. Approximately 1 inch in diameter. \$4.00



07720 Yosemite Bookstore Book Bag.

Conserve resources with YA's handy book bag made from durable 100% cotton fabric with a sturdy web handle. Cream-colored, it's imprinted in blue with the Yosemite Bookstore logo. Fine craftsmanship and generous oversized design make this a bag you'll want to take everywhere. Approximately 17 x 16 inches. \$8.95



07505 Yosemite Association Baseball-Style Cap.

Our YA caps are made of corduroy with an adjustable strap at the back so that one size fits all. The cap is adorned with a YA logo patch, and comes in dark blue, forest green and maroon colors. The cap is stylish and comfortable, and wearing it is a good way to demonstrate your support for Yosemite. \$9.95 (please specify color)



07510 Yosemite Association Mug.

This distinctive and functional heavy ceramic mug feels good with your hand wrapped around it. Available in two colors (green and maroon), it's imprinted with our logo and name in black and white. Holds 12 ounces of your favorite beverage, \$6.50 (please specify color)

07516 Yosemite Association Patch.

Our Association logo is embroidered on colorful, sturdy fabric for placement on daypacks, shirts, blue jeans, jackets, or wherever! The newly-designed patch is available in three attractive colors: dark blue, forest green, and maroon. \$3.00 (please specify color)

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Every membership counts in contributing to the care, well-being, and protection of America's foremost park — Yosemite!

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