

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

HUBERT WORK, SECRETARY

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

STEPHEN T. MATHER, DIRECTOR



YOSEMITE
NATURE NOTES

VOL. VI

FEBRUARY, 1927

NO. 2



This is the official publication of the Educational Department of Yosemite National Park. It is published each month by the National Park Service with the co-operation of the Yosemite Natural History Association, and its purpose is to supply dependable information on the natural history and scientific features of Yosemite National Park. The articles published herein are not copyrighted as it is intended that they shall be freely used by the press. Communications should be addressed to C. P. Russell, Park Naturalist, Yosemite National Park, California.

W. B. LEWIS

Superintendent



"LEARN TO READ THE TRAIL-SIDE"



YOSEMITE NATURE NOTES

Volume V

February 28, 1927

Number 2

THE MODE WINEMAN COLLECTION OF CAMERA STUDIES SPLENDID PICTURES PRESENTED TO MUSEUM

Introductory Note—Mode Wineman, whose article follows, has presented the Yosemite museum with thirty-five photographic studies made in Yosemite Valley and the Mariposa grove of big trees. The photographs have been framed by the National Park Service, each one properly labeled, and they are now exhibited throughout the museum exhibit rooms.

This unpretentious artist's work has aroused much favorable comment among museum visitors, and many will be glad to read Mr. Wineman's account of how the pictures were made. Gems of more than pictorial worth are in the lot. The studies of Galen Clark and John Conway, two Yosemite fathers whose accomplishments need no comments, are valued greatly for the personalities they so intimately portray. It is to be regretted that Mr. Wineman did not find opportunity to record the individual character of some score or so of other Yosemite pioneers whose work is described in the history room of the museum.

The true atmosphere—the actual appeal—of Yosemite's great granite monuments has been done by few photographers. Even the big trees, those enigmatic camera subjects, have yielded to this artist's patience.

Don't overlook the Wineman collection when you visit the Yosemite museum.—C. P. Russell.

A PERSONAL INVITATION.

YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK IS YOURS! WE OF THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE WANT TO HELP YOU TO MAKE FRIENDS WITH YOUR PARK AND TO UNDERSTAND IT IN ITS EVERY MOOD. ALL OF THE FOLLOWING SERVICE IS OFFERED TO YOU *free* BY YOUR GOVERNMENT:

Visit the Yosemite Museum!

Here you will learn the full story of the Park — what tools were used by the great Sculptor in carving this mighty granite-walled gorge; who lived here before the white man came; how the Days of Gold led to Yosemite's discovery; how the pioneers prepared the way for you; and how the birds and mammals and trees and flowers live together in congenial communities waiting to make your acquaintance.

Plan your trail trips on the large scale models in the Geography Room.

The Yosemite Library in the museum provides references on all phases of Yosemite history and natural history.

Popular lectures on Yosemite geology and other branches of natural history are given by nature guides at scheduled times each day.

The nature guide on duty will be more than willing to answer your questions on any subject.

Go Afield with a Nature Guide!

Take advantage of this free service that will help you to know your Park. A competent scientist will conduct you over Yosemite trails, and from him you may learn first hand of the native flowers, trees, birds, mammals, and geological features.

See Schedule of Nature Guide Field Trips.

Visit Glacier Point Lookout!

From there you will obtain an unexcelled view of Yosemite's High Sierra. The binocular telescope will bring Mt. Lyell to within one third of a mile from where you stand; you can recognize friends climbing trails several miles away. The Nature Guide in attendance will help you to operate it and will explain what you see.

A small library is at your command.

You will enjoy the informal nightly campfire talks given here.

Attend the Nature Guide Campfire Talks!

In addition to the museum lectures members of the educational staff give talks as a part of the evening program at Camp Curry and Yosemite Lodge. Non-technical explanations of how Yosemite came to be; what you may expect of Yosemite bears; how the local Indians lived; what birds you see about your camps; what trout you will catch in Yosemite waters; how you may best visit the wonderland of the summit region; and scores of similar subjects are given by the National Park Service Nature Guides.

ALL OF THESE OPPORTUNITIES ARE PROVIDED FREE OF CHARGE BY YOUR GOVERNMENT.

—TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THEM—

PHOTOGRAPHIC STUDIES OF YOSEMITE

By Mode Wineman

From MUSEUM GRAPHIC, March, 1927

The 161 camera studies made by the writer, largely in California's National Parks, now the permanent property of the Los Angeles Museum, in a sense made themselves. By that is meant the author of these studies never knew that he was doing anything apart. It all simply flowed out of his being True, there was deep feeling plus hard work and infinite patience.

It was in June, 1902, that a pilgrim came from Chicago to see in fact what he had seen so many times in his geography—the unrivalled beauty of Yosemite. Those were the days of horse-drawn stage coaches and he sat on the box seat with a camera, big boots, and a pair of out-west gauntlets on. When Inspiration Point was reached, he cried out to the stage driver "Stop!" and jumped from his seat. For a few moments he stood motionless, then set up his camera. A mighty thrill surged through his body as he surveyed the unparalleled scene.

A picture was made; it was the first picture he made of Yosemite, and today it is in the Museum. But in the excitement he left his prized gauntlets on the ground. Ten days before this study was made, the man had never used a camera; in fact, had never thought of one. Being non-professional in this work, the item is stressed. As far as the Yosemite collection in the Museum is today, it is the result of many years' work—joyous work, joyous physical endeavor, joyous patience.

However, the big trees at Mariposa Grove baffled the man. Four times—four different years he failed in securing something like a true presentment of their classic majesties. Finally he secured a permit to live under the trees day and night for a week. It was in the days before travelers were permitted to remain in the grove after nightfall. Bedding and food were sent up by the good Washburn brothers of Wawona who are associated with the history of the Mariposa Grove. Nights spent under the stars that seemed like lanterns on the boughs tips of the mighty trees, and days

worshipping among the living ancient of earth are unforgettable. Finally a bit of the secret of getting their image was revealed, but it was a nervous work. It all seemed so futile! The ancient of earth would not pose, nor would the smaller trees move out of the way.

Going down from the Mariposa Grove into Yosemite valley after this wonderful experience it was a good fortune of the writer to find there Galen Clark, the discoverer of the Mariposa Big Trees. It was in September, and Mr. Clark sat working at a rude table strewn with papers under a tree beside his cabin. He made a classic picture, this good man of 96, and he greeted the stranger with dignified warmth. Among many things, he said: "I hope to live to be 100 and I think I shall. I came out to California for my health. From the East? Yes, from New England. It was in 1857 that I discovered the big trees. I had a place nearby called Clark's station; it is named Wawona, now. I climbed from there up what is now called the Lightning Trail, and the first big tree I saw I named Forest Queen, as you probably noticed by the tablet put on by the Government. I am told that when I die it shall be named the 'Galen Clark.'" (It is so named today.) "You must go over to the village cemetery (Yosemite) and see the little Sequoia Gigantea I fetched down and planted where I am to rest. They were little bits of tiny things—there are six of them. I water them often; it is a nice walk from here." (One of the Sequoias died.) Each time the writer has been in Yosemite since, he has visited Mr. Clark's grave.

In the camera study in the museum, Mr. Clark is seen writing in a book he had published on the big trees of Mariposa Grove. Mr. Clark died in his ninety-sixth year.

Various studies now in La Brea Hall have caused comment. "Sunrise in Yosemite Valley" interested the late Thomas Moran. The cloud effect appealed to him. It may be noticed in the picture that there is a circular ripple. This was caused by a trout snapping for food on the surface of the Merced river, but

It was not noted until the negative was developed. C. P. Russell, park naturalist of Yosemite, and curator of the Yosemite Museum, has written of the "Lone Pine on Sentinel Dome" and "Sunrise on Yosemite Falls." Each camera study has a little story, for love of the original created the work.

Occupied in an allied branch of art, in fact two branches, the thrill born in making the camera studies awakened the writer, to a new vehicle of self-expression. In time this new expression supplanted professional work, but was kept non-professional for the joy of the thing. In that way there was always a freedom and a freshness in the work, although it must be admitted that there was self-denial. For days, weeks, months, he would trek unrestrained in the wilderness seeking hidden beauties of nature. Returning to the city with prizes of the great open spaces, a fresh thrill developed and it became a desire to pass this joy on to others.

Summoned to Meet President Roosevelt

It was for this reason that Joseph Edward Otis of Chicago and the late H. H. Kohlsaat, also of Chicago, brought the work, then on public exhibition, to the notice of Mr. Roosevelt. When word reached the writer to come to Washington he had a sort of stage fright and hesitated. However, when he reached Washington the President had been informed of the feeling of stage fright and greeted the man with a warmth that instantly shattered self-consciousness. In truth, Mr. Roosevelt caused him at once to forget that he was with the President of the United States.

Dr. Edward Everett Hale, who was then chaplain of the Senate, immediately arranged for an exhibit at the Cosmos Club. Had not some details of this work in our national domains been requested, the writer would not intrude personalities.

In conclusion, it may be of interest to add that since the request in 1907 to go to Washington government officials have kept in touch with this work and for many years Stephen T. Mather, director of the National Park Service, has interested himself and only recently sponsored a trip for new work in the Sequoia and the Yosemite National Parks.

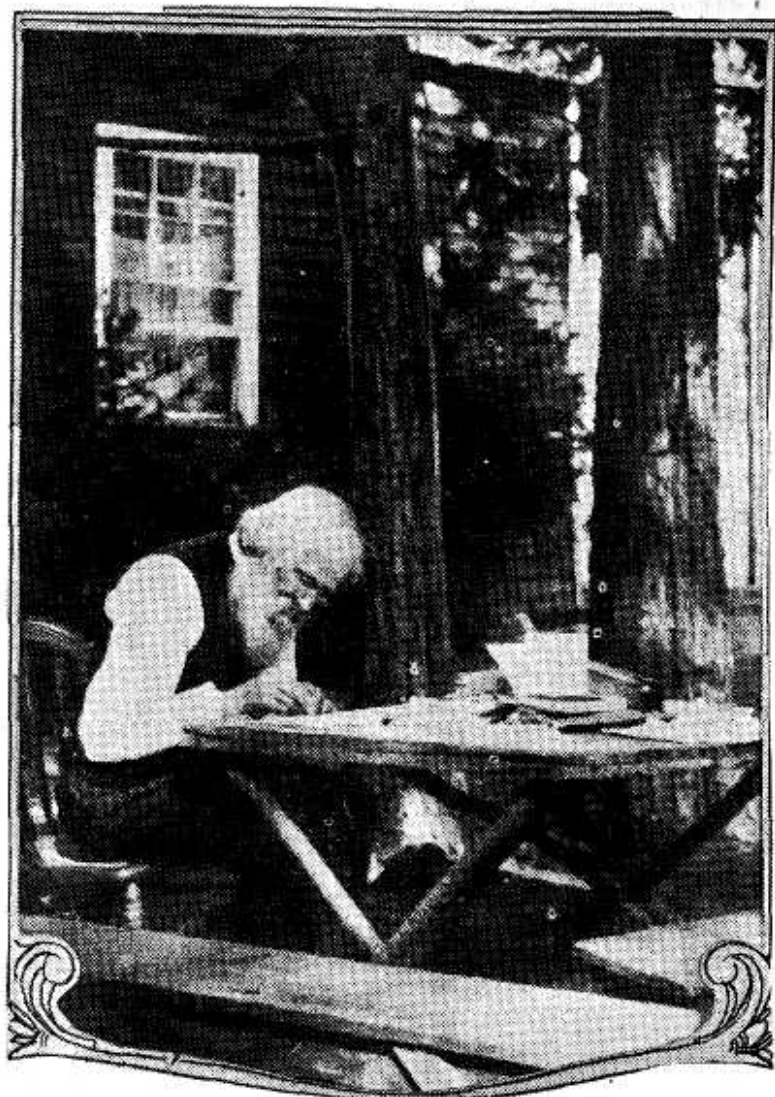
The United States government



MR. MODE WINEMAN.

owns three smaller collections of park scenes and these form a part of a permanent exhibit in the Yellowstone, the Yosemite and the Grand Canyon National Park museums, respectively.

The suggestion that this collection be presented to the Los Angeles museum came from Ralph W. Trueblood, managing editor of the Los Angeles Times.



The Mode Wineman picture of Galen Clark taken but a short time before the aged author's death.

A YOSEMITE PLEA OF 1907

By Galen Clark

Yosemite valley, as is generally well known, is in the center of the State of California, north and south, and nearly midway between the western base and summit of the Sierra Nevada range of mountains. It was first discovered and made known to the public by Major James D. Savage and Captain John Boling, who, with a strong detachment of mounted troops from what was known as the Mariposa Battalion of Volunteers, went with friendly Indian guides to the valley in March, 1851, to capture and take the resident tribes of Indians out and put them on the Fresno Indian reservation.

The first improved trail for saddle animals to Yosemite was made by a livery stable firm in Mariposa, known as the Mann Brothers, in 1856, from Mariposa by way of the south fork of the Merced river, crossing the stream at a point now known as Wawona, and in 1857 the regular tourist travel in Yosemite may be said to have commenced though a few persons had gone there in each of the five previous years.

Some Early History

All parties at that time went with camping outfits. The first house in Yosemite was built in the fall of the year 1856 and was opened up the next spring as a saloon for the entertainment of that class of visitors who loved whisky and the sport of gambling. The next year it was fitted up and used as a restaurant. The first good building for a hotel was built in 1859, and is now a part of the Sentinel Hotel premises known as the Cedar Cottage. Most of the early visitors to Yosemite were Californians, and the number did not amount to 1000 in any one season until the completion of the Union and Central Pacific railroads. Soon after that important even the number increased to many thousands annually. All the necessary supplies for hotels and other purposes were taken into the valley by pack mule trains from Coulterville and Mariposa, a distance of fifty miles, until the completion of

the first wagon roads into Yosemite in 1874.

No Painting or Photograph Does Justice

The main grand features and great variety of Yosemite scenery was early and widely made known throughout the civilized world by pen and press, public speech, artists' paint brush, camera, and kodak, but no painting or photograph gives its vivid, thrilling life expression. I have seen persons of a sensitive, refined, emotional temperament stand with tearful eye, spellbound and dumb with awe as they got their first view of Yosemite from Inspiration Point—overwhelmed in the sudden presence of the unspeakable, stupendous grandeur of such part of the scenery as can be seen from that favorable position.

But almost every tourist who has visited Yosemite in the past few years during California's warmest and driest season of the year has left with one unpleasant experience—dust! The floor or top soil of the valley, over which the stage roads are made, is composed of fine, disintegrated granite sand. The great amount of traffic over the roads—the heavy freight wagons required to bring in the necessary supplies, the great number of stage coaches required to accommodate the multitude of daily tourists, campers, wagons and private carriages—has cut deep into the soft, sandy soil and pulverized it until the roadbed has become a deep channel of volatile earth dust, which rises in great clouds, enveloping stage coaches and passengers obscuring vision, penetrating ears, eyes, nose and mouth, if not kept close shut and covering the whole body with a dusty pall, so that as the stages arrive at the hotel they appear to be loaded with human images carved in brown stone. Since the completion of the Yosemite Valley Railroad up the Merced river to El Portal, near the western boundary of the Yosemite National Park, the United States Government is having some fine improvement work done on the road leading up into Yo-

semitic Valley, and, if ample means are appropriated by Congress, the good work will be continued on up to the hotel and public camps and around the valley on the intersecting carriage drives. It is to be hoped that the California delegation in Congress may be successful in getting liberal appropriations for continuing not only this good work, but all other important work, for the protection and preservation of the scenic beauty of Yosemite.

Great Change Comes Over Valley

A great change has taken place in Yosemite Valley since it was taken from the control of the native Indians who formerly lived there. In the early years, when first visited by white people, three-fourths of the valley was open ground — meadows with grasses waist high and flowering plants. On the dryer parts were scattered forest trees—pines, cedars and oaks—too widely separated to be called groves, clear of underbrush, leaving clear, open, extensive vision up and down and across the valley from wall to wall on either side. The Indians had kept the valley clear of thickets of young trees and brushwood shrubbery, so that they could not be waylaid, ambushed or surprised by enemies from outside and to not afford hiding places for bears or other undesirable predatory animals, and also to have clear ground for gathering acorns, which constituted one of their main articles of food. At the present time there is not more than one-fourth of the floor of the valley clear, open ground, as there was fifty years ago. Nearly all the open ground between the large scattering trees is now covered with a dense growth of young trees, which also extend out over

portion of the meadow land. Every pine tree on the floor of the valley less than seventy-five feet high has grown from the seed within the past fifty years.

During recent years considerable work has been done in clearing up the young growth of trees and brushwood to afford better views of the distant scenery and to be better able to control fires, which accidentally get started in the dry summer season. In many favorable localities where this work of thinning out and trimming up the young growth has been done, it makes very desirable, charming, clean, shady groves for camping parties. There are still hundreds of acres where this reclaiming work needs to be continued to make the greater portion of the valley accessible to visitors and to break up the hidden retreats of the bears, which have now taken up their permanent residence in Yosemite. This present season an old female bear with two cubs has had a free pass throughout the valley and has given ferocious chase to every photo artist who attempted to get a picture of the group.

As this work of clearing up and reclaiming a large portion of Yosemite valley is of great importance and national interest, it should be done in accordance with plans submitted by the best artistic landscape engineers after a careful survey and study of the whole field so as to show all the scenery, local and surrounding, to the best advantage from the carriage road, private walks, and local resting places in charming, shady groves. Much of this work can be done at very little dead expense. All the larger growth to be cleared away can be cut into firewood and readily sold to residents at the cost of cutting.

Protect Banks of Merced

Another matter of paramount importance in the care and preservation of Yosemite valley is the protection of the banks of the Merced river as it runs its winding, crooked course through the length of the valley. In the spring season of the year, when the flood water from the melting snow on the surrounding heights pours over the great falls and fills the river channel to overflowing its banks in many places, the strong current impinging against the gravelly substratum cuts it away and undermines the top surface sod, leaving it a loose deathtrap for every man or beast that goes near its edge, until it breaks down of its own weight. Several feet in width of the river banks are thus cut away annually. During the last thirty years the river channel in many places has been changed sidewise three times its original width, leaving a wide barren waste of sand and gravel on the opposite side, thus destroying its original scenic beauty.

Cause of Swift Erosion

It may be interesting to the public to know the cause of there being in recent years so much more activity in the river currents cutting away the river banks than during the earlier known history of Yosemite. When the El Capitan iron bridge was built in 1879, it was located across the narrow channel of the river between the two points of what remains of an old glacial terminal moraine. The river channel at this place was filled with large boulders, which greatly obstructed the free outflow of the flood waters in the spring, causing extensive overflows of the low meadow land above, greatly interfering with travel, especially to Yosemite Falls and Mirror Lake. In order to remedy this matter, the large boulders in the river channel at the bridge were blasted and the fragments leveled down so as to give a free outflow of the flood waters. This increased the force of the river currents, which now commenced greater eroding work on the river banks, and as the winding turns became more abrupt the destructive force annually increases. Some thorough system of protection should be promptly used to save the river banks from further damage.

Editorial Note: Manuscript of this article in Galen Clark's handwriting was found among papers once in the possession of George Fiske, pioneer Yosemite photographer. Upon Mr. Fiske's death, the papers were put into the hands of national park officials. Presumably, Mr. Clark wrote this article in 1907, and there is no evidence that it has been published before. If for no other reason, it is interesting as an expression from that "unobtrusive and unpretentious" Yosemite Father to whom Yosemite enthusiasts owe so much. His comments upon Yosemite valley conditions as they existed 20 years ago cannot fail to interest all park visitors, whose experiences here are limited to the era of motor transportation.

Mr. Clark's idea for the elimination of the dust nuisance in the valley has been answered. We cannot agree that "there are still hundreds of acres where this reclaiming work (thinning out and trimming up tree and shrub growth) needs to be continued to

make the greater portion of the valley accessible to visitors, and to break up the hidden retreats of the bears." More bears now make Yosemite valley their home than at the time of Mr. Clark's writing, and they constitute a real asset.

We are grateful to Galen Clark for making clear to us the cause of the early-day floods in Yosemite valley. At the Yosemite Museum are a dozen early photographs that show immense ponds upon several parts of the valley. Just why present day floods fail to inundate the meadows and low places that were formerly so extensively covered with water has been something of a mystery to the writer. Readers will note that Mr. Clark records the elimination of the remains of the glacier-built dam at El Capitan bridge, so giving the flood waters of the Merced free outflow. The consequent rapid cutting of the river banks, deplored by Mr. Clark, has since been obliterated in many places by the construction retaining walls of stone.

C. P. RUSSELL.



Presented by—

Ho.

BOOK PLATE ADOPTED FOR MUSEUM LIBRARY

Herbert Maier has drawn the above book plate and it is being placed in the books of the Museum Library. This library is growing steadily through the interest of individuals and organizations. Works of scientific nature are earnestly solicited from our readers.

FROM THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON OUT-DOOR
RECREATION

Called by PRESIDENT COOLIDGE

"THAT THE CONFERENCE ENDORSE NATURE STUDY IN SCHOOLS AND THE EXTENSION OF THE NATURE STUDY IDEA TO EVERY AMERICAN SCHOOL AND FAMILY; THAT THE ESTABLISHMENT OF MUSEUMS OF NATURAL HISTORY IN NATIONAL PARKS WILL INCREASE THE EDUCATIONAL RECREATIONAL VALUE OF THE PARKS".—*Resolution of the Conference.*



Digitized by
Yosemite Online Library

<http://www.yosemite.ca.us/library/>

Dan Anderson