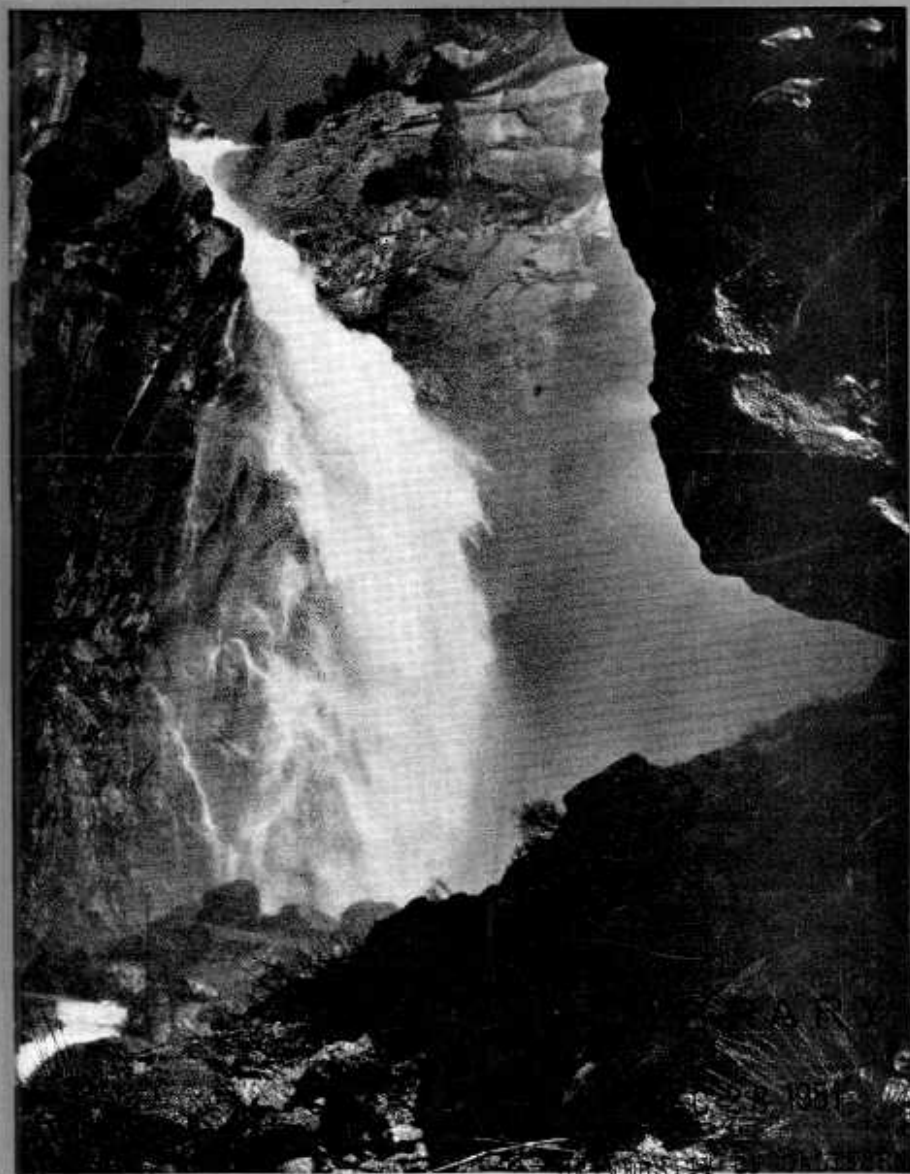


Yosemite Nature Notes





Fort Miller on the South Bank of the San Joaquin River.

This regular Army post was garrisoned from May 26, 1851, until June 1858, and again from August 1863 until August 1866. It was from this post that the third military expedition into Yosemite started in June 1852. Copies of the post returns submitted each month by the commanding officer are possessed by the Yosemite Museum. Near the fort the town of Millerton (called Rootville in 1854-1855) sprang into existence. It became the county seat of Fresno County in 1856 and the *Fresno Times* was printed there every Saturday.

An undated report by Joseph K. Mansfield, Inspector General, War Department, states that within 75 miles of Fort Miller are "500 warriors who are under different local names and armed with bows and arrows, and are disposed to work for miners, and others by the day, but do not wish to remove to the reservation. The American population at Millerton, and this immediate vicinity may number 500, and this country is filling up with miners and the good lands being taken up. A post office should be established at Millerton where there is a ferry across the San Joaquin."

In 1853 William Parks, mineralogist with Lt. R. S. Williamson's transcontinental railroad survey, wrote from Fort Miller: "As many as five or six hundred Indians may be here at one time. They live in the usual manner in brush huts a short distance below the fort."

The above sketch is one of four plates from the records of the Office of the Quartermaster General now preserved in the National Archives, Washington, D.C. The undated plates are accompanied by a statement regarding the condition of the fort's buildings as they were in March 1858. The buildings described in the report agree in all particulars with the structures shown in the undated drawing.

The sites of Fort Miller and the town of Millerton are now covered by the waters of Millerton Lake.

Cover Photo: Cascade Fall, Merced Canyon below 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 Nature Notes

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NO. 6

THE GEOGRAPHY OF THE MARIPOSA INDIAN WAR

(No. 3)

By Carl P. Russell, Park Superintendent

V. The Third Punitive Expedition into Yosemite Valley

In a preceding note (No. IV of the present series) reference was made to the mustering out of the Mariposa Battalion in July of 1851. This breaking up of the local military force did not take place until the United States had guaranteed that the southern mines should have the protection of professional soldiery. Under date of May 22, 1851, orders had been issued by the 10th Military Department, San Francisco, for the establishment of Fort Miller on the San Joaquin River. By June 1, 1851, the establishment had progressed to a point which enabled Lt. Tredwell Moore* to transmit the returns of his new post to his superiors.

Fort Miller was erected on the south bank of the San Joaquin not far above the present Friant Dam.

Its site is now covered by the waters of Millerton Lake where the National Park Service conducts a recreational program. The first development consisted of a log blockhouse and an adjoining tent camp to which the name "Camp Barbour" was applied honoring Col. George W. Barbour of the U. S. Indian Commission. Here, on April 29, 1851, even prior to the arrival of Lieutenant Moore, delegates from 16 Indian tribes had assembled and in the presence of Adam Johnston, Indian agent, and several regular Army officers, agreed to keep the peace. The Yosemitees were again conspicuous by their absence from this conclave.

The Camp Barbour treaty provided that a tremendous Indian reserva-

*Tredwell Moore enters the general Mariposa scene with his arrival at Fort Miller from the Kings River on May 25, 1851. His unit was referred to in the first post return as "a Battalion of the 2nd Infantry commander by 2nd Lieut. T. Moore 2nd infantry stationed at Fort Miller San Joaquin River California." The battalion at this time was made up of "B" and "K" companies with a total force of 2 officers and 51 men. In September 1851 Moore was promoted to first lieutenant. From June 15 to August 17, 1852, he commanded his company on the third punitive expedition to Yosemite. On February 10, 1853, he left Fort Miller on detached service and subsequently he is shown as "sick at Benicia Barracks" after March 17, 1853. Following his return to Fort Miller on May 10 of that year he then transferred to duty at Benicia Barracks on May 20, and his name does not appear upon the Fort Miller records after May 1853.

Lieutenant Moore is said to have christened his fort on the San Joaquin after Maj. Albert S. Miller, a veteran of the Black Hawk, Seminole, and Mexican Wars, and Moore's commander at Benicia after 1850. The name, Fort Miller, appears on the first post return submitted by Moore at the end of May 1851.

tion should be established between the Kaweah and the Chowchilla tribes. This "district of country" was to extend from the Chowchilla River at a point "immediately at the junction of the first two main forks of said river in the foothills" southwesterly in a straight line to the top of Table Mountain near Camp Barbour (the later Fort Miller), thence southward in a continuing straight line to the Kaweah River. The southern boundary of the reservation extended down the Kaweah for 15 miles, "thence back [northward] to the middle of the Chowchilla River to a point 15 miles distant [west] in a straight line from the starting point as aforesaid on the Chowchilla River." This elongated territory was some 75 miles long and approximately 15 miles wide and it embraced the eastern edge of the San Joaquin Valley throughout the region just east of the present cities of Chowchilla, Madera, Fresno, and Visalia. The 16 tribes who were parties to the agreement were "to have and to hold the said district of country, for the sole use and occupancy of said Indian tribes forever."

There is no reason to believe that the Indian commissioners and the 5 Army officers who shaped the provisions of the treaty and who signed it at the same time that 57 Indians affixed their X's ("his mark") had any intention of breaking their word as given in writing. There is plenty of evidence, however, that a number of pioneer settlers in the region affected had their tongues in their cheeks at every juncture in the negotiations with the Indians. The impressive document and its many signatures had not yet reached the seat of government in San Francisco before the whites violated its terms, and this attitude continued during the entire period of the Mariposa Indian War.

About the same time that the white settlers in the foothills were showing their final contempt for this and all other treaties, the Yosemite Indians were staging their last savage act against the white man. In May 1852 eight prospectors entered Yosemite Valley and almost immediately upon making camp in the lower end of the valley were attacked by the natives. Two members of the prospector party, Sherburn and Rose, were killed. Their marked graves, not far from Bridalveil Fall, constitute one of the very few remaining relics of the white man's affairs of the fifties which can be viewed by the present-day Yosemite visitor. Others in the party made a get-away and reported their horrifying experience in the mining camp, Coarsegold.

No time was lost by the miners in testing the effectiveness of the protective forces stationed at Fort Miller. On June 15, 1852, Lt. Tredwell Moore (commanding), Lt. W. H. McLean, Dr. William Edgar and another unnamed surgeon, and thirty-four of the rank and file of Company 'B' [2nd Infantry] left Fort Miller en route for the head waters of the Merced River . . . and arrived at Camp Steele between the Middle and South forks of the Merced on the 20th of June . . ." Army records show that the unit in the mountains was made up of 1 first lieutenant, 1 second lieutenant, 2 assistant surgeons, 2 sergeants, 3 corporals, 1 musician, 27 privates, and "1 non-commissioned officer on extra duty," a total of 4 officers and 34 non-commissioned and privates. The return which provides this information is titled "U.S. Troops in the Field—Camp Steele, June 1852" and is signed by First Lt. T. Moore, commanding. The same return, copy of which may be ex-

ained in the Yosemite Museum Library, informs us that nine men—one sergeant and eight privates—were "on detached service at Fort Miller in charge of the post," at the time this expedition started into the mountains.

No official report on the experiences of Lieutenant Moore and his men on the upper Merced River has come to light, but the ever dependable L. H. Bunnell in his *Discovery of the Yosemite* relates that the expedition was guided by a volunteer scout, A. A. Gray, who had been a member of Captain Boling's company during both of the earlier Yosemite expeditions. Gray told Bunnell about his experiences with the regular Army unit in Yosemite. He stated that the party entered the valley in the night. Five Indians were captured, each of whom had some article of clothing that had belonged to the murdered prospectors. The naked bodies of Rose and Sherburn were found and buried.

When Lieutenant Moore had satisfied himself that the captured Indians had participated in the murders he sentenced them to be shot. By his order they were executed without further ado, and Tenaya's scouts witnessed the act. The old chief and his followers made a quick departure up the north walls of the valley and proceeded on across the mountains to their Piute friends in the Mono Lake region. Their trail was found but the soldiers did not overtake the fugitives. Neither did Lieutenant Moore succeed in drawing from the Piutes any information regarding the whereabouts of the Yosemitees.

This 2nd Infantry unit explored the Mono Lake country and discovered mineral deposits and collected samples of ore. The return westward was made through Bloody Canyon

and Mono Pass (the route which had been followed as they pursued the Indians eastward), thence to Tuolumne Meadows, Little Yosemite, and back to the mining camps via the ancient Indian route which passed just south of Yosemite Valley. Members of this party displayed some of the Mono mineral specimens in Mariposa, and Leroy Vining—a Mariposa miner—organized a party to inspect the new mining field. This party established camp in the canyon now known as Lee-vining Canyon and out of their prospecting grew the finds which later brought such names as Lundy, Tioga, Monoville, Bodie, Aurora, Benton, and Mammoth into the world's news.

The August return at Fort Miller indicates that Lieutenant Moore's company ("B" Company now with 42 men) "joined from detached service August 17th 1852." During the 2 months of Lieutenant Moore's absence additional units of the regular Army were assigned to Fort Miller—"A" and "E" Companies of the 1st Dragoons and "M" Company of the 3rd Artillery—as well as the original force, "B" and "K" Companies of the 2nd Infantry. One hundred and twenty-two men then called Fort Miller their post.

During the period of the 1852 troubles in Yosemite no other widespread Indian disturbances developed in the southern mines. The adequate military force at Fort Miller and the story of Lieutenant Moore's prompt action in the mountains may have had some influence in this connection. But local disturbances were rather frequent, and without exception they were occasioned by hateful attacks made upon small family groups of Indians by unprincipled white settlers. Of this aspect of the

Mariposa Indian War Bunnell writes:

During all this time [summer, 1852] no indications of hostilities were exhibited by any of the tribes or bands, although the abusive treatment they received at the hands of some was enough to provoke contention. They quietly remained on the reservations. As far as I was able to learn at the time, a few persons envied them the possession of their King's River reservation, and determined to "squat" upon it, after they should have been driven

off. This "border element" was made use of by an unprincipled schemer by the name of Harvey, whom it was understood was willing to accept office, when a division of Mariposa county should have been made, or when a vacancy of any kind should occur.

The political aspects of the final stage of the Mariposa Indian War will be reviewed in the next (concluding) installment of this series of articles.

BIRD'S-NEST FUNGI

By O. L. Wallis, Park Ranger

The diminutive bird's-nest fungi, *Cyathus* spp., are among the most interesting fungi to be discovered in Yosemite's cool, damp forests in winter. Their presence can easily be overlooked because of their size and the fact that they grow on logs and twigs close to the moist earth. During last December and January they were collected in moist, snow-free areas along streams near the South Entrance Ranger Station and at Wawona. On February 18, others were found on the Mirror Lake loop trail in Yosemite Valley.

These specimens are the first additions of their kind to the Yosemite Museum study collection. Their abundance in selected locations suggests, however, that they may have been observed previously in Yosemite, although not collected or recorded.

The small trumpet-shaped cup



contains many tiny seed-like bodies, which superficially resembles a bird's nest with a cluster of eggs. The cup stands about a quarter of an inch high and the distance across the mouth is about the same.

In reality the "eggs" are minute puffballs, each containing a multitude of speck-sized spores. When dry and mature the spore cases become detached from the "nest" and are dispersed by the wind. The cases then rupture to release a cloud of spores. Each spore when it alights remains dormant and waits for arrival of damp conditions. Moisture causes the spore to grow and eventually develop into a mature individual fungus.

The heavy rains of last November, coupled with periods of little snow or frost, made the woods very moist. This condition was especially ideal for the growth of many kinds of fungi in Yosemite National Park.

Fungi are saprophytes or plants which lack the ability to manufacture their own food and must depend upon dead organic materials for a livelihood. Many forms require much moisture in which to make their development.

Other common saprophytic fungi found in Yosemite include many forms of puffballs, mushrooms, and bracket fungi.

RENOVATION OF THE YOSEMITE MUSEUM OIL PAINTINGS

By Norman B. Herkenham, Assistant Park Naturalist

Among the many excellent exhibits in the Yosemite Museum, the collection of Yosemite oil paintings is becoming increasingly esteemed and admired. Of the countless artists who have perceived the grandeur and beauty of the Yosemite scene, a few have been pre-eminently successful in transferring their impressions to the canvas. The names of Chris Jorgensen, Thomas Hill, Thomas Moran, William Keith, Albert Bierstadt, Ferdinand Burgdorff, Harry Best, and Charles Robinson rank high in this respect. Through generous donations to the Yosemite Museum the work of each of these artists is represented in its collection. The principal component of this group is a large number of the finest oils done by Chris Jorgensen, most of which are displayed in the popular Jorgensen Room on the second floor of the museum.

It may be mentioned in passing that the works of four other outstanding artists are included in the Yosemite pictorial collection, representing media other than oil painting: water colors by Gunnar Widforss, color blockprints by William Rice, pencil sketches by Thomas Ayres (done in 1855, the priceless first pictures made in Yosemite), and a photograph by Ansel Adams.

Time and exposure had lessened the brilliance of the oil paintings. Dirt coating the surfaces became ingrained in the pigments, gradually reducing the intensity of some colors and often completely masking the more subtle tones. In addition, physical damage of one sort or another incurred during the life of the paintings had marred them to some degree. Apparently Jorgensen had the



One of the Jorgensen oil paintings in the Yosemite Museum, "Sentinel Rock and Acorn Caches" (chuck-ahs).

irreverent habit of rolling up his canvases tightly for storage or transportation. This produced creases and many small cracks in the layer of paint, seriously detracting from the appearance of some of the paintings. Others had suffered some form of gouging, piercing, or bulging, and many canvases had become slack and needed restretching or remounting.

Negotiations were made by the National Park Service's Region Four office in San Francisco for hiring an expert technician to restore the Yosemite paintings. A special fund of \$1500 had been made available for this long recognized need by the Director's office in Washington, D.C. The services of Mr. Gustav F. Liljestrom became available through

the Graves Gallery of San Francisco, and he agreed to undertake the renovation project. Mr. Liljestrom, who is Art Director for the renowned Bohemian Club in San Francisco, and a distinguished artist in his own right, is one of the most capable men in the profession of restoring and appraising works of art.

Mr. Liljestrom began his assigned task in the Yosemite Museum on March 26 of this year. Four weeks were required to do the restoration wherein he treated 40 oil paintings. All of them were first carefully cleaned with a special fluid, and all were ultimately varnished. Twenty-one of the paintings required skillful repairs for some form of damage. Some of these oils had to be remounted under pressure on plywood backing, and the others were restretched in their frames.

The results of Mr. Liljestrom's expert work surpassed all expectations. Striking as the paintings were before the renovation, they now exhibit a radiance that had not even been suspected. Particularly is this so for

two paintings done by Thomas Hill in 1889, one portraying Nevada Fall and the other Vernal Fall. Much of the intimate detail and richness of tone was concealed by dirt accumulated over the years. At the hands of Mr. Liljestrom the paintings again found their original freshness and warmth, the splendor of torrent and granite again expressed as it had been by the artist 62 year ago.

Another remarkable example is the Thomas Moran painting of Bridalveil Fall, the last one done before his death, heretofore classified as "unfinished" because it was believed to be incomplete when the artist died. To Mr. Liljestrom's astonishment his treatment exposed Moran's unnoticed signature and thumbprint in the bottom corners of the painting. These would not have been added by Moran unless the painting were finished. Mr. Liljestrom states in his report of completion: "It is worthy of notice that you now have three splendid examples of Thomas Moran's work. In the exceptional case of the so-called 'unfinished painting of Bridalveil Fall,' I found after cleaning and the use of the tuning method, that this process not only brought out his authentic signature and thumbprint, but an excellent 'finished' painting of great charm and beauty."

Mr. Liljestrom's skill in repairing physical damage to the paintings is extraordinary. It is now virtually impossible to detect where the cracks and perforations had been. I observed him in one operation where his task was to eliminate an unsightly bulge in a canvas. It was necessary to cut out a narrow wedge-shaped piece to make the bulge lie flat. He trimmed down the piece and then refitted it back in its place after mounting the painting on plywood. He finished by touching up



Chris Jorgensen

the place with paint to match the original. I later inspected the spot where I knew the bulge had been, but with the closest scrutiny I was utterly unable to find where anything had been done to the painting.

Part of Mr. Liljestrom's contract called for his services in appraising the value of all works of art in the Yosemite Museum. Prior to this there was no firm basis for estimating the true worth of the collection. While

he assigned a lower value than was previously assumed to some of the paintings, he appraised most of them higher, so that the total worth of all objects far exceeds the earlier concept.

At the conclusion of his project Mr. Liljestrom consented to compose a brief statement on the quality of Chris Jorgensen's work. This significant estimation of one artist by another follows:

An Expression of Appreciation of Chris Jorgensen

Chris Jorgensen was a keen lover of the beautiful, and in Yosemite he found splendid opportunity for observing and communing with Nature. In fact, no phase of mountain life escaped him or failed to arouse his interest.

In the setting of Yosemite Valley, where Nature is so strong and man so weak, he was impelled by the law of his being to follow the course marked out for him to its inevitable conclusion. What he did accomplish was the legitimate conquest of a territory for his own particular medium, and considering the superiority of his smaller, more intimate subjects, it is distinctly for the good.

His smaller paintings are striking pieces of realism. We cannot but admire the harmonious color spacings, the bold contrasts and unerring judgment of tone, the almost unrivaled, true-to-nature colors of the cliff formations—effects which gave a charm to most that he undertook.

It is a good collection, rich in quality and variety. You have many first-rate examples, proving the vigor and independence of his art.

If there be virtue in familiarity—as there should be—it may count a little that most of the pictures were painted practically from the artist's doorstep.

FAMILY LIFE

By George C. Turner, Ranger Naturalist

Spring and bird life are indeed related terms in Yosemite. The continuous chorus of chirps, warbles, and calls identifies for the patient listener a large variety of our early summer visitors. The following observations made a year ago are representative experiences.

The wildflower garden to the rear of the Yosemite Museum seemed especially abundant with our avian guests. Confusing as it first appeared, the intent listener was soon

able to distinguish a few continuously repeated songs. Over a period of days these songs became more and more predominant, until at length it was a rare occasion when a different voice was heard.

One came to the realization that territories had been established by these birds. Intruders were immediately driven off if they ventured into this area. Before long the observer could readily locate within the space of the wildflower garden three rather

indistinct boundaries—for a western tanager (*Piranga ludoviciana*), a black-headed grosbeak (*Hedymeles m. melanocephalus*), and a western robin (*Turdus migratorius propinquus*).

Life was not at all serene for these small family groups. Almost daily blue-fronted jays (*Cyanocitta stelleri frontalis*) paid their rather dubious respects by a short visit to the area. Their presence was immediately heralded by one of the ever watchful residents. No time at all elapsed before these none too closely related families banded together and descended upon the unwelcome visitor. These members of the bird world seemed instinctively to know that discovery of their nests by this robber of the skies would eventually bring disaster to their young.

The clamor was deafening as the scolding of indignant parents united

with the raucous calls of the jays. The defensive birds seemed to depend more on their voices than their bills to dispel the intruders. A typical clash of this type might find the jay slowly but loudly ascending from branch to branch as he climbed high into a tree, the aroused neighbors completely surrounding the culprit and continuously emitting their calls. The commotion created seemed to be the invitation to all nearby jays to join in the "fun." Curiously enough these birds remained only as spectators, lending their voices but not their strength to the strange battle.

The excitement ended as abruptly as it began. Soon the scene of recent disturbance regained its placid atmosphere and the individual songs once again drifted untroubled through the museum wildflower garden.



FRESH FISH DELIVERY

By Frank A. Patty

Several people had gathered about 100 yards from my tent quarters in Camp 6 to watch some robins and jays harrass a Pacific horned owl that was resting in a cottonwood tree. I decided to join the group and followed a fisherman's trail about 50 feet from the river. While walking along the trail something fell out of the skies at my feet and began flopping around before me. I rubbed my eyes and decided that the object in the trail was neither a snake nor any other creature that crawls, but a real live brown trout about 6 inches in length. I could tell by its clean, fresh appearance that it had only been out of the water for a few seconds, for, in struggling to get

back into the water, it was soon covered with bits of dried grass and other debris. I picked up the fish and joined the group that was watching the owl in the tree. I explained to some of them what had just happened, and they all looked at me as if I were having "pipe dreams." Not finding anyone who would believe my weird story, I hurried back to my tent with my squirming find to show it to my wife and son. We examined the fish and found marks on both sides of the body. From these marks we concluded that a kingfisher had caught the fish, had become frightened by the owl, and had dropped his prey at my feet.

DIGEST OF THE PURPOSES OF THE
YOSEMITE
NATURAL HISTORY
ASSOCIATION

Yosemite National Park, California

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Dan Anderson