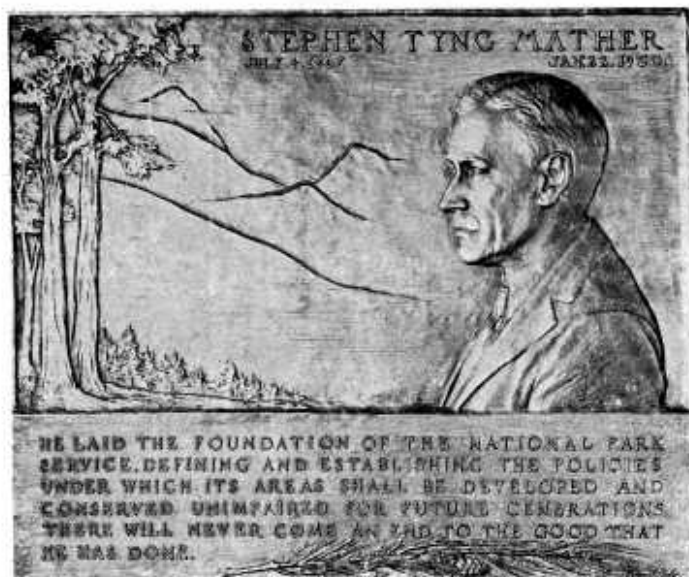


# YOSEMITE NATURE NOTES



Courtesy, American Forests, Washington, D. C.

## SPECIAL MATHER NUMBER

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JULY, 1932

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Volume XI

Number 7

# YOSEMITE NATURE NOTES

## The Stephen Tyng Mather Appreciation Memorial Plaque Dedication

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Yosemite National Park, Cal. - July 4, 1932

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SPRING GROVE

10:00 A. M.

### Program

C. A. Harwell, Park Naturalist, Presiding.

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|-------------------------------|---|
| 1 - Hail, California          | Yosemite Park & Curry Co. Orchestra<br>Robert Kinney, Conducting.   |
| 2 - America                   | Orchestra and Audience.   |
| 3 - Invocation                | Dr. James Asa White.  |
| 4 - Presentation of Plaque    | Mr. Ralph L. Phelps. Representing<br>The Stephen Tyng Mather Appreciation<br>Washington, D. C.  |
| 5 - Meditation Religieuse     | Ketelby. Arr. for String Quintet by<br>Wallace Sabin. Violins - Mme. Paquita<br>Alcorta, Messrs. Larry Highsinger and<br>Edwin Harwell; Cello - Mme. Dolores<br>Alcorta; Bass Viol - Mr. Wendell Hawk |
| 6 - Acceptance of Plaque      | C. G. Thomson, Superintendent, Yosemite<br>National Park.   |
| 7 - Processional to Unveiling | Led by Supt. Thomson  |

The Bronze Memorial Tablet placed at Happy Isles in Yosemite National Park to commemorate Stephen Tyng Mather, organizer and first Director of the National Park Service, is the gift of the many appreciative friends of Mr. Mather associated together under the name of The Stephen Tyng Mather Appreciation, Washington, D. C.



## Stephen T. Mather—The Organizer of Parks

By **HORACE M. ALBRIGHT**

Director National Park Service

Nineteen-fifteen is undoubtedly after 1872, the most important date in the annals of national park development. For that was the year that Stephen T. Mather entered public service in behalf of the national parks—or perhaps I should say in behalf of the people, since all national park work is for the benefit of the people.

Up to 1915 our national park system had been a collection of scenic areas more or less haphazardly selected and administered locally by widely divergent instrumentalities ranging from efficient troupe commands of the United States army to local politicians. Fortunately, despite the lack of central organization and direction, most of the national parks established prior to that time qualified fully for such status, even when judged by the most exacting standards of today. Their creation was a natural outgrowth of their intrinsic merit. Only three of these early parks, small attractive areas of local interest, fell short of these standards, and one of these areas already has been eliminated from the system.

### LOVER OF OUTDOORS

Mr. Mather long had been interested in the outdoors, particularly the mountains, as witnessed by his membership in the Sierra Club and other mountaineering organizations. He visited the parks, and his interest in them as a private citizen led him to write to Secretary of the Interior Franklin K. Lane regarding needed improvements in the methods of administration and development.

As a result Secretary Lane, a friend of college days, prevailed

upon him to take over the direction and unification of the national park system, including those national monuments under the supervision of the Department of the Interior.

Mr. Mather was that irresistible combination, a practical business man and an idealist. He brought to bear upon the system the methods that had won him success in the business field. Organization, business methods of handling appropriations and estimates, substitution of a trained park personnel for local politicians, elimination of annoying nuisances such as toll roads, and admission of automobiles to the national parks, all followed soon after he entered public service.

Especially did he stress the need of a separate bureau in the Department of the Interior to administer the national parks and national monuments. A movement had been started several years previous for such a bureau. He got behind the project with such vigor that in about a year and a half after his appointment to government service legislation to establish the National Park Service was enacted. When, a few months later in the spring of 1917, funds were appropriated for the establishment of the new service, Mr. Mather took the helm as director.

### A GREAT PLAN

Meanwhile, hand-in-hand with these practical developments, this park enthusiast was visioning great things for the future, and making his visions come true. The many educational facilities offered in the parks today are the outgrowth of the plan he conceived 15 or more

years ago to help people understand the phenomena responsible for or represented in the national parks.

The well organized public automobile camps today, and the attractive, inexpensive housekeeping camps, are the result of his desire to provide accommodations for all classes of visitors. Hotels and lodges (then called permanent camps) already were available in the parks in some degree when Mr. Mather entered on his public career, so that the wealthy and those in moderate financial condition were provided with accommodations. Now the automobile camps and the housekeeping cabins each year take care of literally hundreds of thousands less favored with the world's goods.

Perhaps outstanding among the effects of Mr. Mather's practical idealism was the establishment and expansion of a landscape architectural division, to insure the location and construction of all man-made developments in the parks in harmony with the natural landscape. Where so-called developments still exist that are out of harmony with over from earlier days, when expediency rather than fitness was the rule. Gradually they are being eliminated from the landscape.

#### **INTEREST IN PEOPLE**

The guiding spirit of Mr. Mather's administration was his love of humanity; it was that the people

might enjoy the parks that he took over his administration of these areas. It was his love of humanity, as expressed in his unselfish park work, that inspired the co-operation he received from subordinates, from conservationists, and from those who contributed of their personal funds to put through many public projects which he sponsored and on which he spent much of his personal fortune. No complete list of these projects is available, but notable among them were the purchase of the old Tioga toll road in Yosemite National Park and the building of the Rangers' Clubhouse in the same park; the purchase of important groves of Big Trees in Sequoia to save them from spoilation, and of private lands in other parks; the gift of land to Glacier Park for an administration site. Going farther afield, he fathered and helped support the National Conference on State Parks and the National Parks Association, and gave financial aid to other well-worth-while conservation and civic organizations.

The United States owes a great debt of gratitude to Mr. Mather. Without his gift of organization, his power to see far into the future and make the plans of today fit the needs of tomorrow, and his unselfish spending of his personal funds, the story of the national parks today might have been a very different one.

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## **He Loved Yosemite**

By C. G. THOMSON,

Superintendent, Yosemite National Park

In this park we naturally take pride in the fact that Stephen T. Mather's love of Yosemite unquestionably was the compelling factor that eventually led him into the work of organizing the National Park Service.

As a Californian he early became intimate with the Yosemite area; subsequently, as an enthusiastic member of the Sierra Club, with a large portion of the surrounding high Sierra country. He traveled it by automobile, by pack train and

afoot. Not content with enjoying it himself, and being as generous as he was enthusiastic, he saw to it that the recreational opportunities afforded by the high country were also enjoyed by many of his friends. He came to Yosemite most often, but his interest in this area induced him into some of the other parks; and soon it naturally transpired that his passion for conservation and organization brought a sharp realization that the Parks were insufficiently manned, equipped and protected. In consequence he made his now well known statement to Secretary Lane—that the parks should be completely reorganized and managed by an independent bureau—and shortly thereafter found himself, rather amazedly, director of the infant bureau.

#### YOSEMITE THE MODEL

Of course, as director he had no favorite park, but the complexity of problems at Yosemite, its intensive public use, and the peculiar situation among park operators which he inherited, necessitated his devoting a large amount of study and effort here. Some of the solutions to the Yosemite problems were adaptable to conditions in other parks, and became fixed park policies. Fortuitous circumstances led to his experimenting here with the first phases of the naturalist service; as a logical consequence the first adequate park museum was constructed at Yosemite. The necessities for an intensive development to accommodate the great influx into Yosemite, together with Mr. Mather's early insistence upon the protection

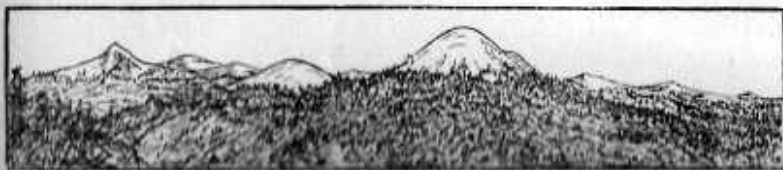
of all possible park values, led to the introduction of the landscape note to Yosemite, and from here to the other parks. In fact Mr. Mather, some years before the organization of a landscape division, personally brought in distinguished landscape specialists and architects to study and report to him on special problems.

In innumerable ways, here, he pioneered the new conception of full usefulness of the Parks, without destruction.

#### FROM HIS OWN PURSE

All of his friends, and most of his acquaintances, of course, realized something of the extent to which he opened his private purse in the interest of the parks. We here in Yosemite are most conscious of this generosity because of our daily use of the Rangers' Club. His donation to its construction was typical of the man. He provided a place of shelter, a meeting place for people, a rendezvous for friends. Looking back, it is now easy to understand that he accomplished his great work almost entirely through his genius for friendships; he really loved people—in the mass as well as individually. He was never content unless others were enjoying what he enjoyed.

To us Service men and women, he always came into the Parks not as the boss, not as the final arbiter, but as a loyal friend of all of us. Around his warm personality there built up an intense spirit of public service; it developed spontaneously around him—for his was that kind of manhood and leadership.



## Recollections

H. C. Bryant, Assistant Director

National Park Service

I well remember my first meeting with former Director Mather. It was in 1919, when I located at Al Tahoe, one of the resorts at the south end of Lake Tahoe. I had spent the summer conducting field trips and giving lectures at various resorts around the lake. Mr. Mather, having heard of these operations, made a special trip to Al Tahoe to interview me.

After inquiring as to the methods used and the success attained, he enthusiastically stated that this was the sort of work that should be undertaken in Yosemite and asked whether operations could not be moved there immediately. The reply was made that this was not possible, in that a full itinerary for that season had been arranged, but it was suggested that perhaps in another year similar work could be undertaken in Yosemite if he were to ask the California Fish and Game Commission to participate. Mr. Mather did not forget the suggestion, and the following year he secured the necessary co-operation, and he and a friend raised sufficient funds personally to pay for the beginning of this work in Yosemite.

Thereafter hardly a summer passed that I did not see him at least for a few moments, and many letters passed between us. He was always careful to send to me any letters of commendation that were written to the Washington office. When in San Francisco he invited me to his hotel for conferences, and when in Yosemite he dropped into the Bryant camp in Camp 19, if only for a few minutes, to say hello to the children.

Outstanding in my memory are the times when Mr. Mather especially invited me to help show Yosemite features to visiting congressional committees. In one instance I participated in a banquet given the committee at Yosemite Lodge. On another occasion I spent several days with the committee late in the fall when it was domiciled at the Ahwahnee Hotel.

### SINews TO EDUCATIONAL WORK

Mr. Mather's thorough interest in the development of the educational work made him alert to give it a full standing as an important service to the public. Both by word and deed he sought this objective. On one occasion he very carefully brought a visiting secretary of the interior to our camp in Yosemite to sit around the camp fire in order that he might become better acquainted with the educational work being started in the parks.

By these incidents I have tried to bring out the thorough interest of Mr. Mather in furnishing reliable information to park visitors. He always stressed procuring the finest of trained men and making the work dignified and worthy of the name.

As we look over the wide-flung activities of park educational work today, we must give full credit to the men who early espoused the cause and developed and encouraged every new undertaking. Were it not for this enthusiasm for this line of work, the visitor might still be asking questions and receiving no adequate answers.

## Naturalist Activities 1932

By M. E. BEATTY

Assistant Park Naturalist

Our Yosemite program of naturalist activities for the summer season of 1932 includes:

Daily nature walks on the floor of the valley.

Daily lectures at the museum, Indian village, Glacier Point, Mariposa Grove and Tuolumne Meadows.

Nightly illustrated lectures at the various camps and hotels.

Nightly bear show and talk at the bear feeding platforms.

All day hikes to some point on the valley rim.

Special bird, flower, geology and tree walks.

Morning and afternoon guided auto caravans visiting points of interest on the floor of the valley.

Six-day hikes through the High Sierra led by a ranger naturalist.

Field School of Natural History, a training school for nature students and naturalists.

Junior Nature School for the children.

Yosemite and Mariposa Grove Museum.

Publishing Yosemite Nature

Notes monthly and many bulletins for the benefit of visitors.

Museum nature garden and Indian village demonstration.

### AN ENLARGED STAFF

In order to carry out this extensive program, it is necessary to increase our staff, so that during the rush summer months we have 11 ranger-naturalists in addition to the three permanent staff members attached to the Yosemite educational department. Most of these men are teachers of some phase of natural science in high schools or universities and appreciate the opportunity to spend their summers in the field.

The staff for the summer of 1932 consists of:

Park Naturalist C. A. Harwell, Assistant Park Naturalist M. E. Beatty, Museum Preparator C. C. Presnall, Ranger Naturalists A. E. Borell, C. C. Jensen, J. C. Shirley, W. W. Bennett, C. H. Oneal, C. W. Sharsmith, B. Brooks, J. Burgess, B. A. Thaxter, H. A. Anderson and Enid Michael; Librarian Ruth Casaday and Museum Secretary Stephen Tripp.

## A Living Memorial

Ranger-Naturalist Joe Burgess

On July 4, 1930, a very simple but none the less impressive ceremony was conducted at the Mariposa Grove of Big Trees. A young Sequoia gigantea some 12 feet high and probably 40 years old was dedicated to the memory of Stephen T. Mather, former Director of the National Park Service. Mr. E. P. Leavitt, then Assistant Superintendent of Yosemite National Park, made a brief speech telling of the work of Mr.

Mather and recounting the many fine things he had done for Yosemite. Dr. H. C. Bryant, Educational Director of the National Park Service, spoke on the fitness of selecting a young tree; pointing out that for a thousand years or more it would stand as a living memorial.

The tree is located by the road close to the Faithful Couple, a neat redwood sign marking it as the Stephen T. Mather Tree.



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THE YOSEMITE NATURAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION  
ITS PURPOSES

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1. To gather and disseminate information on the wild-life of Yosemite National Park.
2. To foster the activities of our Yosemite Museum (in co-operation with the National Park Service), adding to its collections by the purchase of exhibit materials.
3. To promote the educational program of the Yosemite Naturalist Service.
4. To assist in the publishing of "Yosemite Nature Notes".
5. To study living conditions, past and present, of the Indians of the Yosemite region; to encourage their arts and perpetuate their traditions.
6. To help maintain in Yosemite Valley a library of historical, scientific, and popular interest.
7. To further scientific investigation along lines of greatest popular interest and to publish, from time to time, bulletins of non-technical nature.
8. To strictly limit the activities of the association to purposes which shall be scientific and educational, in order that the organization shall not be operated for profit.

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 We invite anyone interested in Yosemite to join our Yosemite Natural History Association. Included in this month's issue is a blank showing combination memberships with the American Nature Association and the American Forestry Association. If you are already a member of either of these associations, we hope you will renew through us. Help us double our membership before summer.

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Dan Anderson