

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

SUPERINTENDENT

OF THE

YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

TO THE

SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR

FOR THE

YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 1892.



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REPORT
OF THE
ACTING SUPERINTENDENT OF THE YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK.

WAWONA, MARIPOSA COUNTY, CAL.

September 1, 1892.

SIR: In compliance with your letter of July 21, I have the honor to submit herewith my report of the condition of affairs and of the management of the Yosemite National Park for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1892.

It is very hard to modify a long-established custom, and to destroy it entirely requires some of the methods of a revolution.

For twenty-nine years the sheep-herders had been accustomed to graze their flocks upon the lands embraced within this national park. This custom had been so long practiced that they began to regard it as a right, and last year when I warned them against practicing this custom hereafter they were all highly indignant, and some of them threatened resistance. They were told that a further pursuit of this custom was against the law, but they had been so untrammelled by legal observances in the past that it was very hard to realize that so far as this park was concerned they would be subjected to them in the future.

Some of them resorted to all manner of tricks and devices to graze their herds even on the extreme borders of the park, as though a little stolen feed there was better than it was elsewhere. A few severe examples of ejection, which, although apparently arbitrary, were strictly within the limits of the law, convinced nearly all of them that it was useless to trifle with the federal authority, and they took their stock away. But during the latter part of August some lawless Portuguese herders thought that they would get a few days' grazing in the Mono Pass or Bloody Canyon, as that part of the reservation is a long way from my camp at Wawona. Lieut. Davis, while patrolling that part of the park, arrested the men and sent them, their dogs, horses, and pack outfit to my camp, from whence they were ejected the park. Also in the first part of September, while patrolling that portion of the park north of the Tuolumne River, Lieut. Davis found a herd of sheep grazing in that almost inaccessible region. He arrested the herders and ejected them, their dogs, and pack outfits, via the Coulterville road, on the western boundary of the park. Since then, although my patrols have been repeatedly over every portion of the park, they have failed to find any trespassing sheep.

There is a trail which enters the park from Jackass Meadows and passes to the east through township 4 south, ranges 25 and 26 east, to what used to be the town of Mammoth. In past times, when Mammoth was a booming town of 10,000 inhabitants, this trail was the only thoroughfare through the Sierra Nevada Mountains to the westward; but now there is not an inhabitant or a house left in the town and the trail is used only by the solitary miner as he goes to and returns from working his assessments in the Minerette and adjacent mining districts. Some sheepmen have asked permission to use this trail in order to reach the grazing grounds on the Nevada side, but I have uniformly refused such permission. I have also refused permission to use the Mono trail for a similar purpose. This latter trail runs almost diagonally across the park to the northeast. Their object is to graze their flocks along these trails until they reach the summit, when the season for leaving the mountains will have arrived, and then they will return, thus securing grazing on the park during the entire summer.

I mention this matter in this place for the reason that I have been told that certain sheep owners have written to the Secretary of the Interior to get the desired permission to use these trails. The proposition looks innocent enough, but in practice such permission will convert this park into a grazing ground.

The position of this park relative to the topography of the Sierra Nevada Mountains is peculiar. From the rugged nature of the mountains the passes are few. If we consider the northern terminus at Lassen's Peak and the southern at Tejou Pass, the Sierra Nevada Mountains are about 450 miles in length, with a trend from the northwest to the southeast.

In all this mighty chain there are only about twelve passes, and the formation is such that these passes increase in altitude from the north to the south from about 5,400 to 12,000 feet.

South of this park there are no passes for nearly 100 miles. There are four passes that lead from this park across the summit of the Sierras, and the nearest pass on the north that does not touch the park is about 70 miles distant. Thus for a distance of about 170 miles this park commands the passes of the Sierras.

Fortunately the country immediately to the east is principally desert and very sparsely settled; otherwise it would be almost impossible to keep trespassers out of the park. The Mammoth trail traverses an isolated section of the park, and the portion within the boundaries is so short that the sheepmen succeeded in running two herds through this spring; but their haste was so great that the animals were not permitted to graze.

There are a few settlers upon homesteads north of the Merced River who have inclosed fields or meadows; these settlers occupy their homesteads from May to November, as the snow is so deep that they can not live upon them during the winter. They have permission to bring in only such stock as can subsist upon the grounds inclosed. I find that to conform to the terms of your letter of July 2, 1891, is impracticable. The owner or lessee of patented land can not, or, what is the same thing, he will not, mark the boundaries of such land, so that my men can easily find the lines. Even if the boundaries were marked, they are too poor to hire herders to keep the stock on such lands, and if I should give them permission to graze their stock upon their patented lands not inclosed it would practically turn the park into a grazing district.

For the above reasons I have totally prohibited any landowner bringing any stock within the limits of the park except such as have inclosed pastures, wherein the stock must be kept. I am of opinion that, even if the Government does not take measures to assume the titles to these lands, in the course of a year or two the permission to this latter class should be withdrawn.

Horses and cattle feed upon the grasses principally, but the sheep eat up everything within reach. The owners of the former are American citizens and generally are of American birth. They take a pride in these magnificent forests, and, as objects of love they are protected and not destroyed, they take great interest and will voluntarily undergo enormous fatigues to save the forests from fires; but the sheep-herders, few of whom are American either by birth, citizenship, or sympathy, care for nothing but the prosperity of their flocks, and where their herds go a desert follows in their wake. The sheep are taken from the foothills right up to the highest point of the Sierras that will produce vegetation. This great forest grows at elevations from 5,500 to 9,500 feet, and in passing through nearly every young plant is eaten or trampled to death. They are particularly voracious of the young fir, and in areas frequented by these herds year after year there is a remarked scarcity of the young growth which is to replace in future ages the now matured forest trees. As the keen air of the higher Sierras notify the herder that the storms of winter approach his descent begins and then, if damage was wrought during his progress up the mountain, destruction accompanies him upon his journey to the plains.

A cloudless, rainless summer has made kindling wood of the pine needles, the last year's leaves, and the fallen timber, and through design or carelessness he applies the match, and his trail to the plain is marked by the smoke of the burning forest. Generally the larger trees can stand a great deal of fire, but the younger saplings that are just too tall for the sheep to eat are destroyed. The fir, which constitutes the principal forest tree at certain elevations and in particularly favored localities, can stand but little fire. A degree of heat that would not affect the pine will blister the fir, causing the bark to withdraw from the sapwood, the top branches and the tips of the main limbs will die, and although the tree will look green, decay has set in, and in about fifteen years after it has received its wound, without any apparent cause, it breaks and crashes to the ground. An examination will show that the interior of the tree has completely rotted away, and a thin rim of sapwood has sustained the weight until increasing decay has so weakened it that the material could no longer stand the strain, and the great forest tree which it had taken nature hundreds of years to produce, has wantonly been destroyed. It is impossible for any man, or any set of men, under the name of a board of appraisement, to affix even an approximate value to the damage wrought by a forest fire, for the consequential damages reach hundreds of years into the future, and this generation knows not the conditions that may obtain after it passes away. The rule which makes a pecuniary penalty for creating forest fires is a mere waste of words, a beating of the thin air. The men who commit this deed are impecunious and can not be touched by a simple fine. They are not the men who observe the laws from a love of order and justice. They respect those laws only which involve as a penalty for their violation personal restraint and enforced labor for the public good.

This park has been protected from the encroachments of the grazing herds but one year, and it is a subject of remark, by those familiar with

the past condition of things in these mountains, what a change has taken place in so short a time. The mountain herbage is appearing everywhere. Nearly all the great forest trees are reproduced from the seed only, and the young plants are appearing in great abundance. It is astonishing how quickly nature recuperates her exhausted forces.

The grouse is the only game that makes this reservation its permanent habitat. It subsists upon the buds of the forest trees, and it is immaterial how deep the snow may be or how intense the cold, its supplies are easily obtained, and the evergreen foliage seems to give it sufficient shelter. Quails come up from the foothills into the high mountains every spring to rest and rear their young, but as the cool nights of September warn them of approaching storms the young coveys retire to the foothills to pass the winter. The deer and bear also dread the deep snow and seek lower altitudes during the winter months.

Many people living in the different valleys of this State, to seek a short relief from the intense heat during the long summers, fit up camping parties and go into the high mountains. This park is a suitable place for such parties, and during the past year many of them came here. I encourage this, for I find that like the regular tourist they are impressed with the grandeur of the scenery and the magnificence of the forests, but unlike the tourist, they take a personal interest and pride in the park. I have no means of knowing the exact numbers of such campers during the past year, but from a close observation I should say that there were no less than one thousand such visitors during the months of June, July, and August, 1891.

The number of tourists who visited the Yosemite Valley during the past season, by the regular public conveyances, was about two thousand. This number would be vastly increased if there were a railroad built to the edge of the National Park. The long, dusty, and fatiguing stage ride of 65 and 95 miles on the south and west sides, respectively, deter all but the most enthusiastic from making the journey. But notwithstanding these great disadvantages the number of visitors steadily increases from year to year.

There have been no fires of consequence within the limits of the park during the past year. Some sheep herders west of the park started a fire, during the month of August, that extended within the boundaries for a distance of about half a mile, but the fire burned chaparral principally and did not reach the heavy timber. Students from the various educational institutions in the State frequently make up parties to travel on foot to the different objects of interest in the Sierras during the summer vacations. Such a party of students from the University of California, whilst journeying near Hazle Green, discovered a fire, and throwing aside their knapsacks they applied themselves with such diligence and effect that, in the course of three or four hours, they subdued what might have become a very destructive fire.

In my report last year I was able to give an approximate estimate of the number of preëmpted, homesteaded, and timber claims within the boundaries of this park. I could not give the entire amount of land owned by private parties from the fact that sections Nos. 16 and 36 of each township were given to the State by the Federal Government for school purposes, and I was unable to learn how much of each of these sections had been disposed of by the State. My information is still very indefinite upon the subject, but it is sufficient to warrant the assertion that the State has parted with its title to several thousand acres of such lands. I think that at a low estimate there are 60,000 acres of land owned by private parties within the boundaries of this park. This

does not include the mill sites, placer and other mining claims, which were located under the mining laws prior to October 1, 1890.

The following list of mines, etc., dates of locations, and townships in which they are situated, were given me by the recorder of Mariposa County. The list is very incomplete, and only includes those on the assessment rolls. A complete list of all the locations would take a month's labor to compile. The recorder could not gratuitously devote this time to such an object, nor had I the wherewithal to pay him for the time. In former times the record of part of this mining country was kept at Coulterville, and I have been unable to obtain a list of the locations that were recorded at that place. These claims, with the exception of two, are all in the southwestern part of the park.

No.	Name of mine.	Date of location.	Township.	Range.
1	Apex mine	Jan. 1, 1884	S.	E.
2	Hidden Treasure mine	May 15, 1885	3	19
3	Hite mine (patented)	Dec. 5, 1874	3	19
4	Giltaer mine	Oct. 23, 1862	3	19
5	Priest & Coleman (patented)	Jan. 1, 1883	3	19
6	Cader Edris	Sept. 12, 1874	3	19
7	McCaulley mine	Feb. 6, 1879	3	19
8	Summit mine	Jan. 29, 1880	3	19
9	Spring tunnel (patented)	Nov. 6, 1880	3	19
10	Georgia Point (patented)	do	3	19
11	South Side (patented)	do	3	19
12	Bright Star	Dec. 20, 1886	3	19
13	Ned's Gulch	June 20, 1865	3	19
14	Cranberry (patented)	Dec. 31, 1874	3	19
15	Rutherford (patented)	do	3	19
16	El Carmin or Mexican	Sept. 12, 1879	3	19
17	White Oak	June 11, 1878	3	19
18	Alaska mine	Apr. 12, 1884	3	19
19	Hite Central (patented)	Oct. 26, 1883	3	19
20	Old Dominion	Dec. 8, 1879	3	19
21	Ferguson	Jan. 1, 1887	3	19
22	Opie mine	Apr. 16, 1890	3	19
23	Freezout	Jan. 1, 1887	3	19
24	Golden Rule	Dec. 13, 1883	3	19
25	Gibbs	Jan. 1, 1883	3	19
26	Feliciana (patented)	Sept. 2, 1876	4	19
27	Early	Sept. 1, 1880	4	19
28	Revel, placer claim	Oct. 23, 1883	4	19
29	Revel, quartz	Aug. 8, 1890	4	19
30	Union mine	Oct. 24, 1882	4	19
31	Toolman & Leevis	Oct. 10, 1872	4	19
32	Mountain View	Sept. 4, 1880	4	19
33	Banner mine	Mar. 31, 1883	4	19
34	Golden Fleece	Oct. 7, 1882	4	19
35	Keystone	Nov. 7, 1882	4	19
36	No. 1, quartz	Nov. 13, 1882	4	19
37	No. 1, placer	do	4	19
38	No. 1, easterly extension	do	4	19
39	Nutmeg, placer claim	do	4	19
40	No. 2, placer claim	do	4	19
41	No. 3, placer claim	do	4	19
42	No. 4, placer claim	do	4	19
43	Morning Star	Jan. 2, 1890	4	19
44	Reindeer	Jan. 1, 1890	4	19
45	White Bear	do	4	19
46	Estrella, placer claim	Nov. 26, 1890	4	19
47	South Side mine	Feb. 4, 1887	3	20
48	Randall mine	Aug. 17, 1888	1	23
49	Loney mine	do	1	23

Of the above eight are placer and forty-one are lode claims. The placer claims are in the valleys of Devils Gulch, South Fork, and Main Merced rivers. The latest was located November 26, 1890, and of course was illegally located.

The following is a partial list of the claims in the southeastern portion of the park, in what is known as the North Fork Mining District, the Minerette country. A part of these claims are recorded in the dis-

tract and the remainder are recorded at Fresno, the county seat. The county recorder would not furnish me a list of the claims on record at the county seat without being paid for the work. There are no funds that can be expended for such an object and my private means do not warrant the expenditure. This mining district was established June 17, 1878, with Thomas G. Agnew as recorder.

No.	Name of mine.	Date of location.	No.	Name of mine.	Date of location.
1	Advance	June 17, 1878	35	Alfa	July 3, 1889
2	The Fresno	July 10, 1878	36	Pierce mine	Sept. 3, 1889
3	The Eureka, mill site	Sept. 18, 1878	37	The Mint	Aug. 30, 1889
4	King Creek mine	Aug. 16, 1879	38	North Star, No. 3	Aug. 9, 1890
5	The Lake mine	June 4, 1887	39	Gold Prize	Do.
6	The Baker mine	June 8, 1889	40	Morning Star	July 14, 1890
7	The North Star	Do.	41	Evening Star	Do.
8	The Amazon, No. 2	July 12, 1889	42	The Deniston	July 15, 1890
9	Mountain Maid	Do.	43	The Nellie	Aug. 4, 1890
10	The Clipper Location	June 20, 1889	44	Grand View	July 5, 1890
11	The Ellipse	Do.	45	Silver Star	Sept. 22, 1890
12	The Madeira	June 21, 1889	46	The Franklin Pierce	Sept. 26, 1890
13	The Lotta mine	Do.	47	The Comstock	Do.
14	The Soto	June 22, 1889	48	The Pioneer	May 8, 1885
15	The Columbia	June 29, 1889	49	The Fresno Consolidated	July 10, 1887
16	The C. C. mine	June 9, 1889	50	El Dorado	Oct. 2, 1889
17	North Star, No. 2	June 28, 1889	51	Lady Clara	Do.
18	The Spanish Belle	June 22, 1889	52	Dead Wood	Do.
19	The Sierra	July 5, 1889	53	Nil Desperandum	Aug. 30, 1889
20	Grey Eagle	June 20, 1889	54	Lone Star	Do.
21	Old Soldier	June 29, 1889	55	Exchequer	Oct. 2, 1889
22	The Jay Gould	July 16, 1889	56	Conception	Do.
23	The Gem	July 8, 1889	57	Great Bear	Do.
24	The Mammoth	July 3, 1889	58	The Ventura	Do.
25	The Maritta	July 24, 1889	59	R. E. Lee	Do.
26	The Emma Nevada	July 22, 1889	60	Grizzly	Do.
27	The Nonpareil	Do.	61	Clarisa	Aug. 31, 1889
28	The Central Point	Do.	62	Virginia	Do.
29	The Lookout	July 31, 1889	63	Mill sight, 5 acres	Oct. 2, 1889
30	The Red Ledge	July 30, 1889	64	Cornucopia	Do.
31	Big Blue	Do.	65	Two water rights on Shaw Creek	July 27, 1889
32	Mountain Meadow	Aug. 20, 1889	66	Shaw Creek Falls and Holcomb Lake	Do.
33	Bright Metal	Do.			
34	Capitola	Aug. 29, 1889			

I was unable to obtain a list of the mining claims in the Mount Gibbs country. I visited the district twice, but the recorder was absent at each visit. I have written him, but have not received an answer.

All three of these mining sections are isolated from the Yosemite National Park by the natural features of the mountainous country around them. There are no natural curiosities of a destructible character in any of them. There is nothing in these mining sections that would attract the tourist or the wonder seeker. Each of them is at an extreme corner of the park, and inaccessible from any point within it except by most fatiguing climbing.

I believe it is against public policy for the Government to reassume title to these one hundred and fifteen various claims and lock them up in the national park. Over \$2,000,000 have been taken from one of these claims, and the owners of all the rest hope for an equal bonanza.

Hope is the miner's main stay of life. A miner without hope would be as great a natural curiosity as the Yosemite Valley. This characteristic is so buoyant in its effect that no matter if he only has a trace of the mineral, he firmly believes that when he gets a little deeper he is sure to "strike it rich," and he puts in his \$100 worth of work year after year with the firm conviction that a fortune awaits him in the end. A sight of his hardened hands, strong but soiled clothing, his dry humor, his clear reasoning from his own standpoint, and his decided and positive manner when speaking of his claim deprives the

subject of its pathos and half convinces the listener. I can think of no plan by which the Government can purchase this man's claim, satisfy him, and still keep the expenditure within the bounds of reason.

As most of the timber claims within the boundaries of this park were purchased with a speculative object, a refunding of the money expended, with a good rate of interest, would probably be an equitable way of reassuming the title to such lands. The homestead and pre-emption claims would probably have to be appraised or suits of condemnation instituted.

The sooner the Government reassumes titles to these lands the cheaper it can be done, for as soon as a railroad comes near the park the lands will increase in value and the holders will be justified in demanding higher prices for them.

All the homesteads in the southwestern corner of the park (two or three are in or very close to the Merced River Valley and two near Wawona) are occupied continuously, but the others can not be occupied during the winter months. All the mining claims in the southwestern corner are or can be worked at all seasons of the year; the others can not without special preparation for the winter.

The stockowners living on these intermittingly occupied homesteads are so careless about keeping their animals upon their claims that they are a perpetual source of annoyance.

On the other hand, the miners complain that in the present uncertain state of affairs they can not interest capital, for as soon as a proposed investor finds that the claim is within the park boundaries he will have nothing to do with it. To be within the park, they declare, destroys the value of their property and causes them to lose the labor and expense of years.

A large experience confirms my views regarding the boundaries of this park, as set forth in my report of last year, except upon the west. For the western boundary I would recommend that it follow the north and south line, equally dividing township 3 south, range 20 east, prolonged to intercept the south fork of the Merced River to the southern boundary of township 2 south, range 20 east, thence along this boundary to the west until the intersection of the western boundary of township 2 south, 19 east, then north to the Tuolumne River. This would conform to the recommendation of the honorable Secretary for all the country north of the south fork of the Merced River, and I think it would exclude all the mining and farming country in the southwest corner of the park.

It is necessary to send patrols from this camp almost incessantly. An officer generally accompanies each patrol. Last year the number of miles marched by such patrols was 2,640. I had authority to hire a guide for one month, but I could find no one man who knew all the country, and rather than be troubled by such guides I determined to reconnoiter the country without such aids. In the performance of this duty I found the services of Second Lieut. M. F. Davis, Fourth Cavalry, almost invaluable. He discovered an eye for the topography of the country and displayed a talent in woodcraft that were of a high order.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

A. E. WOOD,
Captain, Fourth Cavalry,
Acting Superintendent Yosemite National Park.

THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR.