

Yosemite Nature Notes

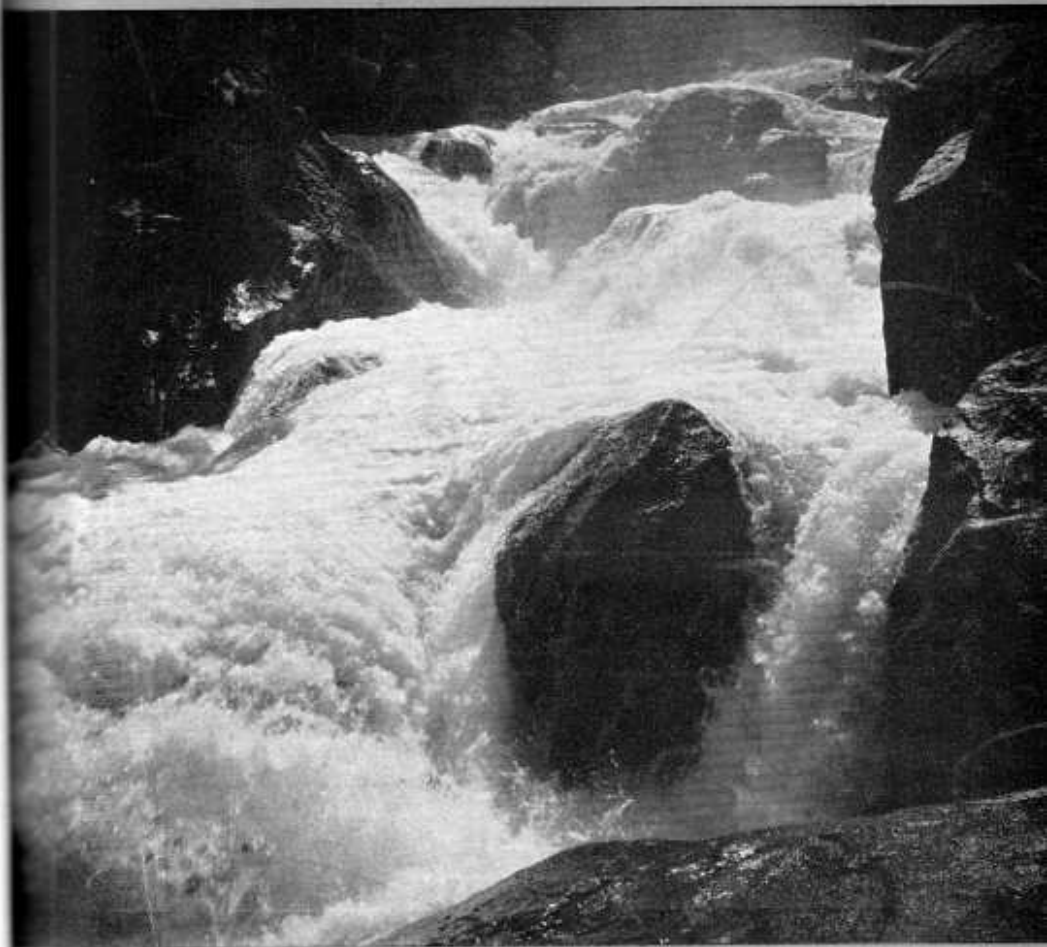




Photo by J. T. Boyce

President Theodore Roosevelt and party leaving the Wawona Hotel for the Mariposa Grove of giant sequoias on May 15, 1903. Tom Gordon, old-time stage driver, at the reins; John and Ed Washburn, owners of the hotel, in evidence in the background; A. D. Mann addressing the President.

Cover Photo: River cascade, Yosemite Valley. By Ansel Adams from "Yosemite and the Sierra Nevada," text by John Muir, 64 photographs by Ansel Adams. Reproduction by kind permission of Houghton Mifflin Company.

YOSEMITE NATURALIST NOTES
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"WE WILL PITCH CAMP AT BRIDALVEIL!"

By Ralph H. Anderson, Administrative Assistant

This was a simple, forceful statement made by President Theodore Roosevelt as he sat on his horse in front of the old Sentinel Hotel on May 17, 1903, but it marked a new era in the history of conservation in the United States. But let's start at the beginning!

Early in the spring of 1903, President Roosevelt wrote to his friend Chester Rowell of the San Francisco Chronicle that he wanted to go camping with the famous naturalist John Muir, whose writings had attracted nation-wide attention. The necessary arrangements were made and on May 15 the Presidential train rolled into the little lumber town of Raymond, California, the nearest railway station to Yosemite National Park. According to old-timers who were there, the President was somewhat nonplussed to find a large crowd of cowpunchers, lumberjacks, miners, and prospectors gathered at the little station. Even a band was playing, and bunting and flags were waving at every corner. Theodore Roosevelt waved to the throngs and quickly mounted the stagecoach waiting to drive him to Wawona, the President and his party well buttoned up in their linen dusters.

The party drove first to the Wa-

wona Hotel where it was met by many enthusiastic local residents. Photos were made by Julius T. Boyesen in front of the hotel as the President mounted the stage, driven by Tom Gordon, to continue on to the Mariposa Grove. Most of the group stayed at the hotel that night, but plans had been made for Roosevelt to have a 3-day camping trip with John Muir, accompanied by Rangers Charles Leidig and Archie Leonard, starting with an overnight camp in the Mariposa Grove and winding up in Yosemite Valley.

As the President and his companions were about to pitch camp near a cool spring not far from the Sunset Tree, Roosevelt called for his "wahh bag"—a small bag containing his personal effects. No one could find it! Apparently it had been left at Wawona by mistake. "I want my wahh bag!" exclaimed the President in no uncertain terms. So veteran stage driver Sam Owens jumped into a buckboard and galloped his horse as fast as he could to Wawona, picked up the bag, and brought it to the President post haste. Sam Owens, who had the distinction of being able to smoke a pipe and chew tobacco at the same time, later drawled: "And he didn't even look into it when he got it!"

Early in the morning of the second day, after a refreshing night's rest among the giant sequoias, Theodore Roosevelt and his companions were up and in the saddle long before the rest of the party, including Governor Pardee, Benjamin Ide Wheeler, and Private Secretary Loeb, were out of bed at Wawona. As the San Francisco Chronicle described the trip: "Avoiding the main road, and long before most of his associates were up, the President, filled with his usual enthusiasm for adventure, passed rapidly down the narrow defile known as Lightning Trail and struck off for Yosemite Valley. An hour later the main road was reached and the steep ascent to the top of Chinquapin [should have been Chilnualna Falls] was begun. The party reached the summit before noon and then the difficult portion of the trip began. Here the party not only had the steep ascents but the deep snow as well."

Floundering in snow that was often belly deep on their horses, and further hindered by a blinding snow-storm that continued all afternoon, the weary party pushed on to a point "just back of Sentinel Dome" where they pitched camp for the night. Next morning they shook several inches of fresh snow off their camp beds, had breakfast, and started the 14-mile trek to Yosemite Valley via Glacier Point, Nevada and Vernal Falls.

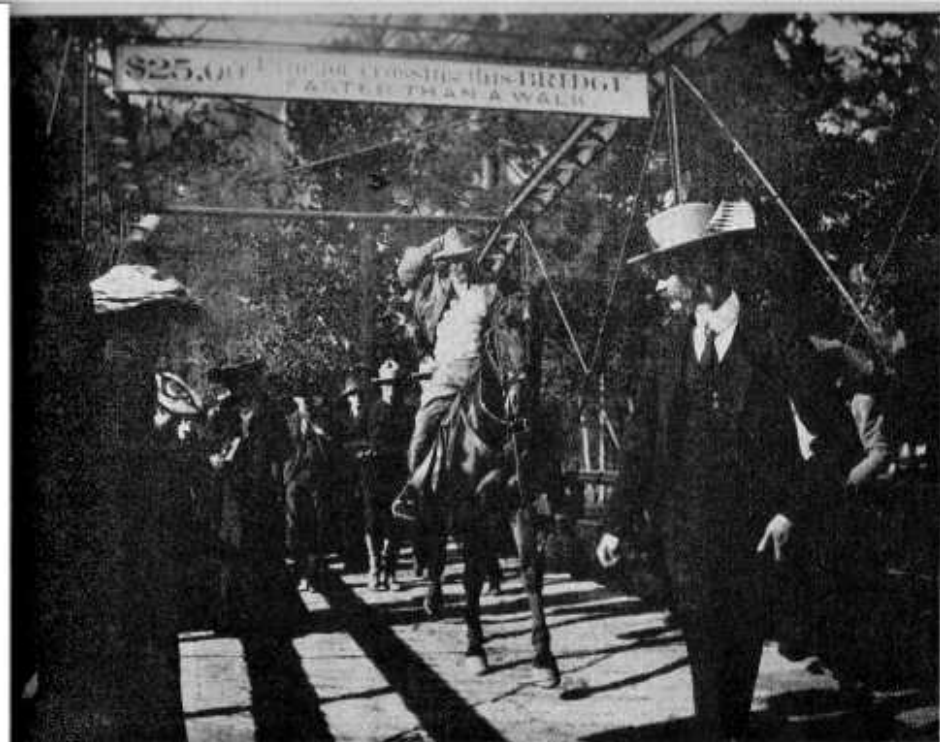
Many are the stories told by those who met or travelled with President Roosevelt on this history-making trip. Charles Leidig recalled Roosevelt dressed in Norfolk coat, baggy breeches, leather puttees, and topped with a large sombrero; Muir as usual in business suit complete with vest and heavy watch chain and wearing an old felt hat. Those who knew Muir well have commented on his

habit of wearing ordinary street clothes and an old felt hat when he made trips into the mountains. Mr. Clay Gooding of San Francisco was with Muir on one of the first Sierra Club jaunts. Gooding said Muir scoffed at those hikers who had to have special clothes for going into the mountains. Leidig recalled that Muir and Roosevelt had long talks on the flowers, birds, and animals of the park, and that Muir occasionally plucked a flower for the President's coat, sometimes to the discomfiture of Roosevelt.

At Glacier Point the Presidential party paused to enjoy the superlative views. A photographer for Underwood and Underwood was on hand to make pictures of John Muir and the President standing on Overhanging Rock.

The distinguished group rode down the long trail to Yosemite Valley and west toward the Old Village, where elaborate preparations had been made to honor the President with a big banquet at the Sentinel Hotel. John Degnan said there was \$400 worth of fireworks to shoot off for the occasion! Mrs. Degnan remembered how John painted a green sign reading "Welcome" which was erected over the Stoneman Bridge. In doing so he got a drop of paint in his eye that bothered him the rest of his life!

These plans were directly contrary to the wishes of the President. As the San Francisco Chronicle reported: "Notwithstanding the fact that the President, before leaving Washington, outlined his programme he was to follow during his stay in the Yosemite, the [State] Commission decided that he should follow another programme, which they adopted without consulting him. This latter programme provided for fireworks, the firing of dynamite to pro-



President Theodore Roosevelt crossing the old Sentinel Bridge amid throngs of excited visitors. This remarkable documentary photograph was taken on May 17, 1903, by Miss Katherine Dexter, teacher in Yosemite Valley at the time of the President's visit

duce loud echoes and the participation by the President in some sort of public ceremony . . . people came into the Yosemite from hundreds of miles away to see him."

Arriving at the Old Village the party stopped at the Chris Jorgensen studio, the Jorgensens having moved out of their picturesque log house into the Sentinel Hotel so that the President could have their entire home. Here he dismounted and the group enjoyed a drink; then, mounting their horses, they rode back across the bridge (see photo) to the Sentinel Hotel but paused only briefly when Roosevelt's booming voice called out to the others: "We will pitch camp at Bridalveil!"

While hundreds of visitors, politicians, and residents stood by, the little group of riders disappeared down the valley. John Degnan took

2 bales of hay by buckboard to Bridalveil Meadow for the stock of the Presidential party. There, on the south side of the grassy meadow near a small stream course, the camp was made at a choice spot at the very base of towering cliff walls near Bridalveil Fall. The camp provided a view of El Capitan across the Merced River, Ribbon Fall then thundering from one of the highest hanging valleys on the north rim.

According to Muir's journal, the two great naturalists talked long into the night around the campfire. There was much to be done toward safeguarding for future generations the most superb examples of America's wilderness. Muir felt this need keenly, and imparted his conservation ideas to the receptive President. The two talked about steps which might be taken to preserve for pub-

lic use some of these great natural areas. That meeting around the campfire at Bridalveil was of far greater importance to the United States than any banquet at the Sentinel Hotel. There, in one of the most beautiful settings in our country, two great conservationists got together on a constructive program for the preservation of parks and forests, of fast disappearing natural habitats for wildlife.

Following the Yosemite visit, President Roosevelt returned to Washington refreshed in mind and spirit. Before the end of his term he had assisted in adding 148 million acres to the forest reserves, created 16 national monuments, and used his influence in the establishment of 5 national parks. Among the national monuments were Muir Woods near San Francisco; Petrified Forest in Arizona; Grand Canyon of the Colo-

rado, which was later converted by Act of Congress into a national park. It was John Muir who suggested that Petrified Forest and the Grand Canyon be saved by Presidential order as national monuments.

Next day President Roosevelt was reluctant to leave his newly made friends. He expressed great consideration and appreciation for the guides who had accompanied him, and advised them to take their time about breaking camp, urging them to stay in camp and rest up after their strenuous 3-day trip in the high country. There were the usual farewells as the President rode off in a stage for the return trip to Wawona and Raymond. As the party disappeared, Archie Leonard made a dive for the President's camp bed. "I'm going to take a nap right where the President slept," he said, as he pulled up the covers.

WILDLIFE CONDITIONS IN THE MARIPOSA GROVE, SUMMER 1950

By Orthello L. Wallis, Park Ranger

Although the giant sequoias are the primary objects of interest in the Mariposa Grove, the wildlife forms receive the immediate attention of many visitors. The average tourist expects to see a bear, is excited by the sight of the "tame deer," and is thrilled upon seeing the chipmunks, golden-mantled ground squirrels, chickarees, and gray squirrels. The appearance of a gray fox or coyote is an experience long remembered.

Unfortunately there are some problems created by the relationship of man with the wildlife. This report deals with a discussion of these problems and the wildlife conditions in the Mariposa Grove during the summer of 1950. The area included extends from the Sentinels to Wawona Point and from Big Tree Creek

on the south to the Wawona Trail on the north.

California mule deer are the most conspicuous mammals in the grove. Daily observations of the activities of these animals were recorded during the summer. By constant observation one is able to recognize individual deer. During the summer months I saw 51 different individuals and I feel confident that few deer escaped my attention. This summer population is excessive for such a small area. The tendency of visitors to feed the animals causes the deer to gather at certain locations along the road where they are readily and repeatedly observed.

Deer provide the No. 1 wildlife problem in the Mariposa Grove. This problem is created, of course, by

the visitors' habit of feeding the deer. As a result, the deer will gather at any place where it is necessary for cars to slow up or stop, such as Wawona Point, the museum and picnic area, Big Trees Lodge, the campground, and any of the most popular trees.

Unfavorable conditions caused by the concentration of deer at these points are numerous—traffic congestion, overbrowsing of the small trees and shrubs in the immediate vicinity, the danger of visitors getting struck by the flying hoofs of the deer, and, of course, the adverse effect of the unnatural food (cigars, cigarettes, candy, pastries, etc.) upon the physical condition of the deer. Also there is the danger and possibility of disease spreading through the population when concentrated in abnormal numbers. During the season, several persons received injuries from the deer. Fortunately, all of the injuries were of a minor nature. One or two of the does in the

museum picnic area habitually struck at visitors, especially young children.

Approximately seven black bears were observed in the grove during the summer. Early in July, Ranger Naturalist Wayne Bryant saw a bear with two small cubs in the meadow on Rattlesnake Creek over the hill behind the campground. This family group was not reported again. One large and three medium-sized bears were seen during the summer. Bears created no important problems last year. Their activity, mainly, consisted of infrequent garbage can raids. Except when discovered on these nocturnal visits, bears were rarely seen by visitors. The "Do Not Feed the Bears" signs at the Grizzly Giant and the lodge often provoked the question, "Where are the bears?" The situation at the Big Trees Lodge improved with the installation of a "bear-proof" cabinet for the garbage cans and the cooperation of the employees in refraining from



Deer with fawns

Photo by Hatwell

encouraging the bears by feeding them. No cases of bear feeding were encountered and no injuries by bears within the grove were reported.

Porcupines did considerable damage to the pit-type restrooms by gnawing at the seats and platforms. A slight amount of damage was done to the bark of young trees. These mammals have gnawed at the bases of many prominent giant sequoias, also. Their numbers do not appear to be sufficiently large to necessitate any control measures.

Coyotes frequently were seen along the road. Their scats and tracks were observed on all the trails. Several instances of evidence of coyotes feeding on dead deer were noted. Gray foxes were observed on several occasions.

During the summer, the checklist of mammals of the Mariposa Grove was augmented by observation of the following species: Striped skunk, ring-tailed cat, bobcat, long-tailed meadow mouse, vagrant shrew, and mountain lion (1949 record).

Other mammals found within the Mariposa Grove include: Gambel's white-footed mouse, Sierra marmot, Tahoe chipmunk, long-eared chip-

munk, chickaree, gray squirrel, Sierra Nevada pocket gopher, Sierra ground squirrel, golden-mantled ground squirrel, and raccoon.

Notes on the Fishes

No fish were found in Rattlesnake Creek. In Big Tree Creek, both eastern brook trout and rainbow trout are present. I fished in Big Tree Creek several times but the results of two trips will illustrate the composition of the fish fauna. On July 13, 1950, I fished upstream from the ranger's cabin to the fire road. I caught 16 rainbows and 2 eastern brooks. Only 4 of the 18 were over the 6-inch limit; the others were carefully released. The largest was 8 $\frac{3}{8}$ inches long. On September 14, 1950, I covered the stream from the falls to a point about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile above the junction of Rattlesnake Creek. The catch consisted of 8 rainbows and 5 eastern brooks. Of the 13 fish, only one was over the legal length.

The rainbows are more abundant than the eastern brook. The size of both species is small in this stream. Ample reproduction was evidenced. Smallness of the trouts can be attributed to confinement of the environment and overpopulation.

YOSEMITE IN SPRING

By Elizabeth Godfrey Baker

The winter's past, the spring is in the making;
The sun is melting the frozen snows away.
In glad release gigantic falls are breaking,
And birdsong greets the dawn of a spring day.
Awake ye souls, ye mortals knowing sadness,
Behold the wonders of God's mighty hand.
Such joyous rapture in superb creation
Is like the strains from Heaven's borderland.
The winter's past, old orchards are abloom;
Oak leaves are lace against a moonswept sky;
Incessantly, we hear those torrents booming
As they burst from tombs a long time dry.

TINY BIVALVE

By Jene E. Pankow, Ranger Naturalist

Clams came to me by surprise; I've dug them out of the sea off the coast of Maine, boiled them and eaten them raw, yet I never expected to find them here in Yosemite. One day a little boy brought to the museum some tiny things that looked about the size of a pencil eraser, though not as circular. I couldn't get the little boy's name, but I finally found the clam's—*Pisidium* C. Pfeiffer—to be exact.

Pisidium is found in several areas on the Yosemite Valley floor where the stream isn't too rapid, even in pools that are apparently stagnant, such as ditches which are filled only in periods of high water. Several of these areas lie between Stoneman Bridge and Sentinel Bridge, and anyone wishing to delve into these year-round pools will be rewarded with

observing an abundance of minute animal life, including *Pisidium*.

Like many of its larger relatives, *Pisidium* moves by means of a tiny muscle called a foot which can be extended between its shell halves or valves. However, unlike some other clams, *Pisidium* often may be found clinging to water plants close to the surface, although it feeds not on the plants, but by ciliary action, sucking in food-bearing water and straining out the tiny pieces of edible matter.

At first *Pisidium* seems to be of no use to man, though it should not be condemned for this. It certainly is too small for man to eat; however, the stomachs of some of our Yosemite trout have been found to contain partly digested clams, so that here again we find an apparently insignificant animal working for the benefit and pleasure of man.

AN INSPIRING MESSAGE IN THE MARIPOSA GROVE

By Newton B. Drury, Former Director, National Park Service

Editor's note: The following stirring address, spoken without advance preparation by Mr. Drury on October 18, 1950, in the majestic setting of the Mariposa Grove of giant sequoias, marked a high point of the twentieth National Park Service Conference, held in Yosemite National Park.

The giant trees among which we stand are classed as wonders of the world and this Mariposa Grove is one of the great possessions of our Nation. That is why, in spite of the many speeches I have already made to this gathering, I agreed, on Regional Director Allen's invitation, to say another word to the National Park Service family. Nowhere else would it be more appropriate to emphasize the function of the National Park Service as trustee for the great places of beauty and wonder and the sites of scientific and historic interest in America.

The less one tries to put in words the importance of the sequoias, whether it be the big trees of the Sierra or the coast redwoods, the more nearly one begins to succeed in recognizing their greatness. One needs only to stand among them. Our own California poet, Edwin Markham, tried to express it when he said: "These mighty trees belong to the silences and the millenniums. Many of them have seen a hundred human generations rise, give off their little clamors, and perish. They chide our pettiness. They rebuke our impiety. They seem

indeed to be forms of immortality standing here among the transitory shapes of time."

That message of the big trees was one of meaning to men like Joseph LeConte and Dr. John C. Merriam, who had such talent for interpreting the greatness of the national parks, and Dr. John P. Buwalda, who is here today as a member of the Yosemite Advisory Board, as well as to countless other men and women in California and throughout the Nation. They have long recognized that a great act was performed when in 1864 President Abraham Lincoln signed the bill which created, first as a state park, and later as Yosemite National Park, this reservation where we are today. The story is told by the historian of Yosemite, Dr. Carl P. Russell.

Whatever Horace Albright claims as to the priority of Yellowstone—and his claim is *literally* true—we Californians stand together in saying that the national park type, the basic idea, originated in 1864 in Yosemite.

I spoke of Edwin Markham, and I spoke of Abraham Lincoln. My mind goes back to an experience that I had in Greenville, Tennessee, when visiting the Andrew Johnson National Monument. It shows the many ways in which the areas of the national park system are interrelated. As I went upstairs in the old home where Andrew Johnson spent his last years, there on the wall were two faded photographs and under them the caption: "Yo-Semite." They were pictures of the valley where we met today. My thoughts went back to 1864 when Andrew Johnson was presiding officer of the Senate. It is not hard to believe that he had received these photographs of the incomparable Yosemite as part of the campaign to induce the Congress to pass the act which later received the signature of Abraham Lincoln. And thinking again of Markham, there came to mind the ending of his poem on the death of Lincoln, described by Alfred Noyes as "the most impressive climax in English poetry":

"And when he fell in whirlwind, he went down
As when a lordly cedar, green with boughs,
Goes down with a great shout upon the hills,
And leaves a lonesome place against the sky."



Mariposa Grove museum

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YOSEMITE
NATURAL HISTORY
ASSOCIATION

Yosemite National Park, California

INCORPORATED for the purpose of cooperating with the National Park Service by assisting the Naturalist Department of Yosemite National Park in the development of a broad public understanding of the geology, plant and animal life, history, Indians and related interests in Yosemite National Park and nearby regions. It aids in the development of the Yosemite Museum and library, fosters scientific investigations along lines of greatest popular interest, offers books on natural history applicable to this area for sale to the public, and cooperates in the publication of

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Dan Anderson