

PH0503738

DATA SHEET

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR FEDERAL PROPERTIES

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED SEP 12 1977

DATE ENTERED AUG 25 1978

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Great Sierra Wagon Road

AND/OR COMMON

Aspen Valley Road

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

N of Yosemite Village

N/A

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Yosemite National Park

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

California

VICINITY OF

Aspen Valley

14th

CODE

06

COUNTY

Tuolumne

CODE

109

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

- OCCUPIED
 - UNOCCUPIED
 - WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE
- YES: RESTRICTED
 - YES: UNRESTRICTED
 - NO

PRESENT USE

- AGRICULTURE
- COMMERCIAL
- EDUCATIONAL
- ENTERTAINMENT
- GOVERNMENT
- INDUSTRIAL
- MILITARY
- MUSEUM
- PARK
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- RELIGIOUS
- SCIENTIFIC
- TRANSPORTATION
- OTHER:

4 AGENCY

National Park Service

REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS: (If applicable)

Western Regional Office

STREET & NUMBER

450 Golden Gate Ave., P.O. Box 36063

CITY, TOWN

San Francisco

VICINITY OF

Ca.

STATE

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Yosemite National Park/Roads and Trails Office

STREET & NUMBER

P. O. Box 577

CITY, TOWN

Yosemite National Park

STATE

Ca.

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

EXCELLENT
 GOOD
 FAIR

DETERIORATED
 RUINS
 UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

UNALTERED
 ALTERED

CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE
 MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The section of the Great Sierra Wagon Road that is described in this nomination is the most pristine of the few remaining sections of the road, known commonly as the Old Tioga road. This stretch still contains the fine drywall masonry retaining walls and culverts built by the Chinese laborers. Other sections of the road up to Tuolumne Meadows are used as access roads into campgrounds and are much more heavily traveled and impacted than this section.

The Great Sierra Wagon Road travels in a generally northeasterly direction for 17-3/4 miles from the western boundary of Yosemite National Park to where it approaches the White Wolf Campground. The westernmost 3-3/4 miles of the road are paved. Two and a quarter miles beyond where the pavement ends, the road passes along the southern edge of Aspen Valley, site of one of the last three private inholdings in Yosemite, and a popular resort before the road was realigned in 1937.

The road then enters a densely forested section, following a tributary of the south fork of the Tuolumne River, up to the Hardin Lake Campground spur. This past section of road is extremely narrow in places and required the construction of the many drywall masonry retaining walls, known locally as the "Chinese walls." By today's vehicle standards it is strictly a one-lane road to this point. The forest cover opens up somewhat for the short distance to the White Wolf Campground where pavement begins.

The section of road from Aspen Valley to the White Wolf Campground is closed to all but National Park Service vehicular use as a fire road. The section between the western boundary and Aspen Valley is open as an access route to property owners in the area.

The handcrafted retaining walls and culverts benefit from the lack of vehicles on this road. They are the prime value and should probably be recorded, through photographs and drawings, as a method of preservation.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

| PERIOD | AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW | | | |
|---|--|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC | <input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING | <input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE | <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499 | <input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC | <input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION | <input type="checkbox"/> LAW | <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599 | <input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE | <input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS | <input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE | <input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699 | <input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE | <input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION | <input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY | <input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799 | <input type="checkbox"/> ART | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING | <input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC | <input type="checkbox"/> THEATER |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899 | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE | <input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT | <input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1900- | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY | <input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT | <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION | | |

SPECIFIC DATES 1882, 1915 BUILDER/ARCHITECT Great Sierra Consolidated Silver Co.
 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Great Sierra Wagon Road is of local significance in engineering, industry, and transportation. The first category relates primarily to the relatively unaltered retaining walls (see description), and the additional categories were determined because of the road's associative history with silver mining efforts in the region and the "opening up" of Yosemite's spectacular high country to the public. The Great Sierra Wagon Road was constructed in 1882 by the Great Sierra Silver Mining Company for the purpose of transporting supplies to their mine on the summit of Tioga Hill (located on the northeast boundary of the park). The road was skillfully laid out by surveyors H. B. Carpenter and H.P. Medlicott and built under the direction of engineer Charles N. Barney. The construction was unusually permanent for a mountain road with stone abutted bridges and retaining walls built whenever the least necessity dictated. Chinese laborers were used to a large extent and paid the impressive sum of \$1.20 a day; Caucasians received \$1.50, the foreman \$2.00 per day. According to one report, there were 90 whites and 250 Chinese; another alludes to 160 Chinese out of 250 laborers. In any event, the road, reaching a total length of 56¼ miles, was completed in 130 days, for a total cost of \$61,095.22 - about \$1100 per mile.

The road had barely reached completion when the Great Sierra Mine proved a losing venture and was abandoned. Use of the wagon road stopped except for a few intrepid travelers. The road remained in a state of neglect for over 30 years, while still in private hands. The Government could not meet the price being asked, although the Army began agitating to acquire the route shortly after the establishment of the national park. The importance of the road was recognized for some time, not only as a means of establishing a new route across the Sierra Nevada and opening up the northern part of the Yosemite region, but, with the advent of the automobile, it was seen as a link in transcontinental travel. In 1915 the road was acquired by Stephen T. Mather, future first Director of the National Park Service, and deeded over to the Government. In July of that same year, through the cooperation of the U.S. Department of the Interior and the State of California's Department of Engineering, the "highway" was opened to motor car travel.

In 1937 the section of road from the western boundary to White Wolf Lodge was realigned, bypassing Aspen Valley for a two-lane paved road via Crane Flat, on the Big Oak Flat Road. Except for the section leading to the private homes in Aspen Valley, this section of the original Great Sierra Wagon Road remains relatively unchanged from its earliest days.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Hubbard, Douglass. Ghost Mines of Yosemite, Fresno, Awani Press, c.1958.
 Trexler, Kieth, The Tioga Road, Yosemite Nature Notes, special edition. 1961.
 Ditton, Richard. Self-guiding Auto Tour of Yosemite National Park, Yosemite Nature Notes, v. 35:6, June 1956.
 DeDecker, Mary. Mines of the Eastern Sierra, Glendale CA. La Siesta Press, 1966.
 Whedon, Hazel. A History of the Roads, Trails, etc. in and near Yosemite Nat'l Park.
 unpublished M.A. thesis, 1934 University of Southern California.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY N/A approx. 107. dms

UTM REFERENCES

| | | | | | | | |
|---|------|-------------|---------------|---|------|-------------|---------------|
| A | 1 1 | 2 4 9 6 5 0 | 4 1 9 0 3 0 0 | B | 1 1 | 2 5 2 9 5 0 | 4 1 8 9 8 8 0 |
| | ZONE | EASTING | NORTHING | | ZONE | EASTING | NORTHING |
| C | 1 1 | 2 5 4 8 7 5 | 4 1 8 8 3 0 0 | D | 1 1 | 2 5 5 6 6 0 | 4 1 8 8 9 1 0 |
| | ZONE | EASTING | NORTHING | | ZONE | EASTING | NORTHING |

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The road is described in the description section: the UTM references were determined with a buffer of 25 ft. out from the crown of the road on either side.

(UTM points continued on additional sheet)

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

| STATE | CODE | COUNTY | CODE |
|-------|------|--------|------|
| STATE | CODE | COUNTY | CODE |

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Leslie Starr Hart/Historian

ORGANIZATION

Denver Service Center/National Park Service

DATE

8/76

STREET & NUMBER

655 Parfet, P.O. Box 25287

TELEPHONE

(303)

234-4509

CITY OR TOWN

Denver

Co. 80225

12 CERTIFICATION OF NOMINATION

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

YES

NO

NONE

Howell Rhodes JUN 23 1977

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

In compliance with Executive Order 11593, I hereby nominate this property to the National Register, certifying that the State Historic Preservation Officer has been allowed 90 days in which to present the nomination to the State Review Board and to evaluate its significance. The evaluated level of significance is National State Local.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE Deputy Harris

TITLE Deputy Assistant Secretary

DATE SEP 6 1977

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST:

Charles A. Harris
 DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE

8-27-77
 KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

| | |
|------------------|-------------|
| FOR NPS USE ONLY | |
| RECEIVED | SEP 12 1977 |
| DATE ENTERED | AUG 25 1978 |

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

Great Sierra
CONTINUATION SHEET Wagon Road WTM's ITEM NUMBER 10 PAGE 1.

- E 11/255310/4189575
- 600 F 11/257700/4192445
- G 11/258030/4192570
- H 11/261225/4193775
- I 11/265025/4196790
- 050 J 11/267400/4196775
- 300 K 11/267030/4193175 4194-17
- L 11/266500/4192180 4190-800
- 0 M 11/266275/4196110
- 0 N 11/265025/4196175
- 0 O 11/261460/4193200
- 0 P 11/258000/4192000
- 0 Q 11/256025/4189425
- 0 R 11/256435/4188750
- 0 S 11/254825/4187500
- 0 T 11/252775/4189300
- U 11/249625/4189610