

# **o Tour of Yosemite National Park (1956) by Richard P. Ditton and**

Richard P. Ditton and Donald E. McHenry

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# ***Self-guiding Auto Tour of Yosemite National Park (1956) by Richard P. Ditton and Donald E. McHenry***

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r r *Cover*

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**Warning:** Road markers have been renumbered since this guide was written in 1956. Also some roads described are now closed to automobiles (including roads in Mariposa Grove and Tuolumne Grove and roads in far eastern Yosemite Valley to Mirror Lake and Happy Isles.)

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## About the Authors

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r Richard P. Ditton worked for the Yosemite Park and Curry Company and livedr in the Yosemite area for 14 years when this book was written in 1956.r

## Self-guiding Auto Tour of Yosemite National Park (1956) by Richard P. Ditton and Donald E. McHenry

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r Donald E. McHenry was born August 28, 1895 in rural Pennsylvania. He started out as an episcopal minister, but found it too political. He studied biology at University of Wyoming and in 1927 guided visitors at Rocky Mountain National Park in a tour bus. He received a masters in botony from University of Colorado and taught atr Oklahoma A&M. In 1932 he joined the National Park Service and would guide with tour bus or, with a megaphone, guide a auto caravan. McHenry even tried guiding from above in a plane with a megaphone, but that was short-lived as the motor drowned out the talk. He then worked at several other parks. At the National Capital Parks he started an popular urban campfire program.

r r

r According to r Bingaman's *Guardians of the Yosemite* (1961):r

r

r Donald was appointed Park Naturalist of Yosemite National Park, January 9, 1947. Prior to this appointment he had been at the Grand Canyon National Park, Arizona and in the Washington office of the Naturalist Division. He entered the Government Service in 1919. Mr. McHenry, an accomplished musician, contributed freely of his time and talent to all musical programs. He retired from the Park Service March 31, 1956.

r r

r After transferring to Yosemite in 1947, McHenry tried to get the Yosemite Field School going again. The park superintendent, Carl Russell, was opposed because of budget and becauser he felt it didn't contribute much. McHenry then modified the revived program to require student participationr in interpretation and write an article for *Yosemite Nature Notes*. Several students in the school became Ranger Naturalists.

r r

r Shirley Sargent *Protecting Paradise* (1998) adds:r

r

r Don headed the naturalist division for 11 years before retiring early. In 1950 his wife, Bona Mae, became the first kindergarten teacher at ther Yosemite school. They had two sons, Bruce and Keith; the latter died as a teenager in 1955 from ar severe sunburn received while skiing shirtless.

r r

r McHenry died December 28, 1969 in Santa Clara County, California.

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r

- r r Dr. Napier Shelton, "Roots of Interpretation: Donald Edward McHenry—Pioneer Urban Interpreter, Preacher of the Earth," *Legacy* 3(2) (reprinted at [National Association for Interpretation website](#))

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r r

## Bibliographical Information

r r

r Richard P. Ditton (b. before 1942) and Donald E. McHenry (1895-1969), *Self-guiding Auto Tour of Yosemite National Park* (Yosemite: Yosemite Natural History Association, 1956), 78 pp. Illustrated. 24 cm. Saddle stitched in paper wrappers. Published as *Yosemite Nature Notes* 35(6):61-112 (June 1956).

r r

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r —Dan Anderson, [www.yosemite.ca.us](http://www.yosemite.ca.us)

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r [Editor's note: "Descent Into the Valley," *Appleton's Weekly Magazine*, January 18, 1873r —dea.]r

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# YOSEMITE NATURE NOTES

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r THE MONTHLY PUBLICATION OFr  
r THE YOSEMITE NATURALIST DIVISION ANDr  
r AND THE YOSEMITE NATURAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION, INC.r

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**VOL. XXXV**

**JUNE, 1956r**

**No. 6r**

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# ***r Self-guiding Auto Tour r of r Yosemite National Park***

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r r By  
r Richard P. Ditton and Donald E. McHenry r

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r SPECIAL ISSUER

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# ***Self-guiding Auto Tour of Yosemite National Park (1956) by Richard P. Ditton and Donald E. McHenry***

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## **WELCOME**

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r John C. Preston

r r r On behalf of the National Park Service I take pleasure in welcoming you as a visitor to Yosemite National Park. I know that your visit was planned to afford you and your party a unique and happy experience in this, one of the world's outstanding scenic areas. It is the purpose of this booklet to help you realize to the utmost the pleasures of this trip. Many will find time or inclination for seeing the park from auto roads only. Under these circumstances the use of this guide will bring a fuller understanding and appreciation of the essentials of the magnificent scenery which can be seen from the highway. For those who are disposed to explore the wonders of Yosemite further, you are invited to travel along the high country trails and spend your nights camping out under the stars. In this manner will you be able to gain a more intimate knowledge of the park and its many superlative features. By this experience one will more fully understand and appreciate the fragile nature of a wilderness area. Detailed trail guides and maps to help you are available in the park.

r This booklet is intended to help you learn more about Yosemite. It is based on the combined experience and knowledge of the park gained by Richard P. Ditton of the Yosemite Park and Curry Company through 14 years of residence in the area, and that of Donald F. McHenry, Park Naturalist for over 9 years, assisted extensively by members of the naturalist staff, especially Douglass H. Hubbard, Wayne W. Bryant, Ruth Glass and Helen Doty as well as by Laurence V. Degnan, and by helpful suggestions from National Park Service and Company officials.

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# ***Self-guiding Auto Tour of Yosemite National Park (1956) by Richard P. Ditton and Donald E. McHenry***

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## **A BRIEF STORY OF YOSEMITE**

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r Yosemite National Park, one of our 28 scenic and scientific national parks and one of some 180 areas administered by the National Park Service, is world famous for the scenic grandeur of Yosemite Valley and its high Sierra country. It embraces about 1200 square miles with elevations ranging from foothills to alpine peaks over 13,000' high. Such differences in elevation account for the zone-like distribution of the 17 evergreens and 18 broad-leaf trees making up Yosemite's forests and to a degree its wildlife also. Deer are especially abundant in Yosemite Valley where they, with the bear, are often mistaken for tame animals. They are dangerous and park regulations forbid feeding them in the park.

r r

r Yosemite Valley was probably discovered by William Penn Abrams in 1849 during the gold rush days. It later came into national prominence through the 1855 reports of Dr. Lafayette H. Bunnell of the Mariposa Battalion under Major James D. Savage, and the extended writings of James M. Hutchings, John Muir, Starr King and many others who worked for its preservation. Because of growing public interest, John Conness, Senator from California, introduced into the Congress in 1864 a bill to set aside Yosemite Valley and the Mariposa Grove of Big Trees as the Yosemite Grant. The bill was passed and signed by President Abraham Lincoln. Here was the first practical application of what was to grow into our great National Park System of today. It was given to the State of California to administer until 1905 when it was ceded to the federal government for incorporation in Yosemite National Park which had been established in the surrounding country by Congress in 1890. Yosemite National Park was first administered by the U. S. Army but with the establishment of the National Park Service as a bureau of the U. S. Department of the Interior in 1916, administration passed to civilian hands. Today the visitors' contacts with this Service are largely through uniformed park rangers and naturalists, whose duties are to protect, preserve and interpret the park under the supervision of the park superintendent.

r r

r The story of the formation of Yosemite Valley goes back some two hundred million years when this land was beneath the sea. As it subsequently arose out of the sea it was covered with layers of sediments many thousands of feet thick, the remnants of which are seen today as greatly changed rocks in the foothills and on some of the park's highest peaks. The granites which now make up most of Yosemite National Park's rocks welled up underneath this old sea deposit as molten rock which cooled slowly as the sea deposits eroded away. As the Sierras tilted westward through three stages of uplift, rivers established courses down this slope wearing successively deeper valleys into the granite. About one million years ago the third and last deep and steep-sided "V"-shaped river valley was invaded at separate times by three ice age glaciers which carved the valley into its present "U"-shaped form. The first two glaciers were 3000 to 4000 feet deep and extended as far as El Portal. The third and last glacier, filling only about a third of the depth of the valley,

## Self-guiding Auto Tour of Yosemite National Park (1956) by Richard P. Ditton and Donald E. McHenry

dropped its load of rocks and debris at a point between El Capitan and Bridalveil Fall. This made a dam which backed up the water from the melting ice to form Ancient Lake Yosemite, 5 1/2 miles long and perhaps as much as two thousand feet deep in the area of Camp Curry. As the lake filled with sediment the present level floor of the valley came into being.

r r

The first tourist party came to Yosemite Valley in 1855 on horseback over old Indian trails. It was not until 1874 that a toll road, the Coulterville Road, was built, allowing stage travel to the valley floor. It was followed within a month by a competing toll road, the old Big Oak Flat Road. In the autumn of 1874 Washburn, Chapman, Coffman and Company received permission to extend their toll road from Wawona to the valley, thus completing the road from Mariposa, the first from the south. In 1877 Coffman sold his interests and the company became the Yosemite Stage and Turnpike Company, the first organized stageline in Yosemite. During the 1880's the Nevada Stage Company ran stages from Stockton to Yosemite Valley via Milton and the old Big Oak Flat Road. Scheduled stage runs over this route ended in 1888, although there was irregular stage coach travel over this road past the turn of the century.

r r

The days of the stage coach were numbered with the building of the Yosemite Valley Railroad in 1907 from Merced to El Portal. Upon its completion the railroad company built a wagon road from the railhead to the Coulterville Road in Yosemite Valley so that horse-drawn stages could carry train passengers into the park. This was when El Portal—the portal—received its name.

r r

In 1913 stage companies operating in and to the park established the then famous Horseshoe Route running from Raymond to Yosemite Valley and return to Merced. Another well-known stage circuit was the Triangle Route, operated from El Portal past Big Meadows to the Tuolumne Grove of Big Trees and then via the old Big Oak Flat Road to Yosemite Valley. These several stage routes came to an end with the consolidation and reorganization of transportation and hotel accommodations in the park in 1925 under a corporation that is known today as the Yosemite Park and Curry Company. The transportation division of this company operates bus stages throughout the park and between the park, Merced, Fresno and Lake Tahoe under franchises with the U. S. Department of the Interior, the California Public Utilities Commission and the Interstate Commerce Commission. This division still uses the old name, Yosemite Transportation System, formerly identified with the transportation department of the old Desmond Company.

r r

The building of the Merced All-Year Highway in 1926, the growth of mass automobile travel and the subsequent loss of passenger and freight revenue led the Yosemite Valley Railroad to abandonment in 1945. In the travel year of 1955 almost a million visitors like yourselves came to the park, mostly by private automobile. For you there are some 217 miles of public roads to various parts of the park and about 750 miles of trails to permit you to enjoy the wilderness features of Yosemite. It is with your pleasure in mind that this self-guiding auto tour booklet has been prepared, that you may have greater opportunity to appreciate, enjoy, and protect the unique scenic wilderness values of Yosemite National Park.

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# ***Self-guiding Auto Tour of Yosemite National Park (1956) by Richard P. Ditton and Donald E. McHenry***

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## **HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE**

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r This booklet describes the more important points along the highways in Yosemite National Park and along the roads between Merced, Fresno and the park.

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r To get the greatest enjoyment from this self-guided trip, travel leisurely—drive slowly and carefully.

r r

r In the left hand margin of the text is a series of letters and numbers which correspond to post markers with white letters and numbers identifying points of interest along the highway. The letters represent the particular roads as follows: “V” stands for Yosemite Valley. “W” the Wawona Road to the South Entrance. “B” the Mariposa Grove of Giant Sequoias. “G” the Glacier Point Road from Chinquapin. “C” the Crane Flat Road to the park boundary at Carl Inn (Highway 120). and “T” the Tioga Road from Crane Flat to Tioga Pass which leads to the other side of the crest of the Sierra Nevada. Look at “Contents” for the proper page. The mileage shown in parentheses between paragraphs gives the distance between successive points driving either way. Using either or both systems will enable you to follow this guide successfully. Where your travel reverses the order given in the guide, remember that this will also reverse directions as given, i.e., right becomes left, ahead becomes behind, opposite side becomes near side, etc.

r r

r The guides to interesting points along the Merced Road and the Fresno Road are on pages 103 and 108, respectively. Along these roads outside the park you will be guided only by the distances given between points. A brief description of the wildlife and plants in the park is given on page 110.

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r STOP ONLY AT PARKING AREAS OR OFF THE ROADr

r

r AN AUTOMOBILE ACCIDENT WILL SPOIL YOUR TRIPr

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# ***Self-guiding Auto Tour of Yosemite National Park (1956) by Richard P. Ditton and Donald E. McHenry***

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## **YOSEMITE VALLEY FROM PARK BOUNDARY ON MERCED ROAD**

r r

r (Total driving distance 30 miles)r

r r

*r r Keep to the left at all major intersections in the valley.r r*

r r

*r r Map of Yosemite Valley pages 86 and 87.r r*

r r

**r r V-1r PARK BOUNDARY.** Yosemite Nationalr Park, like our other nationalr parks, was established to preserve an area in as primitive a wilderness condition as possible for the enjoyment byr the people for all time. Yosemite is famous for its glacier-sculptured scenery. Inr contrast to the practices in national forests, no lumbering, hunting or mining isr allowed in national parks. Yosemite is ar wildlife preserve where wild animals mayr be seen roaming at large. Yosemite'sr modern history began in the days of ther '49ers, although Indians lived here previously. The walls of the Merced Canyonr here, like the walls of Yosemite Valley,r are granite. This granite was originallyr molten rock which was forced up beneath older rocks now worn away.r (For ar guide to points of interestr along the road between Yosemite National Park and Merced, see page 103.)r r

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r r r  
California Mule Deerr

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r r r  
Sierra Black Bearr

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r r r r r

r (2.2 miles)r

r r

r r **V-2r ARCH ROCK ENTRANCE STATION.** There are 4 entrance stationsr in Yosemite where park rangersr furnish information and collect visitor-user fees. This money is not used for operating the park but is deposited directly in the U. S. Treasury. Additional detailedr information is available at park headquarters and the Yosemite Museum.r

r r

r (2.7 miles)r

r r

r r **V-3r OLD COULTEVILLE ROAD.**r On the left the highway is joinedr by the old Coulterville Road, ther first road into Yosemite Valley. (Readr r description in W-4, page 80.)r

r r

r (0.5 of a mile)r

r r

r r **V-4r CASCADE FALLS.** In the springr early summer you will haver from here a fine view of Cascader Falls. The falls have a drop of approximately 500 feet. (Readr r description underr C-3, page 93.)r

r r r r r

r (1.7 miles)r

r r

r r **V-5r JUNCTION WITH THE BIG OAKr FLAT ROAD.** The Big Oak Flatr Road which takes off here is described underr r C-1, page 92. (Driver straight ahead at next intersection)r

r r

r (1.2 miles)r

r r

r r **V-6r VALLEY VIEW.** From Valley Viewr you see the “gates” of the valley,r formed by El Capitan and Cathedral Rocks. In early summer the scene isr framed by fragrant blossoms of azalea,r the shrubs which line the river bank.r The trees of the forest in the valley arer principally two dominant evergreens, ther ponderosa pine and the incense-cedar,r with a scattering of white fir, Douglas-firr and a few sugar pine. In the meadowsr grow the California black oak (source ofr food for the now departed Yosemite Indians), black cottonwood and whiter alder. The last two trees are commonr along the streams together with the Pacific dogwood. The rocky slopes at ther base of the cliffs are covered with ther evergreen live oaks, as well as a scattering of



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bigleaf maples and California laurel. Although the incense-cedar, because of its red bark, is frequently mistaken for "redwood," no giant sequoias grow native on the floor of the valley. A few young sequoias, notably a tree near the entrance of the Yosemite Museum, have been transplanted. (For further information on trees read "Broadleaved Trees of Yosemite" and "Cone-bearing Trees of Yosemite" available at the museum and gift shops.)

r r

r (1.2 miles)r

r r

**r r V-7r EL CAPITAN MORAIN ANDr JUNCTION OF OLD BIG OAKr FLAT ROAD.** The low ridge in the forest extending towards the river is a glacial deposit or "moraine" formed by the most recent ice-age glacier. As the ice melted back this moraine made a dam to help form Ancient Lake Yosemite which was between one and two thousand feet deep at the upper end of the valley and was 5 1/2 miles long. The lake gradually filled in with sediments to form the present level valley floor. The road on the other side of the highway is a section of the Old Big Oak Flat Road, now abandoned.

r r

r (0.5 of a mile)r

r r

**r r V-8r EL CAPITAN.** Read description under V-32, page 76. r r r

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Features seen from Valley View

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**r r V-9r OLD STAGECOACH ROAD.** You can turn back the pages of time by driving west over this section of the original stagecoach road which skirts the base of El Capitan. This is a one way loop drive from this point on the opposite side of the highway and continuing for about 3/4 of a mile back to the main highway. Except for an oiled surface this road is little changed from stagecoach days.

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r (0.9 of a mile)r

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Three Brothersr

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r r **V-10r SENTINEL ROCK, THE THREEr BROTHERS, AND EL CAPITAN.**r As you pass El Capitan you will see the Three Brothers on your left. The highest of the rocks, Eagle Peak, is 3,773r feet above the valley floor, it being the highest point on the north rim of the valley. It may be reached on foot by way of the Yosemite Falls Trail. (Read description of r Sentinel Rock under V-30,r and of r El Capitan under V-32, page 76.r

r r

r (1.3 miles)r

r r

r r **V-11r ROCKY POINT.** On the down-valley side of the parking area is a rockr slide which occurred about 1922. The scar is slowly being covered with vegetation.r It tells the story of the geologicalr and biological forces that continue to alter the landscape. Grooved and shinyr glacier polish left by Ice Age glaciers can be seen about 25 feet above the base of the cliff close at hand. This is one of the few places where glacier polish can be seen on the floor of the valley.r

r r

r (0.7 of a mile)r

r r

r r **V-12r YOSEMITE LODGE.** The Yosemite Lodge area was first developed by the U.S. Army as an Army post when it administered the park prior to 1916. In 1915 it was improved by the Desmond Company which had a 20-year franchise to provide hotel accommodations. During the period between 1920 and 1925 a succession of reorganizations brought the present Yosemite Park and Curry Co. into being. The history of this company is told under G-12, page 90. Today a new lodge replaces the old one which originally was an Army barracks. New modern cottages are taking the place of the old redwood cabins. A gift shop, grill, post office, swimming pool and cafeteria are located at the Lodge. This unit is open all year and is popular with the winter visitors. The row of dwellings across the road from the Lodge once were Army non-commissioned officers' living quarters.

r r

r (0.5 of a mile)r

r r

r r **V-13r YOSEMITE FALLS.** The spur road to the left leads to near the base of Yosemite Falls, a distance of 0.2 of a mile. One of the highest free-leaping waterfalls in the world, its total drop is 2,425 feet. The great upper fall is 1,430 feet, the middle cascade 675, and the lower fall 320 feet. The top may be reached by a rather steep but scenic trail which starts from Camp 4, which you passed just before reaching Yosemite Lodge. The falls are full in the spring and dry up in late summer. In winter a large ice cone usually forms r r r r

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r r r

Yosemite Fallsr

r r r at the base of the upper fall by slabs of ice formed from frozen spray falling off the cliff. The combined height of the falls is nearly twice that of the Empire State Building, at present the world's tallest man-made structure, while the lower fall is twice the height of Niagara. r r

r (1.3 miles from the road intersection)r

r r

r r **V-14r YOSEMITE VILLAGE.** This includesr the Park Service Headquarters, Yosemite Museum, post office,r Western Union, photographic and curior shops, residences of permanent employeesr in the park, offices of the Yosemite Parkr and Curry Company, a garage and service station. Eventually the Village Store,r studio and grill, Degnan’s restaurant andr store, as well as Best’s Studio, will maker up the merchandising portion of ther village.r

r r

r (0.2 of a mile)r

r r

r r **V-15r LOST ARROW, INDIAN CANYON, LEHAMITE FALL.** Fromr the plaza near the Yosemite Museumr and Park Headquarters you canr r see the Lost Arrow high on the cliff tor the right of the Yosemite Falls. Thisr slender shaft of granite is separatedr from the main cliff and rises to a heightr of several hundred feet. The Lost Arrowr was first climbed September 3, 1946, byr members of the Sierra Club, an ordear which took them nearly 5 days andr nights. The legend of the Lost Arrowr is told in “Yosemite Indians,” availabler at- museums and gift shops. Indian Canyon is the deep ravine to the right ofr the main cliff, so named from its user by the Yosemite Indians as an escaper route when they were pursued by ther Mariposa Battalion in 1851. During ther early spring runoff Lehamite Fall dropsr into a ravine on the right wall of thisr canyon. Lehamite is Indian for “Arrow-wood.”r

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r r r  
r r r  
Yosemite Museumr

r r r r r r

r (0.1 of a mile)r

r r

r r **V-16r LEWIS MEMORIAL HOSPITAL.** The Lewis Memorial Hospital has a capacity of 16 beds and is equipped to handle most emergencies. It is operated under government contract and is staffed by competent doctors and nurses. The park dentist has an office in this building. The hospital was named in honor of W. B. Lewis, an early civilian superintendent of Yosemite National Park. The houses across the road from the hospital are residences of employees of the Yosemite Park and Curry Co. This area is called Tecoya, from the Indian word To-co-ya, "The Basket," said to be associated with an Indian legend about North Dome.

r r

r (0.3 of a mile)r

r r

r r **V-17r BOWL AND GLACIER POINT VIEW.** In a natural amphitheater at the base of the cliff is the Church Bowl where religious gatherings are held during the summer. Across the meadow Glacier Point rises 3215 feet above the valley floor. From here is one of the best views of the firefall. (For a description of the firefall read G-12, page 90.)

r r

r (0.2 of a mile)r

r r

r r **V-18r THE AHWAHNEE.** The Ahwahnee was opened in 1927. It has 115 rooms and cottages decorated in an Indian motif. Rooms of special note are the dining room with its lofty massive construction and tall windows which frame the scenic views; the great lounge, a room of cathedral-like proportions, and the El Dorado Diggins, a cocktail lounge reminiscent of a street in an early California mining town. Ahwahnee is a native Indian word meaning "deep grassy valley"—the Yosemite Valley.

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r [Editor's note: the correct meaning of Ahwahnee is "(gaping) mouth." See "Origin of the Place Name Yosemite"—de.]r

r r

r (0.6 of a mile)r

r r

r r **V-19r HALF DOME.** Dominating the upper end of the valley is Half Dome, hallmark of Yosemite National Park. It marks the junction of

r r

r

r r r

Half Dome

r r r Tenaya Creek (left) and the Mercedr River (right). Rising nearly one miler above the valley floor it is one of ther most majestic rock forms known. Onr clear days it can be seen from placesr along Highway 99 in the San Joaquinr Valley. Half Dome was climbed for ther first time in October 1875 by George G.r Anderson. Today hikers reach its 13-acrer top in summer by a trail up the farr (east) side with the aid of cables. Ther likeness of a great face on the 2000 foot high sheer surface gives rise to anr interesting Indian legend, told in “Yosemite Indians.”r (Take left-hand turn at intersection.)rr r

r (0.5 of a mile)r

r r

r r **V-20r SUGAR PINE.** The largest of ther few sugar pines on the valley floorr is the tree growing to the left ofr the far end of the Sugar Pine Bridge. Sor highly regarded was this tree that inr 1884 James M. Hutchings, then guardianr of the Yosemite Grant, built the firstr r r stone work seen along the river to protectr the bank from erosion and saves the tree.r Sugar pines are normally found at ar higher elevation. Their cones have beenr known to grow up to 26” in length.r

r r

r (0.7 of a mile)r

r r

r r **V-21r INDIAN CAVES.** Indian Cavesr are the site of an old Indian campr known as either HOL-LOW orr LAH-KOO-HAH. See if you can findr the flat rock near the caves where Indian women pounded acorns from ther black oak, their principal food. Ther caves were used for temporary shelterr during severe weather, for refuge fromr enemies, and for storage. The Indians ofr Yosemite normally dwelt in wigwam-likr structures of incense cedar bark called “uma-chas,” described more fully inr “Indians of Yosemite.”r

r r

r (0.7 of a mile)r

r r

r r **V-22r MIRROR LAKE.** is at its best inr spring and early summer when ther absence of wind during early morning hours makes perfect reflections possibler on its surface. This lake wasr formed by rock slides from the cliffr walls which dammed Tenaya Creekr some years ago. Filling in rapidly (asr did ancient Lake Yosemite which formedr the valley floor), Mirror Lake will probably disappear within a decade or so.r Even now it all but dries up every autumn. Tenaya Creek, which feeds thisr lake, starts above Tenaya Lake near Tuolumne Meadows, and cascades fromr that lake into the upper part of the Tenaya box canyon. Annual Easter Sunrise services are held on the shore ofr Mirror Lake.r

r r

r r **CLOUD’S REST** is the steep-sidedr mountain just beyond towering Halfr Dome.r

r r

r r **MT. WATKINS** across the canyon fromr Cloud’s Rest is the peak which is reflected in Mirror Lake. The peak is 4,23 5 feetr high and is named for Carleton E. Watkins, a pioneer Yosemite photographer.r

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r r r

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Mirror Lake in springr

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r r r

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Royal Arches, North Dome and Washington Column

r r r r

r r **BASKET DOME**, farther to the left, is 3,500 feet. Its name came from an Indian legend. (Take left-hand turns at next two intersections.)

r r

r (1.2 miles)

r r

r r **V-23 GLACIAL MORaine**. The low hill at this intersection is one of the few morainal ridges still existing on the valley floor. It was formed when two glaciers came together. This is known locally as “Ski Hill” because here began Yosemite’s skiing.

r r

r (0.5 of a mile)

r r

r r **V-24 HAPPY ISLES**. The spur road leaves the highway junction and leads up to the Happy Isles and Stater Fish Hatchery. The Merced River at this point branches into several channels forming two main islands. Some 15 species of trees — practically every kind found on the valley floor—grow at Happy Isles. The great white blossoms of the Pacific flowering dogwood may be seen at their best here during early spring. This is also an important starting point for many High Sierra trails, including those to Vernal Fall, Nevada Fall, Little Yosemite, Half Dome, and the high Sierra camps.

r r



**FISH HATCHERY** — This hatchery was built in 1926 by the California Department of Fish and Game and is operated by that agency. Closer to 1½ million eastern brook and rainbow trout are hatched here annually. The National Park Service each year plants about ¾ million of these trout within the park boundaries, and State employees plant trout in lakes and streams adjacent to the park. Many lakes in the high country are planted today by dropping the fish from airplanes. This story is told more fully in “Fishes of Yosemite.” available at museums and gift shops. As you leave Happy Isles, traveling down-valley, Camp 11 is on your right. This is one of six free public campgrounds in Yosemite Valley maintained

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r r r

r Scene in Old Village c. 1903r

r r r r r by the National Park Service for visitors who have their own camping equipment.rr r

r (0.8 of a mile from Happy Isles Intersection)r

r r

**V-25r CAMP 14.** Continuing westward you see Camp 14 on your right. Beyond and across the Merced River are Camps 15 and 7. In the summer months interesting outdoor campfire programs are given by National Park Service ranger-naturalists nightly at Camps 7 and 14, (except Sunday when evening church services are conducted). Before approaching the Camp Curry intersection you will see an apple orchard on your left. It was planted in the 1860's by James Lamon (pronounced le-man), one of the first homesteaders in the valley. This relic of pioneer days is now used as a parking area for Camp Curry. In winter part of the parking area is flooded and frozen over for a skating rink.

r r

r (0.2 of a mile)r

r r

**V-26r CAMP CURRY.** Camp Curry, one of the most popular valley accommodations, was founded by Mr. and Mrs. David Curry in 1899. A grocery store, gift shop, cafeteria, dining room, swimming pool, bicycle rental stand, dance pavilion, garage and service station, and sleeping accommodations are located here. Camp Curry is open from approximately May 15 to September 15.

r r

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r r **GLACIER POINT.** Directly above Camp Curry is the Overhanging Rock at Glacier Point, 3,254 feet up from the valley floor. There are three trails to Glacier Point, 1 1/2 miles, 5 miles and 11 miles in length. By road it is 32 miles. In the spring Staircase Falls can be seen cascading from one ledge to another on the cliff above.

r r

r Across the valley the great granite arches are the exposed edges of rock shells known as the ROYAL ARCHES. Striking down over the Royal Arches to the left are ROYAL ARCHES CASCADES, a striking 1000-foot springtime waterfall. Above the Royal Arches is NORTH DOME, 3,571 feet high. To the right of the arches WASHINGTON COLUMN rises like a tall skyscraper 1,912 feet above the valley. Less spectacular than some other rock forms, the Washington Column is still nearly four times as high as the Washington Monument.

r r r r

r (0.4 of a mile)r

r r

r r **V-27r LE CONTE MEMORIAL LODGE** Down-valley from Camp Curry, directly across the road from the Housekeeping Camp, is the LeConte Memorial Lodge built in 1903 by the Sierra Club, first at Camp Curry, but later moved to its present site. The memorial commemorates the work of Joseph LeConte, a famed geologist. Here the Sierra Club maintains a mountaineering and conservation library and exhibits and furnishes information about rock climbing.

r r

r (0.7 of a mile)r

r r

r r **V-28r OLD VILLAGE.** The Old Village started in the late 1850's and was the center of activity prior to 1916. It boasted such enterprises as photographic studios, general store, post office, church, park headquarters, residences, hotels and saloons. At the present time (1956) the Old Village has a church, movie pavilion, store, grill and restaurant. It is planned to remove all man-made structures eventually and return the area to its natural state. Historical markers will then show former building sites.

r r

r r r r r r r r r r

r (0.2 of a mile)r

r r

r r **V-29r YOSEMITE CHAPEL** Exceptr for the Mountain House at Glacierr Point, built one year earlier, ther chapel is the oldest structure in use inr Yosemite National Park. It was built inr 1870 from funds collected from Sundayr school children all over the country.r Erected originally near the foot of ther Four Mile Trail, the chapel was laterr moved to its present site. This chapelr is unique in that it serves all faiths.r

r r

r (0.1 of a mile)r

r r

r r **V-30r VIEW OF YOSEMITE FALLS.**r Along the edge of the meadowr down-valley from the Old Villager you will have one of the finest distantr views of Yosemite Falls.r r Detailed description under V-13, page 69.r

r r

r r **SENTINEL ROCK** — From here Sentinel Rockr can be seen to your left andr slightly down-valley rising some 3,000r feet above the valley floor. It was namedr from its fancied likeness to a giganticr watchtower. Although Sentinel Rockr has been climbed many times by variousr routes, it was not until 1949 that ther face was scaled in a feat of skill and endurance which took 5 days.r

r r

r (0.7 of a mile)r

r r

r r **V-31r FOUR-MILE TRAIL.** Beginningr at the far end of this parking arear and at the base of Sentinel Rockr is the Four-Mile Trail, the most popularr trail to and from Glacier Point. Itr presents fine scenic views especially atr Union Point. The original trail, completed in 1872, was the first to the valley rim and, as the name implies, wasr about four miles long. Later rebuildingr has lengthened it to about five miles.r The first tourist accommodations werer built at the foot of the Four-Mile Trail,r of which the Lower Hotel erected inr 1856 was the earliest. In 1869 “Black’s”r was constructed on the site of the Lowerr Hotel and “Leidig’s” was built nearby.r Here, too, the chapel was built in 1879.r All that remains today are the locustr r r

r r r  
r r r  
Sentinel Rock and Sentinel Falls in Springr

r r r r trees planted at the site of the old well.r r r

r r **SENTINEL FALLS** is on the right asr you face Sentinel Rock. Prominent onlyr in the early spring and summer, theyr start in the highest hanging valley inr the vicinity. The water cascades downr the face of the cliff some 2,000 feet inr a series of spectacular leaps and drops.r

r r

r (1.4 miles)r

r r

r r **V-32r VIEW OF EL CAPITAN.** El Capitan is one of the largest exposedr monoliths of granite in the world.r The sheer cliff is about 3,000 feet highr and the summit of the rock is 3,564 feetr above the valley floor. Look for ther dark mass on the face of the cliff whichr suggests the map of North America. Anr 80-foot pine tree many hundred yearsr old is rooted in cracks on the face of Elr Capitan and can be located by following the “map” downward through Central America to an overhanging ledge.r El Capitan was named for its imposingr position and dominating size among ther valley cliffs.r r r r

r (0.2 of a mile)r

r r r

r r

r

r r r

Bridalveil Fallr

r r

r r **V-33r VIEW OF THE THREE BROTHERS.** Readr r full description underr V-10, page 69.r

r r

r (0.3 of a mile)r

r r

r r **V-34r CATHEDRAL SPIRES.** Namedr for an obvious likeness, these twor giant shafts of granite are farr larger than any real cathedral spires.r The right hand spire is some 2,100 feet,r the other about 1,900 feet above the valley floor. Both spires have been climbedr by expert rock climbers but the ascenr is very difficult. Cathedral Spires werer named by James M. Hutchings in September 1862.r

r r

r (1.0 mile)r

r r

r r **V-35r MERCED RIVER.** There are finer views of the Merced River as your drive between Cathedral Spires andr Bridalveil Fall. Starting among the snowfields in the High Sierra, the Merced River drops 11,000 feet in its run to the sea. The name Merced has beenr shortened from its original — El Rior de Nuestra Senora de la Merced —r River of Our Lady of Mercy. It was named by Gabriel Moraga in Septemberr 1806 during his expedition in the Sanr Joaquin Valley because of its refreshingr water after seeing only muddy streamsr during his journey.r

r r

r r **BRIDALVEIL MORAINE** — As your approach the widened part of the highway in front of Bridalveil Fall,r the road cut through a bank onr your left reveals a section of Bridalveilr Moraine, a pile of coarse and fine-groundr rock left by Yosemite Valley glaciers.r

r r

r (0.2 of a mile)r

r r

r r **V-36r BRIDALVEIL FALL.** Bridalveilr Fall, a drop of 620 feet, runs allr year diminishing in late summer. Inr the afternoon rainbows in the spray mayr be seen from the base of the fall andr from the parking area at the east entrance of the Wawona Tunnel. The Indians called the fall Pohono whichr means “puffing wind..” It is this samer r r

r r

r

r r r

El Capitanr

r r r r r wind which creates the spray thatr caused the white man to name the fallr Bridalveil. For closer views

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of the fall, enter the parking area ahead and follow the footpath to the base.

**LEANING TOWER** — To the right of Bridalveil Fall is a towering pinnacle of granite rising about 1800 feet above the valley which, from this angle, appears to be leaning outward from the cliff below.

**RIBBON FALL** — Across the valley and to the left of El Capitan is Ribbon Fall, 1612 feet high. It flows only in spring and is the highest single drop in Yosemite though not leaping free of the cliff surface.

(0.5 of a mile)

**V-37 ORIGINAL WAWONA ROAD.** The old road leaving the highway uphill from the left, with a chain across it is part of the old Wawona Road and is used today as a fire road. (Read [description under W-10, page 81.](#))

(1.3 miles)

**V-38 TUNNEL VIEW.** From the parking area at the east end of the Wawona Tunnel is the most picturesque and most photographed general view of Yosemite Valley. This point is confused frequently with the historical Inspiration Point which is on the old Wawona Road some 900 feet above you. Evidences of the geological forces which formed the valley — stream erosion and glacial ice — can be seen from this point: the sheer glacial-plucked cliffs, the stream-cut valley of Bridalveil Creek left hanging by glacial action, and the flat floor of the valley. William Abrams in 1849 was probably the first white man to see Yosemite Valley. In 1851 the Mariposa Battalion, while chasing the Yosemite Indians along the cliffs above you, entered the valley and became the first “effective” discoverers. The barely discernible line part way up and crossing the broken rock slope on the other side of the valley is a part of the [Old Big Oak Flat Road described under C-1, page 92.](#)

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r r r

Yosemite Valley from Wawona Tunnel Overlook

r r r r r r r

r (2.0 miles)r

r r

r r **V-39r CROSSING THE VALLEY ONr THE POHONO ROAD.** As your start across the valley from the intersectionr near Bridalveil Fall parkingr area you will pass through a small grove of trees. On the right side of the roadr in this little grove is a marker on ther site where two prospectors were reportedr killed by Indians on May 2, 1852. Indiansr found later wearing the prospectors'r clothing were executed by soldiers.r

r r

r (0.5 of a mile)r

r r

r r **V-40r PRESIDENT THEODOREr ROOSEVELT AND JOHN MUIRr CAMPSITE.** “On this site Presidentr Theodore Roosevelt sat beside ar campfire with John Muir on May 17,r r 1903 and talked ‘forest good.’ Muirr urged the President to work for preservationr of the priceless remnants ofr America’s wilderness. At this spot one ofr our country’s foremost conservationistsr received great inspiration.” In thisr meadow the Mariposa Battalion also hadr camped at the time of their entrance into Yosemite Valley on March 27, 1811. It was then that Dr. Lafayette H. Bunnell,r surgeon of the battalion, proposed ther name Yosemite, a corruption ofr “O-ham’i-te” or “Oo-soo’-ma-te,” (Indianr for ‘grizzly bear.’), a term he pickedr up from the Indian guide Bunnell didr not know that this name applied to onlyr those Indians in the valley who livedr north of the river and that all the Indiansr referred to themselves as Ahwahneeches,r people of Ahwahnee, the deep grassyr valley.r

r r

r [Editor’s note:r the correct meaning of Ahwahnee is “(gaping) mouth.” Seer “Origin of the Place Name Yosemite”—dea.]r





# ***Self-guiding Auto Tour of Yosemite National Park (1956) by Richard P. Ditton and Donald E. McHenry***

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## **YOSEMITE VALLEY TO WAWONA, AND SOUTH ENTRANCE**

r r r

r (Total driving distance 25.4 miles)r

r r

r r **W-1r WAWONA TUNNEL.** The Wawona Tunnel, blasted out of granite in 1933 to avoid a roadcut which would deface the landscape, is four-fifths of a mile long 28 feet wide and 19 feet high. There is a maximum of 550 feet of rock above the tunnel and a maximum of 503 feet to the edge of the cliff. The tunnel was drilled entirely from the east side under government contract; it took almost 2 years to complete and cost \$847,500. One of the amazing facts is that not a single person was killed or seriously injured in the construction of this tunnel. Automatic fans in the tunnel exhaust carbon monoxide. When 1 part gas to 20,000 parts of air is registered, the controls turn the fans on low and as the ratio of carbon monoxide increases they gradually increase the speed. At full speed impure air is exhausted at a rate of 300,000 cubic feet per minute. Grade in the tunnel is 5%, approaching 6% at the west end.r

r r

r (1.5 miles)r

r r

r r **W-2r EXFOLIATION.** As the road here passes under Turtleback Dome, it is cut through solid granite exposing layers or "shells" of rock. These are caused by an expansion process called exfoliation, the same which has caused the curved, smooth surfaces of domes such as North Dome and Half Dome, and the Royal Arches. The black splotches in the rock are concentrations of diorite, a type of granite in which the dark materials (black mica and hornblende) predominate. The white streaks running through the rock are quartz and feldspar, the two light-colored minerals found in granite.r

r r

r (0.2 of a mile)r

r r

r r **W-3r VIEW OF CASCADE FALLS.** Just beyond the west end of the tunnel you can see Cascade Falls on your right and on the opposite side of the valley. They drop about 500 feet.r

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r r  
r r r  
r Exfoliating granite of Turtleback  
r Dome west of Wawona Tunnel  
(1.0 mile)r

r r r r r

r (1.0 mile)r

r r

r r **W-4r COULTEVILLE ROAD.** The descending scar along the wooded slope opposite is the old Coulterville Road, first wagon road into Yosemite Valley. This toll road, built with private capital, reached the valley floor June 17, 1874, one month before its competitor the old Big Oak Flat Road. The latter is located along the wooded heights somewhat above the present Big Oak Flat Road. The Coulterville Road is narrow with an 18% grade in the last 1000 feet as compared to a 6% maximum on modern mountain roads. It still receives limited use today.

r r

r (0.2 of a mile)r

r r

r r **W-5r RAVAGES OF FOREST FIRES.** Across the canyon you can see the results of forest fires. One fire, which occurred in 1941, was started when electrical transmission wires were blown down on dry underbrush. The area is now being reseeded through the action of the prevailing winds blowing from the southwest. A five-year study has shown remarkable recovery of growth without the help of man. At a greater distance and across the canyon you can see dead trees from a September 1953 fire when a series of dry lightning storms started different fires.

r r

r r **MERCED ROAD** — Paralleling the Merced River below is the Merced Road, called the “All-Year Highway,” leading to the town of Merced in the San Joaquin Valley some 80 miles distant.

r r

r r **TREE ZONES** — Between the tunnel and Chinquapin you pass through zones where the ponderosa pine and oak trees give way to the sugar pine, Jeffrey pine and lodgepole pine. Of special interest is the sugar pine, a tall shaft frequently clear for a hundred feet or more, its arms flung wide. At certain seasons long cones hang from the end of its branches. The Pacific dogwood adds beauty to this forest drive, especially in

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springer when it is white with blossoms and inr autumn when the foliage turns red orr pink. (More can be learned about treesr inr r “Cone-bearing Trees of Yosemite”r andr r “Broadleaved Trees of Yosemite.”r available at museums and gift shops.)r

r r

r (5.0 miles)r

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r r **W-6r CHINQUAPIN.** Chinquapin, 6,039r feet in elevation, receives its namer from a flowering shrub common in ther area. This shrub grows in the Sierra atr an elevation from 3,000 to 8,000 feet.r It is from 1 to 8 feet tall and has ar smooth brown bark with a yellow underside on the leaves; Related to ther now almost extinct American chestnut,r it bears burr-like fruit which mayr sometimes be seen. Chinquapin, ther place, has been an important road andr trail junction since the 1850’s. Acrossr the highway from the service station isr the District Ranger’s headquarters.r

r r

r (2.5 miles)r

r r

r r **W-7r HENNESS RIDGE.** A fire lookoutr operates on a point on this ridger during the fire danger period.r Visitors are welcome.r

r r

r r **LOGGING RAILROAD** — About ar half-mile along the Hennes Ridge roadr are the remains of an old railroad bedr constructed and used by the Yosemite Lumber Company between 1912 andr 1924 before private lands within ther park were acquired. Running from Elr Portal up to an area called Empirer r r Meadows, the winding road bed spannedr a distance of some 25 miles. It is nowr fairly well covered with undergrowth,r but most of it can be traveled on foot.r

r r

r (2.0 miles)r

r r

r r **W-8r VIEW OF SOUTH FORK CANYON.** The canyon below is that ofr the South Fork of the Merced Riverr which joins the Main Merced Riverr about 12 miles down stream. This highway crosses the South Fork. at Wawona.r Signal Peak is the point to the right atr which the level ridge of the mountainer across the canyon drops off.r

r r

r (7.1 miles)r

r r

r r **W-9r WAWONA CAMPGROUND.** Originally known as Camp A. E. Wood, after the first superintendent of Yosemite National Park, this campground has been extended downstream some distance and is now one of the most modern campgrounds in the park. It is distinguished by individual campsites screened from one another by natural forest growth. (Read details in W-11, page 82.)

r r

r (1.0 mile)r

r r

r r **W-10r THE WAWONA ROAD.** Upstream is the only covered bridge in the entire National Park System and is now preserved as a historical structure. Across it ran the original Wawona Road into Yosemite Valley. Interest in building this first road into the valley from the south became active in Mariposa in 1874. The road crossed the Chowchilla Mountain to the west and followed the road which is seen emerging from the forest on the far side of the golf course. The original Wawona Road came in from the south as far as Alder Creek. In the early 1870's a desire to have a road into Yosemite Valley was expressed by the Guardian of the Yosemite Grant. A contract was given to a company of Chinese to complete a road from Alder

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Covered bridge over South Fork of Merced River at Wawona

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General view of Wawona and Wawona Hotel

r r r r Creek to Yosemite Valley for a sum ofr \$10,000. The work was started December 4, 1874, with 50 men and at timesr the crew numbered 300. By April 18,r 1857 a road had been completed to nearr the present Camp Curry. (Read alsor r V-37, page 78.)rr r

r r **W-11r WAWONA.** Wawona, which inr the Indian tongue meant “bigr tree,” was first a camp on ther Mann Brothers trail through the highr Sierra. Later Galen Clark, Yosemite Grant’s first guardian, acquired the Wawona area, built a cabin and it becamer known as Clark’s Ranch. Clark enlargedr the building to accommodate travelersr and it became an important stoppinger place for early Yosemite visitors. Inr 1890 a law was enacted setting aside ar part of the Wawona area as reservedr forest lands. Capt. A. E. Wood becamer the first superintendent of the area inr 1891. ‘With detachments from ther Fourth Cavalry he made a determinedr effort for many years to keep sheepr and cattle grazers and poachers out ofr the park.r

r r

r In 1875 the Washburn Brothers purchased the Clark ranch and over a period of years built most of the buildingsr known as the Wawona Hotel. Followinger purchase by the U. S. Government inr 1932, the Yosemite Park and Curry Co.r assumed, under contract, managementr of the hotel at Wawona.r

r r

r (4.7 miles)r

r r

r r **W-12r SOUTH ENTRANCE.** Here at ther southern gateway to the park, formerly known as “Four Mile,” is one ofr the four entrance stations where controlr of travel in and out of Yosemite is maintained by National Park Service rangers. A short distance from this stationr is the south boundary of Yosemite National Park which adjoins Sierra Nationalr r r Forest. National forests and national parks differ in that national forests, under the U. S. Department of Agriculture, manage forests for such economic and recreational uses as lumbering, grazing, hunting and resorts, whiler national parks, under the U. S. Department of the Interior, are



# **Self-guiding Auto Tour of Yosemite National Park (1956) by Richard P. Ditton and Donald E. McHenry**

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## **MARIPOSA GROVE OF GIANT SEQUOIAS (“B”)**

r r

r (Total driving distance 4.5 miles)r

r r

r r **B-1r GIANT SEQUOIAS.** The giant sequoias (*Sequoia gigantea*), popularly known as “Big Trees,” are probably the largest and oldest living things in the world. Although they are related to the coast redwood (*Sequoia sempervirens*), there is a striking difference in general appearance and foliage. The giant sequoias are more massive, while the coast redwoods are taller. The bark of the giant sequoias is a golden brown while that of its relative is darker. The burls of redwood souvenirs seen in gift shops are from the coast redwood; burls do not grow on giant sequoias. Flowering of giant sequoias takes place from February to April, the pollen being carried by the wind. In contrast to the great size of these trees, their cones are only 1 3/4" to 2 3/4" in length. Both male and female cones grow on the same tree. After maturing for two years on the tree, the female cone may drop from 150 to 300 seeds. Cones, however, may remain unopened on the trees for as long as 20 years. Usual methods of determining age of trees with boring instruments are not possible in the giant sequoias because of their great size. Accurate age dating in sequoias may be done only by counting the annual rings in fallen trees. Some sequoias have been estimated to be as much as 4000 years old. The wood contains no resin ducts but has a high percentage of tannin. This chemical gives the red appearance to the bark and heartwood and turns black r r

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### Grizzly Giant

on exposed ends of fallen trees, giving them the appearance of being burned. Tannin resists insect and fungus attack, the great enemies of many other trees and thus aid longevity of the sequoias. Since sequoia wood is very brittle, light, and weak, with up to 80% waste for large trees when felled, it has little value as lumber although on occasion it has received some limited use as grape stakes. (For more information we recommend "[A Guide to the Yosemite Sequoias](#)," available at museums and gift shops.)

(1.4 miles)

**B-2r MARIPOSA GROVE.** The giant sequoia is native only on the western slopes of the Sierra Nevada, and occurs in scattered groves for a distance of 250 miles, mostly at elevations of 5000 to 8400 feet. Of the three groves in Yosemite the Mariposa Grove is the largest and best known. It was probably discovered in 1849 by Major Burney, the first Mariposa County sheriff, and John McCauley. Measurements were taken and reported in the town of Mariposa but they were considered just another "tall" story of those pioneer days. In 1857 this grove was thoroughly explored and brought to public attention by Galen Clark, one of the first visitors to the region. He named it after the County of Mariposa in which it is located. In 1864 President Roosevelt signed an act setting aside the Mariposa Grove and Yosemite Valley as the Yosemite Grant, the first State Park of the nation. It was administered by the State of California with Galen Clark as first guardian. The grove is about four square miles in area and includes about 200 mature trees.

Ahead you will see a sign pointing to the GRIZZLY GIANT, named by James M. Hutchings in 1859, the fifth largest giant sequoia known and the largest in Yosemite. It may be the oldest of all giant sequoias, estimated age 3 800 years. The blackened places on the giant sequoias are burns from forest fires of the last few centuries. These trees are amazingly resistant to fire, insects and fungus attack and usually die only when roots are disturbed and they fall.

(0.2 of a mile)

**B-3r YOUNG SEQUOIAS.** Although millions of seeds, each less than 1/672th of an ounce when dry, may be dropped by a single mature tree, only about 15% ever germinate and only then when the seeds can reach mineral soil. In spite of this low viability our giant sequoia groves are not dying off. In addition to this cluster numerous young sequoias have sprung up in front of the Big Trees Lodge where the soil was disturbed in the building of the parking area.

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Mariposa Grove Museum and Giant Sequoias

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r (0.3 of a mile)r

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r r **B-4r MARIPOSA GROVE MUSEUM.**r This museum, devoted exclusivelyr to the story of the sequoias, marksr the site of the original cabin built byr Galen Clark in 1857, shortly after her first visited the grove. The original cabinr was destroyed about 30 years later. Inr 1885 the State Board of Commissionersr in charge of the Yosemite Grant built a second one on the same site, enlargingr it in 1902. In 1930 the present cabin,r a replica of the former structure, wasr constructed as a museum. The tallstr sequoia in the Mariposa Grove, the 286-foot-highr Columbia Tree, can be seenr across the meadow from the museum.r Its height is almost equal to the lengthr of a football field. This museum is openr during summer only.r

r r

r (1.8 miles)r

r r

r r **B-5r THE WAWONA (Tunnel) TREE.**r Probably the most photographedr and certainly one of the most famous trees in the world, the picture ofr this “tunnel” tree has appeared in geography texts the world over. In 1881 ther Yosemite Stage and Turnpike Companyr hired the Scribner Brothers for 875 tor enlarge an old burn to the present size of 8 feet wide, 26 feet long, and 10 feetr high. The tree is 234 feet high, 19.8r feet in diameter at 10 feet above meanr base. The name comes from the Miwokr Indian word, “Wah-wo-nah,” meaningr “big tree.” There are two other tunnelr trees in Yosemite; the California Treer within a few hundred yards of the Grizzly Giant and the “dead tunnel tree” onr a loop just off the road through ther Tuolumne Grove. The Wawona tunnelr tree may now be dying from the tramping of millions of human feet on itsr delicate roots and the former depredation of man in cutting the tunnel.r

r r

r (4.1 miles)r



# ***Self-guiding Auto Tour of Yosemite National Park (1956) by Richard P. Ditton and Donald E. McHenry***

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## **CHINQUAPIN TO GLACIER POINT (“G”)**

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r (Total driving distance 18 miles)r

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r r **G-0r GLACIER POINT ROAD.** The original road to Glacier Point, built in 1882, was acquired by the Federal Government in 1917 along with the old Wawona Road, at which time tolls were abolished. The present road was completed in 1936 and follows the original road bed in many places.r

r r

r (1.9 miles)r

r r

r r **G-1r MERCED CANYON VIEW.** Below is seen the gorge of the Merced River winding through the foothills with the Merced Road paralleling it. Near where these disappear beyond a bend are buildings of El Portal just outside the west boundary of Yosemite National Park. On a clear day you can see the San Joaquin Valley where the town of Merced is located and on the other side of the valley the Coast Range, about 125 miles distant. The Wawona Road passes directly beneath you at this viewpoint. In front of you is a sugar pine with its typical ungainly branching form.r

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r r

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r

Merced Canyon and foothills westward from Glacier Point Road

r r r

r (3.1 miles)r

r r

r r **G-2 BADGER PASS.** This is Yosemite's principal skiing area where as many as 3000 visitors ski on a busy Sunday. The ski runs are tailored for the entire family, small beginner's slopes progressing to steeper terrain for the better skiers. The runs vary in length from one-half to two miles. There are two T-bar Constant lifts and one ropeway. Badger Pass has a cafeteria, sales room, and ski school. During summer Badger Pass is one of the park's most beautiful wildflower gardens where such flowers as blue camas, brodiaea, leopard lily, western blue flag, columbine, larkspur, wild strawberry, various lupines, wild geranium, cow parsnips, Sierran shooting star, various pentstemons, mimulus, asters, daisies and the black-eyed susan provide an unusual display.

r r

r (1.6 miles)r

r r

r r **G-3r MERCED PEAK.** This is the peak you see as you look directly ahead, elevation 11,722 feet. It is so named because it is the culminating point of the Merced River whose headwaters originate on nearby mountains.

r r

r (0.3 of a mile)r

r r

Self-guiding Auto Tour of Yosemite National Park (1956) by Richard P. Ditton and Donald E. McHenry

**r r G-4r PEREGOY MEADOW.** The larger meadow which extends on both sides of the road just before you reach Bridalveil Creek is Peregoy Meadow. The horse trail from Clark's Station, which eventually became part of the original Wawona Road to Yosemite Valley, ran through this meadow and it was here that in 1869 the Mountain View House, one of the first hostels in the park, was built. The Mountain View House flourished until 1871 when the old Wawona Road became a reality. The meadow was named for Mr. and Mrs. Charles Peregoy who operated the hotel.

r r

r (0.4 of a mile)r

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**r r G-5r BRIDALVEIL CREEK.** This creek forms the beautiful Bridalveil Waterfall. In the Bridalveil basin the creek winds through a series of delightful meadows which abound with wildflowers in mid-summer. The stream is stocked with eastern brook and rainbow trout. A public campground borders the creek for a mile or so on the right of the highway and is reached by a narrow road leading off to the right.

r r

r (0.6 of a mile)r

r r

**r r G-6r HORSE RIDGE.** To the right on the horizon is Horse Ridge, a point famous for winter ski trips. Horse Ridge, 9000 feet in elevation, is directly above Ostrander Lake on the shore of which is Ostrander Ski Hut. This hut is open approximately February 15 to April 15, and is reached either on skis or by weasel trips operating out of Badger Pass. Overnight reservations must be made in advance.

r r

r (1.9 miles)r

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**r r G-7r CLARK RANGE VIEW.** Directly across the canyon is the Clark Range. Mt. Clark, the peak at the right - center, is 11,506 feet in elevation and was named after Galen Clark, the first guardian of the Yosemite Grant. This peak normally retains some snow throughout the year. The prominent sugar-loaf shaped peak is Mt. Starr King, named for a well-known Unitarian pastor whose writings in the 1860's called attention to the wonders of Yosemite.

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r (2.4 miles)r

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**r r G-8r POT HOLE MEADOW.** Pothole Meadow on the left derives its name from large depressions in the form of circular pools about five feet in diameter. Deep under the ground are hollows in the solid rock which were formed during the Ice Age. The hollows fill with water and form the pools. Here is one of the

Self-guiding Auto Tour of Yosemite National Park (1956) by Richard P. Ditton and Donald E. McHenry

few definite evidences that glaciers reached such elevation. In summerr a beautiful display of wildflowers growsr in this meadow. In season the shootingr star, corn lily and the rarely-seen marshr marigold are prominent.r

r r

r (0.2 of a miler

r r

r r **G-9r VIEW OF SENTINEL DOME.**r looking ahead and slightly to ther left you will see Sentinel Dome.r The tree on the very summit is ther world-famous Jeffrey pine which growsr out of solid rock. A side road leads to ther point about 200 feet below the summit.r From there you can reach the summitr of the dome on foot.r

r r

r (1.1 miles)r

r r

r r **G-10r SWITCHBACKS.** This road followsr much of the original road ofr 1882. Surprisingly you drop downr 600 feet to reach Glacier Point. Ther downhill bend of the lower part of treer trunks is the result of snow pressure onr the hillside during winter when theser trees were young.r

r r

r (0.9 of a mile)r

r r

r r **G-11r WASHBURN POINT.** In ther 1870's and 1880's the Washburnr Brothers drove their visitors fromr their Hotel Wawona either to Glacierr Point or to the turn-around at the presentr Washburn Point, thus accountingr for the name. Even without the view ofr Yosemite Valley the sweeping scene ofr the high Sierra from this point is mostr impressive. Some visitors today believer that they are at Glacier Point and returnr without going any farther.r r r

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Clark Range from Glacier Point Roadr

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r (0.7 of a mile)r

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r r **G-12r GLACIER POINT.** From Glacier Point, approximately 300 yards beyond the hotel, you can see one of the most inspiring views possible in the park. From here you may look at Yosemite Valley, 3214 feet below, Yosemite Falls, North Dome, Basket Dome, Tenaya Canyon, Half Dome, Liberty Cap, Nevada Fall (upper) and Vernal Fall, as well as many peaks of the high Sierra. These may be identified with the aid of the accompanying sketch. The sketch on the opposite page will locate features seen in Yosemite Valley below. About 750 miles of trails wander through this country within the park. (Further information in Clark's Trail Guides, available at museums and gift shops.) A path swinging off towards Half Dome leads to an overlook station where the geologic story is shown. No glaciers can be seen from this point. There are more than 20 glaciers and remnants of glaciers in the park, but all are located on the shaded, far sides of the high peaks. Only snow fields are to be seen from here. The name Glacier Point comes from the fact that during the glacial period two trunk glaciers, one in Tenaya Canyon (left of Half Dome) and the other in Little Yosemite Valley (right of Half Dome) joined in one huge glacier rising some 700 feet above this point.

r r

r The small Mountain House with cafeteria beside the Glacier Point Hotel is the reconstructed original one-story Glacier Point Hotel built by C. E. Peregoy of Peregoy Meadows and Mountain View House, probably about 1872. During the first winter it was crushed flat by snow. James McCauley then gave Peregoy \$600 for the wreck and constructed the present two-story Mountain House from its materials. It is the oldest structure still in use in the park. The hotel was built in 1917 by the Desmond Company which, following receivership, emerged as the Yosemite National Park Company and in 1925 joined with the Curry Camping Company to become the Yosemite Park and Curry Co. of today. This company now operates the Glacier Point Hotel. During the summer naturalist-guided walks about Glacier Point start near the comfort station. A man-made spectacle which attracts considerable interest is the FIREFALL. Produced nightly during the summer and on special occasions during the remainder of the year, it consists of a cascading stream of burning embers from a fire built at the tip of Glacier Point. The fire burns about one-half a cord of bark taken from dead-and-down red fir trees. When a signal is given from below, an employee of the hotel pushes the embers slowly over the cliff, using a long-handled rake. The coals drop almost 1000 feet to a ledge where they die out. The firefall is thought to have been originated by James McCauley in 1871 or 1872. After years of intermittent firefalls the practice was eventually abandoned for a time. In 1899 David A. Curry revived it as a regular feature of camp entertainment, and now it is admired by thousands who view it from many vantage points.

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r The Yosemite High Sierra from Glacier Point



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r r r

# ***Self-guiding Auto Tour of Yosemite National Park (1956) by Richard P. Ditton and Donald E. McHenry***

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r r

## **YOSEMITE VALLEY TO PARK BOUNDARY AT CARL INN (CRANE FLAT ROAD) (“C”)**

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r (Total driving distance 17.5 miles)r

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r r **C-1r THE BIG OAK FLAT ROAD.** This road leads to Crane Flat junction in the park where you may either continue ahead to Manteca and U.S. Highway 99 or, turning to the right over Tioga Pass, to Highway 395. The Big Oak Flat Road was named for the small community of Big Oak Flat 4.5 miles distant where an unusually large and beautiful oak tree once grew. The original road ran along the wooded slopes above. It was a toll road completed on July 17, 1874, one month after the completion of its competitor, the Coulterville Road. These were the first roads into the valley. The Big Oak Flat and Yosemite Company, with a 50-year franchise, organized in 1867 to build a wagon road from Colfax Springs to Yosemite Valley, engaged a company of Italians to construct the road down the cliffs. No cement was used—the rocks being wedged in such a way that it was rare for any part of the road to slide. However, a big rock slide where switchbacks descend the rocky slope into the valley closed the old road permanently in the spring of 1945. The present high-gear Big Oak Flat Road, dedicated June 1940, was built at a cost of \$1,200,000 as compared with \$40,000 for the original road.

r r

r (1.6 miles)r

r r

r r **C-2r VIEW OF COULTERVILLE ROAD.** Below you along the wooded slope down-valley is the scar of the Coulterville Road. Park off the road just ahead if you stop here. (More about the Coulterville Road under W-4, page 180.)

r r

r (0.3 of a mile)r

r r

r r **C-3r CASCADE CREEK - TAMARACK CREEK.** Both creeks drain a relatively small forested area northwest of the valley. The two creeks join to form Cascade Falls which can be seen from the valley floor (V-4) and from the Wawona Road (W-3). Both streams are stocked with eastern brook trout.

Self-guiding Auto Tour of Yosemite National Park (1956) by Richard P. Ditton and Donald E. McHenry

“Tamarack” was the local name given to the lodgepole pine, the tree common to the headwaters of the streams. WILDCAT CREEK — Flowing in the spring and early summer only, this stream drains a small area to the southwest of Tamarack Creek.

r r

r (0.4 of a mile)r

r r

r r **C-4r VIEW OF HALF DOME, EL CAPITAN AND THE WAWONA ROAD.** From here is one of the impressive views of Yosemite Valley with El Capitan in the middle left foreground, Half Dome in the middle background, and the Wawona Road cut through the forest on the slope across the gorge. Below is the Merced River with the Merced Road paralleling it.

r r

r (5.3 miles)r

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r r **C-5r BIG MEADOW.** The small open area in the forest below is known as Big Meadow. It is (in 1956) a privately owned area within the national park. Ponderosa pine, incense-cedar and black oak, typical of medium elevations on the west slope of the Sierra, make up the forest surrounding the meadow. These same 3 trees are the

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Old Big Oak Flat Road c. 1900r

r r r r r most common ones immediately around you here. The old Coulterville Road (W-4) into Yosemite Valley skirts the left margin of this meadow. Over the ridge beyond Big Meadow is the Merced Canyon. r r r

r (2.8 miles)r

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r r **C-6r CRANE FLAT.** Crane Flat was named from reported cries of sandhill cranes said to have been surprised in this area in early days, probably a mistaken observation. The great blue heron is seen here occasionally for this day. Upon leaving Crane Flat entrance station you will be on a road which is steep, narrow and full of curves. In a 2 mile stretch you will drop from an elevation of about 6,500r to 4,800 feet.r

r r

r (1.3 miles)r

r r

r r **C-7r TUOLUMNE GROVE OF BIGr TREES.** The giant sequoias are thought to have been seen first by white men when this grove was discovered in 1833 by Joseph Walker expedition seeking a route across the Sierrar Nevada. The grove covers about 20r acres and has approximately 25 larger trees. The spur road to the right passes through the tunnel cut in the Deadr Giant in 1878, one of 3 tunnel trees inr the park.r

r r

r (4.5 miles)r

r r

r r **C-8r HODGDON MEADOWS.** In the early 1860's the Hodgdon family operated an overnight stoppingr place here for stage coach passengersr This enterprise continued until the later 1890's.r

r r

r (0.6 of a mile)r

r r

r r **C-9r THE ROCKEFELLER SUGARr PINE FOREST PURCHASE.** In 1939 the Rockefeller Foundationr with matching funds from the Federalr Government, purchased this, one of the world's finest remaining virgin sugarr pine forests for \$3,200,000 and addedr it to Yosemite National Park. Its 20,000r acres also included practically all of the Tuolumne Grove of giant sequoias.r

r r

r (0.7 of a mile)r

r r

r r **C-10r CARL INN.** In the large meadowr to the right just before you leave the park was Carl Inn, a popularr resort owned and operated by Donnar Carlon. It was a regular stop on the Hetch Hetchy Tour. The Inn was purchasedr and razed in 1940 by the governmentr after being destroyed twice byr flood, once by fire, and once by snow.r Cross the bridge over the South Fork ofr the Tuolumne River just beyond the park boundary you can follow the roadr to the Hetch Hetchy section of Yosemite National Park.r

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r Hodgdon's historic ranch and stage coach stop on old Big Oak Flat Road (running along r fence) present Crane Flat Road runs at right angles to it at lower right.r

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Carl Inn before its removal in 1940r

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# ***Self-guiding Auto Tour of Yosemite National Park (1956) by Richard P. Ditton and Donald E. McHenry***

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## **CRANE FLAT TO TIOGA PASS**

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r (Total driving distance 48 miles)r

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r r **T-0 THE TIOGA ROAD.** This road climbs about 48 miles up the western slope of the Sierra, becoming the highest highway in California at Tioga Pass, elevation almost 10,000 feet. For the first 3.4 miles it follows generally the old Big Oak Flat Road which it crosses at right angles at Gin Flat. Twenty-one miles of the Tioga Road, located approximately in the middle, is the old steep, winding, narrow road built in 1883 by the Great Sierran Consolidated Silver Company. Although improved today this road still retains much of its old character and charm. Slow and careful driving along this section is safe. The improved road on either side of the 21-mile stretch was completed in 1938. Negotiations are under way for a new section to replace the old road but portions of the old road will be preserved as an historical exhibit. Along this road you will pass successively through forests of sugar and Jeffrey pine, red fir and lodge-pole pine, with the limber-branched western whitebark pine at Tioga Pass. In winter the Tioga Road is closed by snow.

r r

r (Additional information under T-7, page 97.)r

r r

r (0.4 of a mile)r

r r

r r **T-1r CRANE FLAT.** During the days of the original Big Oak Flat Road, a Mr. Gobin operated a hotel and Mr. Hurst a saloon here at Crane Flat. Very little was known about these operations but diaries of early day travelers mention them. The hotel was built on the approximate location of the present Blister Rust Control Camp.

r r

r (3.0 miles)r

r r

r r **T-2r GIN FLAT.** Scattered all through the high Sierra are meadows known as flats, since most of the

Self-guiding Auto Tour of Yosemite National Park (1956) by Richard P. Ditton and Donald E. McHenry

surrounding country was very hilly and steep. Cattle and sheepmen used these as pastures before the park was established. Apparently there was considerable activity at Gin Flat in the summertime while John B. Curtin, once state senator and cattleman, headquartered there. A portion of the ruins of a cabin back from

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Former Gobin's Hotel, building on left with porch, and Hurst's Saloon, shake-roof beyond team. Road from lower left is the Old Big Oak Flat Road with the Coulterville Road cut-off running off lower right. The road consists of parts of the old Tamarack Lodge, moved by Curtin from Tamarack Flat and parts of the original cabin of 1882. Robert A. Curtin, brother of John, reports that the name Gin Flat was given to this meadow after the first freight team over the Big Oak Flat, presumably heading for Yosemite Valley, lost a barrel of gin here from the wagon. As a result the cowboys and road workers became gloriously "ginned up," thus establishing the name. Contrast the magnificent Jeffrey pine near the road with the wind-swept Jeffrey pine on top of Sentinel Dome.

To the right of Gin Flat is a portion of the original Big Oak Flat Road. It can be traveled about 2 1/2 miles farther to Tamarack Flat and Tamarack Creek campground, and another 2 1/2 miles to Cascade Creek. Both of these creeks are stocked with eastern brook trout. If you follow this road another couple of miles you will find the site of Gentry, a former toll station at the head of the grader on the old Big Oak Flat Road.

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The roadside from Gin Flat to the White Wolf junction has a fine growth of red fir. In this area you will also notice some evidence of glacial polish.

r r

r (3.8 miles)r

r r

**SOUTH FORK OF TUOLUMNE.** The South Fork of the Tuolumne River starts some 8 miles beyond the place where the road crosses it. It usually dries up in later summer or shortly thereafter.

r r

r (1.9 miles)r

r r

r r **T-4r SMOKY JACK CAMPGROUND.** This beautiful, small, wooded campground bears the nickname of an early sheepman who, prior to the establishment of the park, became known as a character in this region. Smoky Jack, whose real name was John Connel, started with a few sheep which he herded personally until he became sheep-rich. "He lived mostly on beans. In the morning after his bean breakfast he filled his pockets from the pot with dripping beans for luncheon, which he ate in handfuls as he followed the flock. His overalls and boots soon, of course, became thoroughly saturated and instead of wearing thin, wore thicker and stouter and, by sitting down to rest from time to time, parts of all vegetation, leaves, petals, etc., were embedded in them, together with wool fibers, butterfly wings, mica crystals, fragments of nearly everything that part of the world contained—rubbed in, embedded and coarsely stratified, so that these wonderful garments grew to have a rich geological and biological significance . . ." (John Muir)

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Siesta Lake on Tioga Road  
(4.5 miles)

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r r

r (4.5 miles)

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r r **T-5r SIESTA LAKE.** This spring-fed little lake encircled by lodgepole pine and red firs is not over 5 feet deep and hence any fish which might be planted in it would be subject to winter-kill. No live fish have been seen in the lake since 1954. The name is unofficial and is probably given because it makes a delightful spot along the Tioga Road for rest or picnic. The road was diverted at this point to avoid despoiling the charm of this lake. The rare Arctic three-toed woodpecker nests here occasionally.

r r

r (1.0 miles)

r r

r r **T-6r WHITE WOLF.** About 1850 John Meyer, a cattleman, while leading a posse to recover horses stolen by Indians, came upon this lovely alpine meadow. An Indian encampment, whose chief was White Wolf, had stopped here for a short time. Meyer named the place in honor of the chief. This is near the junction of the new and old Tioga Roads. The White Wolf Lodge is about 1 mile off the main paved road on the old Tioga Road. This popular high Sierra camp, at an elevation of about 8,000 feet, is open from approximately July 1 to September 1.

r r

r (0.3 of a mile)r

r r

r r **T-7r OLD TIOGA ROAD.** Betweenr White Wolf junction and Tuolumne Meadows you drive along ar section of the *old* Tioga Road. Twenty-oner miles of this road remains in publicr use and has been only slightly improvedr since 1883 when the Great Sierra Consolidated Silver Company built it for an access to their headquarters atr Bennettville near Tioga Pass where theyr were driving the famed Shepherderr Tunnel. It cost over \$64,000. This oldr mining road was purchased by Stephenr T. Mather and some friends and presented the National Park Service inr 1915. A short distance beyond the junction starts a downgrade of some fiver miles which drops about 1,300 feet andr terminates at Yosemite Creek. The namer Tioga comes from the Tioga Miningr District which may, in turn, have received its name from Tioga County N.r Y. Tioga is an Iroquois Indian namer meaning “where it forks.”r

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Old Tioga Road - 1956r

r r r r

r (2.3 miles)r

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r r **T-8r LUKENS LAKE TRAIL JUNCTION.** This trail, near Dark Holer Meadows, is part of the park’s trailr system. Wooden directional signs formerly used along these trails were forr some unknown reason often destroyedr by bears. The metal trail sign seen ar little back from the road to the right isr made by cutting with an acetylene torchr and is considered “bear proof.”r

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r r  
r r r  
r New metal trail signs replacing  
r wooden signs destroyed by bear  
(2.6 miles)r

r r r

r (2.6 miles)r

r r

r r **T-9r YOSEMITE CREEK.** Yosemite Creek is the stream that creates Yosemite Falls. Like many streams in the Sierra, Yosemite Creek dries up in late summer after all snow in its drainage basin has melted. This basin faces the sun so that snow here melts sooner than on the more protected slopes. Because of the granite structure of the country and thin soil coverage, springs are uncommon and contribute little or no water to Yosemite Creek. At this location are a summer ranger station and public campground. The campground, at an elevation of 7,200 feet, accommodates approximately 30 camps, has outdoor tables and benches. A trail follows down the creek 6.3 miles to the top of Yosemite Falls thence into Yosemite Valley.

r r

r (0.5 of a mile)r

r r

r r **T-10r TOP OF YOSEMITE CREEK GRADE.** Leaving the campground you start up the Yosemite Creek grade. Here in a distance of about 2 1/2 miles you climb from 7200 to 8200 feet. This road climbs up the side of a moraine piled up by ancient Yosemite Glacier. Here you will pass through one of the most beautiful groves of quaking aspens in the park. The quaking aspen rarely grow below 5000 feet elevation although it is said to be the most widely distributed tree in the world. The tree has a smooth white or cream colored bark covered with black markings. Their leaves are shiny, smooth, roundish, and their characteristic fluttering accounts for the name.

r r

r (3.4 miles)r

r r

r r **T-11r PORCUPINE FLAT CAMPGROUND.** One of the smallest campgrounds is situated in the delightful flat meadow surrounded by a red fir forest through which runs Porcupine Creek. 1.2 miles along the road towards Tuolumne Meadows is the entrance to Porcupine Creek Campground, an old Indian campsite, located downstream from Porcupine Flat. From here a trail leads into Yosemite Valley and to North Dome. Elevation at this place is 8,015 feet.

r r

r (4.7 miles)r

r r

r r **T-12r SNOW FLAT.** Approximately 5r miles beyond Porcupine Campr ground is Snow Flat. A snow survey station is maintained here. Severalr times each winter National Park Servicerrangers make trips on skis or snowshoesr to take snow measurements in order tor determine the amount of moisture whichr will be available to the Central Valleyr and Bay Region the following summer.r Here at an elevation of 8,710 feet,r some of the deepest snow in the park isr recorded.r

r r

r r **MOUNT HOFFMANN** - 10,836 feetr high, is seen from this point, rising from the west side of May Lake (out ofr view). In 18 81 silver was found on Mt.r Hoffmann and the Mt. Hoffmann Mining Districtr was organized but soon fizzled out. The mountain was named forr r r r r

r r

r

r r r

Mt. Hoffmann from Snow Flatr

r r r Charles T. Hoffman, principal topographer of the Whitney Survey of 1863.r Mt. Hoffmann marks the approximaterr geographic center of the park.r r r

r (1.8 miles)r

r r

r r **T-13r MAY LAKE JUNCTION.** Just beyond Snow Flat is the May Lake junction. A steep but well-used footr trail of about 1.7 miles will take you tor the May Lake High-Sierra Camp. Locatedr at about 9,300 feet in elevation,r r the camp is open from approximatelyr July 1 to September 10. The lake wasr named for Lucy Mayotta Browne who,r in 1870, married Charles Hoffmann ofr the Whitney Survey.r

r r

r r **TENAYA LAKE GRADE**—After leaving the May Lake junction you startr down the Tenaya Lake grade. Here inr about two miles you descend some 600r feet. To your left you will see Cathedralr Peak (elevation 10,993 feet), Tenayar Lake (elevation 8,141 feet), and Tenaya Peak (10,700 feet).r

r r

r (1.4 miles)r

r r

r r **T-14r TENAYA LAKE.** Tenaya Lake was named in honor of Chief Tenaya of the Yosemite Indians. On the early morning of May 22, 1851, pursuing the Yosemite Indians and, from the vicinity of Tenaya Lake Grade, spotting their camps on the lake, the Mariposa Battalion, under Capt. John Boling, made such a hasty attack clothed mostly in their long red underwear that it gave rise to an Indian story of “red devils.” The capture of the Yosemite was completed r r

r r

r r r

r

Tenaya Laker

r r r r when Chief Tenaya was taken near Yosemite Valley on June 12. Dr. Lafayette Bunnell, who was surgeon for the expedition, named the lake after the chief but when the old man heard of this he was unhappy and told the party that the lake already was named Py-we-ack, Laker of the Shining Rocks. The lake, a glacial lake, is about a mile long, one-half mile wide, and a little over a hundred feet deep. It is stocked with rainbow and eastern brook trout. As you pass along the built-up road on the northwest side of Tenaya Lake, you will see some of the finest examples of glacial polish in the park. r r

r [Editor’s note: Bunnell was not the surgeon for the expedition—dea.]r

r r

r (2.5 miles)r

r r

r r **T-15r GHOST FOREST.** This is a forest of lodgepole pines which were killed in insect epidemics. Once every two years in July and August the lodgepole pine needle miner moth lays eggs at the base of the needles. After the larva or worm emerges from a small hole, the needles turn chestnut brown. Soon the needles fall off. Bark beetles attacks often follow needle miner epidemics and kill the trees. Air spraying operations have been carried on recently with a hope of reducing widespread destruction. (You may read more about trees in r “Cone-bearing Trees of Yosemite” and r “Broad-leaved Trees of Yosemite.”) Off to the right of the road is a smooth rock surface with scattered boulders. These angular boulders were dropped during the recession of the last glacier of the ice age. r

r r

r (1.7 miles)r

r r

r r **T-16r EAST END OF OLD GRADE —r MT. CONNESS.** For a descriptionr of this old grade read T-7. At nor other place along the park roads, exceptr near Snow Flat, can the mountain hemlock more easily be seen. It normallyr prefers northern exposure of 9000 feetr or more where snow banks linger. Johnr Muir called the mountain hemlock ther most singularly beautiful of all the Californiar r conifers. The elegance of thisr graceful tree-mountaineer is ever refreshingr in contrast to the ruggedr staunchness of its associate trees, ther western white pine, lodgepole pine, Sierrar juniper and whitebark pine.r

r r

r r **MT. CONNESS** is the most distant andr prominent peak seen as you look straightr ahead. On the crest of the Sierra Nevada, 12,556 feet in elevation, thisr mountain was named for John Conness,r Senator from California who, on Marchr 28, 1864, introduced in the U. S. Congress the bill establishing the Yosemite Grant, consisting of Yosemite Valley andr the Mariposa Grove of Big Trees.r

r r

r (1.5 miles)r

r r

r r **T-17r FAIRVIEW DOME.** This is typicalr of granite domes in Yosemite andr the Sierra. Like other graniter throughout the region its form resultedr from the cooling of molten “magma” orr rock, beneath layers of rock which werer formed from sea deposits. The mannerr in which this molten mass cooled determined the way in which this rock weathers, by exfoliating in “shells — as if removing the layers of an onion.r

r r r

r r

r r r  
Fairview Dome  
(0.7 of a mile)r

r

r r

r (0.7 of a mile)r

r r



**T-18r TUOLUMNE MEADOWS.** In this region are the headwaters of the Tuolumne River. From here easy hikers will take you to many beautiful lakes and streams which are typical of the grandeur of the Sierra. A store, fountain, and r r r r

r r

r r r

r

Tuolumne Meadows and Cathedral Peak

r r r r service station are open from approximately July 1 to September 10. The public campground with water and sanitation facilities accommodates about 350r camps. The elevation is 8600 feet, Looking southwest from Tuolumne Meadowsr you see Cathedral Peak, 10,933 feet inr elevation, and Unicorn Peak, 10,849 feetr in elevation. Tuolumne is an Indianr name, probably of a tribe along ther lower course of this river.r r

r (2,5 miles)r

r r

**T-19r LYELL FORK, TUOLUMNEr RIVER.** Just beyond the store you will cross the Tuolumne River which begins at Mt. Lyell Glacier onr the extreme eastern boundary of ther park. This ice body, roughly one miler wide and one-half mile broad, is ther largest glacier within the park. Mt.r Lyell, 13,090 feet in elevation and ther highest peak in the park, was named forr Sir Charles Lyell, a leading geologist ofr the past century.r

r r

r (0.1 of a mile)r

r r

**T-20r LEMBERT DOME—SODAr SPRINGS.** The lopsided appearancer of this dome is the result of glaciers pushing up the slope and forcinger chunks of rock off the steep side. Ther scallops over the face of the dome werer worn by sub-glacial streams which followed the courses of these shallowr trenches. Patches of glistening glacialr polish cover the face of the dome. Ascent of 800 foot Lember Dome is safer only under expert guidance. It was named for Jean Baptiste Lember, sheepr man and hermit who homesteaded Tuolumne Meadows in 1885. His home wasr built near the soda springs 1 mile tor your left after crossing the

Tuolumner River.r

r r

r r **TUOLUMNE MEADOWS HIGH SIERRA CAMP.** The road to your right after you pass the Tuolumner River bridge leads to the Tuolumner Meadows High Sierra Camp which can r r r

r r

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r r r

Soda Springs, Tuolumne Meadows

r r r r accommodate about 125 people and is open from about July 1 to September 15. It is one of five hikers' and horseback riders' camps along the high Sierra loop. This scenic route may be covered with relatively easy hiking if spread over 5 days or more. Other camps are at May Lake, Glen Aulin, Vogelsang and Merced Lake. All furnish comfortable beds and good meals and limited hiker supplies. Motorists may be accommodated at the Tuolumne Meadows camp.r r r

r (1.5 miles)r

r r

r r **T-21 MORAINE OF ROCKS LEFT BY THE GLACIERS.** The roadcut, known as the Blue Slide, exposes here a section of a rounded hill composed of loose rock and fine material left after the front of a glacier melted back. This moraine swings in a great arc toward the peaks to the right (south).r

r r

r (0.8 of a mile)r

r r

r r **T-22 DANA FORK OF THE TUOLUMNE RIVER.** Beyond the turn-off road to the Tuolumne High Sierra Camp the main highway follows along the Dana Fork of the Tuolumne River which has its source on Mt. Dana.r

r r

r (1.0 mile)r

r r

r r **T-23 TUOLUMNE PEAK.** Looking back down the highway towards Tuolumne Meadows you can see prominent Tuolumne Peak, 10,875 feet in elevation, located a short distance north of the May Lake High Sierra Camp.r

Self-guiding Auto Tour of Yosemite National Park (1956) by Richard P. Ditton and Donald E. McHenry

r r

r (Approx. 0.3 of a mile)r

r r

r r **T-24r MAMMOTH PEAK.** Looking straight ahead along the road from this point the great rounded form of Mammoth Peak rises to an elevation of 12,225 feet.r

r r

r (Approx. 0.3 of a mile)r

r r

r r **T-25r MT. GIBBS.** Named for Wolcott Gibbs, well-known professor of science at Harvard at the turn of the century and life-long friend of Professor Whitney, California State geologist, Mt. Gibbs (seen directly ahead)r rises to an elevation of 12,000 feet.r

r r

r (0.4 of a mile)r

r r

r r **T-26r MT. DANA.** Mt. Dana can be climbed from Tioga Pass with relative ease. It is not only the second highest peak in the park. elevation 13,053 feet, but it is one of the most colorful. (Inquire of park ranger at the Tioga Pass Entrance Station.) Noted for its beautiful summer wildflower gardens, it was named for James Dana of Yale University, pioneer geologist of the past century.r Looking back towards Tuolumne Meadows the skyline, as shown in the sketch opposite identifies Johnsons Cockscomb, Unicorn and Cathedral Peaks. As you drive westward towards Tuolumne Meadows you will see these peaks framed strikingly by the road corridor through the forest. Roadside signs will aid you to recognize them.r

r r

r (2.3 miles)r

r r

r r **T-27r TIOGA PEAK.** The prominent peak before you is Tioga Peak, elevation 11,513 feet. Tioga Peak, like Tioga Lake, Tioga Pass, and Tioga Road, comes from an Iroquois Indian name meaning "Where it forks."r

r r

r r **T-28r KUNA CREST.** If you look back and to the left from this point within 0.6 of a mile of Tioga Pass Entrance Station you will see a range of peaks known as Kuna Crest at whose northern (right) end stands Mammoth r r



r r

r

r r r

r r **Next: Fresno to Yosemite** • **Contents** • **Previous: Tioga Pass Road (“T”)** r r

r r r

# ***Self-guiding Auto Tour of Yosemite National Park*** **(1956) by Richard P. Ditton and Donald E. McHenry**

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r r

## **INTERESTING POINTS BETWEEN MERCED AND YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK**

r r r

r (Total driving distance to park boundary 68.5 miles)r

r r

r r **CITY OF MERCED**— Located in the San Joaquin Valley just south of the Merced River, this city of about 20,000 takes its name from that stream. It is a center of extensive farming and dairy industry. Merced came into existence on February 8, 1872, when a subsidiary corporation of the Central Pacific Railroad auctioned off building lots. The site was deliberately selected as being centrally located in the San Joaquin Valley and as the gateway to Yosemite. The desirability of moving county seats to the railroad was also foreseen and was realized when the county government moved from Snelling to Merced in 1872. The early inhabitants expected Merced to be the important town in the valley and for a while it surpassed Fresno in population.r

r r

r (4.5 miles from So. Pac. R. R. Depot)r

r r

r r **FILICE & PERELLI CANNERY**— The large establishment across the Santa Fe Railroad tracks is the Filicer & Perrelli Cannery and Kadota Fig orchards. In addition to the Kadota figs, the plant packs Elberta peaches, apricots, boysenberries and green gage plums. This cannery has the distinction of being the world's largest canner and packer of Kadota figs.r

r r

r r **MERCED COUNTY**— Formed from a part of Mariposa County, "Mother of Counties," in 1885. Merced County covers an area of some 1,995 square miles with a population of 80,000. It is known for its fruit, cotton, beef cattle and dairy products.r

r r r r

r (2. miles)r

r r

r r **FANCHER MONUMENT**— South of the highway a shaft commemorates Clarence L. Fancher, a well-known local grain rancher and leader in community affairs around the turn of the century. The monument is over Fancher's grave.

r r

r r **DEL MONTE ORCHARDS**— As you pass the Fancher Monument you will also pass through the Del Monte cling peach and Kadota fig orchards, owned and operated by the California Packing Corporation. The peach orchard has approximately 2800 acres and 250,000 trees and is the largest of its kind in the world. The fig orchard contains about 600 acres and 54,000 trees. The fig trees are kept pruned down to produce better quality for canning and to permit picking from the ground. Practically all fruit grown here is canned.

r r

r (3 miles from Filice & Perelli)r

r r

r r **PLANADA**— This town of around 1000 persons, received its name in a unique manner. A contest for a suitable name was held in 1911 from which the Spanish word for "plain" was chosen. Formerly the post office here was named Geneva and the railroad name was Whitton.

r r

r r **VIEW OF THE SIERRA NEVADA MOUNTAINS**— Leaving Planada you will see the Sierra Nevada Mountains directly ahead of you. It was from this approximate area that in 1777 the Spanish discoverers saw the mountains and gave them the name Sierra Nevada, meaning "Snowy Range of Mountains." The Sierra Nevada is approximately 430 miles long, lying in a northwest-southeast direction, having a breadth of 40 to 80 miles. The range is located entirely in California except for a small portion in Nevada near Lake Tahoe. The western approach is long, winding and gradual but the eastern approach is abrupt.

r r

r (4.6 miles from Planada)r

r r

r r **MILLERTON ROAD**— Near the point where the highway crosses the Merced-Mariposa County line is the Millerton Road. This is the original Stockton-Los Angeles road. It was constructed in the foothills to avoid the many small creeks and thick tules of the valley floor.

r r

r (2 miles)r

r r

r r **MARIPOSA COUNTY**— Mariposa County was one of the largest of the original 27 counties of California. An old Mexican grant comprising a portion of this area was given to Juan Bautista Alvarado in 1844. Purchased for John C. Fremont in 1847 for \$3,000, it was resold in 1863 for \$6,000,000. From the formation of the county in 1850 until 1893, people of various areas seceded to form separate counties,

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namely the present counties of Merced, Madera, Mono, Fresno, Kings, Tulare, Inyo, Kern and a portion of Los Angeles County. Hence Mariposa County became known as "The Mother of Counties." In this county an official U. S. Mint was located at Mt. Ophir where six-sided \$50 gold coins were made. These coins are valued today up to \$10,000 each. Mariposa County is known for its cattle, hogs, sheep, poultry, timber and mining. Zinc, lead, manganese and tungsten are found in quantity, as well as small deposits of nickel, cobalt, barium and titanium.

r r

r (9.5 miles)r

r r

r r **CATHAY VALLEY**— This pleasant rolling farm and cattle land never saw much mining. It received its name from Andrew Cathay who purchased it in 1854 for a sum of \$1,500 from George W. Evans and Jacob Hill. Stone fences throughout this immediate area were built during the 1840's and 50's by Chinese labor.

r r

r r **JOAQUIN MURIETA AND HORNITOS**—Joaquin Murieta was a Robin

r r

r r r

r

Mariposa in 1850's

r r r r Hood-like Mexican bandit who roamed the area from Los Angeles to Stockton in the 1850's. (According to recent studies he may have been a legendary figure generally accepted in folklore.) It is said that he found friendliness in the little mining town of Hornitos of the gold rush days. Remains may still be seen of an underground passage leading from the dance hall in Hornitos which Murieta may have found useful for escape when things grew too hot. Hornitos, Mexican for "little bake oven," is about 10 miles northwest of Cathay Valley. It derived its name from the presence of many odd Mexican graves or tombs that sat on top of the ground, built of stone in the shape of little baker ovens. (the fascinating history of this foothill gold mining country may be followed in "A Guide to the Mother Lode Country," available at museums and gift shops.)



r (7.6 miles from Cathay)r

r r

r r **AGUA FRIA**— Agua Fria — coolr water — was the name of the townr which grew up around the Agua Friar Mine and which was the first countyr seat of Mariposa County from 1850 tor 1854. Once located about a half-mile upr the course of Agua Fria Creek (dryr most of the year), this once-importantr r community has disappeared completely.r Its name was derived from a stream ofr water gushing from the mountainsider An historical marker along the highwayr was placed by the Mariposa Countyr Chamber of Commerce.r

r r

r (4.2 miles)r

r r

r r **MARIPOSA**—In 1806 Padre Munozr of the Moraga Expedition recorded inr his diary: “This place is called (place)r of the mariposa (butterflies) because ofr their great multitude, especially at nightr and morning . . . One of the corporalsr of the expedition got one in his ear,r causing him considerable annoyance andr no little discomfort in its extraction.”r Located on the Fremont Grant (described under Mariposa County above),r Mariposa became county seat when ther county government was moved fromr Agua Fria in 1854. At that time ther courthouse was built. It is now the oldestr courthouse in continuouse use in ther State of California. The seats and barr have remained unchanged through ther years. The belfry clock, operated onr cables and pendulum alone, was broughtr around The Horn from England inr 1866. Its bell has been chiming everr since. The only newspaper in the county,r a weekly, was started here January 1854.r First published as the Mariposa Chronicle,r r r through a change of ownership inr June 1855 it became the Mariposar Gazette. The paper has been in continuous publication.r

r r

r (7 miles)r

r r

r r **SIERRA NATIONAL FOREST**—r Beyond the sign “Entering Sierra National Forest” is part of 1 13 millionr acres of land administered as one of ther areas under the National Forest Servicr of the U. S. Department of Agriculture.r These forested lands are managed forr lumbering, grazing, hunting, mining andr the like under such regulations as to assure as far as possible continuing renewable natural resources.r

r r

r (3.6 miles to top of hill)r

r r

r r **BRICEBURG GRADE**— In approximately 2½ miles this grade has a dropr of 1,200 feet. Bear Creek Canyon is onr the south side of the road. The originalr road from the top of the Briceburgr Grade to El Portal was built by convictr labor.r

r r

r (2.4 miles)r

r r

r r **MERCED RIVER**— From the footr of Briceberg Grade to the park you willr follow the Merced River. Forr description read V-35, page 77.r

r r

r (6.1 miles)r

r r

r r **RICHARDSONS**— An old limestone quarry was operated here by ther Yosemite Portland Cement Company. Itr was purchasd in 1944 by the Kaiser interests which closed the quarry and removed the machinery.r

r r

r r **YOSEMITE VALLEY RAILROAD**—r Across the river you will see what remainsr of the railroad bed of the Yosemite Valley Railroad, constructed fromr 1905 to 1907 at an estimated cost ofr \$10,000,000. Running 78 miles fromr Merced to El Portal it was forced outr of business in 1945 after the Yosemite Lumber Company and the Portland Cement Company ceased operations andr private automobile travel over the newr Merced highway diminished passengerr train travel.r r r

r r

r

r r r

Ancient folded rocks near geologic exhibit on Merced Road with railroad tracks above.r

r r r r r r r

r (1.7 miles)r

r r

Self-guiding Auto Tour of Yosemite National Park (1956) by Richard P. Ditton and Donald E. McHenry

**GEOLOGICAL EXHIBIT**—Between Richardson's and Savage Trading Post a geological exhibit may be seen on the right of way. It describes the oldest rocks of the Yosemite region, to be seen across the river. These were formed as ancient sea deposits changed into rock. They produced the original Sierra range now largely worn away, its place being taken by the granite of the present Sierra.

r r

r (1.6 miles)r

r r

**SAVAGE TRADING POST**—Not far from the junction of the Merced River and its south fork stood the first trading post of the area, established by James D. Savage in 1849. Savage employed native Indians to mine gold for him. How much gold dust Savage acquired was never reported but he was rumored to have had "barrels full" of it. After an attack in 1850 by Yosemite Indians Savage moved the trading post to a new location near Mariposa.

r r

**MITES COVE MINE**—About three miles upstream on the south fork of the Merced River is Hite's Cove where John Hite operated a mine from 1861 to 1882. Nearly \$3,000,000 in gold was reported taken from this mine with no great depth needed for shafts.

r r

r (1.5 miles)r

r r

**CLEARING HOUSE MINE**—Between the south fork and Incline is the site of the Clearing House Mine. The approximate site is recognized by several houses on the opposite side of the river. About \$1,000,000 in gold was taken from this mine. The shafts were 1100 feet deep. Operations were stopped in the early 1940s' because the mine could not be freed of water.

r r

r (1 mile)r

r r

**INCLINE**—Here the Yosemite Sugar Pine Company carried on logging operations, using a two-mile incline up the side of the mountain. It was operated by hooking a cable to a loaded flat car at the top of the mountain and to an empty flat car at the bottom of the mountain. As the loaded car descended the grade it would pull the empty car to the top. This operation took place from 1924 to 1945.

r r

r (3 miles)r

r r

r r **TUNGSTEN MILL**— The mill whichr you see across the river receives tungstenr ore from open mines in the immediate vicinity. This operation, which started producing in the spring of 1955, is the onlyr active mining and milling in this area.r

r r

r (0.8 of a mile)r

r r

r r **BARIUM MINE**—Across the riverr is the site of the El Portal Mining Company’s barium mine. The mine stoppedr operations about 1947, principally because of the decreasing use of barium inr drilling oil wells.r

r r

r (1.2 miles to store)r

r r

r r **EL PORTAL**— This community ofr approximately 200 people became ther eastern terminus of the Yosemite Valleyr Railroad in 1907. About the time ther laying of the railroad was completed ther railroad company built the 8 miles ofr wagon road from the railhead to Yosemite Valley so that horse-drawn stagesr could carry train passengers into ther park. This was when El Portal receivedr its name. The railroad station stood onr the approximate location of the El Portalr Motor Inn and the Standard Oilr service station, while a hotel stood onr the hill a short distance to the northeast.r Directly across the river from the Elr Portal store the Yosemite Lumber Company conducted an operation from 1911r to 1924 similar to the one at Incline.r

r r

r (1 mile)r

r r

r r **YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK**—r Upon entering the park turn to r pager 67 and follow the self-guiding tourr for Yosemite Valley.r

r r r

r r

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r r

r r **Next: Fresno to Yosemite** • **Contents** • **Previous: Tioga Pass Road (“T”)**r r

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# ***Self-guiding Auto Tour of Yosemite National Park (1956) by Richard P. Ditton and Donald E. McHenry***

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r r r

## **INTERESTING POINTS BETWEEN FRESNO AND YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK**

r r

r (Total driving distance to park boundary 61.2 miles)r

r r

r r **CITY OF FRESNO**—This city, the Fresno County seat, with a population of 108,000, because of its central location has become the principal wholesaler and retail distribution point in the San Joaquin Valley. Today it is hard to believe that in 1872 a subsidiary of the Central Pacific Railroad which staked out the town in the heart of the San Joaquin desert could find no buyers for its “choice” lots. In this desolation where there was no railroad, town, water, or settlement, the company permitted any newcomers to settle on the lots provided they would purchase them should they decide to remain. Land values unexpectedly increased. In July 1874 when the railroad reached this point there were 29 business and 25 private dwellings. The coming of the railroad encouraged people to move down from the foothills and the county seat, together with the entire population, and many of its buildings, moved from Millerton that year. Fresno means “ash tree” in Spanish. In 1806 Lt. Moraga named a “rivulet from the Sierra” San Joaquin in respect to the parent of Mary, the mother of Christ, and subsequently the name became associated with the southern central valley of California.

r r

r r **COUNTY OF FRESNO**—Fresno County was formed in 1856 out of the then huge Mariposa County with Millerton on the San Joaquin River the first county seat from 1856 to 1874. Fresno County embraces 3,830,400 acres and has an average farm production of about \$350,000,000 annually as of 1954. Principal crops of the county are dairy products, livestock, poultry, turkeys, cotton, raisins and grapes, figs, peaches, alfalfa and grain.

r r

r (From Hotel Californian approx. 8 miles)r

r r

r r **FRIANT DAM AND MILLERTON LAKE**—The road branching off from Highway 41 at Pinedale leads to Friant Dam on the San Joaquin River. Millerton Lake, formed behind this dam, received its name from the town of Millerton which, along with the site of old Fort Miller (1851-1863), was inundated with the formation of the reservoir. About one-half of Friant Dam and Millerton Lake lies each in Fresno and Madera Counties. Millerton Lake, a local water sports area, is administered by the National Park Service as

Self-guiding Auto Tour of Yosemite National Park (1956) by Richard P. Ditton and Donald E. McHenry

a National Recreation Area.

r r

r (2.3 miles)r

r r

r r **MADERA COUNTY**— The secondr youngest county in the State of California, Madera County was formed from ar portion of Fresno County in 1893. Itsr name is from the town of Madera, ther county seat, a Spanish word meaningr “lumber,” adopted because of the thriving lumber industry there. Madera wasr the western terminus of the lumberr flume which stretched some 65 milesr from the Sierra (described under Oldr Lumbering Operations below). Maderar County is divided about equally inr plains, foothills and high mountainr country, the latter including a part ofr Yosemite National Park and all of ther Devils Postpile National Monument onr the east of the range. Its crops are muchr the same as those of Fresno County withr dairying, vineyarding and poultry raising the largest industries. Recreation isr an important industry in the mountains.r

r r

r (7.3 miles)r

r r

r r **MADERA CANAL**—This canal is ar part of the huge Central Valley irrigationr r r project developed by the Bureau ofr Reclamation. It operates from Shastar Dam in northern California through ther great Central Valley to the southern partr of the San Joaquin Valley, carryinr much-needed irrigation water to ther thirsty farm lands of this part of California.r

r r

r (2.3 miles)r

r r

r r **JUNCTION HIGHWAY 145 ANDr 41**—From this point on, Highway 41 isr known as the “Yosemite Discoveryr Road.” On nearby Table Mountainr stands a 33’-high cross erected by public-spirited citizens of Madera Countyr in connection with Easter sunrise services.r

r r r

r r  
r r r  
r Great Flume of the Madera Flume and r  
r Trading Company—abandoned in 1932 r  
r r r

r (2.0 miles) r

r r

r r **SAN JOAQUIN EXPERIMENTAL RANGE**—Beyond the junction of Highway 145 and 41 is the 5000-acre Sanr Joaquin Experimental Range operated byr the U. S. Department of Agriculture.r and the University of California. Ranger and cattle improvements are the primaryr purposes of the station. The U. S. Forestr Service has developed grasses here whichr increase range capacities. The University of California Department of Animalr Hushandy studies hereditary characteristics and herd improvement.r

r r

r r **CHUCKCHANSI INDIANS**—r The area around Coarsegold was settledr originally by the Chuckchansi Indians.r As white men came into the area Chiefr Black Hawk was instrumental in keeping the tribe friendly. After severallr years the Chuckchansi tribe became docile and lazy, and the Indian womenr would marry white settlers to be assured of food. This was a help to settlersr who wanted women willing to “roughr it,” and who would do without conveniences. Black Hawk Mountain, whichr is the butte to the right of the road, isr named after the Chuckchansi Chief.r

r r

r (15.5 miles) r

r r

r r **CALIFORNIA DIVISION OF FORESTRY**—The State Division of Forestryr has a headquarters near Coarsegold. Itsr main purpose is fire control to saver grazing lands and stop soil erosion. Thisr headquarters is unique because it is operated under the joint control of the Division of Forestry and the Californiar Youth Authority. Approximately 120r men 18-23 years in age are sent fromr various institutions throughout the stater to this “honor camp” for rehabilitation.r From here they assist in fire controlr and man fire lookouts in



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the area approximately 100 mile radius in cooperation with the U. S. Forest Service andr the National Park Service.r

r r

r (1 mile)r

r r

r r **COARSEGOLD**— The gold rush ofr 1849 brought many prospectors to thisr area. The town was named for the typer of gold found here. By 1850 the community boasted 10,000 inhabitants. Oner nugget found by two Texas brothersr was worth \$15,000. It is reported thatr \$18,000,000 in gold was taken fromr here in a four-month period. By 1866r r r the nuggets had become scarce and ther white men moved on but the patientr Chinese came in, some to make fortunestr in gold dust. By 1880 the finds werer over but the town was established.r

r r

r r **GENERAL BOX COMPANY SAWMILL**—As you enter Oakhurst you willr see the sawmill owned and operated by the General Box Company, a subsidiaryr of the American Box and Lumberr Company. Here is produced lumber fromr trees taken within a 30-mile radius. Ther better lumber is dried and sold as building lumber while the poor part of ther tree is made into “shook,” the materialr used for making fruit boxes. This sawmill produces about 12 million boardr feet of lumber annually.r

r r

r (7.5 miles from Coarsegold)r

r r

r r **OAKHURST**—This little communityr in the mountains near the head of ther Fresno River was originally known asr Fresno Flats. In 1882 it was reportedr to be a thriving camp with farming,r mining, lumbering and-stock raising asr principal industries. At that time discovery of a quartz mine seemed to giver promise of local prosperity. Apparentlyr little came of it and an undesirable element moved gradually into Fresno Flatr and brought it ill-repute. Wishing to dor away with this unfavorable past, citizenstr about 1914 changed the name tor Oakhurst.r

r r

r r **OLD LUMBER OPERATIONS**—Inr 1874 the California Lumber Companyr operated in the Oakhurst area. Railroadsr were built to get logs to the sawmill butr the problem of getting the lumber fromr the mill to the San Joaquin Valley wasr great. As a result the 65-mile Maderar flume was built and the City of Maderar was founded at the flume terminal inr the San Joaquin Valley. The Maderar Sugar Pine Company purchased the operationr in 1900 and continued in businessr until 1932 when the low price ofr lumber made it necessary to abandonr the project.r

r r

r (5.4 miles)r

r r



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>r

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# **Self-guiding Auto Tour of Yosemite National Park (1956) by Richard P. Ditton and Donald E. McHenry**

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## **SOME WILDLIFE AND PLANTS OF YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK**

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r r r

California Wildcat

r r r One of the most common animals seen in the park is the mule deer, especially evident in Yosemite Valley and occasionally along roads above the valley. Although less frequently seen, black bear are not uncommon in the valley and are seen occasionally outside of this area. Although these animals are interesting photographic subjects they are still wild animals and are dangerous. Regulations against feeding them are for your protection. You may also see various squirrels and chipmunks, coyotes, bobcats, porcupines, marmots, and a variety of small rodents. Rarely you may catch a glimpse of the mountain lion (cougar). A more complete account of these, together with other kinds of mammals in the park, is given in "Mammals of Yosemite" which, along with "Reptiles and Amphibians of Yosemite National Park" and "Birds of Yosemite." is available at the museums and gift shops.

r

r r r r  
r PONDEROSA PINE—Easily recognized by  
r the large jig saw puzzle-like sections of  
r bark.r

r r r r  
r BLACK OAK—Characterized by the almost  
r clear trunk. It's many spreading branches  
r often 10 feet or more from the ground.r

r r r r

r Lizards and their relatives will be seen- scampering over warm rocks at stopping points. Numerous toads and frogs furnish a lusty spring chorus from the wet meadows. Seen infrequently will be snakes, all of which are interesting and even beautiful.

r r

r Fishing is an important phase of recreation in the park. The 5 game fish are trout and include rainbow, brown, eastern brook, cutthroat, and golden. You may read more about them in r "Fishes of Yosemite."

r r

r Thirty-five species of trees are native to the park. Of these 18 are broad-leaved, dropping their leaves in autumn, and 17 cone-bearing evergreens. The dominant forest trees along the park roads are indicated throughout this guide. More complete descriptions can be had in their pamphlets r "Cone-bearing Trees" and r "Broad-leaved Trees."

r r r r

r Wildflowers along park roads vary according to season and altitude. Common throughout most of the season are blue *lupines*, varying from meadow lupine in dense, short-stemmed stands to large widely separated shrubs. In the valley the four-to-six feet tall *cow parsnip*, with its huge leaves and umbrella-like heads of small white flowers 6 to 10 inches across, are conspicuous in the spring, followed shortly by the reddish-purple flower cluster of the *showy milk-weed*, the favorite plant of the migrating monarch butterflies. The well-known *black-eyed susan* is becoming an increasing summer attraction in the valley meadows, giving way in autumn to the delicate, haze-like lilac coloring over the meadow from innumerable *Lessingia*, with their slender stems about 12 inches high. Along dry roadsides above the valley clusters of orange *western wall flowers* will be seen along with groups of the cup-shaped purple or pinkish *farewell-to-spring* and its closer relatives. In early summer the wet woodland meadows above the valley are attractive with mass displays of the rose pink *Sierra shooting star* intermingled with the yellow of the

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daisy-like *senecio*, the *brodiaea*, *buttercup*, common *monkey flower*, the blue of the *western bluer flag*, *mountain bluebell*, *Sierra forget-me-not*, *blue camas*, and the red of the *gilia* and the *scarlet mimulus*. “*Mountain Misery*,” more properly known as its Indian name *Kit-kit-dizze*, is a low fernlike plant with finely divided foliage forming fragrant carpets in the open pine forests of the middle and lower elevations. The odor is noticeable on warm days especially along the road between Wawona and the South Entrance Station.

r r r

r r r  
r LODGEPOLE PINE—Can be identified by  
r the relatively smooth bark.

r r r r

r Conspicuous in upland meadows is the *corn lily* growing in patches with leaves 6 to 12 inches long. When young it looks like a form of skunk cabbage but later develops a 3 to 6-foot high stem supporting an attractive mass of small white flowers. With the approach of autumn the leaves die and form patches of straw-colored dried-up vegetation.

r r

r One of the most amazing and attractive plants in the park is the rarer blood-red *snow plant* found growing out of the litter on the floor of pine forests until near the end of June, depending on the altitude. It is protected by both park regulations and State law. (The pamphlet “Common Wildflowers of Yosemite” will give you further information about flowers.)

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r Illustrations in this pamphlet are credited as follows: To **Ralph Anderson**: Three Brothers, p. 69, Yosemite Falls, p. 70, Half Dome, p. 71, Sentinel Rock, p. 76, El Capitan and Bridalveil Fall, p. 77, Exfoliating Granite, p. 80, Covered Bridge, p. 81, Grizzly Giant, p. 83, Mariposa Grover Museum, p. 84, Exhibit and Overlook at Glacier Point, p. 92, Carl Inn, p. 95, Ancient Folded Rocks, p. 106, California Wildcat, p. 110; **Volney J. Westley**: Features from Valley View, p. 68; **Ralph dePfyffer**:

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Mirror Lake in Spring, p. 72; **Onos Ward:** r Royal Arches, North Dome and Washingtonr Column, p. 73,  
and r Yosemite Valley from Tunnel Overlook, p. 78; **Garibaldi**—courtesy of **Laurence Degnan:** r Scene  
in Old Yosemite Village, p. 74; **Henry G. Peabody:** r General View of Wawona and Wawonar Hotel, p.  
82; **Donald E. McHenry:** r Merced Canyon View, p. 88; **Wayne W. Bryant:** r Profile of Clark Range, p.  
89, r Profile of High Sierra from Glacier Point, p. 90, r Profile of Skyline from Dana Meadow, p. 103;  
**Dorothy Moyer:** r Features of Yosemite Valley from Glacier Point, p. 91; **Celia Crocker**  
**Thompson**—courtesy of **Margaret Schlichtmann:** r Hodgdon’s Historic Ranch, p. 94; **Celia Crocker**  
**Thompson:** r Formerr Gobin’s Hotel, p. 96; **Robert N. McIntyre:** r Siesta Lake, Old Tioga Road, p. 97, r  
Mt. Hoffman, p. 99; courtesy of **Mrs. Emma Footman:** r Madera Flume, p. 109; **Ansel Adams:** r  
Ponderosa Pine and Blackr Oak, p. 111, r Lodgepole Pine, p. 112. r r All other illustrations are either from the  
National Park Servicer collection or are of unknown origin.

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HIGHWAY DISTANCES FROM YOSEMITE MUSEUM, YOSEMITE VALLEYr

r r r r

r HIGHWAY DISTANCES FROM YOSEMITE MUSEUM, YOSEMITE VALLEYr

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**r Yosemite Valley Area (see above map)r**

		r r	Housekeeping	1.0
			Camp	mi.
			El Capitan Bridge	3.5
				mi.
r r	Ahwahnee Hotel	.8 mi.	Happy Isles	2.5
	Bridalveil Fall	4.5 mi.		mi.
	Camp Curry	1.4 mi.	Mirror Lake	2.5
	Camp 4 (public campground)	.8 mi.		mi.
	Camp 7 (public campground)	1.0 mi.	Old Village	.7
	Camp 9 (organization comp)	1.5 mi.	(store, etc.)	mi.
	Camp 11 (public campground)	1.8 mi.	r r Pohono Bridge	5.6
	Camp 12 (public campground)	1.9 mi.		mi.
	Camp 14 (public campground)	1.8 mi.	Curry Company	1.9
	Camp 15 (public campground)	1.0 mi.	stables	mi.
r r			Wawona Tunnel	6.0
			(east portal)	mi.
			Yosemite Falls	.7
			parking area	mi.
			Yosemite Lodge	.6
				mi.

r r r r r

**r Points Outside Yosemite Valley Area r**

		r r	Mono Lake	76.0
				mi.
r r	Arch Rock Ranger Station	11.0 mi.	Reno (via Tioga Road)	218.0
	Badger Pass (winter ski area)	20.0 mi.		mi.
	Fresno (via Wawona Road)	94.0 mi.	(via All-Year Highwayr	334.0
	Glacier Point	30.0 mi.	and Sacramento)	mi.
	Hetch Hetchy (via B.O. Flat Rd.)	38.0 mi.	San Francisco (via All-Yearr	211.0
	Los Angeles (via Wawona Road)	313.0 mi.	Highway)	mi.
	(via All-Year Highway)	356.0 mi.	r r (via Big Oak Flat Road)	195.0
	(via Tioga Pass)	418.0 mi.		mi.
	Mariposa (All-Year Highway)	44.0 mi.	South Entrance Ranger Station	31.0
	Merced (via All-Year Highway)	81.0 mi.		mi.
	Mariposa Grove (Wawona Road)	36.0 mi.	Tioga Pass Ranger Station	62.0
r r				mi.
			Tuolumne Meadows	55.0
				mi.
			Wawona	27.0 mi.

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r [http://www.yosemite.ca.us/library/auto\\_tour/yosemite\\_valley\\_map.html](http://www.yosemite.ca.us/library/auto_tour/yosemite_valley_map.html)r

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# ***Self-guiding Auto Tour of Yosemite National Park (1956) by Richard P. Ditton and Donald E. McHenry***

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r r *Cover*

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**Warning:** Road markers have been renumbered since this guide was written in 1956. Also some roads described are now closed to automobiles (including roads in Mariposa Grove and Tuolumne Grove and roads in far eastern Yosemite Valley to Mirror Lake and Happy Isles.)

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## About the Authors

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r Richard P. Ditton worked for the Yosemite Park and Curry Company and livedr in the Yosemite area for 14 years when this book was written in 1956.r



## Self-guiding Auto Tour of Yosemite National Park (1956) by Richard P. Ditton and Donald E. McHenry

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r Donald E. McHenry was born August 28, 1895 in rural Pennsylvania. He started out as an episcopal minister, but found it too political. He studied biology at University of Wyoming and in 1927 guided visitors at Rocky Mountain National Park in a tour bus. He received a masters in botony from University of Colorado and taught atr Oklahoma A&M. In 1932 he joined the National Park Service and would guide with tour bus or, with a megaphone, guide a auto caravan. McHenry even tried guiding from above in a plane with a megaphone, but that was short-lived as the motor drowned out the talk. He then worked at several other parks. At the National Capital Parks he started an popular urban campfire program.

r r

r According to r Bingaman's *Guardians of the Yosemite* (1961):r

r

r Donald was appointed Park Naturalist of Yosemite National Park, January 9, 1947. Prior to this appointment he had been at the Grand Canyon National Park, Arizona and in the Washington office of the Naturalist Division. He entered the Government Service in 1919. Mr. McHenry, an accomplished musician, contributed freely of his time and talent to all musical programs. He retired from the Park Service March 31, 1956.

r r

r After transferring to Yosemite in 1947, McHenry tried to get the Yosemite Field School going again. The park superintendent, Carl Russell, was opposed because of budget and becauser he felt it didn't contribute much. McHenry then modified the revived program to require student participationr in interpretation and write an article for *Yosemite Nature Notes*. Several students in the school became Ranger Naturalists.

r r

r Shirley Sargent *Protecting Paradise* (1998) adds:r

r

r Don headed the naturalist division for 11 years before retiring early. In 1950 his wife, Bona Mae, became the first kindergarten teacher at ther Yosemite school. They had two sons, Bruce and Keith; the latter died as a teenager in 1955 from ar severe sunburn received while skiing shirtless.

r r

r McHenry died December 28, 1969 in Santa Clara County, California.

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r

- r r Dr. Napier Shelton,r “Roots of Interpretation:r Donald Edward McHenry—Pioneer Urban Interpreter, Preacher of the Earth.”r *Legacy* 3(2)r (reprinted at National Association for Interpretation website)r

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r —Dan Anderson, [www.yosemite.ca.us](http://www.yosemite.ca.us)r

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