# YOSEMITE

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Published for members of the Yosemite Natural History Association

**OUR RETURN OF LIGHT** fundraising campaign is alive and well, and we're pleased to report that a major commitment in the amount of \$150,000 has been made by American Savings and Loan Association, and a sizeable donation, actually the first recieved, was made by YNHA Board member, Skip McLaughlin. Our volunteers (see photo) operating out of kiosks at Tuolumne Meadows and in the Valley have received some \$5000 in individual donations; in addition they have accumulated the names of hundreds of well-wishers, many of whom have indicated either a willingness to serve as volunteers or to make a donation at a later date.



Helping with YNHA's Return of Light fundraising campaign are volunteers Carol Bartholomew (left) of Sonora and Sylvia Hoffmayer of Pacific Palisades. Ten volunteers at several kiosks discussed with park visitors the details of the campaign. Their assistance has been immeasurable. *Haley photo.* 

With the aid of the firm of Lavender and Rice, our fundraising counselors, all the strategic plans are laid out, the mailcommunications program nearly ready to go, and a full team of advisors and workers lined up.

For those of you who may have tuned in late and are unaware of the campaign, here's how it all began:

The YNHA Board of Trustees has long been accustomed to hearing about the park's money shortages, which matter comes up when the board considers approval of annual funding requests made by NPS (\$125,000 in 1984). So, they have become aware repeatedly that funding from Congressional sources was little more than bare bones, covering only basic needs.

There is little hope that the situation will change; there is no light at the end of the tunnel.

So, with the enthusiastic leadership of Board Chairman Thomas Shephard, the fundraising effort was launched last year with the broad precept to restore Yosemite's perfection, which has eroded at an alarming rate in recent years. The combination of millions of visitors and insufficient funding have created the need for direct citizen action.

Each of us pays only a few pennies per year in taxes for the enjoyment of our national parks — a total amount that falls short of what is needed. It may be surprising to learn that none of the fees collected at park entrance gates or profits from concessioner operations support the parks in any way. Those funds go directly to the US Treasury, and are disbursed to other government programs.

#### Only personal contributions will help...

- ... return scores of previously developed acres to their natural state.
- ... augment the Peregrine Falcon population and reintroduce the endangered bighorn sheep.
- ... remove dump sites, parking lots, and obsolete buildings.
- ... improve miles of trails, including the Pacific Crest Trail.
- ... eliminate and redirect unnecessary automobile traffic.
- ... care for the impacted Mirror Lake area.
- ... return the number of rangers and interpreters to former levels.
- ... provide a stable endowment, instead of temporary and inadequate funding.

YNHA members will receive our appeal material when it's off the press. We know they will subscribe to a program which carries the message that: A line must be drawn — by whatever means necessary — beyond which reasonable people will not risk or jeopardize their national heritage — Yosemite National Park.



An ornamental basket, measuring more than two feet in diameter, is one of the larger baskets in the Schwabacher collection. Made by Carrie Bethel, a Mono Lake Paiute, it is woven with a willow warp and sedge root weft; the designs are done in bracken fern root and redbud bark. Dixon NPS **THE SCHWABACHER COLLECTION COMES HOME.** In the 1920s, James H. Schwabacher and his family made frequent trips to Yosemite from their San Francisco home. From one such trip he brought back a few baskets made by the local Indian people. These first purchases started his collection, which eventually became one of the largest collections of the "fancy baskets" created for sale by the Miwok and Paiute people of the Yosemite region between 1920 and 1958.

Schwabacher continued collecting until his death in 1958. In 1973, his children James H. Schwabacher Jr. and Marie Louis Rosenberg placed the collection on temporary loan to Yosemite National Park. Now, at long last, final arrangements are being made for the Schwabacher collection to become part of the Yosemite National Park Museum's collection, ensuring that these pieces will be preserved for future generations to enjoy and study.

James H. Schwabacher, born in 1881, was a prominent San Francisco businessman. In 1918, he proposed to his future wife Sophie Dinkelspiel while enroute from Wawona to Yosemite

Valley. Yosemite was always a special place for them and their family, and they were frequent visitors to the Park. Former residents of Yosemite's last Indian Village — located just west of today's Sunnyside Camp — remember Schwabacher's visits to Lucy Telles and other weavers to buy baskets.

In the 1930s Schwabacher made news throughout the Yosemite and Mono Lake regions when he purchased a large, finely-woven basket from Carrie Bethel for the then unheard of price of \$100. His friend, Ralph Randall, remembers accompanying Schwabacher on another trip to the Mono Basin in 1949 when he contracted for baskets with weavers around Mono Lake.

The next year Schwabacher was in Yosemite as usual, and it was then that he purchased Lucy Telles' largest basket from her son John Jr. In the late 1950s, Carrie Bethel mailed a number of baskets to him, baskets he had ordered woven, and she remembered making trips to San Francisco to deliver others woven especially for him.

While Schwabacher purchased baskets from curio stores and dealers in Indian artifacts, it is those objects which he purchased directly from the weavers of the Yosemite — Mono Lake region that hold for us the most interest for us today.

Schwabacher was himself an organizer and co-sponsor of the "Indian Field Days" held at the end of the summer in Yosemite Valley in the 1920s. As a judge at these events, as well as a friend of many of the weavers, he was in an excellent position to obtain the finest baskets. In the 1920s, a style of fancy basketry, developed by Lucy Telles some ten years earlier, was refined and developed into an art form. Baskets, formerly only utiliarian objects, became textile sculpture. This development was nurtured by patrons with large collections such as Schwabacher's, and today it is one of only two such collections that are intact.

The collection has already proven important to the interpretation of the native culture of Yosemite. Since 1973 accounts of nearly 20% of the 360 pieces of the collection have appeared in numerous articles and publications regarding Indian culture, items have been loaned by Yosemite National Park to other institutions for special exhibits, and a number of baskets have graced the displays in the Indian Cultural Museum which opened in 1976.

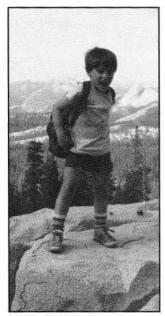
Today, with plans being drawn to enlarge the museum to more than four times its present size, the collection is particularly valuable in presenting the artistry and culture of Yosemite's First People.

YNHA is currently planning to assist in the publication of a major work that will tell the story of the basketry and the people of the Miwok and Paiute groups from 1870 to 1950. Tentatively titled *Change and Tradition: Basketry from the Yosemite-Mono Lake Region of California, the James H. Schwabacher Collection,* the book will illustrate nearly 250 baskets, the majority from the Schwabacher collection, supplemented with examples from Yosemite's permanent collections and other sources. Historic photographs, some of which include the baskets in the Schwabacher collection during their display at the Indian Field Days events, will be used to establish the historic importance of many of the examples. YNHA has applied for a National Endowment for the Humanities grant to help offset the costs of printing the work, which will be of great educational and interpretive value now and in the years to come.

A POEM. Mr. Richard Edwards of Oakland and his five-year-old son Michael were members of one of YNHA's Family Backpack Trips to Ostrander Lake Ski Hut; Tim and Barbara DeWitt and Blue Tierney were the leaders.

Mr. Edwards wrote to comment on his and Michael's enjoyment of the trip. In his letter he said, "The third day of the trip was 'family day." At sunset we all shared a poem or story of our explorations of the day. Enclosed is the poem Michael and I wrote, plus a picture of him returning from Hart Lake. As a YNHA member, I can certainly attest to the value of the renewed summer family backpacking 'seminars.""

We're printing the father-and-son poem, and the photo referred to in Mr. Edwards' letter.



Michael Edwards

#### OUR COPPER PENNY

by Michael (age 5) and Rich (age 35) Edwards at Ostrander Lake Ski Hut, Yosemite National Park

Ostrander Lake is a circle, Surrounded by pine trees, fir trees and granite the boulders left by the big ice of ages ago — Under Horse Ridge in the south part of Yosemite National Park.

Wrapped in our rain gear and hats, We went exploring along the shore. Purple male fir cones, M&M wrappers, A taste of honey: the sweet white flowers of the manzanita.

A catchup bottle top. Trees dead long ago — decaying and returning to the soil. Learning the difference between pine trees and fir trees. Through the trees to the pile of boulders.

One, two, three,...21, 42, 101,...thousands, even more! These were the boulders which made up the shore On the south side of Ostrander Lake. We walked, we climbed, we scrambled, we fell As we made our way up, over, and around the Granite flakes decorating the ridge protecting Ostrander.

Stopping along the way Atop a large boulder We snacked and drank as the sun Broke through the gray sky. Suddenly, a yellow bird fluttered by As the trout jumped in the lake And all was calm and quiet as the Storm prepared to rage again.

Up and over the giant boulders on the east shore. "Daddy, I'm afraid!" "But you can do it!" Up, down, all around; At last, back on the dirt path. "I did it!" — "I knew you could."

"What's that?" "Listen!" The wind. See the birch trees bend. Quick! Out with the rain gear again! Pitter, patter. Pitter, patter...Dip, dip, dip. The rain on our hats As we finish our circle around The jewel in front of our four-day home. A HELPING HAND. Among the several dozen park projects YNHA has helped to fund has been the acquisition of historically significant artifacts, photographs, etc., for the Yosemite Museum's collection; over the past five years, \$49,000 have been contributed.

We are pleased, and hope you are, that we've helped make the Yosemite collection among the largest and finest in the park system.

When the grand plan for display areas is realized, park visitors will have an opportunity to admire many of the treasures.

In the last members bulletin, we reported on the acquisition of several Mary Hunter baskets, made possible by a YNHA donation. These baskets are significant because of the fact that their history is recorded from the date of weaving until the present, an uncommon occurrence in the world of Indian basketry.

Additional ethnographic objects were purchased during the year. Among these are beaded bottles and baskets, as well as numerous bits of Yosemite-related ephemera and early-day photo. (Museum people use the world ephemera in reference to objects which may have little real value but which commemorate an event or a period of time.)

Of particular note is an unusual group of 35 albumen cabinet prints, probably produced in the 1880s'; cabinet prints typically are 5¼ inches by 8½ inches. These early photographs were removed from an unmarked album prior to their acquisition, so there is little information about them, aside from that recorded in the images. One of the prints shows a group posed at the base of the Wawona Tunnel Tree (see illustration). The large chunk in the left foreground may be the remains of cutting the tunnel, which would date the photograph to around 1881. The collection also includes several unusual early views of the Hetch Hetchy Valley (see illustration) and photographs of early structure and bridges in the Yosemite area.

Although the identity of the photographer or photographers, and the identities of the individuals in the photographs are unknown to us now, further research may turn up their names. In any case, these views are valuable documentation of the early history of the park, and are an important addition to the museum's photograph collection.





Two old and important photos were recently acquired for the park collection with funds provided by YNHA. Left, an early photo of the Wawona Tunnel Tree, possibly taken shortly after the opening was cut in 1881. The identities of the three woodsmen are not known. The other photo, a hundred-year-old view of Hetch Hetchy Valley, is one of a group of albumen prints purchased for the collection.

**HIGH-TECH FOR LIBRARY.** In September of 1976 the Yosemite Research Library moved into what had been the National Park Service Interpreter's study room; the move added space for several years of anticipated growth. Despite this, storage space eventually became inadequate and in January of this year the library underwent extensive remodeling.

A "Spacesaver" high-density storage system was installed to help alleviate the space problem. It consists of large, moveable shelving units which run on a track mounted on a raised platform. These shelves may be moved back and forth by the use of a wheel on the front panel, creating access through the aisles.

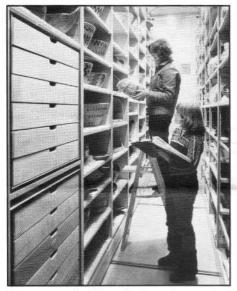
During the renovation, the library staff was obliged to store temporarily nearly 350 boxes of books and periodicals. The library, then completely empty, was painted and a new carpet installed, in part of a gift of the family of Peter G. Barton. The shelving was assembled, and a week was spent on the enormous job of organizing and returning the books to the "new" library. Several sections of



shelves may be locked, giving secure storage space for reserve and rare materials which are not circulated.

The entire system more than doubles the available shelf space, and should allow for approximately five to eight years of growth space.

The movable shelving units recently installed in the Yosemite Library minimize space devoted to aisles. Handles at the end of the carriages move the units along tracks in the floor to create aisles when needed. Dixon NPS



Museum technicians Barbara Beroza (on the ladder) and Norma Craig inventoring a part of the park's vast basket collection in the recently renovated collections room. The long shelving units, which slide on floor tracks, are halted by automatic safety switches, preventing injury to workers or damage to the artifacts. Temperature is kept at 62 deg., hence the need for parkas and fur boots. Dixon NPS

MASSIVE MICROFILM PROJECT. YNHA funding allowed the Yosemite Research Library and Museum to microfilm a portion of their holdings. The microfilming provides the protection of fragile and rare items while making them accessible to researchers who wish to consult the original and often unpublished materials in the library and museum collections.

Last winter, Jim Snyder, an NPS trail boss and a park historian, microfilmed and indexed a large group of material. The resulting 20,000 images contain many often-consulted items from the collections, including a rare, complete set of Hutchings California Magazine (1856-1861), the Yosemite Guardian's Reports of the 1880s and 1890s, the Superintendent's Monthly Reports (1924-on), and the papers of Galen Clark and James Mason Hutchings. The microfilms are available for use in the Research Library.

Future plans call for microfilming the Library's large collection of hotel registers and ledgers as well as the newspaper clipping files and a number of volumes from the reserve room. This will allow increased use of these materials while insuring their preservation.

MORE ROOM FOR PARK COLLECTIONS. In 1981, initial funding was secured from the National Park Service for a major reorganization of the Yosemite's Museum's vault and collection rooms. Two crowded rooms held the majority of the museum's unexhibited collection for many years. Automated compact storage shelves now have been installed; these move, to expose one aisle in a bank of cabinets at a time (see illustration), allowing for an increased number of cabinets, while permitting easy access to each. Before his retirement, Curator Jack Gyer got the project started and his successor, David Forgang, got additional NPS funding to complete the system. The presence of the new moveable units and new cabinetry, in addition to a recently-installed fire suppresion system and environmental control system, have resulted in an enormous improvement in the storage conditions for objects in the NPS collection. This consolidation and upgrading the museum storage area in the Valley District Building represent one step in a larger plan to allow the expansion of museum exhibits, which will be on view to park visitors.

**ANYONE FOR DIGS?** Periodically, we receive a handsome publication, *Earthwatch*, published in Belmont, Massachusetts, by Earthwatch, which, according to its statement of ownership, is a "non-profit organization whose members sponsor field research of every sort."

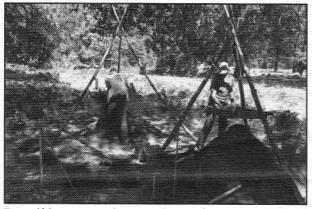
Its contents are fascinating, especially to one whose adventure seldom take him farther than his backyard.

What it all seems to amount to is this: The organization has pulled together a group of distinguished scientists who have a research project underway. The Earthwatch people then solicit, through their tantalizing articles, volunteers to participate in the project, be it a dig in an Augustinian hermitage in Siena, Italy, to working at paleontological sites in the Western Nift Valley in Zaire, Africa.

In the issue we examined, there were 31 expeditions described, anyone of which we think would excite and entice the adventuresome. Participation costs a fair sum, but how else for \$1495 could one spend two weeks on Maui living in a condo teaching dolphins to talk?

That the Earthwatch people know what they're about is, to us, revealed in their descriptions of conditions on Salango Island, Ecuador — "Evenings can be chilly and misty, but seaside sunsets and plentiful rum can cut any chill."

Earthwatch's address is 10 Juniper Road, Box 127, Belmont, MA 02178.



Two sifting screens in operation at the Ranger Club test site.



An archaeologist removing deposits 2m beneath the surface.

#### VALLEY ARCHAEOLOGY PROBE.

Within the last month or so, we've noticed teams of three or four digging fair-sized holes in several locations adjacent to the Ranger Club here in the Valley. Set near the holes were threelegged scaffolds supporting wire mesh screens. Workers hauled up buckets of earth, which they meticulously sifted through the screens. We surmised that the operation had to do with a hunt for Indian artifacts, traces of things left behind by the earliest valley dwellers.

We asked park Archaeologist Scott Carpenter about the nature of the dig. Carpenter obligingly furnished the following, including notes on the Yosemite Research Center where he and his cohorts do their planning and analyses.

The Yosemite Research Center was established in November of 1983. It serves as the work place for Carpenter and for Dr. Jan van Wagtendonk who directs the natural science research programs. The Center is located in El Portal in an attractive residential-type structure on a knoll overlooking about a half-mile of the Merced River. Built in 1929, it was home of the superintendent





Dirt is removed in 10cm levels; artifacts and bits of obsidian from different depths are kept separated after dirt passes through 5mm mesh screen.

Close view of screening.

of National Lead's El Portal Barium mine. Between 1958, when the park service acquired the buildings and 1983 when it became the research center, it provided quarters for NPS employees.

Not infrequently, visiting researchers and scientists engaged in studies of Yosemite's natural and cultural resources, avail themselves of the living facilities, the laboratory and a fairly sophisticated computer set up.

Back to excavations. The Yosemite Valley Archaeological Project was begun a year ago when plans were in the making for new electrical and water systems throughout the Valley. Carpenter, aware of the locations of archaeologically significant areas, was able to persuade the engineers to "design around" the known site boundaries. He then set to work on the actual excavations.

Examination of site 4-MRP-300 (adjacent to the Ranger Club) took a month. Teams excavated over 140, three-inch auger holes throughout the site. The results gave an indication of a heavy concentraion and wide distribution of subsurface obsidian waste flakes. Eleven test units, one meter by one meter, were dug, revealing vast quantities of obsidian flakes ranging downward to as much as 2.2 meters below the existing ground surface. Very few tool fragments and no complete tools were found, which is interesting because over 50,000 obsidian flakes were found.



Obsidian waste flakes remaining from manufacture of knives or arrowheads. It is generally known from other archaeological work that Indians resided in Yosemite Valley as long as 2000 years ago; this excavation may date that far back. Artifacts are now undergoing analysis which will reveal their age and whether the site was used year-round or seasonally.

Because of the fact that no diagnostic tools were found (i.e. those with a shape or size that might indicate function or age) it is difficult at this time to estimate the age of the deposits. Samples of the obsidian flakes will be subjected to a series of sourcing and hydration tests, to get a date sequence for the various deposits. At this time, it appears as though the site was a special use area - specifically used for the production of stone tools; there is little indication that the tools were used in the area. The site seems to be a large peripheral, or special use area within the larger composite of sites extending from the Yosemite Elementary School to the Mall area. The big questions of the site are: How old are the deposits (either they were deposited by a large number of people over a short period of time, or vice versa), what is the special function of the site - what elements of tool production occured at the site?

As a result of the excavation studies, areas have been found near the proposed routes of the water and electric lines which will cause a minimum amount of disturbance. Now that the field work is complete, an analysis of the many thousands of flakes and artifacts, plus soil samples, and excavation notes will take place.

The work done at the Yosemite clinic area (site 4-MRP-61) was not as extensive or productive, due to the extensive amount of prior development and disturbance. Excavated were three, one meter by one meter test pits, yielding virtually no cultural material of any integrity. All that seems to remain of this site are a number of bedrock mortars, which will be preserved in place. The proposed water line through the area will be much smaller in length than that near the Ranger Club and will be restricted to previously disturbed areas such as roadways.

We are glad that Carpenter and his people are at work probing, poking and digging to unearth fragments of things left behind by the First People, vestiges of their presence here perhaps as much as three thousand years ago. Carpenter's efforts may help protect this remarkable place from some future foolishness or other. All photos Carpenter, N.P.S.

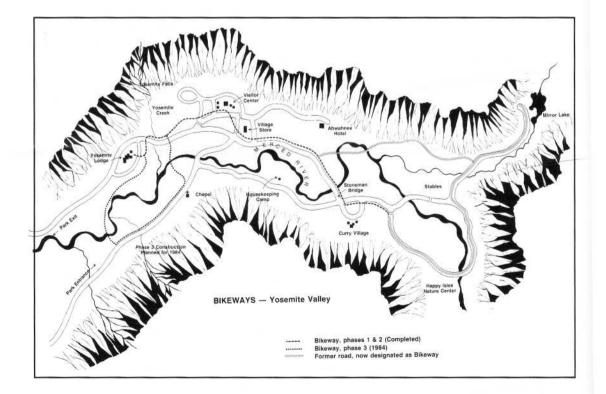
**BRING ON THE BIKES.** A two-way bicycle path around the Valley, running roughly from Mirror Lake on the east to a point about a half-mile east of the Chapel, is well-along and should be ready for cyclists by the end of September. Of its total seven miles, three miles, as the map shows, are new construction, the balance consisting of former roads which have been designated as bikeway.

According to park planner Don Fox, the bikeway should make biking not only more enjoyable but vastly safer than on motor roads where bikers shared the roadway with automobiles. Bikes are pretty well out-matched.

The project has begun in 1981 with the first phase linking Yosemite Village with Curry Village; phase II connected Yosemite Village with Yosemite Lodge; phase III threads through the Yosemite Lodge area, crosses the Merced River at Swinging Bridge and proceeds along Southside Drive turning north at the Chapel. It crosses the river on the Superintendent's Bridge, then connects with itself near Yosemite Creek.

The park Interpretive Division plans to install interpretive message boards at appropriate points along the trail, and Fox says that several rest stops — a bench or two — will be located at scenic vista points.

While a bikeway might not do much to get cars off the roads, every little bit helps.



**TRAVEL TRIVIA.** The government's interest in gathering statistics extends to assembling profiles of foreign visitors to national parks. From a three-page NPS news release, the following we found to be of some interest:

While the study doesn't state the total number of visitors from overseas, 10% of them visited national parks.

Of the foreign visitors to national parks, 47% came from the United Kingdom, West Germany and Switzerland (figures don't include Canada or Mexico). Among overseas visitors to national parks, 42% were in the U.S. to attend conventions or business meetings.

Nearly one-half of overseas visitors to parks traveled alone, and most likely used a rental car.

Foreign visitors who visit parks spend \$2233 in the U.S. as compared to \$1133 on the whole, and are tabbed as being in "professional/managerial positions." During a 3-month period (fall quarter) visitors from abroad spend \$379 million; largest expenditures were not on lodging or food but on souvenirs and gifts.

The average female visitors is 50 years old, males 33 years. Grand Canyon was the park most visited. (Yosemite didn't make the top 10.)

We're pleased that our friends from across the seas visit the nation's parks and monuments; they're the best things around and the federal park concept did originate in the U.S. Our own sidewalk poll leads us to believe that Yosemite hosts a great many more Orientals from one country or another than the studies indicate.

The Ahwahnee Hotel dining room quite typically reserves about one-third the chairs at lunch time for Japanese tour members who troop in, double file, to tables always set with bottles of Kikkoman Soy Sauce. YNHA publishes a guide book in the Japanese, German and French languages. We sell the most to Germans — about 2 to 1, French next, with Japanese far behind. We can't figure out why the Japanese don't buy more books but, unfortunately, we can't ask them.

All, save perhaps the Britons, have acquired t-shirts proclaiming or advertising something.

Our modest amount of European travel leads us to believe that the U.S. parks people do a better job in the hands-across-the-sea department than one experiences in other countries.

#### NEW MEMBERS

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