

YOSEMITE NATURE NOTES

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MARIPOSA GROVE MUSEUM

Yosemite Nature Notes

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YOSEMITE DURING THE WAR YEARS

By Frank A. Kittredge, Superintendent

Yosemite residents reacted to the startling news of the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor, that fateful December day of 1941, in a manner typical of Americans everywhere. It was immediately apparent that events of the future were to have a profound effect upon Yosemite National Park; that they were to touch all of us to some degree in one way or another. Now, looking back over the war years one feels no hesitancy in making the statement that Yosemite National Park rose admirably to the occasion.

Even before the beginning of actual hostilities a number of local men had entered the armed forces and all during hostilities 139 regular employees and residents donned military uniforms in the defense of their country. A number left the park to engage in war industries, and those who remained behind adequately demonstrated their interest and their feeling of responsibility to their public trust by exhibiting a wholehearted spirit of cooperation which was necessary if this area was to be maintained for future generations.

The loss of many experienced employees upon whom all park organizations had depended so greatly for automatic and satisfactory performance of many important tasks was only partly compensated for by the employment of willing but inexperienced help—young people or those unfit for or beyond the age required by military services. Many positions, particularly insofar as the government organization was concerned, were eliminated as an economy measure and for a similar reason funds for park operations were greatly curtailed.

Difficulties of the labor situation were intensified by factors pertaining to the geographical situation of Yosemite National Park. As this area was located in a region characterized by a large war industrial program as well as numerous military establishments, travel to the park continued throughout the war years and, although greatly under that of the pre-war years, was far above our ordinary ability to cope with and solve the numerous problems that were thus developed. In addi-

tion to a certain amount of civilian travel from nearby communities, Yosemite National Park was an objective of many men and women in military service who were traveling to the Pacific Coast or who were stationed in this area. In addition, particularly during the early war years, the Park was visited by numerous Army convoys and for over two years the Ahwahnee Hotel was operated by the United States Navy as a hospital.

Local civilian war activities were noteworthy for their scope and accomplishment. In spite of added bur-

dens concerned with regular duties local residents gave willingly of their time and talents. In the dark early days of the war the grave peril to our country touched off a series of activities all designed in an anticipation of an emergency and probable regional disaster. Some of these proved to be unnecessary and passed out of the picture at an early date. Others firmly established themselves and functioned as regular routine throughout the war.

Among the more important changes in the normal operation of Yosemite National Park during the



Dining room of the Ahwahnee Hotel as it appeared during its use as the United States Naval Special Hospital (From "History of the United States Special Hospital," published by the U. S. Navy, December 1945).

war years in which the many friends of this area will probably be interested are the following:

The Ahwahnee Hotel continued in operation as such until June 23, 1943 when this structure was taken over by the United States Navy. It was operated as the Naval Special Hospital (originally termed Naval Convalescent Hospital) until its formal decommissioning on December 15, 1945. Although it will be reconverted to hotel use the date of its availability in that capacity is not yet definite. During the period when the Ahwahnee functioned as a hospital 6,752 patients were treated here, the greatest number at one time being 853. The hospital, during its most active period, was operated by a large and varied staff including officers, nurses, waves, and enlisted men, as well as representatives of the American Red Cross, Veterans Administration, and United States Employment Service and a number of civilian employees.

Camp Curry, Yosemite Lodge and Camp 16 continued in operation throughout the war. The Wawona Hotel, Big Trees Lodge and the Glacier Point Hotel were closed following the summer of 1942. The Glacier Point Mountain House, however, was open during the summers on a greatly reduced basis. Only two of the High Sierra Camps — Tuolumne Meadows and Merced Lake—were operated during the summer of 1943. However, the operation of the Tuolumne Meadows Lodge was discon-

tinued after that season. Regular bus service from Merced to the Park was permitted throughout the war but sightseeing busses ceased operation in June, 1942. The bus between Fresno and Yosemite Valley, however, operated throughout that season but discontinued service during 1943, 1944 and 1945.

Only three of the five public camp grounds on the Valley floor were open following the 1942 season, one of these being reserved for military personnel and military convoys. Ranger activities had to be curtailed due to reduced personnel, but fortunately no major emergency developed. Although the Park Museum was operated throughout the war practically all other naturalist activities were eliminated, including the operation of the Mariposa Grove Museum, all hikes and field trips and the major share of the lecture program. All seasonal naturalists positions were abolished as an economy measure following the summer of 1942; three of the five year round positions were likewise eliminated in the early fall of 1943. Other departments in the local National Park Service organization were also affected—hence general maintenance work, (particularly in regard to trails), even though carefully planned for maximum accomplishment, had to be greatly curtailed.

Badger Pass continued in operation throughout the war and a skating rink was provided on a reduced and informal scale in the usual place

at the Camp Curry parking area. During the winters of 1943-44 and 1944-45 the opening and maintenance of the Badger Pass road was made possible largely through funds provided by the United States Navy in an effort to make this area available for hospital patients as a recreational feature.

Travel to the park dropped considerably after Pearl Harbor and continued to decline through 1944. In 1945, following V-E Day and the easing of gas restrictions, it began a slow climb which was phenomenally accelerated immediately following V-J Day. From an average of 1,100 visitors per week immediately before V-J Day it jumped sharply to a weekly average of 2,500. This tendency

has continued unabated. Since October 1, 1945, park travel has been running consistently ahead of 1941 (the record year) for the same period. Up to the first of March this year 93,826 people entered the park as compared to 70,039 during the same period of the 1941 travel year, an increase of 34%. A comparison with a similar period in the 1945 travel year indicates an increase of 315%.

Thus, with the war behind us the Yosemite staff, although augmented by the return of many of our former employees, has little time to review its war accomplishments. At present, all signs point to an influx of travel that will tax our most conscientious efforts and even the most varied of our talents.

Travel Statistics

The following figures are based upon the official travel year which includes a period from October 1 to September 30 of the following calendar year. To date the all-time record for Yosemite travel was established in the 1941 travel year (October 1, 1940-September 30, 1941).

1940	506,781	1942	332,550	1944	119,515
1941	594,062	1943	127,643	1945	251,931



HONOR ROLL YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

The following list contains the names of those who, at the time they entered military service, were either permanent employees of the National Park Service, regular employees of the Yosemite Park and Curry Company or other established local organizations, or whose homes were in the park. Many seasonal employees, of course, also entered the armed forces but their names have not been included due to difficulties in obtaining a complete and accurate list, and to lack of space.

Bud Andrews (3)	Emil F. Ernst	Dave McNamara (2)
Bernard C. Arnold	Wm. A. Ellis	Norman May
Al Akers	Herbert Ewing	Elmer H. Nelson
Merle Ashworth	Kenneth English	William Nielson
Jules Ashworth	Malcolm Fulmer	Amos Neal
Dorothy Ballard	Luigi Foeger	Wendell Otter
Gaylord Baker	Ralph Fulton	Dan Otto
Don Bartlett	Arthur Freeman, Jr.	Clarence Parker
Robert Bartlett	Geo. G. Goldsworthy	Harry C. Parker
Clarence Bernhauer	Ted Glisczinski	Earl Pierson
Margaret Boyd	Charles Gilliam	Fred Pierson
William E. Brockman	Glenn D. Gallison	John Putnam
Otto Brown	James W. Gann	Oscar Price
Chris Brown	Richard Gordon	Everitt Philp
All Bergley	Elton M. Hilton	George Petersen (2)
William Birchnall	Arthur G. Holmes	Hugh Paisley
Donald Bunnell	Elmer L. Hommel	Jack Patterson
Arnold Burch, Jr.	Andy Hennig	Erwin Rehker
James Brennen	Marshall Hall	Frank Raffensperger
Lowell Bonshu	Joseph Haas (1)	Carl Reber
Louis Bunter	Delbert Hogan	Jack Ring
Nat Bredeman	Duane D. Jacobs	Leroy Rust
Della Brown	William Jones	Annie Marie (Dudley)
Bob Brantley	Bert Jenkins	Shaw
Melvin Brantley	Velma Johnson	E. Carlton Smith
Lawrence Brocchini	Oscar James	Floren Slaughter
Nicholas Brocchini	Norman James	Lewis Smith
Winston Churchill	Gordon Kuhlman	Eugene Stoetzel
Samuel L. Clark	John Keeley	William Stark
Miles Cooper	Alphonse Landry	Myron L. Sharp
James Carpenter	Selmer J. Logeland	Marvin G. Scott
Radar Crooks	Paul Lane	Dr. Avery E. Sturm
William Cahow	Bill Lane	John Telles, Jr.
Richard Connett	Robert Lally	Lorin Trubschenck
Jack Cameron	Roy Lally	Ben Tarnutzer
James Connell	Catherine Lally	Helmar Torgerson
Kenneth J. Carpenter	Roger Lane	E. L. Thayer
H. E. Camay	Gerald E. Mernin	Kirk Torney
Charles Cromer	Lester M. Moe	John A. Townsley
R. E. Cromer	Robert N. McIntyre	Jack Vacca
William Cuthbert	Floyd A. McKim	Jack E. Van Housen
Eugene Drown	Russell L. McKown	Barbara Van Housen
Harry A. During	Vernon Morris	Harold Whittington
Charles Dantibo	Leland Miracle	Carl Waters
Richard Ditton	Vincent Merritt	Bennie R. Wood
Jack Dolan	Thomas McElligott	E. B. Ward
Paul Dinsmore	Harry Mohn	

(1) Killed in action. (2) Missing in action. (3) Killed in line of duty.

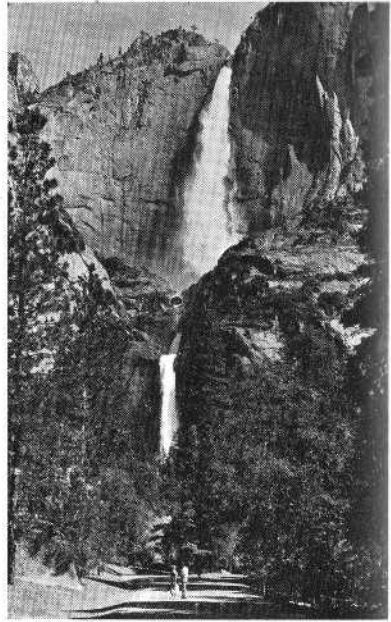
INTERESTING SPRINGTIME TRAILS

By C. Frank Brockman, Park Naturalist

Although Yosemite National Park embodies diverse interests that appeal to different people at different times of the year, there can be no question that, insofar as the Valley area is concerned, the months of May and June have the greatest appeal. At this season the waterfall display is at its best and the sombre hues of the coniferous forests are enlivened by the fresh greenery of the deciduous trees.

One must use the trails to best appreciate and enjoy Yosemite National Park⁽¹⁾. Perhaps the most dramatic hike that one can make at this season is the climb to the top of Yosemite Falls. This is not a difficult trip, even though it requires a round trip of about seven miles, a climb of 2,700 feet from its origin at Camp 4 (a short distance west of Yosemite Lodge) and a total time for the average person of about six to eight hours.

After reaching the brink of the falls one may, if desired, return to the main trail and continue for about one mile to Yosemite Point. This, on the east side of Yosemite Creek, is about 300 feet higher than the top of the falls. Further, although it is not recommended for the average



Yosemite Falls

visitor, the strong hiker may be able to combine the ascent of Eagle Peak with a trip to the top of the falls. This necessitates an additional hiking distance of about six miles (round trip) from the trail junction at the top of the rim. However, if time is available the view from this point, highest of the Three Brothers (7,773 feet), will be adequate compensation for the extra effort.

(1) Trails in the Yosemite "high country" are usually not ready for use until about the first week in July. The trail to the summit of Half Dome is not usually open until early in June, at which time the cables which are necessary in negotiating the last 900 feet are installed. The trail to Cloud's Rest is also not advised until about that time. The Pohono Trail on the south rim of the Valley is generally not suitable for travel until late in June or early in July. By mid-June the Ledge Trail from Camp Curry to Glacier Point is usually open. Trail information and maps may be obtained from park rangers at the Administration Building or from naturalists at the Park Museum.



Vernal Fall

Perhaps the most popular hike from the Valley floor is the trip from Happy Isles up the Merced River to Nevada Fall and the lower portion of Little Yosemite Valley. This trip offers a great variety of interests, including an intimate approach to Nevada and Vernal Falls, the Diamond Cascades, the Silver Apron, and the Emerald Pool. En route one also gets a distant view of Illilouette Falls and an unusual view of Half Dome. A round trip of about seven miles, a climb of about 2,000 feet, and a total hiking time of from four to six hours is required. In making the ascent to Little Yosemite Valley the use of the horse trail is suggested. Thus, on the return one can use the steeper foot trail and avoid retracing the same route. This branches left from the

main route in lower Little Yosemite Valley, a short distance above the bridge at the top of Nevada Falls. From this point one descends via a series of steep switchbacks below Liberty Cap and, after reaching the brink of Vernal Fall, continues the steep descent via the Mist Trail.

The Sierra Point Trail, a short but steep footpath, bears left from the main Vernal-Nevada Falls Trail a short distance above Happy Isles. It offers a steep climb of about one half mile which brings one to a point on the flank of Grizzly Peak from which one may see Nevada, Vernal, Illilouette, and Yosemite Falls.

Glacier Point is usually accessible via the Four Mile Trail by late May. Of course by that time one can also reach Glacier Point by the road but one cannot properly appreciate the tremendous height and bulk of Yosemite's granite cliffs until one uses the trails. The Four Mile Trail starts from the south side of the Valley at a point near the base of Sentinel Rock and after a climb of 3,200 feet, usually requiring a time of from three to four hours, Glacier Point is reached. Here one obtains a matchless panorama of the surrounding "high country" as well as a "bird's eye view" of the Valley. If available the return to the Valley floor can be made by means of the trail which first descends to Illilouette Creek which is crossed just above its falls, then climbs around a shoulder above Panorama Cliff before it finally descends to the top of



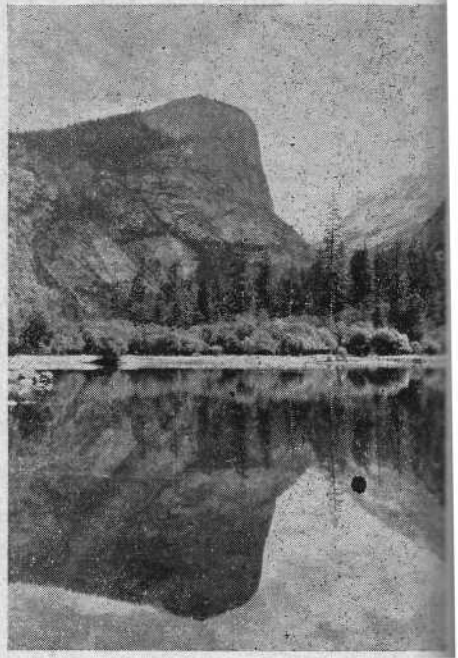
Half Dome from Glacier Point

Nevada Falls. From this point the return to the Valley floor is made via either the foot or horse trail from that point to Happy Isles. A total hiking time of from four to five hours is required for the descent by the "long trail" from Glacier Point.

Other shorter walks are also available. Various sections of the bridle-path, which completely encircles the Valley at the base of the granite cliffs, offer many interesting possibilities for enjoyable hikes. Of particular interest in this regard is the trail from Mirror Lake which follows up Tenaya Canyon for $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles, crosses Tenaya Creek, and returns to Mirror Lake on the south side of the

stream. A footbridge below Mirror Lake enables one to cross to the main road again. A stroll along the bank of the Merced River—particularly in the early morning or early evening is also of interest.

These trails, although a very small portion of the total trail system of Yosemite National Park (740 miles)



Mirror Lake

nevertheless will enable one to get a better appreciation of the Valley area and perhaps will arouse the interest of the park visitor so that at some later time, more extended hikes will be made into the Yosemite "high country."



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Dan Anderson