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**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Multiple Property Documentation Form**



This form is used for documenting multiple property groups relating to one or several historic contexts. See instructions in *How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form* (National Register Bulletin 16B). Complete each item by entering the requested information. For additional space, use continuation sheets (Form 10-900-a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer to complete all items.

☒ New Submission ☐ Amended Submission

**A. Name of Multiple Property Listing**

**Historic Resources of Yosemite National Park**

**B. Associated Historic Contexts**

(Name each associated historic context, identifying theme, geographical area, and chronological period for each.)

1. **Historic Context: Native Americans and the Yosemite, Prehistory to 1969**
2. **Historic Context: Settlement and Industry in Yosemite, 1851-1951**
3. **Historic Context: State and Federal Administration of Yosemite, 1864-1966**
4. **Historic Context: Outdoor Recreation and Environmental Preservation in Yosemite, 1864-1973**
5. **Historic Context: Architecture, Landscape Design, and the Construction of the Visitor Experience in Yosemite, 1856-1964**

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**D. Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this documentation form meets the National Register documentation standards and sets forth requirements for the listing of related properties consistent with the National Register criteria. This submission meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60 and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation. (\_\_\_ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Deputy FPO June 4, 2014  
Signature and title of certifying official / Date  
National Park Service  
State or Federal Agency or Tribal government

I hereby certify that this multiple property documentation form has been approved by the National Register as a basis for evaluating related properties for listing in the National Register.

[Signature] 7/10/2014  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

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Provide the following information on continuation sheets. Cite the letter and the title before each section of the narrative. Assign page numbers according to the instructions for continuation sheets in *How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form* (National Register Bulletin 16B). Fill in page numbers for each section in the space below.

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**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 120 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.



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**INTRODUCTION**

Yosemite and the High Sierras have played a prominent role in shaping and reflecting the evolution of American ideas about wilderness, conservation, preservation, and the environment. The cultural landscape and built environment of Yosemite are representative of American ideas about the use and protection of our public lands. The history of Yosemite is the product of myriad interests, both conflicting and complementary, and represents America's evolving attitudes towards the natural landscape and its role in identifying national identity. The guardians of the park constantly worked to provide public recreation while preventing the destruction of natural beauty and ecosystems.

Beginning in the late 1860s the Valley was developed extensively with roads, bridges, accommodations, and other tourism infrastructure. Visitors came to regard a resort-like vacation within a wilderness as their historic right, resisting efforts to turn the Valley "back to nature." The need to reconcile preservation with use, and to reconcile expectations of contemporary visitors with the mandate of perpetual trust has been the controlling factor in the history of Yosemite National Park and in the history of the National Park Service as a whole.

The patterns of cultural and historical development of Yosemite National Park are similar in many ways to patterns throughout the western United States. Indian people had lived in the Yosemite region for as long as 8,000 years prior to contact with Western cultures. By the mid-nineteenth century, when native residents had their first contact with non-Indian people, they were primarily of Southern Miwok ancestry. Their complex culture, rich in tradition, religion, songs, and political affiliations, included trade with Mono Paiutes from the east side of the Sierra, resulting in many unions between the two tribes.

The first sighting of Yosemite Valley by non-Indian people was probably by members of the Joseph Walker Party in 1833, as they moved up the steep eastern escarpment and westward across the Sierra Nevada through the future Yosemite National Park. After the discovery of gold in the Sierra Nevada foothills in 1849, the arrival of thousands of miners resulted in conflict with native people fighting to protect their homelands. The Mariposa Battalion, organized as a punitive expedition by the State of California to bring an end to the "Mariposa Indian War," entered Yosemite Valley on March 27, 1851. This visit, the first recorded entry into the Valley, changed the valley forever. Exploration was quickly followed by the first trickle of visitors, presaging the future flood of tourists, commercial development, recreational activities, natural resource exploitation, and protection and conservation measures.

Writers, artists, and photographers spread the fame of "the Incomparable Valley" throughout the world. A steadily increasing stream of visitors came on foot and horseback, and later by stage. Realizing that money could be made from tourism, rival entrepreneurs quickly flocked to the Valley. Trails, roads, hotels and other structures were constructed, livestock grazed in meadows, and orchards were planted. Spurred on by the specter of private exploitation of Yosemite's natural wonders, early conservationists appealed to the U.S. Congress for help.

On June 30, 1864, President Abraham Lincoln signed the Yosemite Land Grant Act, placing Yosemite Valley and the Mariposa Grove of Giant Sequoias under the stewardship of the State of California as an inalienable public trust. For the first time in history, a federal government had set aside scenic lands simply to protect them and to allow for their enjoyment by all people. It signifies the birthplace of the American conception of "the national park idea"

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and sparked the designation of Yellowstone as the first official national park a few years later in 1872.<sup>1</sup>

Artist George Catlin is generally credited with the national park concept. Concerned with westward expansion and the loss of Native American lands and wilderness, Catlin proposed parks, maintained in their wild state, set aside by the government. The national park idea maintained that the natural wonders of the United States should be held in perpetual trust for the entire population, rather than being exploited by private entrepreneurs, as was the case at Niagara Falls. The idea derived in part from the transcendentalist traditions of Henry David Thoreau and Ralph Waldo Emerson, which advocated the contemplation of natural beauty as an antidote to the increasingly urban society of the nineteenth century. This combined with the popular conception of the West as a place of rugged independence, somehow more innately American and democratic than the settled, domesticated East. Yosemite's half-mile high granite cliffs and giant redwood trees were a larger-than-life epitome of what seemed to be the West's unlimited potential.

One of the most basic assumptions about the West, even for those who had moved beyond the idea of the conquest of free land to acknowledge prior claims of the indigenous peoples, was that white settlers were battling their way into a wilderness. This wilderness has been seen to exert a powerful influence on American culture and identity, beyond the simple idea of Frederick Jackson Turner's Frontier Thesis. Recent scholarship has suggested, however, that there was little wilderness to be found. Further, the idea of the West as an exceptional and formative environment has perhaps wielded greater power than the reality of the landscape. These ideas have in many cases worked "backwards" on the environment, reshaping it to match American expectations as much as the environment has shaped Americans.

Historian Roderick Nash explored how wilderness is connected with American identity in 1973 with *Wilderness and the American Mind*. Nash shows that the American national myth invests special meaning to the wilderness as the true source and keeper of national character. The wilderness was commonly seen as a natural counter to European claims of cultural superiority, and as such had to be personally experienced in order to be a proper American. This idea calls to mind Theodore Roosevelt's glorification of the strenuous life as a counter to the enervating influences of excessive civilization, and lay behind many of the earliest attempts to preserve natural scenic wonders as American treasures. A number of scholars have traced these efforts, including Stephen Fox in *The American Conservation Movement: John Muir and his Legacy* (1981), and Hal Rothman in *Greening of a Nation?* (1998) and *Saving the Planet* (2000). These works illustrate the religious devotion of environmentalists such as Muir, and point to the distinctly elitist mindset that characterized the movement in its earliest days. Fox explicitly connects the conservation ethic to the Progressive tradition and its efforts to mitigate the impact of modernity and a changing society. "Back to Nature" carried with it the additional message of "Away from the Cities" and their corrosive influences—particularly the apparent threat of immigrants challenging the established order. In nature, it was supposed, would be found the true and authentic America

But, as William Cronon has suggested in an essay of the same name, there is a "Trouble with Wilderness." The essay, in *Uncommon Ground* (1995), raises a point that is seemingly obvious, yet has been overlooked for decades: Native Americans—the West's original inhabitants—are people, and have had their own distinctive impact on the environment. While it might be fashionable to regard Native Americans as magical people who somehow float above the landscape in perfect harmony, the truth of the matter is that they have extensively modified the environment to suit their way of life. As Dan Flores has also pointed out in *The Natural West* (2001), the first white settlers in the

<sup>1</sup> Yosemite National Park Factsheets: "History" dated April 8, 2003, at <http://www.nps.gov/yose/nature/history.htm>

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West were not seeing wilderness in most cases. Rather, the park-like Western forests and mountain meadows were created through deliberate human intervention, typically to improve food supplies. Robert Keller and Michael Tureck explain in *American Indians and National Parks* (1998) that in order for white Americans to appreciate Western landscapes as authentic representations of the national identity, the people who created the landscapes had to be largely removed as inconsistent with the desired narrative. Where they were allowed to remain, as Marguerite Shaffer explains in *See America First* (2000), Native Americans were transformed into scenic accessories to decorate the national parks and remind visitors that through conquest, European-Americans were now the legitimate heirs of the Western environment.

Shaffer also raises the issue of the built environment in the Western national parks. The hotels and lodges created in the parks, particularly in the decades during and after the First World War, emulated to a degree the chalets of Europe, suggesting to visitors the permanence of the American experience, together with the nation's new role on the world stage. The slogan "See America First" explicitly put forward the notion that American culture was the equal of anything that could be found across the Atlantic. Ethan Carr explains in *Wilderness by Design* (1999) that the National Park Service, under founding director Stephen Mather, readily cooperated with commercial interests to promote visitation as a patriotic duty. Extensive circulation infrastructures and lodging to suit every budget emphasized that in America, the environment was not only spectacular, but democratic.

Fears that this essentially American landscape was being squandered in Yosemite due to mismanagement by California state officials inspired a new campaign, headed by John Muir and Robert Underwood Johnson, editor of *Century* magazine, to establish Yosemite as a federally administered National Park. Muir authored two articles for *Century*, "The Treasures of Yosemite" and "Features of the Proposed Yosemite National Park," to muster public support. Muir recommended that the park's boundaries be set as widely as possible, encompassing not only the existing grant, but the entire watershed in order to preserve what would now be termed Yosemite's ecosystem. Writing to Johnson, Muir observed "To preserve the Valley and leave all its related rocks, waters, forests to fire and sheep and lumbermen is like keeping the grand hall of entrance of a palace for royalty, while all the other apartments from cellar to dome are given up to the common or uncommon use of industry--butcher-shops, vegetable-stalls, liquor-saloons, lumberyards, etc."<sup>2</sup> As Muir predicted, the State of California objected to giving up its "crown jewel" and maintained control of the original grant even as Congress formed Yosemite National Park on October 1, 1890.

During the following years, the U.S. Army administered the new National Park, while California's Board of Commissioners continued to oversee Yosemite Valley and the Mariposa Grove. Dual control of the Yosemite area came to an end in 1906, when the State of California returned Yosemite Valley and the Mariposa Grove to the federal government. Civilian park rangers took over from the military in 1914. Two years later, on August 25, 1916, Congress authorized the creation of the National Park Service to administer all national parks "...to promote and regulate the use of the...national parks...which purpose is to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> John Muir to Robert Underwood Johnson, March 4, 1890, *The Life and Letters of John Muir*, ed. William Frederic Badè (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1924), Chapter XV, available at [http://www.sierraclub.org/john\\_muir\\_exhibit/life/life\\_and\\_letters/index.html](http://www.sierraclub.org/john_muir_exhibit/life/life_and_letters/index.html)

<sup>3</sup> "Act to Establish a National Park Service, and for Other Purposes (Organic Act)" August 25, 1916; Yosemite National Park Factsheets: "History" dated April 8, 2003, at <http://www.nps.gov/yose/nature/history.htm>



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**THE SETTING<sup>4</sup>**

Yosemite National Park is located in the central Sierra Nevada of California and lies 150 miles east of San Francisco and only a six hour drive from Los Angeles. Designated a World Heritage Site in 1984, Yosemite is internationally recognized for its spectacular granite cliffs, waterfalls, clear streams, giant sequoia groves, and biological diversity. The 750,000-acre, 1,200 square-mile park contains thousands of lakes and ponds, 1600 miles of streams, 800 miles of hiking trails, and 350 miles of roads. Two federally designated wild and scenic rivers, the Merced and Tuolumne, begin within Yosemite's borders and flow west into California's Central Valley.<sup>5</sup>

Geology. Yosemite's glaciated landscape - resulting from the interaction of glaciers and the underlying rocks - formed the basis for its preservation as a national park. Iconic landmarks such as Yosemite Valley, Hetch Hetchy, Yosemite Falls, Vernal and Nevada Falls, Bridalveil Fall, Half Dome, the Clark Range, and the Cathedral Range are known throughout the world by the photographs of countless photographers, both amateur and professional. Landforms that are the result of glaciation include U-shaped canyons, jagged peaks, rounded domes, waterfalls, and moraines.

Hundreds of small bodies of massive granite dominate the Yosemite area. These granitic bodies intruded into the Yosemite area over a span of 100 million years. Somewhere between 25 to 10 million years ago, uplifting began and the Sierra Nevada tilted to form relatively gentle western slopes and steeper, more dramatic eastern slopes. Uplift also increased the steepness of stream and river beds, and the resulting erosion formed deep, narrow canyons. As the world's climate grew colder, beginning two to three million years ago, snow and ice accumulated, forming glaciers in the higher alpine meadows. Ice thickness in Yosemite Valley may have reached 4,000 feet during the early glacial episode. Glaciers moving down the narrow canyons sculpted the U-shaped valley that attracts so many visitors to its scenic vistas today.<sup>6</sup>

Ecology. Yosemite National Park, one of the largest and least-fragmented habitat blocks in the Sierra Nevada, supports a diversity of plants and wildlife. Precipitation amounts vary from 36 inches (915 mm) at 4,000 feet (1200 m) elevation to 50 inches (1200 mm) at 8,600 feet (2600 m). Elevations in the park, ranging from 1,800 to 13,123 feet, include five major vegetation zones: chaparral/oak woodland, lower montane, upper montane, subalpine and alpine. The plants of Yosemite National Park are diverse and complex and are a significant part of the exquisite beauty and biological diversity of the park. Vegetation zones range from scrub and chaparral communities at lower elevations, to subalpine forests and alpine meadows at the higher elevations.

Of California's 7,000 plant species, more than 20% occur within Yosemite. There is suitable habitat or documented records for more than 160 rare plants in the park, with rare local geologic formations and unique soils characterizing the restricted ranges many of these plants occupy.

With habitats ranging from thick foothill chaparral to expanses of alpine rock, Yosemite National Park supports over 250 species of vertebrates, which include fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds, and mammals. This high

<sup>4</sup> See Eugene P. Kiver and David V. Harris, *Geology of U.S. Parklands* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1999), 214-229.

<sup>5</sup> Yosemite National Park Factsheets: "Natural Resources at Yosemite National Park" dated April 8, 2003, at <http://www.nps.gov/yose/nature/nature.htm>

<sup>6</sup> N. King Huber, *The Geologic Story of Yosemite National Park* (Yosemite National Park, California: Yosemite Association. 1989), 10-11.

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diversity of species is also the result of habitats in Yosemite that are largely intact, compared to areas outside the park where various human activities have resulted in habitat degradation or destruction.<sup>7</sup>

Along much of Yosemite's western boundary, habitats are dominated by mixed coniferous forests of ponderosa pine, sugar pine, incense cedar, white fir, and Douglas fir, and a few stands of giant sequoia, interspersed by areas of black oak and canyon live oak. A relatively high diversity of wildlife species are supported by these habitats, due to relatively mild, lower-elevation climate, and the mixture of habitat types and plant species. Wildlife species typically found in these habitats include black bear, bobcat, gray fox, mountain kingsnake, Gilbert's skink, white-headed woodpecker, brown creeper, spotted owl, and a wide variety of bat species. In the case of bats, large snags are important as roost sites.

Going higher in elevation, the coniferous forests become purer stands of red fir, western white pine, Jeffrey pine, and lodgepole pine. Fewer wildlife species tend to be found in these habitats, due to their higher elevation, and lower complexity. Species likely to be found include golden-mantled ground squirrel, chickaree, marten, Steller's jay, hermit thrush, and northern goshawk. Reptiles are not common, but include rubber boa, western fence lizard, and alligator lizard.

As the landscape rises, trees become smaller and more sparse, with stands broken by areas of exposed granite. These include lodgepole pine, whitebark pine, and mountain hemlock that, at highest elevations, give way to vast expanses of granite as treeline is reached. The climate in these habitats is harsh and the growing season is short, but species such as pika, yellow-bellied marmot, white-tailed hare, Clark's nutcracker, and rosy finch are adapted to these conditions. The treeless alpine habitats are the areas favored by Sierra Nevada bighorn sheep now found in the Yosemite area only around Tioga Pass, where a small, reintroduced population exists.

At a variety of elevations, meadows provide important, productive habitat for wildlife. Animals come to feed on the green grasses and use the flowing and standing water found in many meadows. Predators, in turn, are attracted to these areas. The interface between meadow and forest is also favored by many animal species because of the proximity of open areas for foraging, and cover for protection. Species highly dependent upon meadow habitat include great gray owl, willow flycatcher, Yosemite toad, and mountain beaver.

Despite the richness of high-quality habitats in Yosemite, three species have become extinct in the park within historical time, and another 37 species currently have special status under either California or federal endangered species legislation. The most serious current threats to Yosemite's wildlife and the ecosystems they occupy include loss of a natural fire regime, exotic species, air pollution, habitat fragmentation, and climate change. On a more local basis, factors such as road kills and the availability of human food have affected some wildlife species.<sup>8</sup>

Hydrology. Yosemite has a variety of surface water features, some of which are a major attraction for park visitors. Some of the tallest waterfalls in the world are found in Yosemite Valley, including Yosemite Falls (with a total drop of 2,425 feet) and Ribbon Fall (1,612 feet). The Tuolumne and Merced River systems originate along the crest of the Sierra Nevada in the park and have carved river canyons 3,000 to 4,000 feet deep. Hydrologic processes, including glaciation, flooding, and fluvial geomorphic response, have been fundamental in creating landforms in the park. The surface water quality of most park waters is considered by the State of California to be beneficial for

<sup>7</sup> Yosemite National Park Factsheets: "Natural Resources at Yosemite National Park" dated April 8, 2003, at <http://www.nps.gov/yose/nature/nature.htm>

<sup>8</sup> Yosemite National Park Factsheets: "Wildlife Overview" dated September 4, 2003, at <http://www.nps.gov/yose/nature/wildlife.htm>

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wildlife habitat, freshwater habitat, and for canoeing, rafting, and other recreation.<sup>9</sup>

In 1987, the U.S. Congress designated the Merced a Wild and Scenic River to protect the river's free-flowing condition and to protect and enhance its unique values for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations (16 USC 1271). This designation gives the Merced River special protection under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act and requires managing agencies to prepare a comprehensive management plan for the river and its immediate environment.

The Merced Wild and Scenic River is as central to Yosemite National Park's identity as Half Dome or El Capitan. Today, the upper watershed of the Merced River exists largely as it has for thousands of years. In most areas of Yosemite, it remains a river wild, flowing freely while supporting a diversity of plant and animal species largely unparalleled in the Sierra Nevada. Due to the protection afforded it in a national park, much of the Merced River is free from the direct effects of municipal use, power production, and agriculture. As a result, the Merced River is proving to be a valuable learning ground for scientific research, presenting opportunities for a first-hand education about unique ecological and hydrological river processes.

However, despite the fact that the Merced River in Yosemite National Park appears to be in a natural condition, it has been altered by humans over time. Its banks have been stabilized to protect roads and other development; bridges span the river, restricting its ability to meander through the Yosemite Valley; and some adjacent wet meadows were once drained or filled for mosquito abatement and to make Yosemite Valley more suitable for grazing, farming, and camping. While there are no major dams on the Merced River in Yosemite National Park, diversions remain, such as an old hydropower diversion dam on the main stem and an impoundment in Wawona for the community's water supply. There are also several dams downstream from the Wild and Scenic portion of the river.

Yosemite National Park experienced eleven winter floods between 1916 and 1997 that caused substantial damage to property, including properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places. All of these floods took place between November 1 and January 30. The largest floods occurred in 1937, 1950, 1955, and 1997. The major flood of January 1997 caused extensive damage to structures along the main stem of the Merced River. Many facilities in Yosemite Valley were flooded or destroyed, including Lower River, Upper River, Lower Pines, North Pines, and group campgrounds; motel and cabin units at Yosemite Lodge; numerous trail and road bridges; and employee housing areas. Sections of the historic El Portal Road collapsed as the river undercut rock slopes below the road; other segments were completely washed out.<sup>10</sup>

**HISTORIC CONTEXT: NATIVE AMERICANS AND THE YOSEMITE REGION (Prehistory to 1969)**

Native American peoples inhabited the Yosemite region for thousands of years, developing cultures that were uniquely suited to life in the Sierra Nevada. The group identity of these earliest inhabitants was shaped and directed by the specific resources, landforms, and climate of Yosemite and its surroundings. In return, Native Americans imposed their own visions on the land, investing it with meaning and altering the primordial wilderness to suit their needs. In this they established a precedent followed by all who would subsequently come to the region. Most significantly, their careful management of vegetation in Yosemite Valley produced the parklike appearance that so

<sup>9</sup> Yosemite National Park Factsheets: "Water Overview" dated April 8, 2003, at <http://www.nps.gov/yose/nature/water.htm>

<sup>10</sup> National Park Service (2000). *Merced Wild and Scenic River Comprehensive Management Plan*.



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impressed the first European American explorers. This is the root of a paradox inherent to both Yosemite and the idea of national parks in general: when Americans claimed Yosemite as their own, they embraced the managed landscape but rejected the people who created it. For Yosemite to match the national park ideal of a natural wonderland, the Native Americans who had inhabited the region for thousands of years were compelled to leave. The romantic conception of the "unspoiled wilderness" had no place for a human population.

**Prehistoric Use and Occupation (Prehistory-1850)**

The first Paleoindians to enter the area now designated as Yosemite National Park may well have done so over 10,500 years ago. By that time the central Sierra Nevada was predominantly free of the last ice of the Tioga glaciers, and use or occupation of park lands would have been possible, at least on a seasonable basis. Indian presence in Yosemite is at present unconfirmed archeologically until at least 7,500-6,000 B.C., but evidence from elsewhere in California suggests that the area was likely to have been used prior to that time, even if only infrequently. The origins and linguistic affiliations of the first people to have left a record in Yosemite, as well as those that preceded them, are currently unknown. The archeological record suggests that this was because Yosemite was an area in which the peoples of the Western and Eastern Sierra, the Central Valley, and the Western Great Basin met and intermingled, producing new cultural identities.

The current understanding of these prehistoric peoples is based, to a large extent, on the archeological sequence first proposed by James Bennyhoff in 1956. Bennyhoff identified three basic time periods associated with major trends in archeological remains found within the Yosemite region: the Crane Flat, Tamarack, and Mariposa Complexes. With some modifications and revisions in recent years, as described in the 1999 *Archeological Synthesis and Research Design* by Kathleen Hull and Michael Moratto, this archeological sequence encompasses surveys of all or substantial portions of Yosemite Valley, El Portal, Foresta, Wawona, Lake Eleanor, Virginia Canyon, eastern Hetch Hetchy, Tuolumne Meadows, and most paved road corridors. It also addresses less intensive surveys of backcountry areas, such as Kerrick Canyon, Deep Canyon, Lake Vernon, Moraine Ridge, Young Lakes, Elizabeth Lake, Cathedral Lake, Budd Lake, Vogelsang High Sierra Camp, and Little Yosemite Valley.<sup>11</sup>

The culture of the Crane Flat Complex, dating from an undefined time before A.D. 500, was marked by substantial, sedentary populations that actively participated in regional trade networks. The people of this culture employed millingslabs to grind seeds, and made use of spears launched with spear-throwers (or atlatls). The intermediate Tamarack Complex, from roughly A.D. 500 to 1200, saw a decline in the population level, accompanied by greater mobility, less evidence of trade, and the shifting of settlement sites to higher elevations. The people may have supplemented their use of millingslabs with mortars hollowed out the bedrock, while hunting with the bow and arrow. The Yosemite region experienced another increase in population during the late prehistoric Mariposa Complex, from approximately 1200 to 1850, together with the emergence of the village community. The people occupied principal and subsidiary settlements, from which they might disperse on a seasonal basis as climate and resources dictated. The local economy was based on the native acorn crop, which the people encouraged through careful and

<sup>11</sup> Kathleen L. Hull and Michael J. Moratto, *Archeological Synthesis and Research Design, Yosemite National Park, California*. Yosemite Research Center Publications in Anthropology No. 21, Submitted to USDOI, National Park Service, Yosemite National Park, 1999, page

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intensive land use. These factors also contributed to resurgence in the local trading network.<sup>12</sup>

The archeological record makes attempts to assign definite ethnic identities to these early people problematic at best, but the Southern Miwok, Central Miwok, Mono Lake Paiute, Western Mono, and Chukchansi Yokuts are all known to have resided in or made use of the Yosemite region around the time of European contact. The primary resident group appear to have been related to the Southern Miwok, and identified themselves as the Ah-wah-nee-chee, derived from *Ah-wah-ne*, the name of a village located east of Yosemite Creek. The name, which likened the village's location to a gaping mouth, was applied by outside groups to the Yosemite Valley as a whole.<sup>13</sup>

The largest village in the Valley was *Koomine*, which was located just below Yosemite Falls, and extending for three-quarters of a mile along the north side of the Merced River. *Yowatchke*, at the mouth of Indian Canyon, was one of a large number of other sites throughout the Valley that were occupied for at least some part of the late prehistoric period. An early survey by Clinton Hart Merriam identified two classes of villages: those occupied by the families of the chiefs, and those that were home to other family groups. Other important settlements were located at Wawona, El Portal, the Hetch Hetchy Valley, Big Meadow, Crane Flat, the Lake Eleanor area, and the Eleanor Creek valley. In most cases the village sites were considered permanent, but their habitation levels fluctuated according to the season. Higher elevation sites in the valleys and backcountry were used primarily during the summer months, with much of their population apparently moving down to such lowland areas as El Portal to escape the worst of the Sierra winters. However, some of the Yosemite Valley sites close to the north wall may have been able to take advantage of the sunshine in that area, making conditions tenable for at least part of the winter season. This became important in the late prehistoric period, as the Ah-wah-nee-chee began to occupy the valley on a full-time basis to escape growing white incursions in the foothills.<sup>14</sup>

The Ah-wah-nee-chee Miwok built several different kinds of structures characteristic of Southern Miwok practice in the Yosemite region. *Umachas* were conical-shaped winter dwellings constructed of long poles covered with the bark of incense cedar or pine trees. In summer the preference was for lighter structures of brush with a similar shape. In addition to the individual residences, villages contained large circular, semi-subterranean dance or assembly houses. These were typically forty to fifty feet in diameter, and excavated to a depth of three or four feet. Smaller sweat lodges, ranging from six to fifteen feet in diameter with earth-covered roofs, were also common features of the villages. The Ah-wah-nee-chee constructed *chukahs* to store their acorn harvest, in the form of four tall incense cedar poles supporting a covered, basket-like structure that was elevated to keep the acorns off the ground. Small conical, bark-covered grinding houses were located nearby.<sup>15</sup>

Black oak acorns, which were the primary source of dietary starch for California Indians, occurred in abundance in the Yosemite region. In addition to these, the Ah-wah-nee-chee Miwok gathered clover and bulbs in the spring, seeds and fruits in the summer, nuts and manzanita berries in the fall, and mushrooms in late winter and early spring. They hunted grizzly and black bear, deer, elk, and smaller mammals such as rabbits and squirrels. Trout and several species of birds were also used as food. Before setting out, the hunters would ritually purify themselves in the village sweat lodges.

<sup>12</sup> Hull and Moratto, *Archeological Synthesis*, 71, 117-119.

<sup>13</sup> Linda Wedel Greene, *Yosemite: The Park and its Resources—A History of the Discovery, Management, and Physical Development of Yosemite National Park, California* (United States Department of the Interior/National Park Service, 1987), 9

<sup>14</sup> Greene, *Yosemite*, 7-12

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 9-12.

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Yosemite provided the Ah-wah-nee-chee with an abundance of resources, but they also engaged in trade with other indigenous groups that occupied or regularly visited the central Sierra. These were primarily the Washo, who occupied high elevation meadows and ranged east and west from lake Tahoe and Washo Lake, the Mono Lake Paiutes who lived immediately east of Yosemite on the edge of the Great Basin, and the Yokuts from the San Joaquin Valley' and foothills south of the Fresno River. The Yokuts were a source of shell beads and dogs, for which the Miwok traded baskets, and bows and arrows. From the Paiutes the Miwok received baskets, obsidian, finished projectile points, salt, rabbitskin blankets, pinon nuts, sinew-backed bows, pigments, bison robes, and fly pupae. In exchange the Paiutes were given baskets, shell beads, arrows, and manzanita berries. The Ah-wah-nee-chee also traded shell beads and manzanita berries with the Washo, together with acorns, soaproot fibers, and redbud bark. The Washo in turn provided pinon nuts, rabbitskin blankets, bison skins, and dried fish.<sup>16</sup>

The Ah-wah-nee-chee had a particularly close association with the Mono Lake Paiute. An outbreak of disease around 1800, most likely through contact with Mission Indian refugees, devastated the population of Yosemite Valley and caused many survivors to flee over the mountains to settle in the Mono Lake area. One of the descendents of this group, Tenaya,<sup>17</sup> who was half Miwok and half Paiute, led a return to the valley sometime before 1850. This association with the Paiute, who were generally distrusted by other Miwok, resulted in the current name of the valley, as those who called themselves Ah-wah-nee-chee received the name *yohemiteh*--"some among them are killers"--from neighboring groups.<sup>18</sup> Rendered as "Yosemite," the people and the land bore the same name, even as the arrival of Europeans began to permanently divorce the two.

**Historic Use and Occupation (1769-1969)**

Spanish and Mexican Colonization, 1769-1848.<sup>19</sup> The first wave of European settlement in North America to significantly impact the Indians of Yosemite began in 1769 with the establishment of the Mission and Presidio in San Diego by Spain, who placed the colonization of California almost entirely in the hands of the Franciscan missionaries. In contrast to other Europeans and later Americans, the Spaniards had a precedent of attempting to incorporate native Indian populations into their colonial empires, albeit at the lowest levels. The Franciscans in particular sought to baptize the natives, referred to as gentiles, and convert them into Christians, called neophytes, who would live, work, and pray at the missions. This was accomplished through both persuasion and coercion. Neophytes were taught agriculture, livestock tending, and other Western technologies, as well as Spanish language and customs. Once a mission was running smoothly and had become largely self-sufficient, another would be established somewhere farther along the coast. In total, 21 missions were established between 1769 and 1822.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 3-6

<sup>17</sup> Sometimes transcribed as *Ten-ie-ya*.

<sup>18</sup> Hull and Moratto, *Archeological Synthesis*, 179.

<sup>19</sup> George Harwood Phillips, *Indians and Indian Agents: The Origins of the Reservation System in California, 1849-1852* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997); Hull and Moratto, *Archeological Synthesis*. See also: R. F. Heizer and M. A. Whipple, eds., *The California Indians: A Source Book* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. rev., 1971); C. Hart Merriam, *Ethnographic Notes on California Indian Tribes*, Robert F. Heizer ed. Reports of the University of California Archaeological Survey, No. 68, 3 Pts. (Berkeley: University of California Archaeological Research Facility, Department of Anthropology, 1966, 1967); David J. Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992.



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California Indians may have suffered somewhat from European diseases prior to the arrival of the Franciscans, as some of these may have spread across the interior of North America from other places of colonization and contact. However, the crowded conditions inside of the missions led to an exorbitantly high native death rate from such diseases as tuberculosis, measles, dysentery, syphilis, and pneumonia. Additionally, neophytes often escaped from the missions and fled to interior areas, sometimes bringing these illnesses with them. Disease, of course, was not all that these neophytes brought to the interior Indians. They brought language, material goods, and other customs of the life they had lived with the Franciscans. They caused particular disruption to the lives of the interior Indians because, eventually, these fugitives brought the Spanish after them as well.

The Spanish began exploring the interior areas of California in the 1770s, and their initial encounters with native peoples were friendly. However, as more missions were established and more neophytes were lost due to disease and escape, Spanish and Indian relations in the interior turned increasingly hostile in the 1790s. The Spaniards first attempted to forcefully recover fugitives wherever they were seeking refuge, and later sought new recruits from the interior as well. There were still some peaceful expeditions during this period, but there may also have been earlier hostile encounters which did not originate from the coast. Gabriel Moraga journeyed to the interior in 1806 in what was the closest documented visit near Yosemite made by the Spanish, during which Mariposa and the Merced River received their names. Along the San Joaquin River, he and his men were told that the Spanish had arrived in the area from the east about 20 years prior and killed many foothills Indians. Regardless, the Spanish presence on the coast was sufficient to create conflict. Moraga's 1807 expedition to the Tulare Valley ended in violence and demonstrated a new source of tension when Indians killed two of their men and stole a large number of their horses. Raiding of horses and cattle had begun at the missions shortly after they were established; and in the early 1800s the horses on the expeditions became targets as well.

In 1821 Mexico achieved independence from Spain; and the number of neophyte fugitives increased dramatically. Significant rebellions arose inside and outside the missions throughout the 1820s. Mexican-Indian relations deteriorated further after August of 1833, when the missions were secularized and raids on livestock increased significantly as well.

By this time, the Mexicans, or *Californios*, were no longer the sole non-Indian influence in California. Jedediah Smith had led a group of American trappers through the San Joaquin Valley in 1827 and was suspected by the Mexicans of having instigated the departure of four hundred neophytes from the Mission San Jose in May of that year. In 1830, traders arrived from New Mexico to purchase horses and mules from the Californios but also established trade relations with interior tribes, who raided the coastal areas to procure stock for exchange. Other trappers followed Smith, and British and French Canadians working for the Hudson's Bay Company arrived in 1833. Trappers traded little with the Indians, sometimes established confrontational relationships them, and in 1833 caused a huge malaria epidemic in the Central Valley. The Indian people residing here, who had offered key resistance to the Spanish and Mexicans, were decimated; and the valley was later repopulated by Indians who left the mission ranchos after secularization, many of whom were responsible for the increase in raiding.

Increasing numbers of foreign settlers, mostly Americans, arrived in California during the 1830s and 1840s. Since Mexicans controlled most of the coastal lands, many settled the interior areas. They often became the brunt of Indian raids as well; but some, most notably John Sutter, formed significant alliances with local Indians. Tension and hostility developed between the Mexicans and the immigrants. In May, 1846, the United States declared war on Mexico; and many settlers and Indians helped the U.S. defeat the Californios, who surrendered in January of 1847. In

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February 1848 Mexico ceded California and the rest of the southwestern territory to the United States.<sup>20</sup>

The Gold Rush and Treaty Negotiations, 1848-1855.<sup>21</sup> On January 24, 1848, while working for John Sutter, James Marshall discovered gold on the American River. Spurred on by literature concerning California's climate, resources, and available land, Americans had already been moving to the area in increasing numbers. The lure of potential mineral wealth, however, rapidly brought tens of thousands of individuals to the territory, which quickly achieved statehood in 1850.

This huge wave of settlement had a devastating impact on native populations. In addition to the appropriation of lands and resources, a new wave of diseases and the environmental destruction caused by the mining itself, many Indians were intentionally murdered and villages and food caches purposefully destroyed. The Indian population of California, which had already been considerably diminished, was reduced yet again. This wave of colonization, however, largely concentrated in interior zones that had not been settled by the Spanish and Mexicans, but whose presence on the coast had nonetheless caused the interior tribes to undergo political restructuring as well as other cultural changes that would impact their relations with the Americans.

Citizens rushed to California at a time when the United States policy towards Indians was undergoing transformation. Unlike Spain, neither the U.S. nor Britain before them had intended to absorb the Indian population of the Americas into their society. Theirs was a policy of isolation, which for England had resulted in the declaration of Indian Country west of the Appalachians in 1763. The United States adopted this reasoning and in 1817 began to remove tribes from around the country into what was designated as official Indian Territory. Set in Oklahoma, this territory was considered to be undesirable land which was sufficiently isolated from the rest of the U.S. The land acquisitions of the 1840s, however, extended American jurisdiction all the way to the Pacific and Indian Territory lay immediately in the path of westward expansion. The idea of Indian removal underwent revision and the reservation system was born, whereby Indians would retain isolated pockets of land throughout the country.

The handling of Indians was officially transferred in 1849 from the War Department to the newly created Department of the Interior. On September 9, 1850, with California's admission to the U.S., its Bureau of Indian Affairs was assigned to deal with a native population about which it knew practically nothing. On September 11, 1850, new United States Senator John Fremont introduced a bill which called for the appointment of three commissioners to negotiate treaties with the California Indians who had territorial claims in areas bearing gold and appropriated funds to cover the negotiations. The treaties were intended to eradicate claims and end the conflict between Indians and trappers. Somewhat revised, this Indian Appropriation Bill was signed into law on September 30. In October, George Barbour, O.M. Wozencraft, and Redick McKee were appointed commissioners. In December, Indians in and around Yosemite made a series of attacks on miners and trading posts from the Mariposa area down to the San Joaquin river. As a result, the commissioners decided to begin negotiations in Mariposa in early 1851. Their efforts coincided with formation of the Mariposa Battalion, created in response to these attacks. With the help of the Battalion, six tribes along the Mariposa River signed a treaty in March and moved to a reservation in Fresno, along

<sup>20</sup> Kevin Starr, *Americans and the California Dream 1850-1915* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), 365-367.

<sup>21</sup> Hull and Moratto, *Archeological Synthesis*; Phillips, *Indians and Indian Agents*; Brian W. Dippie, *The Vanishing American: White Attitudes and U.S. Indian Policy* (Middletown, Conn: Wesleyan University Press, 1982); Jack Utter, *American Indians: Answers to Today's Questions* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 2001). See also Rebecca Solnit, *Savage Dreams: A Journey into the Landscape Wars of the American West* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).

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with the Yosemite Indians, who had not signed a treaty. None of the eighteen treaties negotiated by the commissioners throughout California were ever ratified and upheld by the Senate, and the reservation in Fresno lasted only a couple of years. The Battalion perhaps more than the commissioners, helped to open the area in and around Yosemite to Euroamerican expansion, but the purpose of their mission had been achieved: Indian presence and defiance were no longer impediments to American domination of the land. This period marks the first documented interactions between non-Indians and the various Miwok, Yokut, and Paiute people living in the area now designated as Yosemite National Park. The Indians of Yosemite had been scattered once by disease, and now again as a result of the American miners and treaty-makers, but this time the area was not entirely abandoned. It was no longer defended, however, and Americans considered the land theirs for the taking.

American Control and Development of the Park, 1855-1969.<sup>22</sup> Although the desire for gold was largely responsible for the subjugation of Indians in Yosemite, relatively little mineral wealth was discovered in park lands and none in Yosemite Valley. In 1855, James Hutchings, led by two Indian guides, escorted the first tourist party through the valley, which had received regional attention from the reports of the Mariposa Battalion. His published description of this expedition, which included lithographs of drawings made on the trip by artist Thomas Ayres, soon brought increased local as well as national attention to the area. By the end of that year, Milton, Houston, and Andrew Mann had begun construction of a toll trail into Yosemite Valley; and the first hotel there was built in 1856.

The development of Yosemite as a tourist destination became the overriding factor to shape the livelihood of the Indians living and working there after 1855. Indian labor was and had been utilized throughout California, including the mining industry; but it achieved particular importance in Yosemite. This was partially due to its remote location, but the Indians here were seen as an important draw for tourists well into the twentieth century.

The Bureau of Indian Affairs has never officially recognized the Yosemite as a tribe, since Tenaya declined to sign any treaties with the Commissioners. The State of California, placed in charge of its own Indians after the federal government's attempt at creating a reservation system failed in the 1860s, never recognized the Yosemite either. As a result, the people who most affected and controlled the lives of the Indians in Yosemite—and, in particular, in Yosemite Valley—were in charge of the tourist trade. At first the tourist trade in the valley was privately operated. Then was administered by the State of California after the Yosemite Grant was established in 1864. Once Yosemite became a national park in 1890, management rested in the hands of the federal government, first through the U.S. Army, and, after 1916, by the National Park Service. Since the Yosemite were never officially granted land or recognition, Park administrators have largely been free to do with the Indians as they saw fit. Their decisions were influenced by national trends in opinions about Indians, but development of the Park created a unique situation where policy did not mirror those trends exactly.

Indians have been employed in the tourist trade, both directly and indirectly, since Hutchings' first expedition. In addition to serving as guides, tribal members worked as laborers, packers, food suppliers, and domestic servants.

<sup>22</sup> Hull and Moratto, *Archeological Synthesis*; Phillips, *Indians and Indian Agents*; Brian W. Dippie, *The Vanishing American*; Utter, *American Indians*; Robert H. Keller and Michael F. Turek, *American Indians and National Parks* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1998); Frederick E. Hoxie, ed., *Talking Back to Civilization: Indian Voices from the Progressive Era* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2001); Mark David Spence, *Dispossessing the Wilderness: Indian Removal and the Making of the National Parks* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999); See also Solnit, *Savage Dreams*; Hank Johnston, *The Yosemite Grant 1864-1906, A Pictorial History* (Yosemite National Park: Yosemite Association, 1995).



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Most importantly, perhaps, they provided entertainment. This was something that they often did literally, performing songs or posing for pictures, usually for a charge. It was also, however, something that they accomplished merely by being present. In the mid to late 1800s, Indians were seen as a part of the wilderness, something that somehow completed an excursion to Yosemite. This continued somewhat in the 1900s, but to a lesser extent. In a reversal of its earlier policy of isolating Indians from the rest of society, in the late 1800s the United States began officially to adopt the idea of incorporating them into society. There had been proponents of the concept of assimilation all along, but they had not been in the majority. However, the passage of the Dawes Act in 1887 to eliminate tribal lands and encourage individual ownership demonstrates that the myth of the Vanishing Indian, the belief that traditional Indians would die off and the rest would blend into mainstream American society, had taken hold—and that the government was determined to speed the process along. Perhaps because Yosemite was seen as a wilderness preserve, its native inhabitants were allowed to exist as a separate group within the park for a much longer period of time.

While Yosemite's increasing development as a tourist destination certainly would have affected native settlement, which traditionally involved seasonal patterns of residence, the first recorded destruction of an active park village since the days of the Mariposa Battalion occurred in 1906, when the U.S. Army burned the Indian community residence in Yosemite Valley. Little is known about this event, but this time the Indians were not driven from the valley. They continued to work in the tourist trade and carry on many native traditions, such as the gathering and processing of acorns. Basket weaving was one traditional custom which was particularly encouraged by the presence of tourists, who by the 1890s had created a large demand for the baskets which continued well into the twentieth century. A basketry competition became one of the highlights of the Indian Field Days, an event held to draw tourists into the park in the late summers of 1916 to 1929. The details of this event show how the idea of the Indian as a relic of the past still held sway for most visitors. The Yosemite were encouraged to dress in costumes traditional for Plains Indians, which was the stereotypical image of Indians that most Americans held.

Many of the events also revolved around horses, which again were an important aspect of Plains but not Miwok culture. Hence, park visitors were entertained with a presentation of Indian life as they expected to see it, rather than as it was in reality: a continuing evolution and adaptation to the world surrounding Yosemite. As that reality began to confront the officials in the Park, the idea that Indians should be assimilated into mainstream society found its way into official policy. This occurred around the same time as the Indian New Deal, which reduced federal assimilation policies and granted tribes more autonomy. But the Yosemite were still officially unrecognized and there was nothing in the New Deal that supported any native claims to the National Parks. There had, in fact, long been debate about whether or not the Indians should be allowed to reside in Yosemite; but they were not removed immediately. Park officials created a new Indian Village in Yosemite Valley for its native residents in the 1930s. The old village was destroyed, and Indians in the new one paid rent and were subjected to ever-increasing Park control. In 1953, the official Yosemite Indian Village Housing Policy stated that only permanent government employees and their families could remain in the village. In 1969, the few remaining residents were relocated to regular employee housing and whatever buildings had not been moved or destroyed previously were burned in a practice session for Yosemite firefighters.

**HISTORIC CONTEXT: SETTLEMENT AND INDUSTRY IN THE YOSEMITE REGION (1851-1951)**

**Exploration and Resource Exploitation in Yosemite, 1851-1951**



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Extractive Industries and Grazing, 1860-1951. Mining in the Yosemite area occurred primarily around the edges of the current park boundaries. The earliest activity at El Portal began around 1863 with the establishment of the Rutherford Mine north of the Merced River. This and the nearby Cranberry Mine passed through a number of hands, and were intermittently active into the early twentieth century, after which the properties were used for home sites. On the eastern edge of the park, the Tioga Mining District had its origin in the "Shepherd" silver claim of 1860, on a site one mile to the northwest of Tioga Pass. The claim was not developed, and was temporarily lost until William Brusky rediscovered the lode in 1874 and staked four new claims on Tioga Hill: Tiptop, Lake, Sonora, and Summit. In 1878 the fortuitously named W. W. Rockfellow discovered the parallel Great Sierra lode, which included the High Rock, Bevan, Ah Waga, Hancock, and Atherton claims. In the same year E. B. Burdick, Samuel Baker, and W. J. Bevan formally organized the Tioga Mining District, incorporating some 350 claims stretching from the foot of Bloody Canyon over the crest to Soda Springs. The May Lundy and neighboring claims to the north of Tioga Pass were recorded separately as the Homer Mining District.<sup>23</sup>

By 1880 the mining camp at the High Rock claim acquired a post office as "Dana," while Franklin Watriss, Warren Wilson, and Charles Forward incorporated the Great Sierra Consolidated Silver Company following year in Illinois. The company purchased the major claims in the Tioga district, and established its headquarters along Slate Creek near Tioga Hill. It was dubbed Bennettville for the company president, although its post office--set up in 1882--used the Tioga postmark. The Great Sierra's Golden Crown and Ella Bloss mines were located at Mono Pass. Despite considerable efforts and investment, the Great Sierra's mines quickly played out and were closed in 1884.<sup>24</sup> While the active mining period in the Tioga pass area was relatively brief there are prominent ruins and a few good examples of mining structures remaining, particularly in the area developed as the Golden Crown.

During this same period, deposits of the mineral barite were discovered on the north side of the Merced River near El Portal. At various periods before and after World War One the deposit was worked by the El Portal Mining Company, Western Rock Products Company of San Francisco, and the Yosemite Barium Company. The National Pigments Company developed a deposit south of the river from 1927, which continued after the operation was purchased by the National Lead Company. The company constructed a number of buildings and structures in the area, including housing in Rancheria Flat, before it ceased operations in 1951.<sup>25</sup>

Logging operations had a more direct impact on the Yosemite area than did mining, and was a motivating force for the creation of the original grant in 1864. The Mariposa Grove was specifically included in the grant with Yosemite Valley to keep the giant trees out of the hands of those who saw them only as uncut lumber. When Yosemite National Park was established in 1890, it encompassed over 60,000 acres of privately held land, mostly represented by high value timberlands along the western boundary. Because these inholdings were protected from confiscation, and the federal government lacked the funds to buy them out, Yosemite's acting superintendents were faced with the possibility of extensive logging within the park. The possibility became a reality in 1903, when the Yosemite Lumber Company began operations. Interior Secretary E. A. Hitchcock appointed a commission in 1904 to study the matter and formulate a plan of action to be forwarded to Congress. Because of the traditional federal aversion to purchasing private holdings, the commission pragmatically recommended that the park be reduced in size

<sup>23</sup> Greene, *Yosemite*, 243-246.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 246-247, 256-257.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 699-712.

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by some 430 square miles to exclude the most sought-after timberlands. The new park boundaries, formalized by an act of Congress in February 1905, still contained some 20,000 acres of private lands, but the commissioners believed that timber in these areas was too inaccessible to be practically logged.<sup>26</sup>

Unfortunately, the privately owned stands of timber along the Wawona Road were almost immediately threatened with cutting by the West Side Lumber Company and the Sugar Pine Lumber Company. Acting Superintendent Benson urged Congress to purchase the remaining private holdings in 1906, but the legislature did not act at that point. In the meantime, the Yosemite Lumber Company constructed an extensive system of railroad tracks and inclines to exploit the sugar pines on either side of the upper Merced River Canyon. By 1912 the tracks had reached the park boundary at Chinquapin, and Acting Superintendent Forsyth warned Congress that clear-cutting would soon begin near Chinquapin. In response Congress was prompted to pass bills in 1912 and 1914 authorizing the Secretary of the Interior to negotiate the exchange of privately-owned lands of scenic beauty for government land away from normal tourist activities.<sup>27</sup> Land exchanges did not end logging activity in the park, but simply delayed its visible effects. New threats to the forest surrounding the Merced Grove in 1926 began to bring the matter to public attention, and in 1930 John D. Rockefeller, Jr., pledged \$1 million in matching funds to encourage the federal government to buy out the private timber claims. Even so, commercial logging continued at a reduced rate in Yosemite until 1942.<sup>28</sup>

While the damage caused by logging was readily visible, the more subtle damage inflicted on Yosemite's landscape by unrestricted grazing was no less of a long-term threat. In 1889 John Muir and Robert Underwood Johnson, editor of *Century Magazine*, discovered that sheep grazing in Tuolumne Meadows had left them denuded, and the nearby streams trampled and muddy. Shepherders set fires when leaving the area at the end of the season to encourage new grass to grow, but in the process they destroyed large areas of other vegetation and promoted rapid melting of the snowpack in spring.<sup>29</sup> When Yosemite came under federal control, the U. S. Army's acting superintendents imposed new anti-trespassing regulations, but the sheep owners and herders--many of them Portuguese, Mexican, Basque, Chilean, or French--were determined to subvert them. They interpreted their habit of using Yosemite's lands as a right, and knew that the army was only a temporary inconvenience as long as the Department of the Interior failed to provide any strict penalties for violating the regulations. Stronger regulations followed the creation of the National Park Service, but World War I soon provided a new problem. Ranchers insisted that it was their patriotic duty to graze sheep and cattle in park lands in order to conserve the nation's food supplies. Interior Secretary Lane was inclined to agree with them, but Horace Albright, in his capacity as acting director of the Park Service, managed to keep this activity at a low level in Yosemite from 1917 to 1919, when permits were revoked.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 391-396; See also Alfred Runte, *Yosemite: The Embattled Wilderness* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1990), 67-68; Richard West Sellars, *Preserving Nature in the National Parks: A History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 65-67.

<sup>27</sup> Greene, *Yosemite*, 481-488.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 679-682, 922; Horace M. Albright to John D. Rockefeller, Jr., 5 April 1930, *Worthwhile Places: Correspondence of John D. Rockefeller, Jr. and Horace M. Albright*, ed. Joseph W. Ernst (Fordham University Press, 1991), 99-100.

<sup>29</sup> Greene, *Yosemite*, 299.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 368-372, 720; Donald C. Swain, *Wilderness Defender: Horace M. Albright and Conservation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), 74-75.

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Early concerns about Yosemite's snowpack had primarily been related to strictly local concerns. If the snow melted too quickly the Valley's streams were liable to flooding in early spring, while the waterfalls were likely to exhibit a sharply reduced flow during the prime tourist season of late summer and early fall. In addition, excessively rapid melting could leave the backcountry dangerously dry during this same period, which is the height of California's fire season. For the most part, experienced residents of Yosemite could assess the conditions simply by looking around them. The need for scientific surveys became acute in the 1920s, when California's explosive growth made reliable and predictable water supplies essential. In 1926 the Park Service entered into an agreement with the Merced Irrigation District to permit the construction of snow surveying facilities in the backcountry, including a cabin built in 1927 at Merced Lake. During the 1930s the state of California provided funding for additional cabins, as did the city of San Francisco in the 1940s.<sup>31</sup>

The Mariposa Battalion and U. S. Army Surveying, 1851-1914.<sup>32</sup> The Mariposa Battalion, formed in the winter of 1850-1851, is extremely significant in the history of Yosemite National Park as it effected the turning point between Indian and federal control of the land. The California Indians had restricted Spanish and Mexican colonization to the coast, but immigrants of many nationalities flooded the interior zones at the end of the 1840s and beginning of the 1850s. Interior tribes had restructured to form an effective resistance against the Spanish and Californios; and many natives joined with other, predominantly American settlers to help the United States defeat Mexico in the war declared in 1846. These non-Mexican settlers had begun to settle the interior beginning in the 1830s; and some—including John Sutter upon whose property gold was initially discovered—developed working relations with the tribes. Indians often worked for these settlers and did much of the mining for them, particularly in 1848 before other gold-seekers arrived in sufficient numbers.

The settler who developed the most significant relations with the California Indians with respect to Yosemite was James Savage, who arrived in California in 1846. During that year, he fought against the Mexicans under John Fremont and, in doing so, got to know many of the Indians who had joined that battalion as well. Savage had lived for a time with Indians back east; and, after the discovery of gold, he quickly ingratiated himself into various Indian groups in California. He took wives from at least five different tribes, learned to speak a number of local languages, and set up several trading posts. He set one of these up on the South Fork of the Merced River in 1849. This post was attacked by Yosemite Indians in early 1850. He then relocated to Agua Fria and set up another post along the Fresno River. Savage's relationship with the Indians has been described as despotic, and he certainly manipulated their labor into great financial gain. However, he also fought alongside some of tribes on occasion and appears to have earned some of the natives' respect and acceptance.

James Savage was but one among the thousands of Euroamericans interacting with the Sierra Indians who lived in the vicinity of the gold discoveries. Many of the miners committed outright hostilities against the natives, raping them, killing them, or destroying their food supplies. Collectively, however, all were responsible for a huge wave of environmental destruction that greatly affected the Indians' lives and subsistence. By the end of 1850, some of the Miwok and Yokut tribes had organized together and were planning a war against the Euroamericans to drive

<sup>31</sup> Linda Wedel Green, "draft Yosemite National Register Multiple Property Document," (Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1989), E47-E49 (hereafter referred to as "Yosemite Draft MPD"); Michael V. Finley, superintendent Yosemite National Park to Regional Director, Western Region, "Review of National Register forms for factual data," 7 September, 1989.

<sup>32</sup> Hull and Moratto, *Archeological Synthesis*; Phillips, *Indians and Indian Agents*; Keller and Turek, *American Indians and National Parks*; Spence, *Dispossessing the Wilderness*. See also Solnit, *Savage Dreams*.



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them out of their lands. On December 17, the first in a series of attacks on miners from the Mariposa area to the San Joaquin River was on Savage's trading post along the Fresno River. Three men were killed in this incident and the post was destroyed. James Burney, the Mariposa County sheriff, immediately raised a company of men under James Savage to counter these attacks; they engaged in numerous battles over the next several months. Savage was even able to enlist help from the Tuolumne and Siakumne tribes, who had remained friendly. Burney made an appeal for assistance to the governor in January of 1851, and the Mariposa Battalion was officially called into service in February. James Savage was elected major and placed in command of the battalion, which was organized into three companies: "A" under John Kuykendall, "B" under John Boling, and "C" under William Dill.

The Mariposa Battalion was designated to oversee the treaty negotiations between the foothills tribes and Commissioners Barbour, Wozencraft, and McKee. A treaty was signed on March 19 at Camp Fremont on the Little Mariposa River. The six tribes who signed agreed to give up all claims to their land and move to a reservation in Fresno. The Battalion was immediately dispatched to round up those tribes who did not present themselves at the negotiations. Savage arrived in the Wawona area with Companies B and C, encountering Nutchu and Pohonochi Miwok along the way and ordering them to head for Fresno. The Indians complied and, at Savage's bidding, sent runners to the valley with instructions for Tenaya and his people to come out and join the treaty negotiations. Tenaya soon joined Savage at his camp, entreated that his people be left alone in Yosemite, and promised to remain on peaceful terms with the miners. Savage insisted that they come out and negotiate, so Tenaya left to retrieve his people. He returned the next day and said the members of his tribe would soon follow. The Battalion waited for two days then set out for the valley, encountering 72 members of the tribe on their way out. Savage sent them along with Tenaya to the Fresno Reservation and proceeded to Yosemite in search of others, convinced that many more remained. While searching for the young men of Tenaya's group, Savage and a portion of the battalion entered the valley on March 27, 1851. They explored both sides of the valley floor, ascended Tenaya Creek canyon beyond Mirror Lake, and followed the Merced River above Nevada Fall to Little Yosemite Valley. Most of the group was apparently preoccupied with finding the Indians, but battalion surgeon Lafayette Bunnell carefully observed the surroundings, and suggested that the name "Yosemity" for the valley after its inhabitants. Bunnell subsequently recorded his observations in *Discovery of the Yosemite, and the Indian War of 1851, Which Led to that Event* (1880). Only one old woman was found, but Savage and his men burned the recently abandoned villages and any food stores that they encountered. They soon left and joined the tribes they had sent ahead on their way to Fresno, but the Yosemite slipped away en-route and returned to the valley.<sup>33</sup>

John Boling lead B Company on a new expedition in May 1851, capturing Tenaya and killing one of his sons and another man. Boling's company pursued the rest of Tenaya's people as far as the present Lake Tenaya--so named by Bunnell at the time--and brought them out of Yosemite to the Fresno River reservation. Tenaya and many others were eventually able to return, but evacuated to the Mono Lake area in response to an expedition in June 1852 by regular army troops under Lt. Tredwell Moore. Moore took his unit over the crest of the Sierras to Mono Lake, exploring the area and collecting ore samples before returning west through Bloody Canyon, Mono Pass, Tuolumne Meadows, and Little Yosemite Valley.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>33</sup> Greene, *Yosemite*, 18-23; Francis P. Farquhar, *History of the Sierra Nevada* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1965), 72-78; Kiver and Harris, *Geology*, 214-216.

<sup>34</sup> Greene, *Yosemite*, 24-25; Farquhar, *History of the Sierra Nevada*, 78.

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The army returned to the Yosemite area in 1891, following the creation of Yosemite National Park. The officers and men who acted as the park's guardians found that it existed at that point more as an idea than as a defined place. By default, it fell to them to define Yosemite in the absence of recognized boundaries or a mapped landscape. Lt. N. F. McClure and Maj. Harry Benson are especially notable for their efforts to explore and map the park. In the process, they established a number of place names, occasionally at the expense of traditional names that had never been recorded.<sup>35</sup>

Surveying for Transportation and Circulation in Yosemite, 1864-1911. The state of California created the California Geological Survey in 1860, with geologist Josiah Whitney as its head, for the purpose of making a complete study of the state's geology and botany. In 1864 the state government initiated a land survey of the new Yosemite Grant in order to determine its boundaries. This was undertaken by Clarence King and James T. Gardner, who was appointed to the post of U. S. deputy surveyor especially for the job. The results, including Gardner's map of Yosemite Valley and its surrounding topography, were filed with the commissioner of the General Land Office in Washington, D.C. Additionally, under the conditions of the grant, the state geologist was authorized to prepare a description of the Yosemite area with maps and illustrations that could be sold to potential visitors. King, Gardner, H. N. Bolander, and C. R. Brinley made a survey of the area surrounding Yosemite Valley in 1865 to support this publication, followed by another survey party under Charles Hoffmann in 1866. Hoffmann also surveyed the valley floor, including settlers' claims, and the Mariposa Grove where the party measured and numbered the largest trees. The results of these surveys were presented in two different editions: *The Yosemite Book* (1868) with photographic illustrations by Carleton Watkins, and the *Yosemite Guide-book* (1869) without photographs. Both increased visitation levels by providing the public with information on what was still a largely unknown region.<sup>36</sup>

More travelers to Yosemite in turn created the need for still more accurate information. An army survey group under the command of Capt. George Wheeler produced a large-scale topographic map of the region in 1883, based on their work in the late 1870s and early 1880s. Lt. M. M. Macomb, attached to this unit, made the first survey of Hetch Hetchy Valley in 1879. John Muir included a detailed map of Yosemite Valley in his 1890 articles for *Century Magazine* advocating federal control of the grant, and Lt. N. F. McClure drafted an important map of the national park as it existed in 1896 for use by patrolling troops. These maps show a number of the early trails, such as the Mono Trail, which were vulnerable to heavy snowfall because of their high-altitude routes. This had provided an impetus for the construction of new trails that would be more usable in the winter months, although early attempts, including the Hite's Cove Trail, traded better weather for more taxing grades.<sup>37</sup>

These conditions drew the ire of towns that stood to benefit from tourists making their way to Yosemite, believing that the government should have provided assistance for improving the routes. The Chowchilla Mountains route from Mariposa to Galen Clark's hotel at Wawona was infamous for its difficult and rugged course, which finally prompted the residents of Mariposa to petition for a survey in 1867 that would lead to a high quality wagon road.

<sup>35</sup> Greene, *Yosemite*, 311-21.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 65-66; Farquhar, *History of the Sierra Nevada*, 124, 134, 145-154; James G. Moore, *Exploring the Highest Sierra* (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 2000), 39-68, 97-122. See also Clarence King's highly descriptive account in Clarence King, *Mountaineering in the Sierra Nevada* (Boston: J. R. Osgood and Co., 1872; reprint Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), Chapter 7 "Around Yosemite Walls."

<sup>37</sup> Greene, *Yosemite*, 77-79, 306, 330

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Because the state commissioners were provided with a limited budget for the grant, they encouraged private initiative in road building with toll concessions. By 1869, the Mariposa and Big Tree Grove Turnpike Company, the Yo Semite and Big Tree Grove Turnpike Company, and the Mariposa Big Trees and Yo Semite Turnpike Company had all been formed to take advantage of these concessions.<sup>38</sup>

Most of the early road building activities were in support of tourist access from points to the west of Yosemite. However, one of the most significant routes was constructed by the Great Sierra Consolidated Silver Company to supply their mines on the eastern edge of the park. The Great Sierra Wagon Road—now known as the Tioga Road—stretched fifty-six miles from Bennettville to the Big Oak Flat Road at Crocker's Station. The entire length was surveyed and constructed between the fall of 1882 and September 1883, including a break for winter. The company had the road solidly built in anticipation of heavy use, with a thirteen-foot width, sturdy stone and timber bridges, and a low grade. With the failure of the mines, the road served primarily as a patrol route for U.S. Army troops until 1911, when the state completed a road down Lee Vining Canyon. This gave the road new importance as a trans-Sierra route. Still privately owned, the road was purchased by Stephen Mather in 1915 and deeded to the government, which opened it to automobile traffic the same year.<sup>39</sup>

**Settlement and Homesteading in Yosemite, 1851-1875<sup>40</sup>**

Yosemite had been open to settlement and homesteading according to existing land laws from the moment Americans became aware of it. The most desirable lands were quickly claimed by settlers through homesteading, pre-emption, and legal provisions relating to mineral and timber rights, reservoir sites, and state school lands. By the time the national park was created in 1890, over 60,000 acres were tied up in private holdings. Many of these contained valuable stands of timber on Yosemite's western and southern boundaries, but numerous cabins and other structures were located throughout the park.<sup>41</sup>

The claims of private settlers proved to be significant complications for the commissioners' goal of improving access. The Yosemite Act specified that the land incorporated in the grant would no longer be open to homesteading, establishing instead a policy of ten year leases in certain areas of the park to support preservation and improvement work. Unfortunately, a number of early settlers had filed homestead claims in Yosemite Valley, including farmer James Lamon and hotel owner James Hutchings, who had been Yosemite's most ardent early promoter. In 1859 Lamon became the first non-Indian to establish a year-round residence in the valley, while in 1864 Hutchings had purchased 118 acres originally homesteaded by Gustavus Hite in 1856. In light of the valuable services the two men provided to visitors, and in recognition of Hutchings' own careful preservation efforts, the commissioners proposed to lease the claimed land to them for a nominal rent, but Hutchings convinced Lamon to join him in pressing for legal title. In 1868 the California legislature attempted to grant the acreage to the two men, subject to Congressional approval, on the condition that the state retained the right to lay out whatever improvements were necessary for the convenience of visitors. This brought the case, and the significance of Yosemite, to the attention of the nation. While

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 90-92; Starr, *Americans and the California Dream*, 182.

<sup>39</sup> Greene, *Yosemite*, 250-256.

<sup>40</sup> A first-hand account of the early settlement of the Yosemite region can be found in James M. Hutchings, *In the Heart of the Sierras: Yo Semite Valley and the Big Tree Groves* (Oakland: Pacific Press, 1886; reprint Lafayette, Calif: Great West Books, 1990).

<sup>41</sup> Greene, *Yosemite*, 164.



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many sympathized with Hutchings and Lamon, the general opinion held that allowing land to remain under private ownership within the grant would be a violation of the "noble object" for which it had been created. The issue ultimately reached the Supreme Court in 1873 where Hutchings lost his final appeal. The following year the California legislature established the precedent for dealing with private lands in Yosemite by setting aside \$60,000 to settle all claims in the Yosemite Valley. The state paid Lamon, Hutchings, and two other settlers what it deemed fair market value for their lands, with Lamon finally accepting a ten year lease. Hutchings contended that the \$24,000 he received was inadequate compensation and, refusing to accept a lease as had Lamon, was evicted from his claim in 1875.<sup>42</sup>

**HISTORIC CONTEXT: STATE AND FEDERAL ADMINISTRATION OF YOSMITE (1864-1966)**

Yosemite National Park was created by the signature of President Benjamin Harrison on October 1, 1890, but its status as a protected enclave of natural beauty reaches back to 1864. On June 30 of that year, in the midst of civil war, President Abraham Lincoln signed the Yosemite Park Act, ceding to the state of California the "'Cleft' or 'Gorge' in the Granite Peak of the Sierra Nevada Mountains. . . known as the Yosemite Valley" and also the Mariposa Grove of Big Trees. The bill required that "the premises shall be held for public use, resort, and recreation," and "inalienable for all time. . . ." Only a twentieth of the size of the park created in 1890, this initial grant was the first federal effort at scenic preservation in the United States, and signifies the birthplace of the American conception of the "national park idea." This idea maintained that the "natural wonders" of the United States should be held in perpetual trust for the entire population, rather than being exploited by private entrepreneurs, as was the case at Niagara Falls.

The idea grew out of a movement that developed in the mid-1850s countering the popular conviction that Americans were destined to use and exploit the country's wilderness areas without reservation. Transcendentalists such as Henry David Thoreau and Ralph Waldo Emerson, and the artist George Catlin saw the need to preserve examples of natural beauty as an antidote to the increasingly urban society of the nineteenth century. Where wilderness areas had once been regarded only with fear, as the abode of "savages," there was now an increasing tendency to conceive of wild lands, and those who "tamed" them as essential components of the American spirit. The spectacular landscapes of the West, in particular, were seen as a natural heritage that could stand against any claims of European cultural superiority. Reports of the soaring cliffs, grand waterfalls, and giant redwood trees found in the Yosemite region simply reconfirmed these beliefs, and emphasized what many took to be the unlimited potential of the West.

Despite this sort of rhetoric, many in California in the 1850s and 1860s realized that Yosemite was under threat from commercial exploitation. Among the most prominent figures were Thomas Starr King, who would become one of the leaders in the movement to preserve Yosemite Valley; Judge Stephen Field, who realized the need for a geological survey and had much to do with its success under Josiah Dwight Whitney; landscape design pioneer Frederick Law Olmsted; Jessie Benton Fremont; shipping executive Israel Raymond; and Dr. John Morse. These individuals understood that it would not be enough to lament what was happening in Yosemite—saving its natural wonders from destruction would require political action. They made use of their status in society, urging California senator John Conness to present a bill to Congress providing for the protection of Yosemite Valley and the Mariposa Grove of Big Trees. Conness requested the help of J. W. Edmonds, Commissioner of the General Land Office to

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 69-77; Hutchings, *Heart of the Sierras*, 149-162.

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prepare the final draft of the bill, which he introduced on March 28, 1864, making it clear that he was acting on behalf of Californians noted for their taste and refinement.<sup>43</sup>

The Yosemite Park Act, passed on June 30 1864, granted 36,111 acres of federal land in Yosemite Valley to the state, together with 2,500 acres containing the Mariposa Grove. The Grant stipulated that the valley and grove were to be managed by the governor of California and eight commissioners who would serve without pay. Gov. Frederick Low proclaimed the grant on September 30, 1864, and appointed its first board of commissioners: Frederick Law Olmsted, who acted as chairman; state geologist Josiah Whitney, survey party member William Ashburner, Israel Raymond; E. S. Holden; Alexander Deering; George W. Coulter; and Wawona homesteader, guide, and innkeeper Galen Clark. Olmsted had established a camp in the valley and undertook preservation efforts prior to the formal acceptance of the grant in 1866<sup>44</sup>, at which time the commissioners agreed to hire Clark as the on-site guardian of Yosemite Valley and the Mariposa Grove. His duties were to patrol the grant and prevent depredations; build roads, trails, and bridges as needed; bestow and regulate leases for the building of hotels and other tourist facilities; use the income from the leases to carry out his own work; and to serve as the commission's point of contact with the residents of the valley. The commissioners believed the Guardian or an assistant should always be present in the grant during visitor season and that they should be given police authority to arrest offenders on the spot.<sup>45</sup>

The major tasks facing the commissioners involved boosting visitation by improving access routes, accommodations and rates for visitor services, while exercising some level of control over development and land use. The commissioners did not consider it their duty to improve the roads and trails leading to the grant, believing that this should be left to individuals and nearby municipalities interested in securing a share of the travel business. Within the grant, the commissioners constructed a bridge across the Merced River at the foot of Bridalveil Meadow which, in conjunction with a bridge constructed by James Hutchings between Yosemite Fall and Sentinel Rock, allowed tourists to make the circuit tour of the valley that would become emblematic of a visit to Yosemite. The commissioners improved the trail to Vernal Falls, and located another bridge upstream of the fall to provide greater access to Nevada Falls. They also considered a permanent staircase at Vernal Fall as an alternative to the dangerous and privately-owned existing ladders. In general, the commissioners attempted to improve accessibility at all points of interest, and remove barriers to free movement, such as trail charges.<sup>46</sup>

The claims of private settlers proved to be significant complications for the commissioners' goal of improving access. The Yosemite Act specified that the land incorporated in the grant would no longer be open to homesteading, establishing instead a policy of ten year leases in certain areas of the park to support preservation and improvement work. Unfortunately, a number of early settlers had filed homestead claims in Yosemite Valley, including farmer James Lamon and hotel owner James Hutchings, who had been Yosemite's most ardent early promoter.<sup>47</sup> In light of the valuable services the two men provided to visitors, and in recognition of Hutchings' own careful preservation

<sup>43</sup> Greene, *Yosemite*, 52. An important overview of the tension between conservation and commercialism can be found in Mark Daniel Barringer, *Selling Yellowstone: Capitalism and the Construction of Nature* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2002).

<sup>44</sup> The California legislature met every two years, and had already adjourned in 1864 when the Yosemite Park Act was passed.

<sup>45</sup> Greene, *Yosemite*, 55; Barry Mackintosh, "Parks and People: Preserving Our Past for the Future" in William H. Sontag, ed., *National Park Service: The First 75 Years* (Philadelphia: Eastern National Park and Monument Association, 1990), available at

[http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online\\_books/sontag/sontag1.htm](http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online_books/sontag/sontag1.htm); Mackintosh, *The National Parks: Shaping the System* (National Park Service, Division of Publications, 2000), available at [http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online\\_books/mackintosh1/sts2.htm](http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online_books/mackintosh1/sts2.htm)

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 67.

<sup>47</sup> Starr, *Americans and the California Dream*, 181-182. Hutchings had moved his family to Yosemite in 1864, when he assumed control of Gustavus Hite's Upper Hotel, which he renamed Hutching House. His daughter Florence was born in the valley during the same year.

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efforts, the commissioners proposed to lease the claimed land to them for a nominal rent, but Hutchings convinced Lamon to join him in pressing for legal title. In 1868 the California legislature attempted to grant the acreage to the two men, subject to Congressional approval, on the condition that the state retained the right to lay out whatever improvements were necessary for the convenience of visitors. This brought the case, and the significance of Yosemite to the attention of the nation, with the *New York Tribune* editorializing that "the object for which the valley was ceded to [California] . . . was one of the largest and noblest that any State any where, or at any time in the world's history, has proposed to itself with a view to the health and enjoyment of its people . . ."<sup>48</sup> While many sympathized with Hutchings and Lamon, the general opinion held that allowing land to remain under private ownership within the grant would be a violation of the "noble object" for which it had been created. The issue ultimately reached the Supreme Court in 1873 where Hutchings lost his final appeal. The following year the state paid Lamon, Hutchings, and two other settlers what it deemed fair market value for their lands, with Lamon finally accepting a ten year lease. Hutchings refused, and was evicted from his claim in 1875.<sup>49</sup>

While attempting to open the valley floor to unimpeded access, the commissioners also took steps to make it easier for visitors to get to the valley in the first place. Privately constructed roads ended at the boundary of the grant, making the final descent into the valley over difficult terrain too dangerous for many prospective tourists. In 1872 the commissioners entered into a contract with the Coulterville and Yosemite Turnpike Company that gave the firm exclusive rights to construct a wagon road to the valley floor on the north side of the Merced River, and to offset the considerable costs by collecting tolls on the portion of the road within the grant. The commissioners believed that a monopoly on tourist travel was a necessary incentive in light of the considerable risks involved, and they hoped it would spur on the Mariposa business community to construct a competing road south of the Merced.<sup>50</sup> Unexpectedly, the residents of Big Oak Flat and their Yosemite Turnpike Road Company applied to the commissioners for a franchise to extend their access road to the north side of the valley. After repeated denials based on the existing monopoly, the company appealed to the state legislature, which granted the franchise in 1874 over the protests of the Coulterville and Yosemite Turnpike Company.<sup>51</sup> This activity north of the Merced had the desired effect in Mariposa County, however, with the South Fork and Yosemite Turnpike Road being completed in the spring of 1875, primarily by Chinese laborers.<sup>52</sup>

Visitors who made use of these new roads found a number of hotels waiting for them when they arrived in the Yosemite area. The commissioners had purchased the privately built structures in the valley, and then made them available for lease under the established ten year contract arrangement. These were the Upper Hotel near the Sentinel Bridge, also known variously as Hutchings House, Barnard's Hotel, and Sentinel Hotel; Lower, or Black's Hotel at the foot of Four-Mile Trail; Leidig's Hotel to the west of Black's Hotel; La Casa Nevada adjacent to Nevada Fall; Mountain House at Glacier Point; and the Cosmopolitan Bathhouse and Saloon in the Old Village. Mountain View House at Peregoy Meadow and the Wawona Hotel remained under private ownership.<sup>53</sup> The commissioners were responsible for both granting the leases to these and other concession holders, and for setting the rates they charged to visitors. These broad powers, combined with the commissioners' open-ended appointments, made them vulnerable to charges of favoritism and corruption by those who failed to win contracts.

<sup>48</sup> Greene, *Yosemite*, 75.

<sup>49</sup> Hutchings, *Heart of the Sierras*, 149-162.

<sup>50</sup> Greene, *Yosemite*, 95-96.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 100-101.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 108.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 114-138; Hutchings, *Heart of the Sierras*, 98, 349, 414.



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Influential author Charles Nordhoff had criticized the system of management in 1873, suggesting that the temporary nature of the leases was responsible for the "tasteless structures which form blots on the landscape"<sup>54</sup> of the valley. He further suggested that the valley needed "a little judicious and skillful combing down of the wildness" to enhance its beauty and control the flooding of the Merced. Nordhoff warned that if Yosemite's situation was not improved, it would "become a wreck, denuded of fine trees . . . and made nauseous by the taint of selfish and sordid speculation." The apparent lack of progress by 1880, coupled with the disagreements between the state legislature, commissioners, and concessionaires led the legislature to dissolve the board and appoint eight new commissioners in their place, and to return James Hutchings to Yosemite to assume the post of Guardian, in place of Galen Clark.

As a part of efforts to improve conditions, State Engineer William Hammond Hall inspected the grant and issued his findings in the report "To Preserve from Defacement and Promote the Use of the Yosemite Valley." He recommended three points of action to prevent further deterioration. He first argued that it would be necessary to extend the boundaries of the grant to encompass the 200,000 acres that formed the valley's watershed, and so prevent uses of the land that might alter the existing quality and patterns of water flow. Secondly, the board of commissioners needed to regulate the use of the valley floor and halt the loss of its distinctive meadows. Thirdly, erosion control measures were required on the Merced River to counter the effects of the human presence in the Valley.<sup>55</sup>

Hall also turned his attention to the promotion and accommodation of tourism, and in doing so anticipated much of the planning work that would be carried out in the twentieth century. He saw the need for a carefully landscaped, high quality road system within the valley that would both enhance the visitors' experience and reduce maintenance costs. He suggested locating solid, dust-free footpaths throughout the valley to bring people to special attractions or viewpoints while following a naturalistic course. Hall noted that existing wooden and iron bridges looked out of place against the backdrop of Yosemite, and proposed instead that they be replaced by massively built structures, preferably using stone, that would be more in harmony with their surroundings. He extended this principle to any new buildings that might be constructed, which in addition should be inconspicuously located and surrounded by naturalistic landscaping. To restore the views enjoyed by the earliest American tourists, Hall proposed selective tree thinning and clearing.<sup>56</sup>

**Early Federal Administration of Yosemite National Park, 1890 – 1914**

U. S. Army Administration. Yosemite, Sequoia, and General Grant national parks were established by Acts of Congress in the fall of 1890, but without any administrative system that could accomplish the protective goals spelled out by the acts. With this and the precedent of Yellowstone National Park in mind, the Secretary of the Interior recommended that a cavalry troop be stationed in Yosemite, with another to administer both the Sequoia and General Grant parks. First dispatched in May 1891 from the Presidio of San Francisco, the troops would patrol the three parks from May until October, hoping that winter conditions would be enough to deter trespassers during the remainder of the year. The Yosemite troop initially used a seasonal headquarters near Wawona, with a semi permanent post in the Valley following the recession of the Yosemite Grant in 1905. The officer in charge of the troop became the acting

<sup>54</sup> Quoted in Greene, *Yosemite*, 258.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 259-262.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 263-267.

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superintendent of the park, and as this position changed every year it made continuity of policies difficult. During the Spanish-American War in 1898, the regular troop was not dispatched, and Archie Leonard and Yosemite native Charles T. Leidig took their place as the park's first civilian rangers. Special Inspector J. W. Zevely of the Interior Department assumed the role of acting superintendent.<sup>57</sup>

Particular mention must be made of the patrols made by African American "Buffalo Soldiers" in the years following the Spanish-American War. Detachments of the 24<sup>th</sup> Infantry protected Yosemite in May 1899, while units of the 9<sup>th</sup> Cavalry, which had seen combat in the Philippines, assumed these duties in 1903 and 1904. Their work consisted primarily of patrolling the backcountry and park boundaries, in often trying conditions, in an attempt to prevent damage to the park by trespassing sheepherders.<sup>58</sup>

The United States Army filled a void in early park administration that could not be filled in any other way. To a large degree Army officers developed the park policy inherited and later refined by the National Park Service. More importantly, perhaps, without the benefit of a well-defined legal system and hampered by the absence of punitive legislation, army troops save Yosemite from destruction just as they had at Yellowstone. At the same time, they managed to convince the surrounding populace that conservation of natural resources was not only necessary, but also desirable.

Trails and Roads. The army found only a few Indian trails in the backcountry beyond the rim of the Valley. To aid their work, they improved upon these and established new trails as the need arose. Most of the current backcountry trail system was laid down by the army during this period. Because the cavalry units assigned to the park changed each year, trail routes had to be carefully mapped to avoid duplication of effort. This had the unintended effect of supplanting many of the early place names transmitted through oral tradition by new names and references reflecting the experiences of the new authority. To aid patrols after the first snowfalls, the army also marked trails with distinctive blazes cut into the bark of trees. These were in addition to previous marks left by sheepherders to mark their own trails through the wilderness. The army regularly made use of the semi-abandoned Big Oak Flat and Tioga Road for access to the backcountry; the Virginia Trail, and trails from Mount Conness to Tuolumne Meadows and from Bull Creek to the Merced River at the park boundary.<sup>59</sup>

During the early 1900s, acting superintendent Maj. L. A. Craig recommended the repair of trails from Chilnaulna Fall to Devils Post Pile; Poopenaut Valley to Lake Eleanor; Lake Eleanor to Lake Vernon; Lake Vernon to Tiltill Valley; and from the headwaters of the San Joaquin River to the top of Bloody Canyon. At the same time he proposed the construction of new trails from Clouds Rest trail to Lake Merced and from Lake Ostrander to Crescent Lake, and a bridge over the Tuolumne River near Lumbert's Soda Springs. While the army carried much of this work itself, it also contracted for the construction of additional trails from Alder Creek to Peregoy Meadow; Devils Post Pile to Bloody Canyon; Mono Meadow to Lumbert's Soda Springs; Hetch Hetchy Valley to Tiltill Valley; and from Pleasant Valley to Benson Lake. In 1914 the Sierra Club formed a committee to seek funding for what would become the John Muir Trail, based on the ideas and surveying of Theodore Solomons and Joseph LeConte.<sup>60</sup>

<sup>57</sup> Harvey Meyerson, *Nature's Army: When Soldiers Fought for Yosemite* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2001)

<sup>58</sup> Shelton Johnson, "Shadows in the Range of Light: Buffalo Soldiers of the Sierra Nevada" available at <http://shadowsoldier.wilderness.net>

<sup>59</sup> Greene, *Yosemite*, 320-324, 325-328.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 329, 337, 414-415, 419-421.

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In addition to trails, the army also concerned itself with roads used by tourists visiting the park. Access to Yosemite was by way of four toll roads, which provoked complaints about high rates and the basic incongruity of reaching a national park, which was intended to be open to all, over a privately-held road. In 1892 under the administration of Capt. A. E. Wood, the army initiated a study to determine the feasibility of the federal government purchasing these roads. Legislation to provide for this was subsequently introduced in Congress, but was lost among unfinished business at the end of the fifty-fifth session. Congress authorized a new study in 1899, which advised that it would be advantageous for the government to own all the entry roads into the park so as to control traffic flow, and that additional roads should be constructed within the park to ease patrol work.<sup>61</sup> The earliest roadwork actually performed by the federal government involved improving the privately-built El Portal Road from 1909, following complaints by Acting Superintendent Benson that the existing valley routes needed widening, macadamizing, and above all watering to keep down the dust.<sup>62</sup>

Natural Resource Management. The army took its commission seriously, and made significant advances in the protection of Yosemite's resources. Grazing was an ongoing concern, both by sheep in the high country, and by cattle and horses on patented land. Poaching of wildlife was a problem that provoked Col. S. B. M. Young, acting superintendent in 1896, to refuse to issue firearm permits to tourists, and to authorize troops to disarm those found carrying weapons inside the park. Despite this type of effort, poaching continued in the fall, after the regular departure of the troops.

Under the auspices of the military administration, the California Fish and Game Commission began planting trout in various Yosemite streams in 1892, and established a small hatchery at Wawona in 1895. The Army took a direct hand in fish stocking during the 1905-1908 patrol seasons, planting them much further afield than did the Fish and Game Commission. Earlier, Col. Young had strictly enforced prohibitions against human interference with flora, trees, animals, birds, and fish in the park. In large measure to help tourists time their visits to arrive during periods of full streams and waterfalls, the U. S. Geological Survey began measuring the flow of the Merced River and its tributaries in 1904.

Recession of the Yosemite Grant and New Administrative Duties. The State of California proved to be unable to adequately pay for the care and improvement of Yosemite Valley and the Mariposa Grove, the two most heavily used portions of the park. Despite arguments for state pride, financial reality won out and the state formally returned the Yosemite Grant to the federal government on March 3, 1905. The army then assumed management responsibilities for the entire park, and moved their field headquarters from Wawona to the Valley. This made the army directly responsible for new duties, such as visitor services and the administration of concessions. Army engineers surveyed the bridges in the Valley, which at that point were constructed of wood, except for Pohono and Sentinel Hotel. The engineers believed most would have to be replaced within a short time, and recommended the use of stone arch structures as durable, appropriate to the setting, and fitting monuments to the American government and its administration of the park.

The first automobile had been driven into the Yosemite area in 1900, and the few that had managed the trip in

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 341-345; Farquhar, *History of the Sierra Nevada*, 204, 205.

<sup>62</sup> Greene, *Yosemite*, 429-430.



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the following years had been welcomed by state officials. This situation changed in 1906, when acting superintendent Maj. Harry Benson imposed strict regulations on their use and movement, in order to preserve Yosemite's tranquil character. After drivers flouted these regulations, Benson gained permission from the Secretary of the Interior in 1907 to ban cars outright from the Valley, over the strenuous objection of the motorists' lobby. Their efforts to overturn the ban reached a peak in 1912, at which point the Secretary of the Interior acknowledged the inevitability of cars in Yosemite Valley, and lifted the ban the following year.<sup>63</sup>

Maj. Benson was also repelled by the clutter of concession buildings in Yosemite Valley. He noted that leases were granted primarily on the basis of favoritism, and that residents in these properties expected large federal expenditures to maintain their buildings. After identifying the few structures he thought necessary, Benson recommended that the rest be cleared. Maj. William T. Littebrant continued this theme in 1913, suggesting that the existing village be replaced by a new development to the north of the Merced River, away from the major scenic attractions. He asked that the Secretary of the Interior send a landscape architect, structural engineer, and civil engineer to the park in order to begin work on a long-term development plan. Littebrant emphasized the need for new construction to harmonize with the surroundings, and to follow a common architectural theme. The Interior Department received these ideas with great interest, and they formed the basis for the new village as it was actually built by the National Park Service in the 1920s.

By 1914 the situations at the California national parks had been stabilized enough that the War Department, concerned by the situation in Europe, determined the army had achieved its mission at Yosemite. The Department of the Interior assumed direct management of the park, and fifteen civilian rangers, ten of them temporary, replaced the troops. The Department also determined that a separate administrative bureau would be required to adequately manage the national parks as a unified system, with consistent policies and objectives. As seen at Yosemite, the lack of these had resulted in serious physical deterioration in many sections of the national parks.<sup>64</sup> President Woodrow Wilson signed the legislation creating the National Park Service in 1916, with wealthy industrialist and outdoor enthusiast Stephen T. Mather appointed as the first director. Mather had a particular genius for publicity and eagerly put it to use in promoting and expanding the reach of the new agency.<sup>65</sup>

**National Park Service Administration in Yosemite National Park, 1916 – 1966<sup>66</sup>**

<sup>63</sup> Farquhar, *History of the Sierra Nevada*, 208-209.

<sup>64</sup> Harlan D. Unrau and G. Frank Williss, *Administrative History: Expansion of the National Park Service in the 1930s* (National Park Service, Denver Service Center, 1983), Chapter 1A, available at [http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online\\_books/unrau-williss/adhi3a.htm](http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online_books/unrau-williss/adhi3a.htm)

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Useful general histories of the Park Service include Horace M. Albright and Marian Albright Schenck, *Creating the National Park Service: The Missing Years* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1999); Lary M. Dilsaver, ed. *America's National Park System: The Critical Documents* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1994); William C. Everhart, *The National Park Service* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1983); Ronald A. Foresta, *America's National Parks and Their Keepers* (Washington, D.C.: Resources for the Future, 1985); Charles B. Hosmer, Jr. *Preservation Comes of Age: From Williamsburg to the National Trust, 1926-1949*. (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1981); John Ise, *Our National Park Policy: A Critical History*. (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins Press, 1961); Polly W. Kaufman, *National Parks and the Woman's Voice: A History* (Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 1996); Barry Mackintosh *The National Parks: Shaping the System* (Washington, DC: National Park Service, 1991); Dwight F. Rettie *Our National Park System: Caring for America's Greatest Natural and Historic Treasures* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1995); Hal K. Rothman, *America's National Monuments: The Politics of Preservation* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1994); Alfred Runte, *National Parks: The American*

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Early National Park Administration, 1916-1930.<sup>67</sup> Mather, having accepted the challenge to oversee the unification of the national park system, remained at this post for the next fourteen years. Mather served as Assistant Secretary of the Interior for two years, beginning in 1915, and as director of the National Park Service from 1917 to 1929. Mather's assistant Horace Albright then served in that capacity until his resignation in 1933. During the early crucial years of the park service, Mather and Albright proved highly successful in acquiring increased appropriations and public support necessary to develop more and better park facilities. They were able to make the park service an integral part of the political and legal framework of the federal government, and equate park lands with the essence of American society. Significantly for Yosemite, both men had been raised in California and had a particular regard for the park and its importance to both the National Park Service and the nation. Albright had been born only sixty miles from Yosemite, in the town of Bishop, and first visited it as a boy in the company of R. L. P. Bigelow, a family friend and Park Service ranger based in the Mammoth Lakes area on the eastern slope of the Sierras.<sup>68</sup>

From the beginning, Mather determined to link in the public mind the relationship between national parks and the American economy. Historian Barry Mackintosh notes "Mather and Albright blurred the distinction between utilitarian conservation and preservation by emphasizing the economic potential of parks as tourist meccas."<sup>69</sup> They believed it imperative to fully and efficiently develop park resources for the pleasure of the public, which would in turn result in profits for the public through increased tourist dollars, and the strengthening of their own agency. While aesthetic preservationists still hoped to find ways to use scenic areas without destroying their basic values, they generally realized that some concession had to be made to provide for the comforts and convenience of tourists in order to get them into the parks for longer periods of time, so that they would come to appreciate national parks and stand up in their defense.<sup>70</sup>

In his endeavors to popularize the national park idea, Mather's practical business experience proved invaluable. He was selling a product to the American public, though scenic beauty was a more unconventional commodity than borax. Based on the argument that the national parks would ultimately stimulate the economy if properly managed,

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*Experience* (Lincoln, NE.: 2d ed. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1987); Joseph L. Sax *Mountains Without Handrails: Reflections on the National Parks* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1980); William H. Sontag, ed. *National Park Service: The First 75 Years* (Philadelphia: Eastern National Park and Monument Association, 1990). See also Horace M. Albright and Robert Cahn, *The Birth of the National Park Service: The Founding Years, 1913-33* (Salt Lake City: Howe Brothers, 1985); Robert Gottlieb, *Forcing the Spring: The Transformation of the American Environmental Movement*. (Washington, D.C.: Island Press, 1993); George B. Hartzog, Jr. *Battling for the National Parks* (Mt. Kisco, NY: Moyer Bell, 1988); Dwight T. Pitcaithley, "Philosophical Underpinnings of the National Park Idea," *Ranger* (Fall 2001); James M. Ridenour, *The National Parks Compromised: Pork Barrel Politics and America's Treasures* (Merrillville, Ind: ICS Books, 1994); Conrad L. Wirth, *Parks, Politics, and the People*. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1980).

<sup>67</sup> Mackintosh, "Parks and People" in Sontag, *National Park Service*, [http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online\\_books/sontag/sontag3.htm](http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online_books/sontag/sontag3.htm). The basic operating principles of the National Park Service were set out in a letter of May 13, 1918, addressed to Stephen Mather from Secretary of the Interior Franklin Lane, reprinted in Unrau and Williss, *Administrative History*, Chapter 1B, [http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online\\_books/unrau-williss/adh1b.htm](http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online_books/unrau-williss/adh1b.htm)

<sup>68</sup> Dwight T. Pitcaithley, "A Dignified Exploitation: The Growth of Tourism in the National Parks," in David M. Wrobel and Patrick T. Long, eds., *Seeing and Being Seen: Tourism in the American West* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2001), 299-312; Swain, *Wilderness Defender*, 5-9.

<sup>69</sup> Mackintosh, *Shaping the System*, [http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online\\_books/mackintosh1/sts2a.htm](http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online_books/mackintosh1/sts2a.htm)

<sup>70</sup> Greene, *Yosemite*, 523-524; Don Hummel, *Stealing the National Parks: The Destruction of Concessions and Park Access* (Bellvue, Wash: Free Enterprise Press, 1987), 55; Sellars, *Preserving Nature*, 59.

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Mather's first steps involved streamlining his organization, handling finances in a businesslike manner, installing trained nonpolitical personnel, and improving the visitor experience by improving access and accommodations, and by establishing educational facilities and opportunities. His educational program was a direct outgrowth of this need to help people better understand the natural phenomena represented in the parks. In addition, Mather sponsored the creation of the National Parks Association in 1919 to promote greater public awareness of the parks and to serve as a conduit for civic activism on their behalf.<sup>71</sup> Recreation was central to Mather's conception of the national parks. He placed a special emphasis on cultivating interest and support from his wealthy and influential Americans who could help further his cause, and the growth of the Park Service.<sup>72</sup> Auto camps and housekeeping camps resulted from Mather's desire to expand housing for all classes of visitors to further expand the Park Service's popularity with the American public. In Yosemite, accommodations would eventually include the plush Ahwahnee Hotel, the medium-class Yosemite Lodge, tent camps at Curry Village, and seasonal camps in the High Sierra.<sup>73</sup> Mather's commitment to the idea of the parks as havens for recreation and leisure insured that major parks like Yosemite were heavily developed with thousands of structures, hundreds of miles of roads and extensive recreational facilities that at times overpowered even the dramatic landscape of the parks they were built to serve. However, this was a direct outgrowth of Mather's pragmatic belief that the future of the national parks depended on making them appealing to more than the committed nature lover. Mather commented in 1915 "Scenery is a splendid thing when it is viewed by a man who is in a contented frame of mind. Give him a poor breakfast after he has had a bad night's sleep, and he will not care how fine your scenery is. He is not going to enjoy it."<sup>74</sup>

Recent scholarship by historians such as Robert Gottlieb has faulted Mather for this approach, charging that he developed the Park Service as a "playground for the wealthy"<sup>75</sup> in partnership with Western railroad interests. Described by his assistant and successor Horace Albright as a "Bull Moose Roosevelt Progressive,"<sup>76</sup> Mather clearly believed in selling the Park Service to the nation's elites, in the hope that their example would then "trickle down" to the lower classes. In an era when the philosophy of Social Darwinism guided public policy, it was assumed that urban, working class Americans would have to be properly educated by their betters in the correct way to appreciate national parks and their scenic wonders. Mather's close collaboration with the railroads and the automotive industry furthered this process by promoting the parks and tourism in their advertising. While distasteful to committed preservationists, who often took a condescending view of the general public,<sup>77</sup> this indirect corporate sponsorship and its resulting growth in visitation helped to promote the growth of the Park Service and to pressure the federal government into providing more than subsistence-level funding.

The changes in Yosemite during Mather's administration of the Park Service were precedent setting in terms of policy and programs. The purchase of the Tioga Road improved access and sightseeing opportunities in the backcountry, while the establishment of the D. J. Desmond Company attempted to remove concession haggling and put Yosemite's visitor services on a stable footing. Other significant actions included the improvement of roads, the relocation of Yosemite Village, construction of the Rangers' Club as a prototype for future park structures, and

<sup>71</sup> John C. Miles, *Guardians of the Parks: A History of the National Parks and Conservation Association* (Washington, D.C.: Taylor and Francis, 1995), 18-21.

<sup>72</sup> Gottlieb, *Forcing the Spring*, 31.

<sup>73</sup> Greene, *Yosemite*, 524.

<sup>74</sup> Quoted in Albright and Schenck, *Creating the National Park Service*, 54.

<sup>75</sup> Gottlieb, *Forcing the Spring*, 31.

<sup>76</sup> Albright and Schenck, *Creating the National Park Service*, 39.

<sup>77</sup> Gottlieb, *Forcing the Spring*, 33.



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interpretive and educational programs that would be emulated by all other parks. Mather's approach to the national parks is best described as visitor oriented. He believed that developing better means of access to the parks, and more activities for the visitors once there, would help to ensure that parklands would be preserved from other, inappropriate forms of exploitation. At Yosemite this approach resulted in the encouragement of outdoor sports such as hiking, fishing, skiing and camping, the establishment of a zoo, and a racetrack for the "Indian Field Days" held every summer. Mather had also hoped to build a golf course for better off visitors, in addition to the existing course attached to the Wawona Hotel.<sup>78</sup>

National Park Service Administration, 1931-1966. In January 1929 Stephen Mather stepped down as director of the Park Service due to ill health, which resulted in his death in January 1930. Mather's ideals and basic policies continued under Horace Albright, who, because of his long tenure with the park service assisting Mather, could be considered nearly a co-founder of the present National Park Service. Having worked with Mather in addition to serving as superintendent of Yellowstone for ten years, Albright could smoothly continue building on the achievements of the early Mather years. He was knowledgeable in governmental affairs and well known and respected in Washington's political arena. Of great benefit to his work was the fact that the park idea had become solidly entrenched in the American consciousness. Albright also enjoyed the support of Interior Department official and the aid of a first-class staff in the Washington Office and in the field. During his four-year tenure as director, Albright enlarged nine parks, including Yosemite, and also gained three new parks and several national monuments.<sup>79</sup>

Hal Rothman explains that Albright brought a new emphasis on history to his term as director of the Park Service. Mather's vision had imposed a "one-dimensional role upon his agency" by making the "scenic magnificence of the western parks" such as Yosemite serve as the model for parks nationwide. They served as showcases for humanity's interaction with the environment, and provided recreation, but failed to speak to other aspects of America's national heritage. As a result, Albright leaped at the chance to add historic preservation to the Park Service's mandate. Rothman writes that it became increasingly important to recount and explain the development of the United States as urban, industrial growth moved the nation further away from its agrarian creation myth. Albright realized that while both the Forest Service and the War Department maintained an assortment of national monuments, no federal agency had fully taken on the role of interpreting the key sites of American history to the public. Doing so would also have the practical effect of promoting the continued growth of the National Park Service--an essential factor for ensuring the continued growth of its budget. Franklin Roosevelt gave this new direction permanence in August 1933 through Executive Order 6166, which gave Albright's agency control of all national monuments, together with battlefield parks and cemeteries.<sup>80</sup>

With this victory, Albright had achieved all the major goals he had set for himself as director. As a holdover from the Hoover administration he was unlikely to rise any further in the ranks under Roosevelt, so on the day Executive Order 6166 took effect Albright tendered his resignation and accepted an executive position with the United States Potash Company. Arno Cammerer, associate director under Albright, replaced him as director and Arthur

<sup>78</sup> Greene, *Yosemite*, 525-531; Runte, *Yosemite*, 154-157; Sellars, *Preserving Nature*, 58-64.

<sup>79</sup> Greene, *Yosemite*, 731-732.

<sup>80</sup> Hal Rothman, *Preserving Different Pasts: The American National Monuments* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989), 197-202; Unrau and Willis, *Administrative History*, Chapter 2C, [http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online\\_books/unrau-williss/adhi2c.htm](http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online_books/unrau-williss/adhi2c.htm)

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Demaray became associate director. Both had also worked under Mather. Harold Ickes served as Secretary of the Interior during the boom period of the 1930s and oversaw the expansion of park and recreational activities.<sup>81</sup>

Civilian Conservation Corps and Works Progress Administration Activities in Yosemite National Park, 1933 – 1940. During his first one hundred days in office, Franklin Roosevelt introduced the idea of a Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), a program stimulated by his interest in forestry and conservation, and as a means to provide jobs for unemployed youth. As the Interior Department's representative on the CCC Advisory Board, Horace Albright immediately began compiling estimates for road and trail work, physical construction, and forest protection and cleanup in the national parks. Because each park already had a master plan for development work, the Park Service was better prepared than most agencies to quickly begin projects. Although much of the work was focused on forest preservation, the greatest impact from the visitor's point of view was found in the extensive rustic landscaping programs that produced the characteristic "look" of national parks that is still recognized and expected today. Linda Flint McClelland explains "As a result of master planning and the supply of funds and labor for work at various scales, it was possible for the first time to coordinate large-scale and small-scale projects and treat development in a comprehensive way. . . and blend the final development into the surrounding environment. Through this process, park designers achieved an illusion that nature had never been disturbed."<sup>82</sup> Thomas Vint, head of the Park Service's Landscape Division, mandated that each structure follow the principles of non-intrusive design, and be individually tailored to compliment its location. This was not always simply a matter of blending in with the landscape. The Chinquapin intersection complex, for example, was designed by John Wosky to reflect the distinctive nineteenth century architecture of Yosemite's early hotels, and so conform to the public's established notions of what the park was "supposed" to look like. Additional work, in a more traditional rustic style, included the Merced Grove Ranger Station and the comfort stations in the Tuolumne Meadows Campgrounds.<sup>83</sup>

The Advisory Board helped set up the CCC organization and programs and determined the role of participating agencies. The Department of Labor selected the candidates, the army transported the men to the camps, fed and clothed them, carried out their physical conditioning, maintained morale, and generally handled all camp matters. The agencies of the Interior and Agriculture departments for which the men worked exercised technical supervision of the men during work details.<sup>84</sup> The Public Works Administration (PWA) assumed the continuation of road and trail construction and other physical improvements and, because it required topographical surveys, landscape studies, and wildlife protection policies, provided work for engineers, landscape architects, artists and scientists. Beginning in 1935, the Park Service cooperated with the Works Progress Administration (WPA) established by the Emergency Relief Appropriation Act of 1935, assuming responsibility for technical supervision of its programs involving resource conservation and recreational development. Although most of its projects needed manual laborers, arts projects enabled writers, actors, musicians, and artists to be hired. At the start of 1937, the various public works

<sup>81</sup> Swain, *Wilderness Defender*, 206-231.

<sup>82</sup> Linda Flint McClelland, *Building the National Parks: Historic Landscape Design and Construction* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 345;

<sup>83</sup> William C. Tweed, Laura E. Soulliere, and Henry G. Law, *Rustic Architecture, 1916-1942* (United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Western Regional Office, Division of Cultural Resource Management, 1977) available at [http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online\\_books/rusticarch/part5.htm](http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online_books/rusticarch/part5.htm)

<sup>84</sup> Greene, *Yosemite*, 732-733; John C. Paige, *The Civilian Conservation Corps and the National Park Service, 1933-1942: An Administrative History* (Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1985), available at [http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online\\_books/ccc/index.htm](http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online_books/ccc/index.htm); Unrau and Willis, *Administrative History*, Chapter 3A, [http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online\\_books/unrau-williss/adhi3a.htm](http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online_books/unrau-williss/adhi3a.htm)

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programs undertaken within the national park system were consolidated as Emergency Relief Act projects until 1941, when appropriations were curtailed.<sup>85</sup>

Yosemite's CCC camps were among the first organized in the West, beginning operations on June 6, 1933. The park hosted camps at Crane Flat, Eleven-Mile Meadow, and Wawona, with later camps at Empire Meadow, Tamarack Flat, and The Cascades. The Park Service located its CCC camps near the work project areas, preferably near railroads or highways and water sources, and in close proximity to lumber and other building materials. The earliest camps consisted of army tents, which were gradually replaced by more substantial, but still temporary, wooden buildings. By 1934 the army had designed a prefabricated structure with interchangeable panels that could be easily transported and erected, and could serve multiple purposes. The army mass-produced these by 1935.

Camps usually formed a U-shape and contained recreation halls, a garage, hospital, administrative buildings, mess hall, officers' quarters, enrollee barracks, and a schoolhouse. The space enclosed by the buildings served for group functions and sports. The wooden exteriors of the buildings were painted brown or green, creosoted, or covered with tarpaper. In 1939, specific structures to be included in CCC camps consisted of those mentioned above, together with a Technical Service headquarters and storehouse, army headquarters and storehouse, an oil house, pump house, generator house, blacksmith shop, and a maintenance building. Satellite tent camps were used when a specific job was too distant for easy daily travel, or during fire season so that the men could keep a close watch on forest conditions.<sup>86</sup>

The basic work of CCC enrollees in Yosemite consisted of forest cleanup and improvement, roadside clearing and landscaping, horse trail construction, stringing telephone lines, expanding fish hatchery facilities, development of public campgrounds, erosion control on creeks and rivers, insect control, and other forestry work such as removal of exotic plants and naturalization. Emergency Conservation Work (ECW) expanded on these activities with the development of fire control measures, bridge building, flood control, and tree disease control. Prior to ECW the Park Service had always lacked sufficient fire fighters and had been unable to implement fire-protection programs in each park.<sup>87</sup>

The CCC/ECW also undertook extensive work against insects and tree diseases. As early as 1932, Albright had requested emergency funding for a five-year program to combat pine beetles threatening timber stands in several of the western parks. Infestations of mountain pine and bark beetles were brought under control by the ECW in portions of Yosemite in 1933. Superintendent Thomson opposed the eradication of currant and gooseberry bushes to control white pine blister rust, recommending instead more research on the forest ecosystem.<sup>88</sup>

Because of some fears that the size and scope of ECW projects, and the make-work aspect of some of its programs, could threaten preservation policies and damage wildlife habitat, Albright placed certain restrictions on ECW activities. To prevent removal of ground cover needed by wild animals, Albright insisted that clearing be done only to the extent of correcting serious fire hazards. Over development through new truck trails that provided access to primitive areas posed another danger, and the Wildlife Division of the Park Service fielded increased demands for scientific investigations and supervision of ECW projects. From the beginning of the ECW program until the end of

<sup>85</sup> Greene, *Yosemite*, 734-735; Unrau and Williss, *Expansion in the 1930s*, Chapter 3E, [http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online\\_books/unrau-williss/adhi3e.htm](http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online_books/unrau-williss/adhi3e.htm)

<sup>86</sup> Greene, *Yosemite*, 735; Paige, *CCC and the NPS*, Chapter 3.

<sup>87</sup> Greene, *Yosemite*, 736-737; Sellars, *Preserving Nature*, 126-127

<sup>88</sup> Greene, *Yosemite*, 737, 741; Paige, *CCC and the NPS*, Chapter 4.



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1935, an enlarged staff of biologists, foresters, geologists, and other specialists participated in making vegetation maps and conducting biological studies at various parks, including Yosemite.<sup>89</sup>

In 1940 Cammerer asked to be relieved of his duties, citing overwork, and Ickes replaced him with respected conservationist Newton Drury. Drury resisted all threats to park resources during the war years while also trying to deal with the economic and developmental crisis brought on by the termination of New Deal projects. Despite the fact that its roads and structures were being heavily damaged by lack of maintenance, the Park Service made important contributions to the war effort. It cooperated to the fullest extent with the military and federal agencies involved in war activities without allowing its resources to completely deteriorate. It made many facilities, especially concession properties such as the Ahwahnee Hotel in Yosemite, available to the military as rest areas for injured troops. At the same time Park Service officials managed to fend off encroachments by opportunistic mining and lumber interests.<sup>90</sup>

Park visitation increased rapidly as the United States demobilized after the war, due to increased leisure time, greater prosperity, and improved transportation. By the 1950s, however, the lack of maintenance at the parks had caused such deterioration of roads and facilities that they were completely inadequate and in need of replacement. Although the Park Service budget picked up in the postwar years, Cold War spending on foreign aid limited the funds available to the Park Service for refurbishing and rebuilding. This was also hampered by turnover in the director's office, with Drury, Demaray, and finally Conrad Wirth all occupying the position during 1951.<sup>91</sup>

By the mid-1950s the situation had become drastic. Park visitation had increased threefold since 1940, and eighteen new areas had been added to the system. In Yosemite both park service structures and concession facilities were in need of extensive renovation. Increasing numbers of park visitors were not only overtaking resources, but also experiencing less enjoyable stays. Something had to be done to awaken Congress and the public to the impending loss of important natural and historic resources. Only a large infusion of funds could reverse the damage to the parks caused by a minimum budget over the last several years. In 1953 historian and journalist Bernard DeVoto attempted to shock the American public into supporting greater funding for the Park Service with an exposé in *Harper's Magazine* titled "Let's Close the National Parks." DeVoto illustrated the decrepit condition of many of the parks, and derided Congress for treating the Park Service "like an impoverished stepchild." He claimed "There are true slum districts in Yellowstone, Rocky Mountain, Yosemite, Mesa Verde, various other parks. The National Park Service does a far better job on its starvation rations than it could reasonably be expected to do, but it falls increasingly short of what it must do."<sup>92</sup> DeVoto suggested that it might be better to close many of the most popular parks and reduce the size of the system to match what Congress seemed willing to fund.

Wirth's solution to the problem was Mission 66, conceived of as a comprehensive ten-year program to upgrade and expand national park facilities to accommodate visitor levels anticipated for 1966, the fiftieth anniversary of the National Park Service. The plan called for construction of new housing and service structures, sanitation facilities, and water, sewer, and electrical systems. The program was also intended to provide adequate operating funds and field staffs, together with the acquisition of additional private lands. In its basic philosophy, Mission 66 was a restatement of Mather's belief that development was the surest way of preserving the national parks, and that the parks

<sup>89</sup> Greene, *Yosemite*, 741; Paige, *CCC and the NPS*, Chapter 4.

<sup>90</sup> Greene, *Yosemite*, 751; Mackintosh, "Parks and People" in Sontag, *National Park Service*,

[http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online\\_books/sontag/sontag5.htm](http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online_books/sontag/sontag5.htm)

<sup>91</sup> Greene, *Yosemite*, 751-752.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 752; Sellars, *Preserving Nature*, 182; Bernard DeVoto, "Let's Close the National Parks," *Harper's Magazine* 207 (October, 1953), 49-52.

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were the surest way of preserving American values. In his presentation to President Dwight Eisenhower, Wirth asserted "To put the National Parks in shape is an investment in the physical, mental, and spiritual well-being of Americans as individuals. It is a gainful investment contributing substantially to the national economy. . . . It is an investment in good citizenship."<sup>93</sup>

Yosemite's Mission 66 program included protection of Yosemite Valley by removing as many service and support activities as possible to locations outside of the immediate area, leaving only what was necessary for direct visitor service. Road and trail systems were to be completed, primarily in the Crane Flat and Tioga Road entrance routes, to relieve pressure on the South and Arch Rock entrances and to reduce Valley congestion. New water and sewer systems would be constructed to modern standards for government and concession developments. Obsolete concession facilities in the Valley were to be replaced, while others in the park would be improved and additional accommodations would be constructed to relieve overcrowding. Finally, private lands that still existed with the park boundaries would be acquired on the principle that they conflicted with the goal of maximum public use.<sup>94</sup>

The structures that resulted from this program often came as a shock to park visitors accustomed to the highly detailed rustic architecture of the prewar era. The radically new designs were a product of two main considerations: efficiency and modernity. Because of the need to make up for fifteen years of inadequate funding in the face of ever-increasing levels of visitation, Mission 66 required structures that could be completed with a minimum of time, effort, and expense. As a consequence, most construction made wide use of concrete and steel, without any attempt to disguise the material. At the same time, this architecture reflected growing emphasis on modernity in the America of the 1950s as a visible symbol of the nation's progress and the triumph of democratic capitalism during the Cold War. This is also seen in the urban renewal programs that gained popularity in the United States during the same period, which often equated old buildings and old building styles with a low standard of living. Ironically, the specific style of Mission 66 drew on the philosophies of the International School of architects, such as Le Corbusier and Mies van der Rohe, who regarded efficient design and lack of decoration as an expression of socialist solidarity against the supposed excesses of capitalism.<sup>95</sup> A further irony is that by being so visibly linked to a specific moment in time, the Mission 66 structures can now appear more dated than structures reflecting the traditional rustic style. This is perhaps because the older buildings were meant to be in harmony with what visitors see as the unique and "timeless" scenery of the national parks, rather than being a manifestation of a passing architectural style more commonly associated with urban settings.

**Yosemite Administrators and the National Park Mandate**

<sup>93</sup> Conrad Wirth, "Mission 66 Special Presentation to President Eisenhower and the Cabinet, January 27, 1956" in Dilsaver ed., *America's National Park System*, available at [http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online\\_books/anps/anps\\_4f.htm](http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online_books/anps/anps_4f.htm). Wirth was likely not surprised by DeVoto's article, and may have even helped to encourage it through his close work with the Advisory Board on National Parks, Historic Sites, Buildings and Monuments, which counted DeVoto as one of its members. See also Mackintosh, "Parks and People," in Sontag, *National Park Service*, [http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online\\_books/sontag/sontag6.htm](http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online_books/sontag/sontag6.htm)

<sup>94</sup> Greene, *Yosemite*, 752-755; Sellars, *Preserving Nature*, 183.

<sup>95</sup> Sara Allaback, *Mission 66 Visitor Centers: The History of a Building Type* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2000), "Introduction", available at [http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online\\_books/allaback/vc0b.htm](http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online_books/allaback/vc0b.htm); Christine Madrid French, "The Emergence of the Mission 66 Visitors Centers" available at <http://www.mission66.com/documents/intro.html>; McClelland, *Building the National Parks*, 462-473. For a general overview of the philosophy and impact of the International Style, see Tom Wolfe, *From Bauhaus to Our House* (New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 1981).

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The activities of Yosemite's administrators over the course of one hundred years, together with the 1890 park legislation and the provisions of the "Organic Act" of 1916, illustrates the ongoing tension in the mandate of the original Yosemite Grant to preserve the area's scenic wonders while providing for "public use, resort, and recreation." Administrators were forced to perform a balancing act between these frequently conflicting interests, leaning at times one way, and at times the opposite way according to the larger political climate. At all times, however, the administrators' decisions have had a direct influence on both the character of Yosemite as a place, and the way in which the visitor experienced it. While Yosemite gives the impression of being a land in which nature enjoys free reign, it is in fact the product of ongoing legislation, regulation, and often acrimonious debate at all levels of American government.

Tourism first brought wide-scale attention to Yosemite because of its relative proximity to San Francisco, with the first tour group--including artist Thomas Ayres-- entering the valley in 1855, only four years after the Mariposa Battalion's first incursion. Access trails and the valley's first hotel followed in 1856. As a result, while the earliest facilities were rough even by the standards of the day, they established a precedent for a tourist infrastructure as an integral feature of Yosemite's identity. A large proportion of the park's administrative efforts have thus always been concerned with issues of visitor access, accommodation, and regulation. The precise ways in which these efforts were carried out are a reflection of the broader national attitudes towards nature and the national parks.

The concerns of the California state administrators centered on promoting Yosemite as a destination where better classes of tourists could engage in a genteel Victorian admiration of the scenic wonders. Improved hotels and easy access to the sights were intended to encourage visits lasting weeks or months. After Yosemite was returned to direct federal control, the acting superintendents of the U.S. Army developed workable management practices, tightened oversight of concessionaires, and improved access to and throughout the park. The National Park Service built upon the Army's administrative foundation, and in partnership with concessionaires began to emphasize Yosemite as a recreational resort in the interwar years. Much of the built environment, which has become as distinctive as the landscape, was constructed during this period to enhance the visitor's experience while managing ever-greater levels of attendance. The park hosted venues for winter sports and developed accommodations for tourists from all economic levels. These resort-style recreations were in keeping with the public's conception of national parks at the time, and came to be expected as a normal part of a visit to Yosemite. Shifting Park Service philosophies in the postwar years yielded first the Mission 66 program that aimed to update facilities to handle the still increasing visitation levels, followed by new proposals to actively limit the impact of tourists and remove elements of the built environment.

Administrators did not discover the dangers of "loving Yosemite to death" until the 1920s and 1930s as auto traffic increased. The development of tourism has long been accompanied by efforts to mitigate its impact, as well that of other human uses of the park lands. Efforts to gain federal protection of the region in 1864 were sparked by fears of its imminent destruction at the hands of commercial interests. While the state commissioners did bring some level of regulation to the use of Yosemite lands, their work was widely condemned as inadequate. John Muir and Robert Underwood Johnson, editor of *Century Magazine*, were among the harshest critics, contending that ranching, lumbering, and other moneymaking activities allowed by the commissioners would forever spoil Yosemite for future generations.<sup>96</sup> Together they helped set the stage for the creation of Yosemite as a national park, and its management

<sup>96</sup> See Stephen Fox, *The American Conservation Movement: John Muir and His Legacy* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1981);



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by federal authorities. The army troops who first took up these duties exercised them with great conscientiousness by attempting to strictly enforce rules against trespass by poachers and grazers. The acting superintendents, though trained in the art of war, took a keen interest in preserving the beauty of Yosemite by undertaking naturalist and resource management programs, advocating for a higher standard of park architecture sympathetic to the landscape, and attempting to limit the use of automobiles within the park. Administrators of the National Park Service continued and expanded many of these efforts, and made extensive use of the Master Planning process to accommodate legions of visitors while minimizing their impact. Careful use of zoning was intended to preserve as much of the park's lands as possible in a state that would please even the staunchest advocates of wilderness. However, zoning also concentrated most visitors into the relatively tight confines of the Valley, together with most of the controversy that accompanied any attempt to restrict human usage for the sake of the environment.

**HISTORIC CONTEXT: TOURISM, RECREATION, AND THE PRESERVATION ETHIC IN YOSEMITE,  
1864-1973**

**Tourism in the Yosemite region, 1864-1956**

Early Tourist Activities, 1855-1860. Tourism in Yosemite began in 1855 with the initiative of one man: James Mason Hutchings, the editor of *California Magazine*. A British immigrant who had worked his way across the country during the California gold rush, Hutchings was intrigued by accounts of the military expeditions to Yosemite that had appeared in San Francisco's newspapers. He determined to see Yosemite for himself, and invited Walter Millard, Alexander Stair, and artist Thomas Ayres to join the expedition. They hired two Yosemite Indians living near the Fresno River reservation to guide them into the valley, following the route of the Mariposa Battalion over the Chowchilla Mountains to the Wawona area, and thence by the Alder Creek trail to Old Inspiration Point. Hutchings's life revolved around Yosemite from that point forward. Descending into the valley, he spent five days taking voluminous notes on the surroundings while Ayres sketched. After returning to San Francisco, Hutchings authored a number of articles for his *California Magazine*, accompanied by lithographs of Ayres's drawings. Hutchings's articles were reprinted throughout the United States, and were soon joined by others in the *California Christian Advocate*, *Country Gentleman*, and the *New York Tribune*. In 1860 Thomas Starr King, a highly regarded author, lecturer, and minister produced a series of eight articles for the *Boston Evening Transcript* that drew wide attention among Eastern readers.<sup>97</sup> Somewhat surprisingly, Earl Pomeroy notes that, together with individuals from other countries, they "far outnumbered Californians in the Yosemite Valley in the early years. Those who had fought the elements across the continent for a home were relatively less interested in climbing mountains for amusement."<sup>98</sup>

Whatever their origin, early visitors to Yosemite ultimately found themselves walking many of the same Indian trails followed by Hutchings. As the routes were only recorded in memory and oral tradition, the first tourists often required guides, though extended use made the footpaths more obvious and eventually suitable for horse travel. Trails from the south tended to meet in the Wawona area, before branching to follow either Alder Creek towards the

John Muir, *Our National Parks* (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1991).

<sup>97</sup> Greene, *Yosemite*, 32-35; Starr, *Americans and the California Dream*, 181-182.

<sup>98</sup> Earl Pomeroy, *In Search of the Golden West: The Tourist in Western America* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1990), 88

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rim of the valley, or to take the route of the later Hennessey Trail. The Mono Trail passed right through the Yosemite area by a number of branches on its way between Mono Lake and the San Joaquin Valley.<sup>99</sup>

Early Trails and Roads. Brothers Houston and Milton Mann, two of the earliest tourists to the valley, concluded from their visit that a market existed for an easier trail. Together with third brother Andrew they obtained permission from Mariposa county supervisors in 1856 to construct a toll trail charging \$1.00 for travelers on foot, and \$2.00 for those on horseback. Built at a cost of \$700.00, it ran approximately forty miles between Mormon Bar and the valley floor, following the long-used Alder Creek route. Mariposa County forced the brothers to sell out in 1859 and converted the trail to free use. This was likely in response to actions by business leaders in the communities of Coulterville and Big Oak Flat to construct their own free trails from 1857. These were meant to capitalize tourist parties from Sacramento and San Francisco that might appreciate a more direct route.<sup>100</sup>

Within a decade, with the creation of the Yosemite Grant in 1864, it became apparent that something better than simple trails would be required to accommodate the increasing levels of interest in the region. The State of California lacked the funds to build roads to Yosemite, so instead it granted concessions for the building of private toll roads, with the understanding that the state would assume control when it could afford to reimburse the original construction costs. By 1869, the Mariposa and Big Tree Grove Turnpike Company, the Yo Semite and Big Tree Grove Turnpike Company, and the Mariposa Big Trees and Yo Semite Turnpike Company had all been formed to take advantage of these concessions.<sup>101</sup>

These toll roads stopped at the edge of the Yosemite Grant because of the difficulty in building a route down the side of the valley that could safely accommodate a wagon. Tourists were obliged to leave their coaches and make the final descent into the valley on horseback. However, in 1871 the Central Pacific Railroad completed a line to within sixty miles of Yosemite; close enough to prompt the Coulterville and Yosemite Turnpike Company to gamble that the tolls generated by a wagon road all the way to the valley floor would be worth the financial risk. The company received an exclusive contract from the state commissioners in 1872 to construct the road to the valley floor on the north side of the Merced River. The commissioners believed that a monopoly on tourist travel was a necessary incentive in light of the considerable complications that might be encountered, and they hoped it would spur on the Mariposa business community to construct a competing road south of the Merced.<sup>102</sup> Unexpectedly, the residents of Big Oak Flat and their Yosemite Turnpike Road Company applied to the commissioners for a franchise to extend their access road to the north side of the valley. After repeated denials based on the existing monopoly, the company appealed to the state legislature, which granted the franchise in 1874 over the protests of the Coulterville and Yosemite Turnpike Company. This activity north of the Merced had the desired effect in Mariposa County, however, with the South Fork and Yosemite Turnpike Road being completed in the spring of 1875, primarily by Chinese laborers.<sup>103</sup>

<sup>99</sup> Greene, *Yosemite*, 35-40.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., 40-43.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., 89-92.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., 95-96.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., 100-101, 108.

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Turnpikes finally gave tourists a satisfactory way of getting to Yosemite Valley, although the cost was high. Historian Earl Pomeroy records that stagecoach fare for a round trip from San Francisco could typically cost eighty dollars in gold in the 1870s, at a time when a six-room house might rent for eight dollars per month.<sup>104</sup> And once visitors reached the valley, moving about continued to be a problem. Tight funding, disagreements over the proper routes, and the ever-present problem of dust control hindered road building on the valley floor. The 1880 board of commissioners used a special appropriation by the state legislature to begin a Grand Carriage Drive around the valley, completed in 1882. The same appropriation was employed to begin the process of buying out the private toll roads and trails within the grant. James Hutchings--returned to Yosemite as its guardian five years after being evicted from his land claim--had advised the board that the public were greatly annoyed by the tolls. Given the hostility that had built up towards their predecessors over alleged mismanagement, the new commissioners needed the visitor's good will.<sup>105</sup>

Technological Tourism: Railroads and Automobiles at Yosemite.<sup>106</sup> Wagon roads were an important step towards improving access to Yosemite, but they still required tourists to make a long stagecoach ride to reach the valley. In addition, they hindered the ability of business interests to exploit the thick stands of timber on the western and southern edges of the park. The Sierra Railway Company began an abortive attempt to extend a rail line to Yosemite in 1898, but the real beginning of rail service to the park came with the incorporation of the Yosemite Valley Railroad Company in 1902. The company obtained a contract in 1905 from the Department of the Interior to construct a line up the Merced River canyon to the western boundary of the park. The original intent had been to continue the line into Yosemite Valley, but the difficulty of the terrain, combined with the Interior Department's reluctance to compromise the beauty of the valley, forced the company to settle for the next best option.<sup>107</sup>

In 1907 the Yosemite Valley Railroad Company established El Portal as the western gateway to the park, where rail passengers could transfer to carriages for the final stage into the valley over a company-built road. The train arrived at El Portal in the evening, which obliged travelers to spend a night at the company's hotel. This was initially a small tent hotel, replaced in 1909 by the luxurious Hotel Del Portal, with more than one hundred guest rooms. The hotel was lost to a fire in 1917, and was only partially replaced by the twenty room El Portal Inn the following year. In an indication of future trends, the Yosemite Valley Railroad Company replaced its horse-drawn coaches with auto stages in 1913, but retained a monopoly over travel through El Portal until 1926, when the All-Year Highway from Merced was completed. The future of travel to Yosemite, and the future character of Yosemite, centered on the automobile.<sup>108</sup>

On June 23, 1900, the first automobile made its way into the Yosemite Valley. Oliver Lippincott, owner of the 850 pound Locomobile, and his driver/mechanic Edward Russell arrived in Yosemite from Los Angeles for a promotional photo shoot to attract more visitors to the park. The most famous--and harrowing --image from the trip depicted the vehicle perched gingerly on the overhanging rock of Glacier Point. The few car-owners that followed received free access to the park until 1906, when acting superintendent Maj. Harry Benson secured permission from

<sup>104</sup> Pomeroy, *Golden West*, 7-8.

<sup>105</sup> Greene, *Yosemite*, 110.

<sup>106</sup> See David Louter, "Glaciers and Gasoline: The Making of a Windshield Wilderness, 1900-1915" in David M. Wrobel and Patrick T. Long, eds., *Seeing and Being Seen: Tourism in the American West* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2001), 248-270; Marguerite S. Shaffer, *See America First: Tourism and National Identity, 1880-1940* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2001).

<sup>107</sup> Greene, *Yosemite*, 388-390.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, 513, 516, 713-714; Pomeroy, *Golden West*, 60.



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the Secretary of the Interior to ban them outright. Benson was angered by motorists' failure to follow the strict guidelines he had established for them, and by plans for a mass trip by the Oakland Automobile Dealers Association. The opposition by auto clubs, dealers' organizations, and chambers of commerce was predictable, and led to a meeting by their representatives with Secretary of the Interior Walter Fisher at the 1912 National Parks conference. Seeking guidance from a higher power, the conferees called upon John Muir for his opinion. Muir concluded that auto tourism was inevitable, and it was to be hoped that this would be a means by which more people could experience Yosemite.<sup>109</sup>

With this in mind the new interior secretary, Franklin Lane, abolished the ban in April 1913. Because the Wawona Road was considered too dangerous, cars were initially restricted to the Coulterville and Big Oak Flat roads, and once in the valley, to the north side of the Merced. The poor conditions of the roads, and the need to avoid altercations with horse-drawn vehicles, brought with them a new set of regulations permits, operating times, and allowable speed. The Madera, Yosemite, Big Tree Auto Company was organized the same year, beginning the process of replacing stagecoaches with buses. Entrepreneur J.R. Wilson employed his own buses on the so-called "Triangle Route" that he had created by building a direct road between El Portal and the Tuolumne and Merced groves. A highlight of the trip was to drive through the tunnel in the Dead Giant tree. Motorists gained access to Mariposa Grove when the Wawona Road opened in August 1914 after repairs and the installation of a checking system.<sup>110</sup>

Auto-tourism not only brought more visitors to Yosemite, as John Muir had foreseen, it also brought a new class of visitor. Working class families that never had the time or disposable income for an extended vacation in the grand manner were now able to make the trip to Yosemite, with their cars often serving as both transportation and lodging. Hal Rothman observes "Automobiles rendered the older divisions of class and status in accommodations, perfected at the Grand Canyon, Yellowstone, Zion, and Yosemite, obsolete. Whatever their differences, auto campers seemed of the same class and certainly shared experience. The national parks seemed more democratic."<sup>111</sup> Stephen Mather was an early advocate of auto-tourism, and strongly favored development in the parks that would make them more accessible to these new visitors. In 1915, he became a founding member of the National Park-to-Park Highway Association, a group dedicated to creating a road system to connect the major western parks in a grand tourist route. Building on the "See America First" campaign developed to promote railroad tourism, the association adopted the slogan "You Sing 'America'—Why Not See It?"<sup>112</sup> Mather also pushed for the improvement of existing roads within parks, together with new construction, in order to handle the anticipated "great influx of automobiles." At the same time, this work helped to garner support for the Park Service from the automobile industry at a time of tenuous federal expenditure. Mather thought it essential that the large parks should have a major road into their scenic backcountries, and in 1915 purchased the Tioga Pass Road in Yosemite with his own money to serve as a model. After donating the road to the government, he convinced western automobile associations to pay for its improvement as a boon to tourism. Mather further recommended that new auto camps be constructed, in Tuolumne Meadows and elsewhere, to

<sup>109</sup> Ibid., 433-434; "Auto Use in the National Parks: Proceedings of the National Park Conference Held at the Yosemite National Park, October 14, 15, and 16, 1912" in Dilsaver, ed., *America's National Park System*, available at [http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online\\_books/anps/anps\\_1h.htm](http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online_books/anps/anps_1h.htm)

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., 434-436.

<sup>111</sup> Hal K. Rothman, *Devil's Bargains: Tourism in the Twentieth-Century American West* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1998), 157-158. See also Warren Belasco, *Americans on the Road: From Autocamp to Motel, 1910-1945* (Boston: MIT Press, 1979).

<sup>112</sup> Shaffer, *See America First*, 119.

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forestall "insanitation and other evils."<sup>113</sup> Unfortunately, the number of auto-tourists quickly challenged the park administrators' ability to keep pace, bringing traffic congestion, crowded facilities, trampled meadows and landscaping, litter, noise, and air pollution.<sup>114</sup>

Most importantly, auto-tourism changed the fundamental nature of the visitor's experience at Yosemite and became a dominant factor for future development. The new breed of tourists did not only want to drive *to* Yosemite, they wanted to drive *in* Yosemite and see the sights from their cars. Historian David Louter notes that the automobile became not simply a form of transportation, but a means by which Americans could return to the idealized individual connection with nature that seemed lost in the modern industrial world.<sup>115</sup> "The presence of autos in a national park," he observes, "embodied the hopeful notion that nature and technology could be blended into a new kind of aesthetic, one which would solve the social dilemma brought forth by our ambiguous relationship with the natural world."<sup>116</sup>

This new way of experiencing the natural world demanded a renewed attention to the built environment, with road building, traffic control, and parking close to the major scenic attractions. But a sedate contemplation of nature was not enough. Because getting to Yosemite from places like San Francisco was no longer a major expedition, visitors had more time to spend inside the park, and wanted things to do while they were there. And while camping out of their cars was good enough for some visitors, many others had no familiarity with the "outdoor life," and came to Yosemite expecting to find all the comforts of home. Administrators and concessionaires responded with more and better quality lodging, more restaurants, expanded retail services, recreational facilities, and educational programs. These in turn required more employees who needed their own services, such as housing, a school, and medical care. Finally, administrators had to find a way to impose these developments on the historic landscape of Yosemite--primarily at the east end of the valley--without causing too much of a perceived change in its essential character.<sup>117</sup>

The new road building program, initiated in 1924 after much delay, was among the most significant of the responses to auto tourism because it produced a series of structures that came to be identified as essential elements of Yosemite's landscape. The sweeping vistas of the backcountry along the Tioga Road, the tunnels and bridges of the Big Oak Flat Road, and especially the Wawona Road and its tunnel were all carefully planned to give visitors iconic overviews of the park's most spectacular features. In Yosemite Valley itself, the roads were laid out to present motorists with a "program" of framed images, which could be further appreciated from conveniently-located pull-offs. Eight granite-faced, concrete arch bridges constructed between 1921 and 1933 provided refreshing views of Yosemite Creek and the Merced River, while seeming to be natural extensions of the surrounding cliffs. In each case, these structures advanced the blending of art, architecture, and landscape design characteristic of the Mather/Albright era, while serving as models for the Park Service in general. In the view of Robert Yard, an early publicist for the National Park Service and later a founder of the Wilderness Society, this was precisely the wrong model. According to Paul S. Sutter, a visit to Yosemite in 1926 convinced Yard that the Valley had been lost, "sacrificed on the altar of

<sup>113</sup> Sellars, *Preserving Nature*, 59-61.

<sup>114</sup> Greene, *Yosemite*, 437-438.

<sup>115</sup> See David Louter, *Windshield Wilderness: Cars, Road, and Nature in Washington's National Parks* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2006).

<sup>116</sup> Louter, "Glaciers and Gasoline," 248-270.

<sup>117</sup> Greene, *Yosemite*, 438-439.

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Gasoline.”<sup>118</sup> As far as Yard was concerned, the Park Service’s emphasis on accommodating automobile tourism effectively disqualified it from acting as the guardian of the nation’s wilderness areas.

Concessions and Tourist Resources: Hotels.<sup>119</sup> When the State of California formally accepted the Yosemite Grant, it acquired control of the primitive tourist facilities that had developed in the area since 1856. The first permanent accommodation in the Valley, known as the Lower Hotel, merited the name only loosely as its amenities did not extend much beyond a roof and a collection of straw mattresses. The second hotel, the Upper hotel, began as a frame tent in 1857 that was replaced two years later by a more substantial structure of local timber. Both establishments seem to have operated on the edge of financial ruin, and passed through the hands of a number of different owners.<sup>120</sup> The third source of hospitality for early tourists, though outside of state jurisdiction, was a cabin constructed at what is now Wawona by Galen Clark in 1857. Afflicted by tuberculosis, Clark had homesteaded the site in 1856 to spend what he assumed would be his final years.<sup>121</sup> In the meantime, he expanded what became known as Clark’s Station or Clark’s Crossing to include tents serving as a tavern and guest quarters, and a log cabin dining hall. Though never an astute businessman, he readily welcomed travelers on their way from Mariposa to the valley, and became a self-taught expert on all aspects of Yosemite’s environment.<sup>122</sup>

Clark’s lack of business acumen forced him to seek a partnership with Edwin Moore in 1869, and to finally sell the hotel operation in 1874 to the firm of Washburn,<sup>123</sup> Chapman, and Coffman. The purchase of what was then known as Big Tree Station included the main hotel building, several smaller lodging houses, service buildings, and an open bridge over the South Fork of the Merced River. The partners added a new building, called “Long White,” in 1876, after which Chapman and Coffman sold their interests to Henry Washburn. With new partner John Bruce, Henry Washburn built a new two-story hotel building in 1878 to replace Clark’s original that had been lost to fire. The three brothers assumed sole ownership of the complex following Bruce’s death in 1882, when the hotel and surrounding area acquired the name Wawona.<sup>124</sup> The Washburns added a third building, “Little White,”<sup>125</sup> in 1884, followed in 1886 by The Pavilion, a studio for John Washburn’s father-in-law Thomas Hill, a noted landscape artist. The brothers entered into a new partnership with J.J. Cook and his son in 1891 to form the Wawona Hotel company, and by 1894 had built a cottage named “Little Brown.” In 1899 the partners began work on “Long Brown,” now known as the Washburn Cottage.<sup>126</sup>

After 1874 and the resolution of private claims in Yosemite Valley, business enterprises were allowed only as concessions from the government. The existing hotels were made available for lease on a ten-year plan, with rates set by the board of commissioners. These were the Upper Hotel near the Sentinel Bridge, also known variously as

<sup>118</sup> Paul S. Sutter, *Driven Wild: How the Fight against Automobiles Launched the Modern Wilderness Movement* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2002), 126

<sup>119</sup> On concessions in the National Park Service, see Mark Daniel Barringer, *Selling Yellowstone: Capitalism and the Construction of Nature* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2002).

<sup>120</sup> Greene, *Yosemite*, 44-45.

<sup>121</sup> The surroundings apparently agreed with Clark, and his “final years” stretched to more than five decades.

<sup>122</sup> Greene, *Yosemite*, 41-42.

<sup>123</sup> Brothers Henry, John, and Edward.

<sup>124</sup> Said to be a Nutchu term meaning “big tree.”

<sup>125</sup> Renamed the Manager’s Cottage in 1952.

<sup>126</sup> Greene, *Yosemite*, 126-132, 349-350.



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Hutchings House, Barnard's Hotel, and Sentinel Hotel; Lower, or Black's Hotel at the foot of Four-Mile Trail; Leidig's Hotel to the west of Black's Hotel; La Casa Nevada adjacent to Nevada Fall; Mountain House at Glacier Point; and the Cosmopolitan Bathhouse and Saloon in the Old Village. Mountain View House at Peregoy Meadow and the Wawona Hotel remained under private ownership. The lease arrangement had its shortcomings, and not the least of these was the lack of incentive for hotel operators to make major investments for repairs or improvements. As a result the buildings slowly deteriorated, with make-do patch jobs to keep them reasonably serviceable.<sup>127</sup>

This situation reflected poorly on the state and its management of the grant, so in 1885 the California legislature authorized construction of a new hotel to accommodate 150 guests in comfort. Named Stoneman House after a former governor, it was completed in 1888 on a site in the present Curry Village area. The commissioners deemed it "an exceedingly pretty structure, of slightly modern gothic suspicion, three and one half stories in height, with eighty rooms, dining room accommodations for two hundred, large vestibuled parlor, capacious office, reading and writing rooms, and all modern improvements . . ." With the new hotel in place, the commissioners decided to remove the worst of the existing buildings, leaving Barnard's, or Sentinel, Hotel as the only other source of lodging in the Valley. Unfortunately, the Stoneman House proved to have been poorly designed and built, and was a source of constant problems until it finally burned down in 1896.<sup>128</sup>

With the loss of Stoneman House, tourist accommodations in the Valley reverted to the aging Sentinel Hotel, an assortment of campgrounds, and from 1899 the Camp Curry complex (discussed below). Stephen Mather and Interior Secretary Franklin Lane worried that these would not be able to handle the increased visitation they expected after the completion of the Panama Canal. As a result, in 1915 the old Army administrative camp on the site of the native village of Koomine was transformed into the Yosemite Lodge. Located along the base of the north canyon wall, southwest of Yosemite Village, north of the Merced River, and immediately west of Yosemite Creek, the lodge provided more "rustic" housing than the Sentinel Hotel. Increased visitor demands after World War II made it necessary to completely rebuild the Lodge in 1956, replacing the original main building. Developed over many years as a housing, lodging, and administrative center, Yosemite Lodge was comprised of a number of building clusters set in groves of trees and open meadows areas. These clusters include various lodging developments, a visitor-services and recreation complex containing both indoor and outdoor facilities, and a network of parking and circulation systems including pedestrian, vehicular, and bicycling. The Lodge consisted of mid-scale motel units, a main lodge and registration center, two restaurants, a cafeteria, bar, gift and general merchandise store, a specialty gift shop, bike rental shop, post office, and post-flood temporary employee housing. All lodging and some employee housing consisted of multiple-unit-dormitory- or motel-unit-building-style construction. As a result of flood damage in 1997, the last original cabins were removed from the area, leaving only those buildings constructed from 1956.<sup>129</sup>

While the Yosemite Lodge increased the number of comfortable, "middle-class" accommodations, Stephen Mather wanted a luxury hotel in Yosemite that would meet the high standards for national park lodges that began with the Old Faithful Inn at Yellowstone (1903) and the Grand Canyon's El Tovar (1906). The result, the Ahwahnee, was among the greatest of the national park lodges and also the last; fine hotels were built in the parks during the 1930s

<sup>127</sup> Ibid., 114-138; Runte, *Yosemite*, 28-44, 51-53.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid., 138-145.

<sup>129</sup> Ethan Carr, et. al., "Yosemite Valley National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form," draft copy dated March 3, 2002 (hereafter referred to as "Valley Nomination"), 22.

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and even after the war; but seldom, if ever, would a national park lodge achieve the level of artistic significance of the Ahwahnee.<sup>130</sup>

The Ahwahnee was one of the most important and high profile projects of the NPS during the years Stephen Mather was director. In 1914, prompted by the seemingly random growth of facilities in Yosemite Valley and ongoing problems with concessionaires, Mather became directly involved in national park management. In 1925, after years of difficult political wrangling, Mather began to see his overall goals for the valley be implemented. That year the "new village" was dedicated on the north side of the Merced, with a new administration building and museum under construction. The same year, Mather succeeded in forcing two fractious concessionaires, the Yosemite National Park Company and the Curry Camping Company, to merge and become the sole park concessionaire, the Yosemite Park & Curry Company (YP&CC), which was given near monopoly status within the park. Creating a single concessionaire within the park was a standard goal for Mather and the NPS, because it allowed managers to make plans-and a contract-for the overall future development of the park. The Ahwahnee was the direct result of these arrangements.<sup>131</sup>

For many years Mather had envisioned a truly first class hotel for Yosemite to replace the aging Sentinel (located in the Old Village). The YP&CC hired Gilbert Stanley Underwood as the hotel architect. Underwood was an understandable choice, since he had already developed a series of fine lodges in national parks, including the Bryce and Zion lodges. Underwood worked closely on all these projects with the then chief landscape architect at the NPS, Daniel Hull. In his position as landscape architect, Hull was in charge of many major park planning decisions, as well as the design of developed areas throughout the park system. Hull also collaborated with Underwood on other projects, as a de facto partner in a private firm, a situation that was soon found to be unethical and helped lead to Hull's departure from the NPS in 1927.<sup>132</sup>

But the close collaboration between the architect and the NPS landscape architect led to excellent results, and the Ahwahnee was one of them. The developed area was sited in the eastern end of the valley, in an area that had once been a Native American village. It had later been the site of J. C. Lamon's homestead, and in 1878 it became the first official campground in the valley when Aaron Harris opened a public camping facility. In 1888, the area was developed as an extensive stable complex, known as Kenneyville. But by the mid-1920s, Kenneyville stables were cleared to make way for the Ahwahnee.<sup>133</sup>

The hotel itself is a six-story, steel frame and reinforced concrete structure. Large wings contain a massive lounge and a dining room, both of which are extraordinary spaces. The dining room features high, exposed timber vaulting, and the lounge has an ornate, coffered ceiling. Native American design motifs run throughout the building's interior design, and the hotel also displays an impressive collection of Native American art. The exterior of the building is sheathed in tinted, textured concrete, and extensive veneer of native granite boulders. The building's massing is broken up, creating the sense of a rambling, organic structure that belies the sheer size of the facility. The Ahwahnee has continued in operation as a first-class hotel except for a period during World War II when it was converted into a naval hospital. The Ahwahnee was listed in the National Register in 1977, and was designated a

<sup>130</sup> Carr, et. al., "Valley Nomination," 41.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

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National Historic Landmark for its significance in architecture in 1987.<sup>134</sup>

Concessions and Tourist Resources: Camping Campsites for visitors were generally located in the eastern part of the valley, sited near riverbanks at bends in the river. Early campgrounds in the valley were somewhat ill-defined and early visitors to the valley often camped in any open space available. In the early 1920s, the NPS maintained 11 free public camps, each about one mile square. When the All-Year Highway opened in 1926 visitation to the valley increased dramatically with many visitors camped in meadows not normally used for campsites, causing significant damage. In response, and over the following several years, camping areas were designated along the Merced River and were formalized. Camping was limited to 30 days in an effort to reduce the crowding and accommodate the large numbers of campers requesting space. The biggest change to the campground area occurred in 1939 when several campsites were developed in the valley based on the Meineke Camping System, implemented throughout the park service. By design, spaces for campers were designated in a manner that precluded damage to vegetation, and offered parking spaces, room for tents, firepits, and articulated paths to minimize the trampling of vegetation. In 1941, 94 campsites added at Camp 11 using these design standards. After World War II, repeated flooding and denuding of the riverbanks as a result of intense use, lead to the redevelopment of several campgrounds. Work undertaken included reconfiguring campsites, rerouting circulation, and constructing new comfort stations.<sup>135</sup>

Camp Curry was established in 1899 by David and Jennie Curry, two school teachers from Indiana. Tent cabins and communal meals in a central dining hall made Camp Curry a more affordable option for staying in Yosemite Valley than hotels like the Sentinel, while offering a camping experience for those not prepared to camp on their own. The formula proved extremely popular, and Camp Curry grew from a dozen tents to hundreds of tents in a matter of a few years. A social phenomenon as much as a campground, the camp featured charismatic managers (especially David and "Mother" Curry), nightly entertainment (often put on by staff), and the famous "firefall," in which a bonfire was pushed off Glacier Point at night, creating a cascade of fire.<sup>136</sup>

Camp Curry was one of a number of national park tent camps in the early 20th century, such as the "Wylie Way" camps at Yellowstone, or Reese's Camp at Mount Rainier. Other, shorter lived camps were located in Yosemite Valley, as well. Almost all of these other tent camps disappeared by the 1940s, as the public demanded more elaborate motel units. Camp Curry also closed briefly during World War II, but reopened in 1945 and soon was as large as ever. Since then it has operated as the last significant tent camp of its type in the national park system. Camp Curry survived for a number of reasons, including the range of entertainments and other attractions organized by its managers. In later years, the tradition associated with the camp, as well as the always strong demand for housing of any type in the Yosemite Valley, have helped to assure the continued public interest in this type of accommodation.<sup>137</sup>

Camp Curry was located at the east end of the valley, at the foot of Glacier Point on the south side of the Merced River. The area offered views of Glacier Point, Half Dome, Royal Arches, Washington Column, and other features, and was near an apple orchard planted by James Lamon in 1861. The site had been previously used as at least one family's summer tent camp, and the old tent platforms were used to establish the first Camp Curry (known briefly

<sup>134</sup> Carr, et. al., "Valley Nomination," 41-42.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid., 17; Barringer, *Selling Yellowstone*, 51-52.

<sup>136</sup> Carr, et. al., "Valley Nomination," 47.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid.



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as Camp Sequoia). The new business flourished under the relaxed control of the Yosemite state board of commissioners. By 1905, roads connected Camp Curry to the Old Village to the west, and the Currys had constructed dozens of tent cabin platforms, permanent dining and registration buildings, bathrooms, and tennis and croquet facilities. Business was brisk, and even after a destructive fire in 1912, 254 tent cabins were open the next year. That year a new sewer had made it possible to plan still further expansion. By 1915, there were 540 tents, as well as numerous services and recreational activities available to the public. Most of the tents during this period were located to the east of the core facility area, stretched out in a narrow area between the park road to the north and the talus slopes to the south. Other groups of tents, notably "Nob Hill" and "the Terrace," were to the south of the core area.<sup>138</sup>

The 1920s were years of further expansion. In 1919, Jennie Curry paid for the relocation of the LeConte Memorial Lodge (1903) in order to allow expansion of Camp Curry to the west. In 1922, a group of 48 wooden bungalows were completed to the west of the core facility area, providing another level of accommodations, separated from the main body of tents. By that time, Camp Curry had telephones, evening movies, a pool hall and dance pavilion, a gas station and garage, a soda fountain, and numerous cottages and other residences for employees. In 1925, Camp Curry came of age, in a sense, as the Curry Camping Company merged with the Yosemite National Park Company, creating a unified concessionaire for Yosemite Valley. In 1927, the need for more parking was met (following the suggestion of F. L. Olmsted, Jr.) by parking cars between the rows of apple trees in the 1861 orchard. By this time, Camp Curry featured a swimming pool, ice rink (pond), and co-sponsored "Indian Field Days" competitions.<sup>139</sup>

The Depression and World War II slowed the pace of growth at Camp Curry, and closed it entirely in 1943. But following the war visitation to Yosemite Valley increased dramatically, and by 1959, the camp once again operated almost 500 tents and 200 bungalow and cabin rooms, numbers which are comparable to the operation today. Various other changes occurred in the postwar period. The old dance hall became a lodging unit, the Stoneman-House. The central dining facility (1929) burned and was replaced by a new complex in the 1970s. A new pool and bath house and a new skating rink were built, as well, but Camp Curry retains its overall integrity. Camp Curry was first listed in the National Register as a historic district in 1976 (amended 1979).<sup>140</sup>

**Outdoor Recreation and Environmental Preservation in the Yosemite region, 1864-1971.**

Early Outdoor Recreation. The National Park Service Act signed by President Woodrow Wilson in 1916 (also known as the Organic Act) established what Stephen Mather termed the "double mandate": the parks were to be simultaneously used and preserved.<sup>141</sup> But, as Richard West Sellars notes in *Preserving Nature in the National Parks: A History*, Mather did not regard this mandate as a contradiction. "To him," Sellars explains, "the national parks were places where the American people, through 'clean living in God's great out-of-doors,' could renew their spirits and

<sup>138</sup> Ibid.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid., 47-48.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid.

<sup>141</sup> "The service thus established shall promote and regulate the use of the Federal areas known as national parks, monuments, and reservations hereinafter specified by such means and measures as conform to the fundamental purpose of the said parks, monuments, and reservations, which purpose is to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations," excerpted from "An Act to Establish a National Park Service, and for Other Purposes" August 25, 1916 (39 Stat. 535).

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become better citizens." For the parks to be "preserved unimpaired" meant to Mather that they were unimpaired in their essential use as the "national playground system."<sup>142</sup>

Yosemite, more than many national parks, has long been identified with this playground ideal. Despite the pleas of individuals such as John Muir and Frederick Law Olmsted, in its early days the park was first and foremost a resort destination. The valley floor was heavily developed with hotels, cabins, and camps for tourist lodging, and pastures, cattle pens, farms, orchards, irrigation, timber operations and even a chapel to support their basic needs. Sellars describes the valley as "a kind of viewing platform from which to enjoy the scenery."<sup>143</sup> For many early visitors, an Emerson-like regeneration through exposure to natural beauty was recreation enough, while others looked for a more vigorous way to encounter Yosemite's beauty. Toll privileges granted by state commissioners enabled concessionaires to build trails to the valley rim, such as the Four-Mile Trail (1871-1872) and the Yosemite Falls Trail (1873-1877), and to improve the Vernal Fall and Mist Trails. In the spirit of Victorian adventure, George Anderson reached the top of the seemingly unclimbable Half Dome on October 12, 1875 and within the week was leading tourists up the precarious route.

The rise of auto-tourism in the twentieth century brought new types of visitors to Yosemite, many of whom were interested in more familiar types of recreation.<sup>144</sup> Secretary of the Interior Hubert Work's 1925 Statement of National Park Policy endorsed this development, declaring "All outdoor sports within the safeguards thrown around the national parks by law, should be heartily endorsed and aided wherever possible. Mountain climbing, horseback riding, walking, motoring, swimming, boating, and fishing will ever be the favorite sports."<sup>145</sup> As described above, Camp Curry provided the sorts of "urban" activities associated with the typical vacation resorts, including dances, movies, a swimming pool in the summer, and ice skating and tobogganing in winter. Stephen Mather was especially interested in developing organized winter sports at Yosemite, in hopes that the park would develop into a year-round resort.<sup>146</sup> As Hal Rothman notes, this would be a distinctly middle-class development, as the wealthy elite typically preferred to spend their winters in warm weather resorts.<sup>147</sup> In keeping with Mather's ideas, Curry Company President Donald Tresidder hired in 1928 a Swiss native, Ernst desBaillets, who had been successful promoting winter development at Lake Placid in New York State, to organize skiing, skating, ice hockey, and other winter sports in Yosemite.<sup>148</sup>

Winter Sports.<sup>149</sup> In 1928 the YP&CC formed the Yosemite Winter Club, the pioneer California winter sports organization. Its objectives were the general development of winter sports, the promotion of amateur competition, and continued improvement of Yosemite's winter facilities. Physical improvements included an ice rink formed by sprinkling the Camp Curry parking area and a new toboggan slide built in 1927 west of the camp. The older slide became the enjoyable ride referred to as "Ash-Can Alley." During the late 1920s and early 1930s, the company kept

<sup>142</sup> Sellars, *Preserving Nature*, 88-90.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid., 18; See also Pomeroy, *Golden West*, 51-52.

<sup>144</sup> Rothman, *Devil's Bargains*, 149-153.

<sup>145</sup> Hubert Work, "Statement of National Park Policy" in Dilsaver ed., *America's National Park System*, available at [http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online\\_books/anps/anps\\_2c.htm](http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online_books/anps/anps_2c.htm)

<sup>146</sup> Sellars, *Preserving Nature*, 63.

<sup>147</sup> Rothman, *Devil's Bargains*, 182.

<sup>148</sup> Greene, "Yosemite Draft MPD," E41.

<sup>149</sup> See Annie Gilbert Coleman, "The Unbearable Whiteness of Skiing," *Pacific Historical Review* 1996 65(4): 583-614.

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horses in the valley for sleighing and ski-jöring in Stoneman Meadow, which also provided a field for dog teams. Figure skating contests and ice carnivals were held frequently. Tresidder developed the moraine near Tenaya Creek Bridge into a temporary ski hill and later installed a jump. Areas along the Big Oak Flat and Tioga roads catered to skiers when the valley had insufficient snowfall.<sup>150</sup>

The Yosemite Park and Curry Company believed that High Sierra ski tours would greatly increase the scope of winter sports in Yosemite, and, in entering that pioneer field, devised cross-country ski tours of two to six days, the first time such tours were attempted in the United States. It remodeled the little Glacier Point Mountain House for winter use and, in 1929, built an experimental ski cabin on the shoulder of Mount Watkins above Snow Creek, initiating the first hut system for ski-mountaineering in the Sierra. The cabin was enlarged in 1930. The hut was to serve as a starting place for tours of the High Sierra camps, which would also be developed with a series of ski huts similar to those used in the European Alps. Eldridge T. Spencer of San Francisco drew the cabin plans, with Tresidder making suggestions drawn from a book of pictures and plans of Swiss mountain huts. Visitors arrived at the cabin on horseback, snowshoes, foot, and skis for the start of ski tours, which ran from Mount Watkins to Snow Flat and from the cabin to Tenaya Lake and Tuolumne Meadows. The Park Service allowed the Tenaya Lake and Tuolumne Meadows ranger cabins to be stocked and used in the winter as bases for those skiing expeditions. A ski school was started at Yosemite in 1928, with professional instructors and ski guides providing competent ski instruction. As it developed, ski touring did not become as popular as expected, with downhill skiing on packed slopes turning into the main winter attraction. In 1929 Horace Albright made a bid for Yosemite to host the 1932 Winter Olympics but was turned down in favor of Lake Placid.<sup>151</sup>

By the 1930s, skiers began to gravitate toward the Badger Pass area as downhill skiing increased in popularity. As Rothman notes, "The traditional cross-country skiing [as originally promoted by the YP&CC] was hard, physical work; the new activity was fun."<sup>152</sup> The Snow Creek cabin continued to provide a more extensive ski terrain than the valley floor offered, with skiers often using a small hill near the cabin as a practice slope. The cabin served five seasons for skiing, until the spring of 1934. Although park visitors did not use the cabin much after that, rangers en route to Yosemite Creek or Tuolumne Meadows on snow surveys would occasionally stop overnight. During the spring, men sent by the concessionaire to Tuolumne Meadows and Merced Lake to fill the ice houses, which were used for refrigeration purposes for the high country camps, would stop by. Famed photographer Ansel Adams visited the cabin several times to take pictures of the high country in winter. The Curry Company basically abandoned the cabin after that time, although it was occasionally used as an overnight refuge by backcountry travelers. Volunteer "rangers" sometimes lived in the building, which has had some use as a backcountry patrol cabin.<sup>153</sup>

Because the valley facilities for handling the public had proven inadequate, Donald Tresidder felt justified in making Badger Pass the focal point of his company's ski development. He fully expected it to turn into one of the great skiing centers of the Sierra because of its easy access from the valley its, sufficient quantity of snow even in drier years, its good quality of snow and its good skiing terrain. He finally abandoned the valley toboggan and ash can slides because of the possibility of serious accidents. Tresidder began construction on the lodge at Monroe Meadows

<sup>150</sup> Greene, "Yosemite Draft MPD," E41.

<sup>151</sup> Greene, "Yosemite Draft MPD," E41-E42.

<sup>152</sup> Rothman, *Devil's Bargains*, 180.

<sup>153</sup> Greene, "Yosemite Draft MPD," E42.



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in late September 1935 The log slab structure, also designed by Eldridge Spencer, opened in December of that year as did a ski lift. Several of the Badger Pass ski school's directors and instructors proved very influential in the development of skiing in the West. The Ostrander ski hut, built as a touring shelter by the Park Service in 1940 with CCC labor, became an important addition to the park's winter facilities. Tresidder took a great personal interest in the development of winter sports in California, and Yosemite, a pioneer in the winter sports field, is one of the oldest and largest centers for ski enthusiasts in the West.<sup>154</sup>

The Sierra Club and later Outdoor Recreation.<sup>155</sup> Most early visitation to Yosemite centered on Yosemite Valley, which became the focal point of camping, hiking, and sightseeing activities. Even after Yosemite Valley and the Mariposa Grove became part of the larger national park, few tourists ventured into the backcountry. This was primarily because many of those who could afford an extended trip to the park during these years preferred to experience nature in some degree of comfort, and stayed close to the Valley's amenities.<sup>156</sup> However, from 1901 the generally well-to-do members of the Sierra Club made use of packtrains to carry supplies for their annual High Trips, which were elaborate expeditions into the backcountry of as many as two hundred people at a time, attended by as many as fifty packers and camp staff. In the process, the Club set a precedent for the permanent camps that would later be developed in Yosemite.<sup>157</sup>

Stephen Mather followed this precedent during his several publicity trips into the western high country to gain support for the parks. These trips to entertain influential editors, politicians, and conservationists had been characterized by quantities of good food and various other creature comforts. Mather determined that this ability to view the beauties of nature without the attendant hardships of setting up camp and cooking could serve to draw more tourists into the less developed parts of Yosemite and further broaden its appeal. Previously concessionaires had been reluctant to establish extensive camping accommodations in isolated sections of the Park because of the expense and the uncertainty of patronage. The newly created National Park Service, on the other hand, requested that camps be established in an attempt to draw visitors to the Yosemite high country and relieve the growing congestion in Yosemite Valley.<sup>158</sup>

Forerunners of the present High Sierra camps were instituted from 1916 to 1918. These facilities, despite an uncertain beginning and various changes in use, facilities, and sometimes location through the years, became very popular because of their low prices and the beauty of their surroundings. Located within a day's walk of each other so that visitors could easily complete a grand High Sierra loop walk, the camps offered simple food and sleeping accommodations at the end of each day. In addition to enabling increased visitor use of the backcountry, these camps established a pattern of interpretive service by offering organized hikes guided by an NPS naturalist who accompanied visitors to the camps and lectured to them on natural and cultural history along the way. Many Park Service officials

<sup>154</sup> Ibid., E42-E43.

<sup>155</sup> See "Outdoor Recreation for America: A Report to the President and to the Congress by the Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission [ORRRC], Laurence S. Rockefeller, Chairman, January 1962" for an overview of postwar recreation policies and proposals.

<sup>156</sup> Greene, "Yosemite Draft MPD," E40.

<sup>157</sup> Michael P. Cohen, *The History of the Sierra Club 1892-1970* (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1988), 62-63.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid.; Sellars, *Preserving Nature*, 61-62.

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believed this integrated experience provided the best means of spreading the word regarding National Park Service objectives in wilderness preservation.<sup>159</sup>

Unfortunately for some, this camp system simply recreated the crowding typical of the Valley in the High Sierra. David Brower, executive director of the Sierra Club from 1952 to 1969, was typical of those who, like Muir, preferred to travel simply into the backcountry and experience the “challenge of the wilderness”<sup>160</sup> on its own terms. Inspired by this problem, he and others in the club published a *Wilderness Handbook* in 1951 that aimed to “encourage those who feel they should like to be up there—up where the trails are”<sup>161</sup> in Yosemite or any wild area throughout the country. The comprehensive guidebook helped to direct the growth of backpacking in Yosemite as an alternative to the more structured camp system, and encouraged a greater appreciation of the areas of the park away from roads. The Park Service supported this process through the maintenance of trails and the development of special services such as walk-in campgrounds, bear-proof food storage equipment, and wilderness centers providing backpackers with information and supplies.

The Sierra Club.<sup>162</sup> Promoting greater access and understanding of the more remote mountain regions accessible had been a guiding factor in the creation of the Sierra Club in 1892. The articles of incorporation committed the members “To explore, enjoy, and render accessible the mountain regions of the Pacific Coast; To publish authentic information concerning them; To enlist the support and cooperation of the people and the government in preserving the forests and other natural features of the Sierra Nevada Mountains.”<sup>163</sup> The ideal, as expressed by the club’s first president John Muir, was to “do something for wilderness and make the mountains glad.”<sup>164</sup> However, as Michael Cohen observes in his history of the club, the average member regarded the wilderness as something that should exist at the same time as the highly developed city, rather than in place of it. In fact, unlike Muir, the majority of the founding members were professionals from the San Francisco Bay area who likely saw Yosemite as a refuge from the cares of urban life.<sup>165</sup> As Stephen Fox explains in his analysis of the movement, “Conservation began as a hobby and became a profession.”<sup>166</sup>

The club’s mandate at times put it at odds with the administrators of Yosemite, and at other times in agreement. During its first decade, club members frequently criticized the management of the park by the California state board of commissioners, but by 1897 they received permission to establish a summer headquarters in the valley to provide maps and other information to visitors.<sup>167</sup> The following year, commission chairman Abbott Kinney proclaimed the move a success, declaring in an official report “Science, literature, sport, outdoor life and the general

<sup>159</sup> Greene, “Yosemite Draft MPD,” E40-E41.

<sup>160</sup> David Brower, ed., *The Sierra Club Wilderness Handbook*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., (New York: Sierra Club/Ballantine Books, 1971), x.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*, xi.

<sup>162</sup> On John Muir, see especially “A Conservationist Prototype,” Part I in Stephen Fox, *The American Conservation Movement: John Muir and His Legacy* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1981); Sierra Club Online Exhibit

[http://www.sierraclub.org/john\\_muir\\_exhibit/life/](http://www.sierraclub.org/john_muir_exhibit/life/)

<sup>163</sup> Quoted in Cohen, *The History of the Sierra Club*, 9.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>165</sup> Holway R. Jones, *John Muir and the Sierra Club: The Battle for Yosemite* (San Francisco: Sierra Club, 1965), Appendix A, “Agreement of Association,” 170-173.

<sup>166</sup> Fox, *American Conservation Movement*, 107.

<sup>167</sup> Greene, *Yosemite*, 355.

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healthy heart renewal coming from contact with nature are all served in the Yosemite, and can be and must be still more so in the grand and almost unknown scenery of the High Sierra. . . The Sierra Club will be a center of information for travel into the wonders of these peaks, volcanoes of the past, glaciers, rivers, and lakes."<sup>168</sup> The original headquarters, known as the Sinning Cottage, was replaced in 1903 by the LeConte Memorial Lodge, built to commemorate the life and work of geologist, natural historian, and Sierra Club member Joseph LeConte, who had died at Camp Curry in 1901. In 1915 the club built a second memorial lodge at Tuolumne Meadows in honor of Edward Parsons, a director of the club and a dedicated advocate of conservation efforts.<sup>169</sup> Both buildings were completed to the highest architectural standards, and served as important centers of education for visitors to Yosemite.

The work of the Sierra Club and other conservation organizations during the first half of the twentieth century promoted a greater understanding of the natural world throughout the United States, and helped to move Americans away from the expectation that national parks should serve as highly developed resorts. In 1936 John White, superintendent of Sequoia National Park, advised "It should be clearly understood that the park is not in competition with other resorts,"<sup>170</sup> and made a number of suggestions aimed at reducing "artificial" forms of recreation that detracted from the appreciation of the natural scenery. Increasing levels of environmental awareness during the twentieth century indeed prompted many visitors to seek out the Yosemite depicted in the photographs of Ansel Adams or the writings of John Muir, rather than the fun and games promoted by the Yosemite Park and Curry Company. Post war prosperity and the baby-boom dramatically increased the number of visitors to National Parks and introduced millions of Americans to the ideas behind the park system. By the 1960s a new generation of environmental advocates informed by the insights of ecological science and inspired by the work of Rachel Carson were looking for a different kind of park experience than previous generations. Prosperity coupled with environmentalism's counter-cultural aspects in the post-war decades that emphasized direct, personal interaction with nature, rather than received wisdom. The result was the growth of forms of recreation at Yosemite that emphasized individual achievement and closeness to the environment, such as wilderness camping and rock climbing.

Rock Climbing in Yosemite National Park, ca. 1947 – 1970.<sup>171</sup> Until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century Europeans dominated the sport of rock climbing. After conquering the Alps, these mountaineers went on to scale other glacial peaks such as the South American Andes, the Himalayas and the Caucasus of Russia. As they searched for new adventures in North America the snow covered mountains of Alaska and Canada were their first choice but they soon learned of a new style of climbing evolving in the Sierras of California.

<sup>168</sup> Abbott Kinney, quoted in Jones, *John Muir*, 60.

<sup>169</sup> Greene, 353, 491.

<sup>170</sup> John R. White, "Address to Special Superintendents' Meeting, Washington, D.C., February 10, 1936," in Dilsaver ed., *America's National Park System*, available at [http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online\\_books/anps/anps\\_3g.htm](http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online_books/anps/anps_3g.htm)

<sup>171</sup> Gary Arce, *Defying Gravity: High Adventure on Yosemite's Walls* (Berkeley: Wilderness Press, 1996); Chris Jones, *Climbing in North America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976); Paul Piana, *Big Walls: Breakthroughs on the Free-Climbing Frontier* (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1997); Steve Roper, *Camp 4: Recollections of A Yosemite Rockclimber* (Seattle: The Mountaineers Books, 1994); Doug Scott, *Big Wall Climbing: Development, Techniques and Aids*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981). Ed Bennett, "The Bay Chapter and the birth of modern rock climbing", Sierra Club Rock Climbing Section of San Francisco Bay *Yodeler*, June 1999. Jim Bridwell, "Brave New World", *Mountain* 31, 1973. Kor, Layton, *Beyond the Vertical*. Boulder, Co., Alpine House, 1983.



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The walls of Yosemite attracted western climbers for many years, including John Muir in 1869. Although most of the significant peaks were climbed by the Civil War the sheer granite walls of the Valley were considered impossibly steep and featureless and assumed to be un-climbable. For those who dared to dream of scaling the walls it was clear that some innovative technology would be required. In summer of 1871, George Anderson lead the way by placing the first bolts to be used in Yosemite rock climbing into flanks of Half Dome. By attaching ropes to the bolts, Anderson fashioned a means of ascending the peak that experts had deemed insurmountable. The modern day cable route is close to the route taken by Anderson. The remaining in situ spikes are among the most notable extant relics of the early climbing era that retain the historical location and context. The boldness of Anderson's ascent inspired a wave of stunning climbs on Cathedral Rocks and other notable Valley features in the first decades of the twentieth century. By the 1930s Yosemite had become the new test for mountaineers. The challenges posed by the smooth granite walls, vertical cracks that stopped and started out of nowhere, as well as a beneficial climate, attracted climbers from around the world to Yosemite. But for nearly a decade the new leaders in rock climbing came from California.<sup>172</sup>

Building on Anderson's lead pioneer Yosemite climbers like John Salathe worked in the park to develop new equipment that would enable enthusiasts to succeed in their climbing goals. Their efforts were crude at first relying on junk yard scrap and odds and ends to provide the raw material for new harder pitons, bolt hangers and other devices needed to ascend vertical granite. World War II temporarily slowed this development and most climbing stopped while some climbers enlisted in the military and offered their expertise to train specialized mountain troops. Prior to WWII virtually all professionally manufactured climbing equipment came from Europe, but the war forced Americans to produce their own rope and tools. Later the surplus goods would provide the foundation for the growth of a new outdoor recreation industry based on products designed for use in Yosemite and typical American conditions. Most of the innovation in the climbing community came from the West and Yosemite became the ultimate laboratory for outdoor technology. With its vast array of climbing condition, significant logistical challenges and wild extremes of weather Yosemite provided the perfect environment for innovation in the nascent outdoor sports equipment industry. While much of the climbing in the East was thoroughly explored by the end of WWII Westerners had a wealth of untapped challenges as most of the precarious walls of Yosemite remained untouched. El Capitan, the Northwest face of Half Dome and Lost Arrow all required new technology and a level of boldness far beyond current international standards.

From Anderson's time in Yosemite through the late early 1970s all rock climbing involved a combination of direct aid, the direct use of carried hardware to aid the climber in the ascent, and "free climbing", climbers using their equipment only for protection from a fall. While there was much free climbing activity in Yosemite from the earliest days, direct aid was a necessity for the ascents on the Cathedral Spires and other technical climbs. Prior to WWII Americans relied on softer pitons of various lengths and widths. But the soft iron and soft steel pitons imported from Europe were no match for the diamond hard granite of Yosemite. These pitons were fine for glacial peaks but proved too soft for the granite walls of Yosemite.<sup>173</sup> John Salathe, a Swiss born ironworker, redesigned the piton using Model A Ford axles which were lighter but stronger than European steel. Salathe was a skilled metal worker and succeeded in developing new pitons specially suited for Yosemite. In addition to new and stronger metals Salathe developed

<sup>172</sup> Steve Roper, *Camp 4: Recollections of a Yosemite Rockclimber*. Mountaineers Books, 1998.

<sup>173</sup> Steven M. Cox and Kris Fulsaa, eds. *Mountaineering: The Freedom of the Hills*. Seattle: Mountaineers Books; 7th edition (September 2003). Best single reference guide for climbing techniques and equipment.

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new shapes and sizes of pitons and methods for their use in the wide cracks of the park. In some cases local climbers salvaged old stove legs from a nearby dump shaping them to fit the uneven cracks of the Valley. The trend in technological innovation was spurred by the dramatic successes of Salathe on Cathedral and the Lost Arrow. Successive generations of Yosemite climbers spent years developing tools and techniques to climb progressively harder cliffs. Chuck Wilts invented the knife blade peg using aircraft grade steel. Primarily designed to fit into cracks too small for fingers to grasp, they were also reusable. Other innovations included sky hooks used to hang from horizontal flakes or crystals; bat hooks that required less drilling than bolts, and the postage stamp sized RURP (Realized Ultimate Reality Piton) for use on insipient cracks on otherwise bald faces. Climbers also devised creative systems for hauling gear and water up vertical cliffs including the short lived dolt cart and a series of gear bags or "pigs". Later, the push for clean climbing (the use of artificial chock stones, camming devices and other non-scaring gear) was developed to prevent further damage to the walls. The obsessive quest to push the limits of human ability on the walls of Yosemite ushered in a period of unprecedented technological advance in outdoor recreation gear. While most of these climber/inventors were motivated by a single minded effort to conquer climbs that had been considered impossible by previous generations the result of these efforts was the creation of a significant outdoor industry.

During the 1950s and especially after the death of President Kennedy many climbers expressed the sentiment of others from their generation. Dropping out of school and rejecting the values and morals of their parents, the climbers searched for a new way of life. Climbers in Yosemite banded together as a family and stationed themselves at Camp 4. Here they forged a sense of community and purpose they could not find outside the granite walls of the park. Casual labor jobs allowed for regular climbs and in the evenings they would come together to compare notes on the ascents attempted that day. Camp 4 became a spiritual home for Yosemite climbers, one that provided a ritual importance to everyday life. While social standards were abandoned, religious values remained intact, as many believed deliverance would come from toil and purification through the granite walls.

The culture of Camp 4 played a crucial role in the development of American and international rock climbing between 1947-1970. During this time pioneer rock climbers like Yvon Chouinard, Layton Kor, Royal Robbins and many others not only invented modern rock climbing, but also revolutionized outdoor recreation in America. To tourists, NPS rangers and administrators who dealt with them, the tattered and often filthy climbers who occupied Camp 4 seemed like a collection of lost souls hopelessly out of touch with the mainstream of American culture. Early on, Park service employees as well as concessionaires objected to the climbers viewing them as derelicts and scavengers who stayed too long and gave the park a bad name. Several times during major ascents traffic jams occurred on park roads forcing park officials to ban climbers from the walls until after the tourist season. A reconciliation between the two groups occurred in the 1970s and today the Park Service recruits climbers for Search and Rescue teams as well as for interpretive programs. In hindsight it is clear many of these climbing hobos were savvy inventors and entrepreneurs who help create a multi-billion dollar business niche that occupies a significant place in the international recreational economy. Camp 4 is to outdoor recreation what Edison's laboratory is to the Industrial Revolution, an historic site of invention, ethics, and American entrepreneurial genius. Individuals like Royal Robbins and Ivon Chouinard should be considered significant figures in American history for their contributions to the worldwide evolution of rock climbing as a sport as well as their technical innovations and contributions to a major economic revolution in outdoor equipment and apparel. Chouinard in particular, along with several business savvy partners including climbing pioneer Tom Frost, linked extreme sports, environmental

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advocacy, and consumerism in a way that was completely unique. The resultant explosive growth of outdoor sports in the last four decades has had a considerable impact on American culture and the American economy.

From 1957 to 1967 the daring achievements of climbers brought fame to the sport as well as to the park. More climbers meant increased pressures on the walls. In his book, *Big Wall Climbing, Development, Techniques and Aids*, Doug Scott describes the ascent of the northwest face of Half Dome in 1957 "as the event establishing Yosemite as a great center of world rock climbing."<sup>174</sup> The following year the first route up El Capitan took forty-five days, and required the use of 675 pegs and 125 bolts. The resulting media attention prompted the National Park Service to consider new regulations regarding rock climbing. In addition, many within the sport itself questioned the high number of aids used and prompted serious climbers to search for ways to prevent further damage to the granite walls. Today, the focus has shifted away from *what* is climbed to *how* it is climbed. Free climbing supplanted aid climbing and by the end of the twentieth century all of the big walls in the Valley, once considered impossible by any means, had been climbed completely free in a matter of hours.

The clean climbing revolution had implications beyond the climbing community. Ivon Chouinard became a leading proponent of the clean climbing ethic developing a host of thoughtful and environmentally sensitive products for climbers that were gentle on the rock. Chouinard was among a pioneering group of American businessmen who, in the 1970s, built a business philosophy that united environmentalism, outdoor sports, social responsibility, and huge profits. Worried that the successful technological developments of the post-war period had made access to the rarified cliffs of Yosemite a little too easy Chouinard argued that, "no longer can we assume the Earth's resources are limitless; that there are ranges of unclimbed peaks extending endlessly beyond the horizon. Mountains are finite, and despite their massive appearance, they are fragile."<sup>175</sup> Chouinard was a pioneer of a "green" business model that became a powerful force in shaping American consumerism in the late twentieth century.<sup>176</sup> By the 1980s Camp 4 alumni Frost, Chouinard, and Robbins were influential business leaders who wielded considerable political power and used both their money and influence to help preserve the park they had grown to love as disheveled climbing bums. Yosemite National Park is home to many of the most significant historic rock climbs in the world. The history of climbing in the park and its associated sites and routes offer many opportunities for innovative register listings in the future.

Yosemite National Park and the Preservation/Conservation Debate.<sup>177</sup> The history of Yosemite parallels that

<sup>174</sup> Scott, *Big Wall Climbing*, 145.

<sup>175</sup> Yvon Chouinard & Tom Frost, "A Word" *Chouinard Equipment Catalog* (October, 1974)

<sup>176</sup> Andrew Kirk, "Machines of Loving Grace: Alternative Technology, Environment, and the Counterculture" in Peter Braunstein & Michael Doyle, eds. *Imagine Nation: The American Counterculture of the 1960s & 1970s*. New York: Routledge, 2002. pp.353-378. Paul Hawken, Amory Lovins, L. Hunter Lovins, *Natural Capitalism: Creating the Next Industrial Revolution* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1999)

<sup>177</sup> The historical literature on the environmental movement is vast. See, for example: Roderick Nash. *Wilderness and the American Mind* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974). Samuel P. Hays. *Conservation and the Gospel of Efficiency* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959), *Beauty, Health, and Permanence: Environmental Politics in the United States, 1955-1985* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), and, *Explorations In Environmental History* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1998). Donald Worster, *Nature's Economy: A History of Ecological Ideals* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977). See, also; Michael P. Cohen. *The Pathless Way: John Muir and the American Wilderness* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984). Robert C. Paehlke, *Environmentalism and the Future of Progressive Politics* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989). Stephen Fox, *The American Conservation Movement: John Muir and His Legacy* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1981). Michael Fromme, *Battle for the Wilderness* (New York: Praeger, 1974).



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of the changing theories of preservation and conservation. From the time of James Hutchings's first tourist expedition in 1855, Yosemite has been the subject of debates concerning how its lands and resources are to be used, if at all. The key incident of this long history was the battle for Hetch Hetchy, which from 1906 became an issue of national concern and defined the course of the preservation/conservation debate in the United States for decades to come.

The Yosemite Act of 1864 put the state of California in possession of a region that was already subject to a number of competing uses. In his role as the first chairman of the Board of Commissioners, noted landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted set out to establish a management philosophy for the Yosemite Grant that he hoped would guide its future use and development. Although he completed the report in 1865, it was never submitted to the governor of California, and was not published until 1952. Nevertheless, Olmsted's report, "Yosemite and the Mariposa Grove: A Preliminary Report, 1865" accurately foresaw the pressures that would confront the park's administrators into the twenty-first century. He believed that the primary reason the grant had been established was so that people could enjoy and benefit from its unique scenery:

The first point to be kept in mind then is the preservation and maintenance as exactly as is possible of the natural scenery; the restriction, that is to say, within the narrowest limits consistent with the necessary accommodation of visitors, of all artificial constructions and the prevention of all constructions markedly inharmonious with the scenery or which would unnecessarily obscure, distort or detract from the dignity of the scenery.<sup>178</sup>

Olmsted noted that in the sixteen years since Yosemite was first seen by white Americans, the number of annual visitors had risen into the hundreds. He warned that measures to insure proper use of Yosemite had to be put in place immediately, lest increasing visitation made an irreversible impact on the landscape:

Before many years, if proper facilities are offered, these hundreds will become thousands and in a century the whole number of visitors will be counted by millions. An injury to the scenery so slight that it may be unheeded by any visitor now, will be one multiplied by these millions. But again, the slight harm which the few hundred visitors of this year might do, if no care were taken to prevent it, would not be slight, if it should be repeated by millions.<sup>179</sup>

As the twentieth century approached, pressures to exploit what had become Yosemite National Park for other than scenic uses increased. The political philosophy of the Progressive Era emphasized the notion that nature could be subjected to scientific control, and thus made to effectively serve a number of different ends. This mindset was summarized in the principle of conservation, which found its earliest wide scale expression in the policies of Theodore

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Richard Lamm and Michael McCarthy, *The Angry West: A Vulnerable Land and Its Future* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1982). Kirkpatrick Sale, *The Green Revolution: The American Environmental Movement, 1962-1992* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1993). Philip Shabekoff, *A Fierce Green Fire* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1993). Hal Rothman, *The Greening of a Nation? : Environmentalism in the United States Since 1945* (New York: Harbrace, 1997), and *Saving the Planet: The American Response to the Environment in the Twentieth Century* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2000). Bob Pepperman Taylor, *Our Limits Transgressed: Environmental Political Thought in America* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1992).

<sup>178</sup> Frederick Law Olmsted, *Yosemite and the Mariposa Grove: A Preliminary Report, 1865* (Yosemite National Park: Yosemite Association, 1995), 21.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid., 23.

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Roosevelt and his chief forester, Gifford Pinchot. While conservation was not originally seen as antithetical to the minimal use ideology of those such as John Muir, the city of San Francisco's plans for a reservoir in the Hetch Hetchy Valley hardened the distinction, and initiated one of the great conflicts of twentieth century environmentalism.<sup>180</sup>

San Francisco originally proposed developing the Tuolumne River as a municipal water supply as a part of its efforts to rebuild after the great earthquake of 1906. Many in the Sierra Club supported the project as necessary to California's continued development, and as a counter to the monopoly of the Spring Mountain Water Company. These intentions coincided with the principles of conservation being developed by Gifford Pinchot, who advocated development, efficiency, and the utilitarian goal of the maximum benefit for the greatest number. Muir and Sierra Club member William Colby attempted to fight the Hetch Hetchy plan on philosophical and aesthetic grounds, arguing that the unspoiled valley would represent the maximum spiritual benefit through tourism. They were hampered by the fact that the national parks did not have their own administrative agency, and thus no coherent plan for resource protection. At the same time, progressive conservationists such as Warren Olney—a member of the Sierra Club—sincerely believed that a reservoir would be in the best public interest, and that it would only enhance the tourist potential of Yosemite. Colby sought to counter these problems by forming the Society for the Preservation of National Parks, which drew members from around the country and brought the issue of Hetch Hetchy to the national consciousness. The Society provided a forum for Muir's most deeply held moral claims against the "mad God-forgetting Progressive days," but this could also be a part of the problem. California congressman William Kent observed of Muir "with him it is me and God and the rock where God put it, and that is the end of the story."<sup>181</sup> Despite Colby's best efforts and Muir's distaste for utilitarian conservation, the progressive ideal supported throughout the Hetch Hetchy battle by presidents Roosevelt, Taft, and Wilson finally carried the day when Wilson signed the act approving the project on December 19, 1913. In the end, however, this debate over land use in Yosemite set a number of national precedents, and "Hetch Hetchy" remains a watchword in the environmental community to this day.<sup>182</sup>

**HISTORIC CONTEXT: ARCHITECTURE, LANDSCAPE DESIGN, AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE VISITOR EXPERIENCE IN YOSEMITE (1856-1964)<sup>183</sup>**

Yosemite's built environment is the result of nearly a century of effort by the National Park Service to balance

<sup>180</sup> See Roderick Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind* (1967; 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), 129-130, 135-139.

<sup>181</sup> Cohen, *Sierra Club*, 28; Fox, *American Conservation Movement*, 139-147.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid., 22-33; Norris Hundley, Jr., *The Great Thirst: Californians and Water, 1770s-1990s* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 169-192; Holway R. Jones, *John Muir and the Sierra Club: The Battle for Yosemite* (San Francisco: Sierra Club, 1965), 82-169; Mackintosh, "Parks and People" in Sontag, *National Park Service*, [http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online\\_books/sontag/sontag2.htm](http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online_books/sontag/sontag2.htm); Sellars, *Preserving Nature*, 42-43, 64; Robert M. Utley and Barry Mackintosh, *The Department of Everything Else: Highlights of Interior History* (U.S. Department of the Interior, 1989), Chapter 7, available at [http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online\\_books/utley-mackintosh/index.htm](http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online_books/utley-mackintosh/index.htm)

<sup>183</sup> Linda Flint McClelland's *Building the National Parks: Historic Landscape Design and Construction* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998) can likely be considered the definitive work on this topic. Expanding upon her 1993 study *Presenting Nature: The Historic Landscape Design of the National Park Service, 1916 to 1942*, it provides a comprehensive overview of the history of Park Service design, and focuses heavily on Yosemite as a pattern for the national park system nationwide.

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its twin mandates of preserving natural scenery and providing for public enjoyment, use, and appreciation. As in other areas of Park Service history, Yosemite served as a model for ideas and practices that would subsequently be put into place in other parks throughout the country. Because Yosemite quickly became the focus of intensive tourism and haphazard development in the nineteenth century, it has been an especially significant example of the Park Service's attempts to introduce alternative forms of development that would accommodate ever-increasing levels of visitation, while still harmonizing with the natural surroundings. These forms of development not only included new buildings and structures that were sympathetic to Yosemite's unique scenic environment, but also subtle expressions of landscape architecture that would guide and enhance the visitor's experience. Together, these have formed what landscape architect Ethan Carr has termed *Wilderness by Design*: a middle ground between the totally depopulated wilderness and the dedicated tourist resort, combining elements of both while never quite satisfying advocates for either extreme.<sup>184</sup>

The National Park Service was a product of the Progressive Era in American thought and culture. This was a period when scientific management seemed to hold tremendous promise for advancing all aspects of life, including even the preservation and appreciation of the natural world. As early as 1910, Secretary of the Interior Richard Ballinger called for "complete and comprehensive plans"<sup>185</sup> to be drawn up for the infrastructure, accommodations, and conveniences of every national park as a precursor to significant government investment spending for improvements. Although Ballinger soon fell afoul of Washington politics, his basic ideas maintained their appeal. In 1913, Yosemite's acting superintendent, Maj. William Littebrant, proposed that just such a plan be formulated for the development of Yosemite Valley. Littebrant was particularly concerned by the shabby appearance of Yosemite Village and the dubious nature of its sanitary facilities. He suggested that the work be done by a commission of experts representing the fields of architecture, landscaping, sanitation, and engineering.<sup>186</sup>

Although the specifics of Littebrant's proposal were not taken up, the idea of comprehensive planning for the national parks continued to gain momentum. In 1914 Adolph Miller, the interior secretary's assistant for the national parks, commissioned San Francisco landscape architect Mark Daniels to develop a plan for Yosemite Valley that would include Littebrant's suggestion of a new, harmoniously designed village north of the Merced River.<sup>187</sup> With his commission expanded to that of general superintendent and landscape engineer for all parks, Daniels again issued the call for nationwide comprehensive planning. He cited the particular example of Yosemite, arguing that when the seasonal population of a park's developed areas regularly reached into the thousands, "it ceases to be a camp" and is subject to the problems and concerns of a municipality. With his Progressive sensibilities firmly in place, Daniels argued that scientific planning could mitigate the impact of urbanization with the national parks. It would "assure that park development would be efficient and aesthetically consistent--and therefore less destructive to both natural systems and scenery."<sup>188</sup> In Yosemite Daniels proposed that the location and character of every building should be determined "in the light of a careful study of the best arrangement . . . and for picturesqueness." He believed that this meant buildings should be of the "pseudo-vernacular" style, employed as "visual elements of the larger landscape

<sup>184</sup> Ethan Carr, *Wilderness by Design: Landscape Architecture and the National Park Service* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998).

<sup>185</sup> Carr, *Wilderness by Design*, 106.

<sup>186</sup> Ibid., 107.

<sup>187</sup> Ibid., 73-74.

<sup>188</sup> Ibid., 106; Linda Flint McClelland, *Presenting Nature: The Historic Landscape Design of the National Park Service, 1916 to 1942*

(National Park Service, National Register of Historic Places, Interagency Resources Division, 1993) available at

[http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online\\_books/mcclelland/mcclelland3b.htm](http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online_books/mcclelland/mcclelland3b.htm)



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composition.”<sup>189</sup>

The United States’ entry into World War One, shortly after the National Park Service had been formally established, prevented the immediate adoption of comprehensive planning as a formal policy. During the subsequent decade Stephen Mather, the Park Service’s first director, oversaw a vigorous program of improvements but drew criticism from certain conservation groups that felt he had placed too much emphasis on development and auto tourism. In 1927 George Vanderbilt Caesar, a member of the Seattle climbing club The Mountaineers, published an article in the *Saturday Evening Post* charging the Park Service with excessive road building programs. With Yosemite in mind, Caesar declared “at least one park in the West is already spoiled to anyone with taste or appreciation.”<sup>190</sup>

Mather’s assistant, Horace Albright, responded to these accusations the following year with his own article in the *Post*, titled “The Everlasting Wilderness.” In it he restated the Park Service’s essential mandate to preserve wilderness--as he understood the term<sup>191</sup>--and described for his readers the two main groups who sought to influence planning in the parks. These were “Those who want no roads into the parks, and who would keep them unbroken wildernesses reached only by trails . . . and those who are spokesmen for automobile clubs, chambers of commerce and other development organizations, whose appetites for road building are never appeased.” Albright explained that the Park Service was aiming for the middle ground: the most significant scenic features of a park should be available to all by means of well-developed roads, while the vast majority of a park’s area would still be reached only by trail.<sup>192</sup>

Albright attempted to clarify this distinction by reviving the idea of comprehensive planning after he assumed the directorship of the Park Service late in 1928. He called for the implementation of regional land use zoning, so that managers would have a clear idea of which areas were subject to development, and which were to remain wilderness. In 1929 Albright issued a memorandum on “General Planning” in which he emphasized that success would depend on collaboration between park superintendent, landscape architects, civil engineers, and sanitary engineers. Because he identified park development with landscape development, he concluded that planning would be coordinated by the Park Service’s Landscape Division.<sup>193</sup>

Thomas Vint, the head of the Landscape Division, took issue with the proposal, suggesting that Albright had really not gone far enough. Rather than simply coordinating and advising the work of other divisions, Vint argued that his division should exercise centralized control over all of the Park Service’s design and construction activities. He reasoned that park development would only attain true beauty when “congruity of parts gives harmonious form to the whole.”<sup>194</sup> Vint was heavily influenced by the work of the elder Frederick Law Olmsted, who conceived of a landscape park as a singular work of art, shaped by a singular motive. Vint insisted that landscape architecture was the essence of the Park Service’s mandate, asking “What is the work of the Park Service but landscape work? What

<sup>189</sup> Carr, *Wilderness by Design*, 108; Albright and Schenck, *Creating the National Parks*, 50; Sellars, *Preserving Nature*, 21-22.

<sup>190</sup> Carr, *Wilderness by Design*, 224.

<sup>191</sup> Albright originally regarded parklands as “either/or” propositions: they were either developed, or they were wilderness. In addition, he strongly resisted definitions of wilderness that completely excluded a human presence. To satisfy Park Service scientists and educators who argued that parts of a park should remain completely undisturbed, planners developed the concept of the “research area,” which would be restricted to all but a few professionals. “Sacred areas” were put forward as more limited cordons around a park’s chief attractions, such as Old Faithful at Yellowstone, to protect them from development or from being damaged by visitors (Carr, 241).

<sup>192</sup> Carr, *Wilderness by Design*, 225; Swain, *Wilderness Defender*, 170-172.

<sup>193</sup> Carr, *Wilderness by Design*, 226.

<sup>194</sup> *Ibid.*, 227.

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organization was ever given a nobler landscape problem?"<sup>195</sup>

Albright took no immediate action, but at the 1932 superintendent's conference at Hot Springs, Arkansas, he formally instituted the "Master Plan" concept that would guide national park development for the rest of the century, and beyond. Ethan Carr notes that Master Plans "exploited the unique legal situation and symbolic potential of national parks."<sup>196</sup> Unlike municipal zoning authorities, park officials had unchallenged authority over the land use within their jurisdictions, enabling planners to practice a more pure form of their craft.

National Park Service Director Stephen Mather and his assistant (and subsequent Director) Horace Albright desired that Yosemite become a showplace of national park values. But establishment of one common design theme proved difficult because of the wide variety of environments in the Park, varying from valley to forests to alpine meadows, the great distances between developed areas, and the stylistic disparity among existing structures. Variations developed to suit each particular park setting. The historical architecture of Yosemite National Park primarily took its cue from the spectacular granite cliffs and heavily wooded forests of the Sierra Nevada, as well as borrowing occasionally from early California building traditions.

**Vernacular Building Traditions in Yosemite National Park (1856 – 1904)**

From the time of the earliest American settlement in the Yosemite area, the entire region was open to development under various land laws. It was only natural that the sites best adapted for commercial use – the best meadow and timber lands, the routes of the first roads and trails – would quickly be appropriated. Settlers acquired these private holdings in various ways, under laws for homesteading, preemption, timber and mineral rights, reservoir sites, and state school lands. Upon establishment of Yosemite National Park in 1890, private individuals held approximately 60,000 acres within the park boundaries.

Numerous cabins were built in the valleys and high country of Yosemite in conjunction with homesteading, stock grazing, mining, and lumbering. The federal government absorbed many of these private holdings as acting park superintendents from the U.S. Army sorted out legitimate, fraudulent and conflicting land ownership claims. Strict interpretation of land laws and national park legislation drove some early settlers out of the park, exerted pressure on other individual land owners, and enabled the Park Service to purchase their properties. Evidence of early land use in the Yosemite area exists today in the form of place names, cabins, activity sites and other material remains.<sup>197</sup>

In 1951, Yosemite Park Ranger Robert F. Uhte, later architect for the California State Park between 1955 and 1964, began to gather information on Yosemite's pioneer cabins.<sup>198</sup> In writing his report, he utilized field notes, rough sketches, and photographs supplied by several other park rangers who had investigated historical structures in the back country during the summers of 1949 and 1950. Uhte was primarily interested in the architecture of log cabins, noting

<sup>195</sup> Ibid., 226-228. See also McClelland, *Presenting Nature*, Part V, available at [http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online\\_books/mcclelland/mcclelland5.htm](http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online_books/mcclelland/mcclelland5.htm)

<sup>196</sup> Carr, *Wilderness by Design*, 227; Horace M. Albright, "Office Order No. 228 Park Planning, April 3, 1931" in Dilsaver ed., *America's National Park System*, available at [http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online\\_books/anps/anps\\_2i.htm](http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online_books/anps/anps_2i.htm)

<sup>197</sup> Greene, "Yosemite Draft MPD," E10.

<sup>198</sup> Tomales Bay State Park General Plan Team, "Tomales Bay State Park Preliminary General Plan Draft Environmental Impact Report" (Sacramento: California Department of Parks and Recreation, 2004), 83; available at <http://www.parks.ca.gov/pages/21299/files/2-tomalesbaygp-preliminary-final-28jan04-maintext.pdf>

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that most of them were simple, crude affairs that were nonetheless interesting because of their history and architectural qualities. Many are fine examples of a local vernacular building tradition. All were designed to be temporary and functional, erected at a minimum of cost and effort.<sup>199</sup>

Round logs with saddle-notched corners – an easy and quick method – characterized most of the cabins investigated. A V-notch cut, easier to form than a U, was sometimes used with round logs, although the saddle notch produced a more finished appearance. A more difficult but more satisfactory method of corner joining used either the dovetail or box corner, usually with hewn logs, but sometimes with round ones. Dovetailing made for a tighter fit and often eliminated the need for chinking. Various types of chinking were used when necessary: split shakes laid flat or on edge between logs; small poles cut to fit into crevices; wedge-shaped slabs laid between logs; or a complete covering of split shakes, laid vertically against the side walls. This latter type of chinking was common in Yosemite because of the abundant supply of sugar pines for shakes.<sup>200</sup>

The Wawona Hotel complex represents an entirely different vernacular tradition in Yosemite. Unlike the temporary log cabins of settlers, these structures employed wood frame construction and were carefully built for permanence. They were made of milled lumber, and featured elaborate scrollwork details and abundant windows. This California Style, also used in Yosemite Valley hotels such as the Sentinel, was derived from a blending of the Spanish Colonial style, Tidewater South Tradition, and Midland Tradition.<sup>201</sup> The broad columned verandas on both floors helped to adapt these preceding styles to the weather conditions in California, and similar designs were employed in commercial and residential structures throughout the state. The presence of these attractive, modern hotels would have reassured visitors arriving in the Yosemite Grant that nature was safely under control, and the dangers of the frontier far away.

**Rustic Architecture in Yosemite National Park (1870–1940)**

In the course of its efforts to conserve the natural and cultural resources, the National Park Service has built a variety of structures to house administrative, interpretive, and resource management functions, as well as visitor services, employee housing, and recreational facilities. Its earliest park development style – classified as rustic architecture – emphasizes harmony with nature and the physical environment.

Rustic architecture, as developed by the Park Service, applies to a number of styles that have as their central concept the use of native materials in proper scale, the avoidance of rigid, straight lines, the appearance of pioneer crafting with limited hand tools, and informal motifs inspired by American log cabins and the Shingle Style, developed from the 1870s in the northeast. Shingle architecture built upon and enhanced vernacular styles, and featured an irregular, multilevel design that readily accommodated the existing topography. One of the most common design elements adopted by the Park Service was a rusticated stone wall on the ground floor, which served to unite the building with its natural site. The style reached its highpoint in the Adirondack mountain camps of New York, with a decorative style that was popular in resorts and recreational architecture nationwide. From the mid-1930s the simplified Prairie Style of Frank Lloyd Wright gained favor in the Park Service, while the Adirondack style was discouraged as excessively ornamented. A California variant of the Shingle style was especially important in

<sup>199</sup> Greene, "Yosemite Draft MPD," E11.

<sup>200</sup> Ibid.

<sup>201</sup> See Virginia McAlester and A. Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide to America's Houses* (New York: Knopf, 1990), 82-84.



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Yosemite, where it yielded several of the park's most notable buildings. The work of Pasadena architects Charles and Henry Greene demonstrated the use of massive design features and an even greater degree of blending with the local topography, while incorporating elements of traditional Japanese architecture. Bernard Maybeck developed a school of architecture in the San Francisco Bay Area which combined the indigenous Shingle style with northern European influences such as steeply-pitched roofs, vaulting, and floor to ceiling windows. Considerable room existed for individualism and artistry in shape, scale and design of structures. The dichotomy between the preservation and development missions of the Park Service resulted in structures that ranged from massive resort hotels patronized by wealthy tourists to smaller structures built during the New Deal to provide jobs and training for the unemployed. Park buildings during the heyday of rustic architecture could be beatifically crafted and designed because of the large and enthusiastic labor supply, liberal government spending, and the emphasis on recreational facilities.<sup>202</sup>

Prior to creation of the National Park Service, several national parks had been established and buildings had been constructed by the U.S. Army, railroad companies, or private concessionaires. In Yosemite several structures that predate Park Service administration represent good examples of rustic architecture as first manifested in the Yosemite region. Practically all share the common characteristic of cedar bark strips applied in decorative patterns as exterior sheathing on wood frame buildings. Yosemite structures in this style include the Yosemite Valley Railroad station in El Portal (no longer existing); the Registration Office, Mother Curry and Tresidder cabins in the Camp Curry Historic District; and the Chris Jorgensen House and Yosemite Transportation Company Office in the Yosemite Pioneer History Center.<sup>203</sup>

Numerous historical structures in Yosemite National Park illustrate the rustic style of architecture that dominated park construction in the 1920s and 1930s. Since the 1880s landscape professionals had advocated an architectural style for Yosemite Valley compatible with the landscape and surrounding cliffs. Park Service rustic style advocated the sensitive use of natural materials including native stone, timbers, and shingles. Buildings were designed to fit the topography of the land, and naturalistic landscaping became an integral design feature. Beginning in 1921 the Landscape Engineering Division of the Park Service formulated the first examples of National Park Service Rustic Style. Primitive at first, the style rapidly improved in the following years. Director Mather's desire to make Yosemite the showplace of the National Park system and his pet project to relocate Yosemite Village to the north side of the Merced River resulted in a lengthy study on the design of new park structures. The Ranger's Club, personally subsidized by Mather and constructed in 1921, was intended to serve as a model for similar government-funded buildings in other parks as well as for future development in Yosemite.<sup>204</sup>

Primary design features of the mature Park Service rustic style involved hewn logs, detailed masonry work, heavy shake roofs, and natural colors. The elements were often oversized and overscaled to produce harmony with the massive surrounding landscape of Yosemite. Rough granite boulders from Yosemite's cliffs and gravel and river-run stones from the valley streambeds provided materials for foundations, chimneys, and steps, while timber from park forests provided the heavy logs, rough-milled lumber, shingles, and shakes for walls and framing, porches, and trim. The resulting buildings, stained a dark brown, were unobtrusive and in conformity with the environmentally

<sup>202</sup> McClelland, *Presenting Nature*, Part II, available at [http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online\\_books/mcclelland/mcclelland2.htm](http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online_books/mcclelland/mcclelland2.htm); McClelland, *Building the National Parks*, 91-111; William C. Tweed, Laura E. Soulliere, and Henry G. Law, *Rustic Architecture, 1916-1942* (United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Western Regional Office, Division of Cultural Resource Management, 1977) available at [http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online\\_books/rusticarch](http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online_books/rusticarch).

<sup>203</sup> Greene, "Yosemite Draft MPD," E14.

<sup>204</sup> Ibid., E16; See also Tweed et. al., *Rustic Architecture*, available at [http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online\\_books/rusticarch/part3.htm](http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online_books/rusticarch/part3.htm)

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harmonious style of construction sought by the National Park Service.<sup>205</sup>

The Park Service also designed wood frame structures with clapboard siding stained dark brown, shingled roofs, and random-rubble foundations. Although still in accordance with the principle of using native construction materials, they had less of the "log cabin in the wilderness" look that characterized other rustic buildings. In effect, they served as a bridge to the more functional Park Service styles of the 1940s and 1950s.<sup>206</sup>

In the 1930s the National Park Service also constructed a second type of wood frame rustic structure unique to Yosemite. This unique style consists of an early California, almost Territorial, type of frame architecture that simulates a style present in Yosemite Valley and its environs when the Park Service assumed management of the area. While the State of California administered the Yosemite Valley and Mariposa Grove, private individuals erected several structures in the area for visitor accommodation. Two of these, the Sentinel and Wawona hotels, were constructed in a style common in early California. The wood-frame, two-story buildings with broad, columned front porches on both stories and attractive railings with craftsman like stick work welcomed the first visitors who braved the difficult, dusty roads into Yosemite. This particular style was also used in the Cosmopolitan Bathhouse and Saloon, built in 1871; in the White Wolf Lodge built in 1929 north of the valley and reconstructed forty years later; and in the Big Trees Lodge, erected in the Mariposa Grove in 1933. Smaller structures in old Yosemite Village also displayed similar details such as wide columned porches and frame siding.

Park Service designers imitated this early California style in their attempts in the 1930s to construct government buildings harmonizing with both the natural and cultural environments of the park. In the early 1930s when Public Works Administration funds were allotted to Yosemite National Park, construction of facilities at Chinquapin and at Wawona pursued a course of development compatible with this existing cultural and architectural theme--one not found in other Western national parks. These new buildings were planned in accordance with a rustic design ethic effectively invented by the National Park Service branch of Plans and Design in the 1930s, which stressed that park architecture should harmonize with its settings.<sup>207</sup>

Because early hotels such as Wawona were important centers of social and commercial activities, and have always been regarded as significant historical resources of Yosemite National Park, resident Landscape Architect John Woskey chose to design nearby ranger stations and residences in a style that would reflect the existing cultural theme and harmonize with its outstanding architectural characteristics. Architect Eldridge T. Spencer designed the wide veranda on the Big Trees Lodge after early California residences. In the mid-1930s the Park Service and even the concessionaire attempted to not only seek harmony with the natural setting but also thematic harmony with local buildings. This was part of an effort to make parks distinct from the outside world.<sup>208</sup>

The particular style of frame rustic architecture displayed by several Yosemite buildings is difficult to categorize because it appears to be a blending of several different styles such as Spanish Colonial, Tidewater South, and Midland Traditions. Additionally, individual buildings display variation in the placement of chimneys and window styles. All display the full-width, overhanging gable front porches originally designed to provide a cool shelter in summer and protection from thunderstorms.<sup>209</sup>

<sup>205</sup> Greene, "Yosemite Draft MPD," E16

<sup>206</sup> Ibid., E17.

<sup>207</sup> Tweed et. al., *Rustic Architecture*, [http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online\\_books/rusticarch/part5.htm](http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online_books/rusticarch/part5.htm)

<sup>208</sup> Greene, "Yosemite Draft MPD," E22; Tweed et. al., *Rustic Architecture*, [http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online\\_books/rusticarch/part5.htm](http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online_books/rusticarch/part5.htm)

<sup>209</sup> Greene, "Yosemite Draft MPD," E23

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The New Deal and the National Park Service. From 1933, the programs of the New Deal funneled money and labor into the national park system, permitting a rapid acceleration of development projects. The Public Works Administration funded capital improvement in the parks, especially on roads and buildings, which would be undertaken by private contractors. The Civilian Conservation Corps carried out Emergency Conservation Work, principally in the form of forest cleanup, landscape naturalization and planting, trail work, and the construction of smaller park structures.

At Yosemite, PWA funds were used for additional housing at Yosemite Village, development of the Tuolumne Meadows campground, cabins in the Indian Village, and construction of the Henness Ridge Fire Lookout. As in earlier years, new construction was designed to harmonize with both the natural setting and the existing architecture in the park, and the Western Division continued and expanded the practice of standardized designs that could be adapted to specific sites. But, because of the speed with which they were built, PWA designs were typically more simple and functional than those of earlier years, with less attention to detail. These designs also made increasing use of modern, durable materials such as concrete, which might then be stained or textured in an attempt to impart greater harmony with the setting.<sup>210</sup>

CCC work at Yosemite came under the headings of roads, fire control projects, insect or blister-rust control, forestry, planting, roadside cleanup and landscaping, meadow reclamation, and cleaning out logged areas. This last activity took place near Chinquapin, Eleven Mile Meadow, Wawona, Crane Flat, and Merced Grove, and included removing old lumber camps and their associated structures. CCC enrollees also removed deteriorated buildings at the old village, and returned the land to a naturalized state. Sixteen hundred acres of meadow in Yosemite Valley, Wawona, and Tuolumne were cleared of small growth, while other meadow areas were drained to control mosquitoes. A significant amount of labor was spent in planting or transplanting wild vegetation to continue the process of landscape naturalization. This included the truck and fire roads that the enrollees built, as the park superintendent felt they should receive the same treatment as public access roads.<sup>211</sup>

The Chinquapin intersection of the Wawona and Glacier Point roads was one of the most significant examples of National Park Service projects during the New Deal era, coordinating road construction, building construction, and landscape architecture. Park officials had decided to place an administrative unit at the intersection to deal with increasing visitor traffic in the area. Plans called for a ranger station, comfort station, and a gas station with refreshment stand, built in a style which would compliment existing buildings at the Wawona Hotel. The comprehensive design also included details of road construction, curbing, walkways, and the complete vegetation scheme required for landscape naturalization. Together with erosion control work directed by Ecologist Frederic E. Clements of the Carnegie Institution, this project made the Wawona Road the most closely studied in the park system to that point.<sup>212</sup>

Reinforced Concrete, Simulated Logs. The use of reinforced concrete in the construction of maintenance and utility buildings began in the Park Service in the early 1900s, primarily as a result of a need for fireproof accommodations for machinery, electrical departments, and the storage of flammable materials. While the United States' entry into the Second World War ended the New Deal park development programs, funding for park development had been on the decline before the war. During the war years, men and materials became scarce, labor

<sup>210</sup> McClelland, *Building the National Parks*, 327-332.

<sup>211</sup> *Ibid.*, 344.

<sup>212</sup> *Ibid.*, 350-355; See also Tweed et. al., *Rustic Architecture*, available at [http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online\\_books/rusticarch/part5.htm](http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online_books/rusticarch/part5.htm)



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costs rose, the cheap and plentiful CCC work force was disbanded, and decentralization of the Park Service resulted in the loss of the earlier large, skilled staff of architects, landscape architects, and engineers. Budgetary Restrictions in the 1940s-1950s tended to suppress the more time consuming and expensive rustic architecture impulse and force concentration on simpler, more functional buildings.

A movement away from indigenous materials and what was regarded in retrospect as a "contrived" pioneer style of architecture led to contemporary architectural designs striving toward well-built modern structures. Nonintrusiveness was still a goal, but it was redefined to allow harmony with nature through modest functional designs that presented fewer maintenance problems and less fire hazard.

The Ahwahnee Hotel represents a transitional building leading into this period, through the use of a steel frame and concrete structure which was disguised to resemble a rustic wood design, though on a massive scale. The concrete was tinted and textured to give the appearance of logs and rough-cut planks, while containing within it a thoroughly modern luxury hotel. By contrast, the Yosemite Visitors' Center demonstrates the full development of the trend in the Mission 66 period, gaining its sense of harmony through a minimal visual impact, without resorting to disguises.<sup>213</sup>

**National Park Service Landscape Architecture in Yosemite (1916 – 1940)**

The development of the National Parks was heavily influenced by contemporary trends in American landscape design. Park Service officials adopted the naturalistic practices growing out of nineteenth century romanticism in order to make the parks accessible to the general public, while maintaining harmony with scenic features. These practices advocated blending the necessary built features with the existing natural surroundings to minimize their physical and visual impact.

This rustic design ethic drew on the naturalistic tradition of landscape gardening in public parks and private gardens, which emphasized the value of scenic views, natural topography, and the use of native materials and plantings. It was also influenced by parallel developments in architecture, such as the Shingle, Adirondack, and Prairie styles. These all made use of native or "pioneer" materials to foster a greater sense of harmony with nature.

Much of this ethic was based on the pioneering work of Andrew Jackson Downing, author of *Treatise on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening* (1841). Downing set out the basic principles of rustic landscape embellishments, stressing that they must be appropriate to the location and in their use of materials. His work set precedents, which would be long favored in the National Park Service, in the use of woodwork which retained its natural bark covering, and in the use of native stone in naturalistic rockwork. Downing believed that the placement of roads and walkways should be guided by the "genius of the place," and laid out to guide visitors to a series of carefully framed views. He also advocated the selective use of vegetation, to enhance certain views while screening others.<sup>214</sup>

The second major figure influencing early park design was Frederick Law Olmsted Sr., who served as one of

<sup>213</sup> Greene, "Yosemite Draft MPD," E25-E26. See also Tweed et. al., *Rustic Architecture*, available at [http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online\\_books/rusticarch/part3.htm](http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online_books/rusticarch/part3.htm)

<sup>214</sup> McClelland, *Building the National Parks*, 21-33.

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the Yosemite Grant's original commissioners. Olmsted developed six principles for the design of landscapes in public parks, based in part on the examples of English parks and the work of Prince H. L. H. von Pückler-Muskau of Germany. Von Pückler-Muskau believed that parks should be true to their setting, use only native plantings, and where possible, use only what nature provided. Designers, he believed, should content themselves to making the fine points accessible. Using these influences as a foundation, Olmsted called for designs that emphasized and were in keeping with the natural scenery. Designs should aim to promote the physical and mental health of the visitor, with details carefully subordinated to a "controlling scheme." To avoid jarring the senses, areas of different use were to be separated from each other, while the overall design should promote a feeling of spaciousness. As a Yosemite commissioner, Olmsted elaborated on these principles in a preliminary development plan for the Yosemite Valley and Mariposa Grove. A key feature of this report was a road and bridge system to conduct visitors around the Yosemite Grant in an orderly fashion and provide them with a series of set views of the park's scenic wonders.<sup>215</sup>

Early National Park Design. In 1911 the Department of the Interior began a series of national park conferences, bringing together representatives from government and private organizations, to discuss issues relating to park administration and development. At the 1915 conference in San Francisco, the department's first park landscape engineer (as landscape architects were known in the Park Service), Mark Daniels, proposed a three-tier system of visitor accommodation, consisting of hotels or chalets, permanent camps with dining facilities, and basic campgrounds. The centerpoint of these accommodations would be a park village, similar to what existed at Yosemite, but planned in accordance with the principles of naturalistic landscape design. His proposal for a new Yosemite Village included a study of the architectural character and location of each building to be constructed over a period of ten years. At this same conference Gabriel Sovulewski told attendees that those designing trails needed to be sympathetic to the meaning and intention of the parks. The primary goal of the trail, he advised, was to bring the visitor to varied points of interest, where they would be refreshed by the beautiful scenery.

The Park Service's first director, Stephen T. Mather, issued a report in 1916 titled *Progress in the Development of the National Parks* to explain his views on the current conditions and future needs of the parks. He placed a particular emphasis on improving the public's accessibility to the national parks, believing that the parks should be the objective points in a network of railways and scenic highways, rather than isolated places available to only a relative few. Mather also had a fondness for entrance gateways, which would serve as transition points to environments dominated by nature. The gates would introduce the architectural theme of each park, and the sense of harmony with the natural surroundings.<sup>216</sup>

Mather hired Charles P. Punchard Jr. in 1918 to be the Park Service's first dedicated landscape engineer. Punchard described his role as one of maintaining balance between the preservation of the parks' natural qualities, and improvements needed for the accommodation visitors. This could best be achieved, he thought, by closely following an organized plan while being open to the possibilities offered by changing conditions. He spent the winter of 1919 at Yosemite, studying the landscape from a historical perspective. After learning of traditional Indian land-management practices, he recommended the thinning and clearing of brush and trees in Yosemite's meadows, arguing that it would be beneficial from the standpoints of both fire protection and scenic beauty.<sup>217</sup>

After Daniel Hull assumed the position of senior landscape engineer in 1920, he set up his first office in

<sup>215</sup> Ibid., 36.

<sup>216</sup> Ibid., 121.

<sup>217</sup> Ibid., 136-141; McClelland, *Presenting Nature*, Section III, [http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online\\_books/mcclelland/mcclelland3e.htm](http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online_books/mcclelland/mcclelland3e.htm)

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Yosemite. Hull worked closely with Los Angeles architect Myron Hunt and the federal Commission on Fine Arts to design the new Yosemite Village, construction of which began in 1923. Hunt's rustic administration building, with its ground floor faced in naturalistic stonework and its upper floor with cedar shingles, established the standard for harmonious design in the Valley.<sup>218</sup>

Roads and Guardrails. Under Hull's tenure the development of roads became a matter of great importance. This work built upon the philosophy of Major Hiram Chittenden, who had constructed Yellowstone's road system during the period of the War Department's administration of the parks. Chittenden advocated building roads only when absolutely necessary, but then to the highest possible standards. He argued that modern, high-quality roads would be less likely to distract visitors' attention from the scenery than those that were too rough or winding. Andrew Jackson Downing's principles of creating the sequential experience were central to the landscape engineers' proposals for road construction. He recommended laying out the road so that significant views to the side would be arranged alternately, insuring that the visitor did not miss anything. Frank Waugh continued these ideas, and considered roads and trails to be the framework for the overall design of a recreational area. A principle that found great favor at Yosemite was the use of pull-offs or parking areas to direct visitors to the best views.<sup>219</sup>

By 1927, National Park Service landscape engineers concentrated their work on three areas: siting and designing roads and trails, designing park structures, and reviewing the work of concessionaires. In October 1927, Stephen Mather established a Western Field Office in San Francisco for civil engineering, sanitary engineering, landscape design, forestry, and education. Under the direction of Thomas Vint in the late 1920s, the landscape design program evolved into a unified process of park planning and development based on the principles of landscape preservation and harmonious design. Personnel from the Western Office developed standardized construction techniques, and went into the field to supervise construction. In 1929 Director Horace Albright approved a new set of provisions for the protection of the landscape during road construction. These included the prohibition of large-scale blasting, or the clearing of land beyond the immediate margins of the roadway. The Field Office expended considerable effort on the matter of banks and road cuts, to ensure that they blended with the local topography. The ideal was to disguise any evidence of human activity on the landscape, beyond the existence of the road itself. Problems with erosion along the Wawona Road in Yosemite lead to a cooperative agreement with the park's natural history program, and led to experimentation supervised by Frederic Clements with different types of plantings to stabilize banks and conceal the worked surfaces.<sup>220</sup>

By the 1930s the Park Service had become a pioneering force in the area of roadside beautification. Through its work, the principles of the nineteenth century landscape gardeners were translated to the public highways, both inside and beyond park boundaries. One of the most significant aspects of this was the development of scenic overlooks. These were based on garden terraces, but transformed to a much larger scale, and continued the romantic ideals of presenting the visitor with spectacular, sweeping vistas. The Inspiration Point overlook at the Wawona Tunnel represented the most ambitious of these projects. Created with fill from the tunnel excavation, it presents arriving visitors with the iconographic first view of Yosemite Valley.<sup>221</sup>

The Western Field Office developed standards for guardrails and curbs, in order to protect the safety of visitors

<sup>218</sup> McClelland, *Building the National Parks*, 159-164.

<sup>219</sup> Ibid., 175-184.

<sup>220</sup> Ibid., 195-208; McClelland, *Presenting Nature*, Part IV [http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online\\_books/mcclelland/mcclelland4a1.htm](http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online_books/mcclelland/mcclelland4a1.htm)

<sup>221</sup> McClelland, *Building the National Parks*, 210-211. See also "Lying Lightly on the Land: Building America's National Park Roads and Parkways," online exhibit available at <http://www.cr.nps.gov/habshaer/III/overview.htm>



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without sacrificing the ethic of rustic design. Extended discussions in 1926 about the El Portal Road helped lead to standardized rustic stonework for the national parks. This stonework featured the use of weathered, irregularly shaped stones laid in patterns to avoid straight lines or right angles in the mortar joints, suggesting the appearance of natural stone outcroppings. Guardrails avoided the types of decorations found in urban walls. But to prevent monotony in long guardrails, the Park Service used crenellating piers to break up the horizontal line. These piers became a hallmark of National Park design, and, where appropriate, were shaped to echo the surrounding landscape. In more forested areas the guardrails were made of roughly shaped log posts and crossrails. Naturalistic curbs and sidewalks were an integral part of roads, trails, and scenic overlooks, and complementary, unified design practices were developed for these as well. Curbing made of unfinished boulders set in the earth was installed at Yosemite Village in the mid-1920s, but partially embedded log curbs subsequently replaced this in the 1930s, to be less conspicuous.<sup>222</sup>

Bridges, Culverts, and Tunnels. In the early 1920s landscape engineers were brought into the design process for bridges on park roads. While civil engineers were still responsible for the structural work, landscape engineers contributed to selection of materials, standards of workmanship, and harmony of the overall design with its setting and surroundings. The Yosemite Creek Bridge was one of the earliest to result from this collaboration, with detail work by Daniel Hull. Each road bridge in the national park system was planned as a unique project, although by the late 1920s a number of standard types and characteristics had begun to develop. In each case, modifications were made in order to suit the individual topography, and landscape engineers took pains to make the bridges appear as natural a part of the surroundings as possible. In 1931, Thomas Vint listed the Happy Isles, Clarke's, and Trail bridges at Yosemite as being among the Western Field Office's best work.<sup>223</sup>

While culverts were a more modest feature of national park road systems, they were nonetheless essential in maintaining the natural character of the landscape. They permitted streams to pass under roads and trails without interruption, and so were used in great number in mountainous or canyonlike areas. As such, it was necessary that they harmonize with roads and guardrails, and in 1928 the Field Office issued a sheet of standard designs which could be adapted to most situations. The specifications for masonry structures called for the use of weathered stones and deep mortar joints to give the culvert an irregular, naturalistic appearance. Simpler designs were also provided, but in all cases they maintained harmony with other road construction.<sup>224</sup>

Tunnels built in the national parks drew heavily on railroad experience in the nineteenth century. Landscape engineers were particularly concerned with the appearance of the portals, by which the tunnels were connected to the natural character of the park. The earliest tunnels imitated the arched openings of caves or rock outcroppings, a principle that held great romantic interest in the nineteenth century. The approach road to the Hetch Hetchy Reservoir used this principle, but the practice gradually fell from favor as tunnel sizes increased and builders found it difficult to produce a natural appearance. Masonry or masonry-veneered portals were developed, using the same naturalistic design principles that had been used on bridges and culverts.<sup>225</sup>

The Wawona Tunnel was among the first to use staining techniques to give concrete and freshly exposed granite an aged appearance that would blend with existing outcrops in the area. This may have been inspired by the use of stained concrete in the Ahwahnee Hotel. The engineers experimented with different concoctions to achieve the

<sup>222</sup> McClelland, 216-219.

<sup>223</sup> Ibid., 220-222; See also Tweed et. al., *Rustic Architecture*, available at [http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online\\_books/rusticarch/part4.htm](http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online_books/rusticarch/part4.htm)

<sup>224</sup> McClelland, *Building the National Parks*, 224; *Presenting Nature*, Part IV

[http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online\\_books/mcclelland/mcclelland4a3.htm](http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online_books/mcclelland/mcclelland4a3.htm)

<sup>225</sup> Ibid., 225.

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right color and tonal values, finally settling on a combination of mineral oil, linseed oil, and lampblack. The Inspiration Point overlook at the east end of the tunnel filled the engineers' aesthetic need to provide a viewing location for arriving visitors, while at the same time meeting the practical need of what to do with the rock excavated from the tunnel. In situations where the topography required a portal to extend out from the slope, as on the Big Oak Flat Road, the engineers included special planting areas above and behind the portal to camouflage the structure.<sup>226</sup>

Trails. Much of the early trail building at Yosemite—particularly under Army administration—had been motivated by pragmatic concerns. The needs of patrol work dictated direct routes, rather than esthetic considerations. Many of the first tourist trails ascending the Valley walls had been spectacular pieces of engineering, but the developing national park design ethic emphasized that even “ordinary” trails warranted special efforts to enhance the visitor’s experience. Yosemite Supervisor Gabriel Sovulewski articulated the essence of this practice at the 1915 national park conference. In his opinion, “Diversion from a straight path to points of interest, regardless of expense, is important and necessary. . . . I believe it is very important that every feature of natural beauty should be taken into consideration and diversion made to bring such features to the eye of the traveler.”<sup>227</sup>

In order to accomplish this ideal, trail construction mirrored that of roads, but on a smaller scale. Civil engineers were in charge of construction, which was often undertaken by park staff, while landscape designers were responsible for maintaining scenic character and protecting the surrounding environment. The trails were intended to be as inconspicuous as possible, and the dry stone trail beds, parapets, culverts, bridges, and trailside rest areas were all designed to blend in with the landscape. Minimizing the effects of drilling and blasting, as on the Four-Mile Trail, was a particular challenge. Building trails with beds of dry-laid stone removed much of the need for cutting into the natural slope, reduced the risk of erosion, and preserved the existing vegetation on either side of the trail. Designers followed the example of road building in the use of natural stone for parapet walls, and when crushed as a source of gravel for trail surfacing. This work could be done on-site, and reduced the amount of material that had to be hauled through sensitive areas.

In the 1920s, the Park Service placed an increasing emphasis on wide, sturdy trails that could accommodate horse as well as foot traffic. In 1934 the Engineering Division published the first standards for trail construction, calling for a set width of four feet throughout, and grades of no more than 15 percent except when absolutely necessary. The grade was to be varied at regular intervals, to avoid overworking one set of the visitor’s leg muscles, while drainage dips or water breaks were preferred over culverts and bridges. In addition, the trails were to be built so as to make them as invisible as possible to anyone not actually using them, in order to preserve the overall scenery.

The road and trail programs are particularly significant for the efforts put into merging the Park Service’s missions of increasing the public’s accessibility to the parks while conserving the natural scenic resources for future generations. In fact, through the ethic of naturalistic design, the overriding intent of the landscape engineers was to give visitors the impression that they had not done any work at all. The Engineering Division’s standards required that all phases of trail construction be approved by landscape architects in the Branch of Plans and Designs. This included trail location, the building of culverts and walls, and the removal of large trees. Trail crews were instructed to provide a ten-foot clearance above the trail, and no more than one foot to either side. When the proposed route of the trail encountered a large tree, the trail was to go around it unless absolutely impractical. Above all, the intent was

<sup>226</sup> Ibid., 226-228.

<sup>227</sup> McClelland, *Presenting Nature*, Part III, [http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online\\_books/mcclelland/mcclelland3b.htm](http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online_books/mcclelland/mcclelland3b.htm)

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to harmonize with the natural setting.<sup>228</sup>

The complex evolution of trails, trail structures and trail-building methods requires additional study. Therefore evaluation of trails for nomination to the National Register has been deferred to an amendment to the Multiple Property Document.

Standardized Architectural Themes. From the late 1920s to 1932, Thomas Vint, chief landscape architect of the Western Field Office, developed standard designs for administrative buildings, which could be adapted in detail to their specific settings and surroundings. Patrol cabins, housekeeping cabins, comfort stations, and other buildings that were needed in quantity throughout a park could share the same floor plan, and yet be finished on an individual basis to maintain naturalistic harmony. The Union Point comfort station at Yosemite, for example, was the prototype of a design that was used repeatedly throughout the 1930s. In addition to this building, Vint considered the Tioga Pass entrance station, Crane Flat fire lookout, and residential housing in Yosemite Village to be among the most successful examples of this design period.<sup>229</sup>

Architecture in the National Park Service Educational Division. The Educational Division had cooperated closely with the Landscape Division since 1924 and the construction of the Yosemite Museum and the Glacier Point Lookout. By the 1930s the concept of natural history interpretation had grown to include trails and trailside features, wild plant gardens, outdoor amphitheatres, branch museums, and residences for park naturalists. The distinctive character of these structures mirrored the Landscape Division's ethics of rustic architecture and naturalistic design. This is illustrated by the first national park amphitheater, built at Yosemite in 1920 with funding from the Sierra Club. Pine logs were used as seats, with backs of canvas over iron pipe frames. Later park amphitheatres were based on the traditional Greek pattern, but on a smaller and more intimate scale, and again using wood to maintain a rustic character.<sup>230</sup>

Landscape Naturalization. In 1927, Thomas Vint hired Ernest Davidson to begin a program of planting and transplanting in the Western parks to further conceal evidence of new construction. They also developed practices to use planting in a way that would further blend rustic building designs with the surrounding landscape. At the same time, this program also included the building of "furniture and fixtures" such as seats or drinking fountains disguised to look like natural rock formations. Larger scale projects could be as extensive as the clearance of meadows at Yosemite to maintain the "historic vistas" of the nineteenth century. Park Service director Horace Albright broadened the scope of naturalization in 1930 with a "Set of Ideals" calling for the prohibition of exotic vegetation from the national parks and monuments, and its replacement with indigenous species. Exotic grasses were excepted from this prohibition, for two pragmatic reasons. In the first place, such grasses were often better suited to the banks and cuts created by road construction than native types. Secondly, exotic strains were in most cases too well established and widespread to make eradication practical, as was the case in Yosemite.<sup>231</sup>

Concessionaire Properties. At Yosemite, concession operators had anticipated the Park Service's growing interest in natural planting. The Curry Camping Company hired wildflower expert Carl Purdy in the 1920s to create

<sup>228</sup> McClelland, *Presenting Nature*, Part IV, [http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online\\_books/mcclelland/mcclelland4b.htm](http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online_books/mcclelland/mcclelland4b.htm)

<sup>229</sup> McClelland, *Building the National Parks*, 244; See also Tweed et. al., *Rustic Architecture*, available at [http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online\\_books/rusticarch/part5.htm](http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online_books/rusticarch/part5.htm)

<sup>230</sup> McClelland, *Building the National Parks*, 248-252.

<sup>231</sup> *Ibid.*, 266.



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wildflower meadows around Camp Curry. This proved unsuccessful, as the flowers were as appealing to the local deer population as they were to park tourists. A second attempt, at the Ahwahnee Hotel, had much better results. In 1927, what had become the Yosemite Park and Curry Company hired the design firm of Frederick Law Olmsted Jr. to develop the grounds of the new hotel. The plan was to create a wild garden in the form of a native plant reserve, which would gradually return the grounds to the condition in which they had formerly existed, ten or fifteen years earlier. Horace Albright and Thomas Vint were greatly impressed by the results, which inspired park landscape architect John Wosky to draw up a naturalization plan for the government areas of Yosemite Village in 1933, using native plant types.<sup>232</sup>

Museum Wild Plant Gardens. Ansel Hall, head of the Western Field Office's Educational Division, oversaw a significant expansion of natural history interpretive programs in the 1920s. These included ranger tours and talks, museum exhibits, and special publications. The Park Service's first wildflower garden was built at Glacier Point in 1925, in collaboration with the Landscape Division. Based on this experience, similar gardens were established at other western parks in 1929. This same year, a moist rock garden was installed at Yosemite Museum as a student project, followed by a dry glacial moraine garden the following year. A two-acre plot was fenced off and planted with wildflowers in 1932, at which time the park assumed responsibility for the garden as an interpretive tool. Additional plantings were made in the following years, to represent the park's various life zones.<sup>233</sup>

Development of the Modern Campground. Concerned by the impact of increasing visitation on native vegetation in California parks, Stephen Mather commissioned a study by plant pathologist Emilio P. Meinecke in 1926, to determine the extent of the damage. Meinecke discovered that the trampling effect of campers, and especially the compacting of soil by their cars, was having a lethal result on native ground cover, shrubs, and trees, even extending to giant sequoias.<sup>234</sup>

Meinecke proposed a radical restructuring of campground design and management, which the Park Service adopted in 1932. Camps were to be located based on considerations such as the type of soil, length of seasonal use, the composition, density, and distribution of native vegetation, and the type of camper who was expected to use it. The plan featured the elimination of haphazard camping sites in favor of carefully laid-out, permanent campsites that would limit the possibility of cars leaving the road. Campsites were defined by Meinecke's great innovation, the garage spur, which moved the car through the campground on a one-way road system to minimize congestion. Logs or boulders defined the edges of the roads and campsites to keep both car and camper in their assigned spaces. The plan relied on the general willingness of the urban camper to follow directions when they were unsure of how to conduct themselves in a forest setting.<sup>235</sup>

Landscape Architecture in the New Deal. From 1933, the programs of the New Deal funneled money and labor into the national park system, permitting a rapid acceleration of development projects. The Public Works Administration funded capital improvement in the parks, especially on roads and buildings, which would be undertaken by private contractors. The Civilian Conservation Corps carried out Emergency Conservation Work, principally in the form of forest cleanup, landscape naturalization and planting, trail work, and the construction of smaller park structures.

<sup>232</sup> Ibid., 269; McClelland, *Presenting Nature*, Part IV [http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online\\_books/mcclelland/mcclelland4c.htm](http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online_books/mcclelland/mcclelland4c.htm)

<sup>233</sup> McClelland, *Building the National Parks*, 273.

<sup>234</sup> Ibid., 277.

<sup>235</sup> Ibid., 278-285.

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At Yosemite, PWA funds were used for additional housing at Yosemite Village, development of the Tuolumne Meadows campground, cabins in the Indian Village, and construction of the Henness Ridge Fire Lookout. As in earlier years, new construction was designed to harmonize with both the natural setting and the existing architecture in the park, and the Western Division continued and expanded the practice of standardized designs that could be adapted to specific sites. But, because of the speed with which they were built, PWA designs were typically more simple and functional than those of earlier years, with less attention to detail. These designs also made increasing use of modern, durable materials such as concrete, which might then be stained or textured in an attempt to impart greater harmony with the setting.<sup>236</sup>

CCC work at Yosemite came under the headings of roads, fire control projects, insect or blister-rust control, forestry, planting, roadside cleanup and landscaping, meadow reclamation, and cleaning out logged areas. This last activity took place near Chinquapin, Eleven Mile Meadow, Wawona, Crane Flat, and Merced Grove, and included removing old lumber camps and their associated structures. CCC enrollees also removed deteriorated buildings at the old village, and returned the land to a naturalized state. Sixteen hundred acres of meadow in Yosemite Valley, Wawona, and Tuolumne were cleared of small growth, while other meadow areas were drained to control mosquitoes. A significant amount of labor was spent in planting or transplanting wild vegetation, to continue the process of landscape naturalization. This included the truck and fire roads that the enrollees built, as the park superintendent felt they should receive the same treatment as public access roads.<sup>237</sup>

The Chinquapin intersection of the Wawona and Glacier Point roads was one of the most significant examples of National Park Service projects during the New Deal era, coordinating road construction, building construction, and landscape architecture. Park officials had decided to place an administrative unit at the intersection to deal with increasing visitor traffic in the area. Plans called for a ranger station, comfort station, and a gas station with refreshment stand, built in a style which would compliment existing buildings at the Wawona Hotel. The comprehensive design also included details of road construction, curbing, walkways, and the complete vegetation scheme required for landscape naturalization. Together with Clements's erosion control work, this project made the Wawona Road the most closely studied in the park system to that point.<sup>238</sup>

**Mission 66 in Yosemite National Park, 1955- 1964**

Budgetary restrictions in the 1940s and 1950s reduced use of time-consuming and expensive rustic architectural construction techniques and forced the Park Service to concentrate on simpler, more functional buildings. A tendency away from indigenous materials and what was regarded in retrospect as a "contrived" pioneer style of architecture led to contemporary designs striving toward well-built modern structures. Non-intrusiveness was still a goal, but it was redefined to allow harmony with nature through modest functional designs that presented fewer maintenance problems and less of a fire hazard. Contemporary designs, materials, and building methods suitable to economic and technical conditions were used through the Mission 66 period.

In February 1955 Director Conrad Wirth conceived of a comprehensive program to launch the Park Service

<sup>236</sup> Ibid., 332-336.

<sup>237</sup> Ibid., 344.

<sup>238</sup> Ibid., 350-356, See also Tweed et. al., *Rustic Architecture*, available at [http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online\\_books/rusticarch/part5.htm](http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online_books/rusticarch/part5.htm)

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into the modern age, using an ingenious method to solve the problems of deterioration, funding, and new development. Rather than beg Congress for a huge increase in the Park Service's annual budget that helped only existing parks, he presented a proposal for an entire decade of funding. After a series of studies, Wirth introduced Mission 66 to the President and his cabinet on January 27, 1956. The program received immediate approval from the President. The necessary documents for final authorization were signed in early February, and Mission 66 was officially introduced to the public on February 8th.<sup>239</sup>

Mission 66 focused on physical development and construction. Every Park in the system had at least one if not several construction projects. Supplementing these construction projects were museum exhibits, informational pamphlets, and audio-visual programs greatly increasing knowledge and public awareness of the individual park and the national park system. Mission 66 proposed vast goals and accomplishments, including the repairing and building of roads, bridges, and trails, the hiring of new personnel, the construction of new facilities ranging from campsites and visitor centers to administration buildings, the improvement of employee housing, and the obtaining of land for future parks. Mission 66, touted as a program to elevate the park system to modern standards of comfort and efficiency and as an attempt to conserve natural resources, would have required more than 670 million dollars over its proposed ten-year life.

In Yosemite National Park, Mission 66 had five specific goals, the first being the protection of the Yosemite Valley. The Park Service realized that the limited area of the Valley, in relation to the physical facilities essential to operate the park and to serve the tremendous number of park visitors, was the heart of the problem. It could no longer continue to build, construct, and develop operating facilities on the Valley floor without seriously impairing the very qualities and values which the National Park Service was created to preserve and protect for future generations. Specifically, park authorities intended to limit valley facilities to those necessary to directly serve the visitor, with supporting facilities for park wide operation elsewhere.

The second goal was the completion of the road and trail system, primarily the Crane Flat and Tioga Road entrance routes. The influx of travel to the park primarily via the South and Arch Rock entrances had resulted in an imbalance in park development and an unequal distribution of visitor load. Several important trail connections needed completion and repair of trails closed due to lack of maintenance was required. Completion of this system would allow for visitor-use development in other portions of the park and relieve the pressure on concession facilities and the congestion in Yosemite Valley.

A third objective of Mission 66 was the replacement of obsolete concession facilities in Yosemite Valley, improvement of others park wide, and provision of additional accommodations in other areas to relieve overcrowding in the Valley. Although the park's concessionaires had been willing to undertake this additional investment in earlier years, prior to Mission 66 the Park Service had been unable to provide the prerequisite access roads, parking areas, and utilities. The program's fourth goal, was allied with this objective, and sought to construct new water and sewer services to conform to U.S. Public Health Service requirements.

A fifth important goal focused on the acquisition of private lands. In 1955 private lands occupied the few remaining park areas whose level character and adequate water resources made them possible sites for

<sup>239</sup> Roy E. Appleman, *A History of the National Park Service Mission 66 Program* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1958), 33-95. See also Christine Madrid French, "The Emergence of the Mission 66 Visitor Centers," available at <http://www.mission66.com/documents/intro.html> ; Tweed et. al., *Rustic Architecture*, available at [http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online\\_books/rusticarch/part6.htm](http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online_books/rusticarch/part6.htm)



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public-use development. Privately owned lands interfered with the public enjoyment and the NPS policy of maximum public use dictated their acquisition.<sup>240</sup>

Mission 66 was strongly criticized for its emphasis on development and fell far short of its national goals. In Yosemite it successfully achieved objectives 2 through 5. Although the Park Service was attacked for its break with the past, it addressed difficult realities and changed the nature of the park management.

Mission 66 and the rise of Modernism in Yosemite National Park, 1955- 1964 . The history of Park Service architecture before Mission 66 was one of elaborate detail and fine craftsmanship, including late Victorian lodges constructed by private concessionaires, rustic architecture designed by the Park Service in the 1920s and 1930s, and temporary facilities erected to accommodate visitors during wartime (often still in use). The Park Service had come to be recognized for its emphasis on natural materials and the painstaking processes of development that was consistent with the surrounding landscape. This ideal put intensive labor demands on both skilled and unskilled labor, a demand that was easy to fulfill in the 1930s with the CCC providing readily available and inexpensive labor for exactly the kind of construction the Park Service had come to expect. Visitors also had come to expect well-groomed trails, amenities like stone drinking fountains and steps, trailside museums, and other architectural features which appeared part of the natural landscape.

During the post-WWII era Park Service architecture was influenced by modernism rather than the romanticism of earlier rustic construction. Mission 66 architectural roots derived from the philosophies of architects such as Le Corbusier and Mies van der Rohe. With World War II military background, many of the engineers were imbued with modern design tastes that tended to the utilitarian. Because modern structures required little, if any, traditional craftsmanship, they were much less labor intensive and less expensive to build. This allowed the Park Service to stretch funding for construction projects and create many more structures. This was the first time that the Park Service had designed solid structures almost completely in concrete and in contrast to the natural landscape. The result was not the rustic forms of Theodore Roosevelt, but instead a decisively urban sensibility.

The 1950s marked a great change in the tastes of American cities and cultural attitudes toward the family, patriotism, technology, and development. Efficiency and progress became the ideal with the transformation of the pioneer spirit to a corporate plastic mentality. Even with the progressive times of the 1950s, the introduction of modern architecture into the National Parks was not wholeheartedly accepted. The most common reaction to these new developments and structures was shock and outcry from environmentalists and long-time visitors.

Devereux Butcher of the National Parks Association was one of the earliest and most outspoken critics. In 1952 he wrote of his horror at finding contemporary buildings in Great Smoky Mountains and Everglades National Parks, criticizing the Park Service for abandoning its "long-established policy of designing buildings that harmonize with their environment and with existing styles." The Park Service defended itself from the attacks of Butcher and others by arguing that it had remained consistent with the tradition of architectural design and harmony with the surroundings. It argued that designs originating through Mission 66 came directly from those used to define the rustic architecture that had preceded it. Director Wirth stated that Mission 66 buildings were intended to blend into the landscape, but through their plainness rather than by identification with natural features. The qualities that defined rustic architecture drew attention to the building instead of the landscape. Mission 66 buildings were practical and

<sup>240</sup> National Park Service, United States Department of the Interior, "Mission 66 for Yosemite National Park," n.d. (ca. 1956), in Box 22, Backcountry, Yosemite Research Library and Records Center, 4.

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austere so as to illustrate the landscape and not vie for attention.<sup>241</sup>

Environmentalists mainly criticized Mission 66, not because its philosophy was flawed, but because it did not live up to expectations in practice. A majority of buildings and structures constructed during Mission 66 were deemed unnecessary or excessive to the point that it seemed the architects were building just to be building. To a certain extent this was true: many of these buildings were built to fill immediate needs, constructed in a utilitarian style, and completed at a rapid pace.

The key element was that Mission 66 architecture was not built for aesthetic purposes, atmosphere, or pleasure, but instead it was built to meet demands and change. With an estimated eighty million visitors expected by 1966, traditional handcrafted architecture was sacrificed to bring national park facilities up to minimal expectations. Those expectations included the requirements of modern transportation and the use of new construction technology to provide for further development if necessary.

Despite continued objections it was agreed that action was necessary to bring the parks up to contemporary standards. Modern architecture fit with the Park Service's goals of progress, efficiency, health, and innovation. The Park Service hoped to carry those ideals through the next decade.

The Mission 66 era embodied a distinctive new architectural style that can best be described as "National Park Service Modern." This style was an integral part of a broader effort at the Park Service to transform the agency, and the national park system, to meet the exigencies of postwar America. In Yosemite, Happy Isles nature center "additions" encased or extended older, rustic buildings, effectively transforming them into visitor centers.<sup>242</sup>

The emerging Interstate Highway system forever changed the situation for many national parks, making them less isolated and more visited than ever. In some cases, the locations of Interstate routes influenced the siting of park visitor centers. Park Service Modern buildings exploited the functional advantages offered by postwar architectural theory and construction techniques. At the same time, Park Service Modern design built on some precedents of Park Service Rustic design, especially in the use of interior courtyards, plain facades, and exterior masonry veneers. The result was a distinctive new style of park architecture that amounted to a Park Service adaptation of contemporary American modern architecture.<sup>243</sup>

The National Park Service Modern style developed by the Park Service during the Mission 66 era soon had a widespread influence on state park design nationwide and national park design internationally. Although the new style had its critics from the very beginning, Park Service Modern, as developed by Park Service designers during the Mission 66 era, became as influential and significant in the history of American national and state park management as the Park Service Rustic style had been. The Mission 66 visitor center remains today as the most complete and

<sup>241</sup> Devereux Butcher, "For a Return to Harmony in Park Architecture," *National Parks Magazine* 26, no. 111 (October-December 1952); Sara Allaback, *Mission 66 Visitor Centers: The History of a Building Type* (United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service Cultural Resources Stewardship and Partnership Park Historic Structures and Cultural Landscapes Program: Washington, D.C., 2000). See also David Brower, "'Mission 66' is Proposed by Reviewer of Park Service's New Brochure on Wilderness," *National Parks Magazine* 32, no. 132 (January-March 1958); Weldon F. Heald, "Urbanization of the National Parks," *National Parks Magazine* 35, no. 160 (January 1961); Ansel Adams, "Yosemite—1958, Compromise in Action," *National Parks Magazine* 32, no. 135 (October-December 1958); Butcher, "Resorts or Wilderness?" *Atlantic Monthly* 207, no. 2 (February 1961).

<sup>242</sup> Allaback, *Mission 66 Visitor Centers*.

<sup>243</sup> Ibid.

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significant expression of the Park Service Modern style.<sup>244</sup>

Visitor centers combined old and new building programs, and served as the centerpieces of the new era in planning for visitor services in American national parks. The visitor center idea exerted a profound influence on park planning. The visitor center typically consists of a centralized facility that includes multiple visitor and administrative functions within a single architectural floor plan or compound. The use of the word "center" indicated the planners desire to centralize park interpretive and museum displays, new types of interpretive presentations, park administrative offices, restrooms, and various other visitor facilities.<sup>245</sup>

The visitor center was an integral part of a new approach to park planning. The criteria for siting Mission 66 visitor centers therefore differed from the criteria for siting and designing the park villages and museums of the prewar era. In larger parks, new visitor centers were often sited at park entrances or on park roads "en route" to major destinations in the park. In other cases, visitor centers were sited at a major destination or attraction within the park. The Mission 66 visitor center remains today as the most architecturally significant expression of the planning and design practices developed by the Park Service during the Mission 66 era.

Road systems also received attention during Mission 66, to the benefit of both visitors and Park Service personnel. Improved roads would expand visitor access and circulation, enhancing their experience and accommodating greater levels of visitation. These same roads would also make it easier for NPS crews to move about the park, reducing the need for extensive on-site administrative and maintenance facilities. This made it possible to relocate the bulk of these activities outside the park boundaries, where they would be less likely to compromise visitors' appreciation of the park's scenic beauty. Completion of the Tioga Road was a main goal at Yosemite National Park. Intensive studies involving discussions with various cooperating groups, the Secretary of the Interior, and other interested parties became fraught with controversy. Changes in road geometry and alignment to improve safety met resistance from such people as David Brower (Executive Secretary of the Sierra Club) and nature photographer Ansel Adams. Arguments focused on the width of the road and the width of its shoulders. The Bureau of Public roads favored a wide road with wide shoulders so that cars in emergency situations could pull off. The Park Service wanted a safe road with narrow shoulders and turnouts only where terrain permitted to avoid scaring, cuts and fills, and high costs in general. The matter was settled with a compromise whereby the road would have two-foot shoulders with few turnouts except where the shoulder had to be widened for stability. Few were pleased with the results, with conservationists continuing to object to the blasting and gouging methods used creating scars on the glacially polished granite surfaces at Olmsted Point.

Construction began in 1957 and the new road officially opened to the public in June 1961. The work maintained a sense of preservation and aesthetics, eventually becoming recognized as an outstanding park road. It displays the dramatic scenery of the Sierra Nevada through a multitude of overlooks and interpretive signs. Sections of the old Tioga Road were retained, such as that leaving the new road just east of the White Wolf intersection and winding down to the Yosemite Creek campgrounds. Another short section climbs over Snow Flat to the May Lake Trail junction. Shorter sections still serve campgrounds along the old road.<sup>246</sup>

The other major construction project undertaken by Mission 66 was the seven-mile section of the old Big Oak Flat Road between Crane Flat and Carl Inn connecting with State Route 120. The old stagecoach route was retained

<sup>244</sup> Ibid

<sup>245</sup> Ibid.

<sup>246</sup> Conrad L. Wirth, *Politics, Parks, and the People* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1980), 359-360.



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as access to the Tuolumne Grove. Laborers began work on the project in 1961, clearing and removing trees and brush within the right-of-way for the new road, between Crane Flat and the vicinity of Hazel Green Creek. As clearing proceeded, the Park Service recognized that they could not continue without damaging trees in the Tuolumne Grove. The new road was rerouted along the western boundary of the park, connecting with the State Route 120 in the vicinity of Carl Inn. The Park Service retained the historic road to the big trees in the Tuolumne Grove as a downhill, one-way road out the park from Crane Flat.<sup>247</sup>

<sup>247</sup> Superintendent's Monthly Reports, January-December 1948-1961, microfilm #4 and #5, Yosemite Research Library and Records Center.

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**Introduction:** The historic resources of Yosemite National Park are diverse in age, design and function and reflect the breadth of human uses of the region. While there were major historic, administrative and design trends that shaped patterns of development in the park there is no dominant theme shared by the amazingly eclectic resources of this remarkable park. In addition to many well documented pre-historic sites throughout the park there are remnants of early European American homesteads, and properties associated with resource exploitation activities including mining, logging, and grazing. These, together with the built environment produced by the State of California, the National Park Service, and their concessionaires, are as closely associated with the "Yosemite experience" as are the park's renowned cliffs, waterfalls, and giant trees. The elements of this built environment can be as obvious as a great hotel, or as subtle as a historic trail corridor or a climbing route defined only by guidebooks and tradition. The registration requirements are based on the conclusions outlined in the historic contexts that exploration, settlement, and industrial usage; activities related to state and federal management policies; the growth of tourism and the outdoor recreation industry; and the development of a cultural landscape through architecture and landscape design in Yosemite are significant themes in local, regional, or national history. Note that these registration requirements do not address the sites associated with prehistoric occupation and use. These are subject to highly specialized archeological guidelines and provisions for the protection of indigenous remains and cultural artifacts. As such, they fall outside the scope of the normal Multiple Property Document.

**I. Name of Property Type: Resources Associated with Settlement and Industry (1851-1951)**

**II. Description:** Yosemite opened to settlement and homesteading according to existing land laws from the moment Americans became aware of it. The most desirable lands were quickly claimed by settlers through homesteading, pre-emption, and legal provisions relating to mineral and timber rights, reservoir sites, and state school lands. By the time the national park was created in 1890, over 60,000 acres were tied up in private holdings. Many of these contained valuable stands of timber on Yosemite's western and southern boundaries, leading to the construction of railroad lines and inclines to make logging a viable proposition. Silver mining operations took place in the Tioga Mining District during the late 1800s, producing the short-lived settlements of Dana and Bennettville. Lead and barium mining continued in the El Portal area from the 1880s to the early 1950s. Small homesteaders established farms in meadow areas near the park's western boundary, and in Yosemite Valley where they proved a significant challenge to efforts aimed at preserving scenery and improving visitor access. Grazers tended to maintain a less permanent presence, moving stock in or out of the area depending on the seasons, and later on the degree of enforcement by soldiers or rangers charged with protecting Yosemite. Because the Sierra represents the primary source of water for California, the state established survey programs in 1917 to monitor the annual depth of the snow pack. The city of San Francisco began its own snow survey program in 1945 in conjunction with the Hetch Hetchy reservoir system. A number of cabins were built throughout the backcountry between 1927 and 1947 to support these surveys, functioning also as patrol cabins for the park's rangers. Although Yosemite is located in comparatively close proximity to major urban centers in the San Francisco Bay region, the surrounding rugged terrain made developing means of easy access a prerequisite for greater levels of visitation. While the earliest tourists made use of existing Indian trails, private entrepreneurs obtained concessions from state administrators to construct toll trails, followed by toll roads usable by stagecoaches. These early roads were eventually also used by automobiles, although steep grades and poor conditions made the trip uncomfortable. Many other tourists approached Yosemite by rail, but had to make the final leg into the park from the railhead at El Portal by stagecoach, or later by bus, over similarly unsatisfactory roads. The hotel complex originally established by Galen Clark on the South Fork of the Merced River near the Mariposa Big Tree

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Grove represents one the earliest attempts to provide services to tourists on their way to Yosemite. Transportation and circulation resources can also include the rights of way of railroad lines constructed within the park, and the bridges, culverts, and other features related to road construction supporting development of the Tioga Mining District.

**Subtype: Exploration, Settlement, and Resource Exploitation:** Properties associated with settlement and resource exploitation are located primarily on the periphery of the current national park boundaries. For the most part, farming and ranching took place on the patented lands in the southwest areas of the park, although scattered cabins or remains of cabins built by grazers also exist in the backcountry, together with related structures including enclosures to protect water sources. Trail markers in the form of tree blazes have also been recorded. These comprise not only those made by shepherds to define their routes, but also those cut by army troops while establishing patrol routes to guard against the shepherds and their stock. Logging occurred primarily in the southern and western areas of the park, among the dense stands of sugar pines in the upper Merced River Canyon. Although the terrain was initially believed too inaccessible to make logging economically viable, the Yosemite Lumber Company constructed an extensive system of railroad tracks and inclines in the early 1900s to overcome this difficulty. Although the tracks were removed after logging ceased in 1942, scattered remains, particularly of the incline structures, are scattered along the rights of way. Rail construction also made it possible to develop the lead and barium deposits near El Portal. The Highway from Merced to El Portal follows the basic right of way of the Yosemite Valley Railroad, which was used to transport the mine products. The National Lead Company constructed a number of buildings in El Portal and Rancheria Flat including residences and an assay office. These are of wood frame construction and resemble buildings found at Chinquapin and Wawona. Although the period of active mining in the areas of Tioga Pass and Mono Pass was briefer, there are prominent ruins and a few good examples of mining structures remaining, particularly in the areas developed as the Golden Crown Mine and Dana Village. These are wooden or stone structures in various stages of collapse, including cabins, a blacksmith shop, a powder house, and a lift house. Snow survey cabins were constructed for strictly utilitarian purposes, and their design varies by location. They are built primarily of wood, with log, board, or shingled exterior walls, rock or concrete foundations, shake or metal roofs, and double hung or casement windows. They are still in use, and undergo periodic maintenance.

**Subtype: Transportation and Circulation:** Earliest access to Yosemite Valley was by Indian Trail, but after the valley was made a state grant, the state commissioners granted certain individuals the right to build roads into the valley and charge tolls for their use. There were only three main trails into Yosemite: the Mann, Coulterville, and the Big Oak Flat Road. Despite, the convenience of owning an automobile, those who drove them to Yosemite often complained of poorly paved roads (that were dusty and dirty), steep grades (ranging from 14-22%), long stretches of roads without any water or gas stations, and no maintenance shops for repairs to broken vehicle parts. Associated with these early roads were a variety of transportation-related structures, such as transportation offices, station houses, and railroad cars. The resources associated with the theme of transportation possessed a variety of physical characteristics. The one historic district on the National Register associated with this theme served as an important stage and freight center on the way into Yosemite Valley from the south. Although none of the early wooden transportation service buildings, such as stables, barns, granaries, and blacksmith shops, exist, the hotel complex is extant and on its original location at the crossing of the South Fork of the Merced River. Some individual buildings related to this theme are made of wood. One such property housed transportation and communication facilities and served as a railroad station house. Structures also included old wagon and road traces, a tunnel carved through a giant sequoia, and historical vehicles. Many of these roads and associated features are in excellent condition. Because they are still in use they



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undergo frequent maintenance. Older structures not in use, including the historical vehicles, are being preserved as part of the park's early transportation collection.

**III. Significance:** The significance of properties relating to settlement and resource exploitation is derived from the themes of economic development in the western United States and the resulting transformation of the environment, as well as attitudes towards the environment. These themes demonstrate the processes by which the Yosemite region became tied to the local, regional, and national economies through industry and transportation. Ranching activities were aimed, for the most part, at supplying California's urban markets while Yosemite's early farms provided food for tourists. The demand for minerals and lumber was driven by needs originating far beyond Yosemite's immediate environs, and could be driven by developments in financial markets a continent away. The presence of extractive industries in the Sierra was symptomatic of the growing population in California and the greater Western region, and points to the far-reaching effects of urbanization. The transformation in the environment produced by logging also served to galvanize public opinion against such exploitation, and played a direct role in motivating leading members of California society to advocate for Yosemite's protection. These themes also encompass the role of ethnic groups in the West. Shepherds active in the area were primarily Basque, Mexican, and Portuguese, while Native Americans were an important labor force in logging operations. However ephemeral was their presence, they added another layer to Yosemite's cultural landscape and give further evidence of the West's diverse population. Snow survey cabins provide further evidence of the impact of population growth in the region, reflecting Western economies' dependency on water transported hundreds of miles from its source, at vast cost. Dominating Western politics for decades, issues of water allocation continue to have a transforming effect on the whole of the environment.

When tourists traveled to Yosemite, in the early years, it was usually by train. Passengers spent long and tiring hours in order to arrive in Yosemite. Once the passengers arrived into Yosemite they still had to ride in horse driven carriage for another thirty miles. Many of the trails were bumpy and dusty, and in some areas, quite narrow, which made passing other stagecoaches a challenge. The significance of these properties correlates with the important theme of transportation in American history. They exemplify varying types of transportation and transportation-related structures, and the information they provide about changing transportation and circulation networks in and around Yosemite National Park. They also reflect park management's changing philosophy through the years relative to tourism, the type and extent of park development and conservation. They help illustrate several aspects of the park's transportation and recreational history, beginning with the earliest access routes and the types of transportation systems used to bring the first visitors into Yosemite Valley. They illustrate the following years of development within the state grant and the national park, when the emphasis lay on immediate development to bring in the tourist dollar, despite the costs to the environment. In the 1930's designers ultimate goal for roads, bridges and tunnels was to achieve harmony with the environment.

**IV. Registration Requirements:** Properties related to Settlement and Industry are eligible under Criterion A if they serve as important reminders of the movement of Americans into the Yosemite region, and their attempts to make use of the land for its natural resources as well as a scenic resource for tourism. Except where specified the historic materials, form and setting, and association of the historic resource must be intact.

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In order to be eligible under Criterion C in the areas of Design and Construction the resource must reflect the Park Service's developing emphasis on structures that would harmonize with the environment and present a minimal visual impact. This should be represented by features illustrating significant efforts in architecture, landscape design, landscape naturalization, and/or engineering to preserve the "natural" appearance of the surroundings. Eligible properties should be considered even if alterations to form and materials exist so long as the significant design or means of construction is prominent and intact.

Districts, buildings, structures, objects and sites associated with exploration, settlement, and resource exploitation should ideally be on their original property and in the original historical setting. They should exhibit original design and workmanship with minimal change due to repair beyond their period of significance. These properties should retain integrity of setting, feeling, and association with the patterns of history detailed in the context of Settlement and Industry in the Yosemite Region. Because the significance of properties nominated under this theme derives primarily from their ability to illustrate the development of land and resource use in Yosemite, deterioration due to benign neglect should not prevent properties from being considered so long as their setting, feeling, and association are deemed to be intact. Additionally, the effects of Civilian Conservation Corps "forest cleanup" efforts between 1933 and 1940 should not prevent consideration of specific properties if no other examples of the subtype are available. Resources associated with exploration and resource exploitation may include intact or remnant examples of railroad structures including trestles and foundations, mine structures and residences, tree blazes, and snow survey cabins. These resources should date from 1851-1951.

Districts, structures, objects and sites associated with transportation and circulation should ideally be on their original property and in the original historical setting. The Yosemite Transportation Company Office and Bagby Station house were entered in the National Register several years ago but they are removed from their original location. The old road traces being nominated appear to retain many of their original structures in their original locations. Ideally districts, structures, and objects associated with transportation and circulation under this theme should exhibit their original design and workmanship with minimal change due to repair or deterioration. This is important for the historical vehicles because their original design and construction, and resultant use based on those factors, is what gives them significance. Abandoned roads, however, which have undergone some deterioration from disuse, may still provide important data on early modes of transportation and on methods of road construction such as width, grade, and the design and placement of associated physical structures for drainage, shoring, and bridging purposes. The significance of the roads, tunnels, bridges, and others nominated under this theme lays to a great extent in their design, which are related to a variety of factors such as topography, the desire to construct environmentally compatible structures, and evolving tenets of landscape architecture. Significance also lies in their construction materials and methods of workmanship, which reflected the builder and era, economic conditions, the move toward rustic architecture in the pre-World War II years, and the park's changing philosophy toward back-country development. Districts, buildings, structures, objects and sites must be clearly associated with the development of transportation and circulation systems and networks in the Yosemite National Park area. In addition to roads and their associated structures, these resources may comprise facilities to serve tourists using these routes; facilities for servicing, repair, or maintenance of transportation systems; or the actual vehicles used for the transportation of men or supplies. Early transportation materials should date from 1870-1915, National Park Service transportation and circulation should date from 1915-1940.

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**Examples of Properties Associated with Settlement and Industry:**

**Exploration, Settlement, and Resource Exploitation**

Golden Crown Mine site (nominated 2003)  
Great Sierra Mine (Dana Village) site  
Hodgdon Homestead Cabin  
Madera Sugar Pine Lumber Company properties  
McCauley and Meyer Barns  
McCauley Cabin  
McGurk Cabin  
Murchison House and National Lead Company assay office (El Portal)  
Rancheria Flat houses  
Snow Survey Cabins (nominated 2003)  
    Buck Camp  
    Lake Vernon  
    Merced Lake  
    Sachse Springs  
    Snow Flat  
Soda Springs Cabin (Lembert Homestead)  
Tree blazes  
Yosemite Lumber Company properties  
Yosemite Sugar Pine Lumber Company properties

**Transportation and Circulation**

Bagby Stationhouse  
Dead Giant Tunnel Tree  
Great Sierra Wagon Road  
Hetch Hetchy Railroad Engine  
Hetch Hetchy Railroad Track  
New Big Oak Flat Road (nominated 2003)  
Old Big Oak Flat Road (nominated 2003)  
Old Coulterville Road and Trail  
Wawona Hotel  
Wawona Tunnel (nominated 2003)  
Yosemite Transportation Company Office  
Yosemite Valley Railroad Caboose

**I. Name of Property Type: Resources Associated with State and Federal Administration of Yosemite (1864-1966)**

**II. Description:** The concerns of the California state administrators centered on promoting Yosemite as a destination where better classes of tourists could engage in a genteel Victorian admiration of the scenic wonders. Improved hotels



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and easy access to the sights were intended to encourage visits lasting weeks or months. After Yosemite was returned to direct federal control, the acting superintendents of the U.S. Army developed workable management practices, tightened oversight of concessionaires, and improved access to and throughout the park. The National Park Service built upon the Army's administrative foundation, and in partnership with concessionaires began to emphasize Yosemite as a recreational resort in the interwar years. Much of the built environment, which has become as distinctive as the landscape, was constructed during this period to enhance the visitor's experience while managing ever-greater levels of attendance. The park hosted venues for winter sports and developed accommodations for tourists from all economic levels. These resort-style recreations were in keeping with the public's conception of national parks at the time, and came to be expected as a normal part of a visit to Yosemite. Shifting Park Service philosophies in the postwar years yielded first the Mission 66 program that aimed to update facilities to handle the still increasing visitation levels, followed by new proposals to actively limit the impact of tourists and remove elements of the built environment.

**Subtype: Early Administration:** The Yosemite Park Act, passed on June 30 1864, granted 36,111 acres in Yosemite Valley to the state, together with 2,500 acres containing the Mariposa Grove. The Grant stipulated that the valley and grove were to be managed by the governor of California and eight commissioners who would serve without pay. The major tasks facing the commissioners involved boosting visitation by improving access routes, accommodations and rates for visitor services, while exercising some level of control over development and land use. The commissioners did not consider it their duty to improve the roads and trails leading to the grant, believing that this should be left to individuals and nearby municipalities interested in securing a share of the travel business. Within the grant, the commissioners improved the trail to Vernal Fall, and located another bridge upstream of the fall to provide greater access to Nevada Fall. They also considered a permanent staircase at Vernal Fall as an alternative to the dangerous and privately-owned existing ladders. In general, the commissioners attempted to improve accessibility at all points of interest, and remove barriers to free movement, such as trail charges. In 1872 the commissioners entered into a contract with the Coulterville and Yosemite Turnpike Company that gave the firm exclusive rights to construct a wagon road to the valley floor on the north side of the Merced River. In response, the residents of Big Oak Flat and their Yosemite Turnpike Road Company applied to the commissioners for a franchise to extend their access road to the north side of the valley, while the South Fork and Yosemite Turnpike Road from Mariposa was completed in the spring of 1875. The commissioners purchased a number of privately-built hotels in the Valley and made them available to concessionaires on a lease basis, but in doing so left themselves open to charges of corruption.

With the establishment of Yosemite National Park in 1890, the United States Army assumed the administrative duties outside of the original grant. To aid their patrols the cavalry troops sent to Yosemite constructed a number of backcountry trails, and improved the existing El Portal road. When the army assumed responsibility for the entire park from 1905, the acting superintendents made a number of suggestions for improving Yosemite Valley, including proposals for new bridges and a new village designed to a common architectural theme that would harmonize with the surroundings.

**Subtype: National Park Service Administration:** Stephen Mather, the first Director of the National Park Service, and his assistant Horace Albright aimed to make the Park Service an integral part of the political and legal framework of the federal government, and equate park lands with the essence of American society. They promoted developments making the parks more comfortable and convenient for the average tourist, so that more would visit for longer periods of time and, it was hoped, come to appreciate the national park system as a vital national resource. Recreation was

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central to Mather's conception of the national parks. He placed a special emphasis on cultivating interest and support from his wealthy and influential Americans who could help further his cause, and the growth of the Park Service. Auto camps and housekeeping camps resulted from Mather's desire to expand housing for all classes of visitors to further expand the Park Service's popularity with the American public. In Yosemite, accommodations would eventually include the plush Ahwahnee Hotel, the medium-class Yosemite Lodge, tent camps at Curry Village, and seasonal camps in the High Sierra. Mather's commitment to the idea of the parks as havens for recreation and leisure insured that major parks like Yosemite were heavily developed with thousands of structures, hundreds of miles of roads and extensive recreational facilities that at times overpowered even the dramatic landscape of the parks they were built to serve. The establishment of the D. J. Desmond Company attempted to remove concession haggling and put Yosemite's visitor services on a stable footing. Other significant actions included the improvement of roads, the relocation of Yosemite Village, the construction of the Rangers' Club as a prototype for future park structures, and interpretive and educational programs that would be emulated by all other parks.

President Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal proved a landmark development in the history of the National Park Service. Many of the New Deal's make-work programs focused on the national parks, producing the extensive rustic landscaping programs that created the characteristic "look" of national parks that is still recognized and expected today. Under the guidance of Landscape Division chief Thomas Vint, buildings and structures were carefully designed to compliment their individual surroundings. In some cases this might be the natural environment while Yosemite's Chinquapin intersection complex sought harmony with the region's history and distinctive architectural traditions. Members of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), housed in camps at Yosemite, undertook forest cleanup and improvement, roadside clearing and landscaping, horse trail construction, stringing telephone lines, expanding fish hatchery facilities, development of public campgrounds, erosion control on creeks and rivers, insect control, and other forestry work such as removal of exotic plants and naturalization. Emergency Conservation Work (ECW) expanded on these activities with the development of fire control measures, bridge building, flood control, and tree disease control.

These projects came to an end with the Second World War. Despite the fact that its roads and structures were being heavily damaged by lack of maintenance, the Park Service made important contributions to the war effort. It made many facilities, especially concession properties such as the Ahwahnee Hotel in Yosemite, available to the military as rest areas for injured troops.

Park visitation increased rapidly as the United States demobilized after the war, due to increased leisure time, greater prosperity, and improved transportation. By the 1950s, however, the lack of maintenance at the parks had caused such deterioration of roads and facilities that they were completely inadequate and in need of replacement. Although the Park Service budget picked up in the postwar years, Cold War spending on foreign aid limited the funds available to the Park Service for refurbishing and rebuilding. In the mid-1950s, Park Service director Conrad Wirth developed the Mission 66 program. The plan called for construction of new housing and service structures, sanitation facilities, and water, sewer, and electrical systems that would enable the national parks to accommodate the visitor levels anticipated for 1966 and the fiftieth anniversary of the National Park Service. Yosemite's Mission 66 program included protection of Yosemite Valley by removing as many service and support activities as possible to locations outside of the immediate area, leaving only what was necessary for direct visitor service. Road and trail systems were to be completed, primarily in the Crane Flat and Tioga Road entrance routes, to relieve pressure on the South and Arch Rock entrances and to reduce Valley congestion. New water and sewer systems would be constructed to modern

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standards for government and concession developments. Obsolete concession facilities in the Valley were to be replaced, while others in the park would be improved and additional accommodations would be constructed to relieve overcrowding. Mission 66 facilities were to be constructed as rapidly and efficiently as possible, and were intended to reflect the mood of national progress and modernity that pervaded postwar America. As a result, they abandoned the meticulous, labor-intensive designs of the prewar rustic style in favor of the bare-bones steel and concrete of the International School. While they fulfilled their basic purpose, the Mission 66 facilities such as the Visitor Center often came as a shock to visitors who had come to equate Yosemite's scenery with the older architectural styles.

**III. Significance:** The activities of Yosemite's administrators over the course of one hundred years illustrates the ongoing tension in the mandate of the original Yosemite Grant to preserve the area's scenic wonders while providing for "public use, resort, and recreation." Administrators at both the state and federal level were forced to perform a balancing act between these frequently conflicting interests, according to the larger political climate. At all times, however, the administrators' decisions have had a direct influence on both the character of Yosemite as a place, and the way in which the visitor experienced it. While Yosemite gives the impression of being a land in which nature enjoys free reign, it is in fact the product of ongoing legislation, regulation, and often acrimonious debate at all levels of American government. This has been a major factor in making Yosemite the standard, in both positive and negative respects, by which all other national parks are judged.

**IV. Registration Requirements:** Properties related to State and Federal Administration are eligible under Criterion A if they represent the efforts of Yosemite's administrators to provide access and facilities for visitors while protecting the park's scenic beauty. The historic materials, form and setting, and association of the historic resource must be substantially intact, while allowing for routine maintenance.

In order to be eligible under Criterion C in the areas of Design and Construction the resource must exhibit the characteristic design, landscape association, and construction features of the National Park Service's rustic architecture and landscape design principles, or those of the Mission 66 program. Eligible properties should be considered even if alterations to form and materials exist so long as the significant design, association, and means of construction are prominent and intact.

Examples of eligible properties include, but are not limited to, park administrative buildings including ranger stations, comfort stations, visitor accommodations, fire lookouts, visitor centers, and roads, bridges, and tunnels commissioned by state or federal administrators. Eligible properties must be associated with the property type of State and Federal Administration of Yosemite, and must date from the period of 1864-1966.

**Examples of Properties Associated with State and Federal Administration are:**

**Early Administration**

Camp Curry Historic District  
Old Big Oak Flat Road (nominated 2003)  
Old Coulterville Road and Trail  
Wawona Hotel and Pavilion



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**National Park Service Administration**

Ahwahnee Hotel  
Chinquapin Historic District (nominated 2003)  
Great Sierra Wagon Road  
Happy Isles Visitor Center  
Henness Ridge Fire Lookout (nominated 2003)  
Merced Grove Ranger Station  
Merced Lake Ranger Station (nominated 2003)  
New Big Oak Flat Road (nominated 2003)  
Rangers' Club  
Tuolumne Meadows Ranger Stations and Comfort Stations  
Wawona Tunnel (nominated 2003)  
Yosemite Village Historic District  
Yosemite Visitor Center

**I. Name of Property Type: Resources Associated with Tourism, Recreation and the Preservation Ethic in Yosemite (1864-1971)**

**II. Description** In 1864, one hundred tourists visited Yosemite. At the time they only had three hotels to choose from; Black's Hotel, La Casa Nevada, and Hutchings House. However, traveling to Yosemite at this time was dreadful. Tourism in Yosemite grew vigorously with the arrival of the automobile. By the late 1910's and early 1920's Yosemite booster literature had circulated around the United States. Yosemite Park officials found themselves struggling to keep up with the influx of tourism. Although many of the tourists came to Yosemite to take advantage of the many outdoor activities available in the park they came to expect developed facilities. Park facilities needed to be increasingly improved and expanded. Because of the explosive growth in tourism, park officials scrambled to generate enough funds for the improvement of roads, trails, and campgrounds, construction of bridges, expansion of park facilities, and landscaping.

**Subtype: Tourism:** Most early-day visitation to Yosemite centered around Yosemite Valley, which became the focal point of camping, hiking, skiing and sightseeing activities. These property types are related to the development and practice of leisure activities for diversion, amusement, and sport by park visitors and may be either National Park Service designed or concessionaire facilities. Many early visitors to Yosemite limited their stay to the Yosemite Valley, very few ventured into the backcountry. This was primarily because many of those who could afford an extended trip to the park during these years preferred to experience nature in some degree of comfort, and stayed close to the Valley's amenities. Stephen Mather decided he wanted the tourist to have the ability to enjoy the beauty of the backcountry without the hardships of setting up camp and cooking. The newly established National Park Service agreed with Mather and requested that camps be constructed in an attempt to draw visitors to the Yosemite High Country. The first High Sierra Camps were built from 1916-1918. These structures had various changes in use but became very popular as a place to camp because of their low prices, convenience, and beauty of surroundings. These camps were also significant because they established a new pattern of interpretive service by offering organized hikes guided by National Park Service naturalist who accompanied visitors to the camps and lectured them in natural and

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cultural history. This helped the national park service spread their objectives of wilderness preservation. These properties were also significant for their promotion of tourism in the high country. They enabled more "average visitors" to enjoy and appreciate the natural, scenic, and historic values of the high country, by giving access to those who were inexperienced campers or unable to afford packtrains to carry their supplies.

The majority of tourists limited their visits to Yosemite Valley. Early tourists arrived by stagecoach, often after a rail journey to the transfer point at El Portal. The cost of such trips limited most visitation to the well-to-do, who typically favored short day hikes or the serene contemplation of scenery from well-appointed lodgings. When Yosemite was opened to automobiles in 1913, a new class of visitor soon arrived. Working class families that never had the time or disposable income for an extended vacation in the grand manner were now able to make the trip to the park, with their cars often serving as both transportation and lodging. Most importantly, auto-tourism changed the fundamental nature of the visitor's experience at Yosemite and became a dominant factor for future development. The new breed of tourists did not only want to drive *to* Yosemite, they wanted to drive *in* Yosemite and see the sights from their cars. This new way of experiencing the natural world demanded a renewed attention to the built environment, with road building, traffic control, and parking close to the major scenic attractions. And while camping out of their cars was good enough for some visitors, many others had no familiarity with the "outdoor life," and came to Yosemite expecting to find all the comforts of home. Administrators and concessionaires responded with more and better quality lodging, more restaurants, expanded retail services, recreational facilities, and educational programs. These in turn required more employees who needed their own services, such as housing, a school, and medical care. Finally, administrators had to find a way to impose these developments on the historic landscape of Yosemite without causing too much of a perceived change in its essential character.

**Subtype: Winter Sports:** The Snow Creek Cabin was built in 1929 and enlarged in 1930. Constructed of vertical logs and wood-shingled siding, with a wood shingle roof, the structure was patterned after ski huts in the European Alps. After the completion of the All-Year Highway to Yosemite in 1926 and the opening of the Ahwahnee Hotel, the Yosemite Park and Curry Company (YP&CC), the concessionaires at the time, decided to promote winter sports to develop tourism during the winter. In 1927 the YP&CC formed a toboggan slide west of Camp Curry and an ice rink in the parking lot in 1928. That same year, Ernst desBaillets was hired to organize skiing, skating, ice hockey, and various other winter sports in Yosemite. The YP&CC also developed ski tours using the High Sierra camps for overnight stays. They remodeled the little Glacier Point Mountain House for winter use and in 1929 built a ski cabin on the shoulder of Mount Watkins above Snow Creek, initiating the first hut system for ski-mountaineering in the Sierra. Visitors arrived at the cabin on horseback, snowshoes, foot and skis for the start of ski tours, which ran from Mount Watkins to Snow Flat and from the cabin to Tenaya Lake and Tuolumne Meadows. The cabin only served as a ski cabin for five seasons, it was instead used by visiting rangers on snow surveys. Even famed photographer Ansel Adams visited the cabin several times to take pictures of the high country. With the completion of the Wawona road and tunnel in 1933 the focus of winter activities shifted to the Chinquapin area for skiing concentrating on Badger Pass and the high country. The Ostrander ski hut, built as a touring shelter in 1940 by the CCC was an important addition to these winter facilities.

**Subtype: Camping:** This category includes the High Sierra Camps. These structures will be associated with the promotion of tourism in the High Country. These structures are simple, and designed for day use or providing minimal sleeping and eating facilities if built for overnight accommodations. The camps feature semi-permanent facilities consisting of tent cabins and central dining and sanitary facilities. These central facilities may be in the form of large

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tents or permanent stone or wood buildings, depending on the location. In order to be listed in the National Register these properties should be in their original locations and reflect their historical surroundings as much as possible. This is especially important for the High Sierra Camps because the surrounding environment is a significant aspect of their appeal to the population. The environment was an integral part of the recreational purposes for which they were established. Properties associated with camping will typically be simple in design. The most basic visitor housing, such as those found at Glen Aulin or May Lake, will consist of little more than steel frame beds in a tent cabin. The most elaborate camp at White Wolf includes four wooden cabins with heat, electric lighting, and private bathrooms.

The Camp Curry Historic District is characterized—though on a much larger scale—by the same mix of tent cabins and permanent wooden cabins surrounding a central complex of dining, recreation, and guest service buildings. Although this style of camp was once common in the national park system, Camp Curry is now the only remaining significant example of this property type.

When the El Portal Highway opened in 1926 visitation to the valley increased dramatically with many visitors camped in meadows not normally used for campsites, causing significant damage. In response, and over the following several years, camping areas were designated along the Merced River and were formalized. Camping was limited to 30 days in an effort to reduce the crowding and accommodate the large numbers of campers requesting space. The biggest change to the campground area occurred in 1939 when several campsites were developed in the valley based on the Meineke Camping System, implemented throughout the park service. By design, spaces for campers were designated in a manner that precluded damage to vegetation, and offered parking spaces, room for tents, firepits, and articulated paths to minimize the trampling of vegetation. In 1941, 94 campsites added at Camp 11 using these design standards. After World War II, repeated flooding and denuding of the riverbanks as a result of intense use, lead to the redevelopment of several campgrounds. Work undertaken included reconfiguring campsites, rerouting circulation, and constructing new comfort stations. Yosemite currently has twelve campgrounds of this sort and one, Camp 4, which operates on a walk-in basis only.

**Subtype: Trails:** The first white men to descend to the floor of Yosemite Valley, in 1851, were members of the Mariposa Battalion, a military volunteer unit that had been authorized to move the Indians of Yosemite Valley onto reservations. It is possible that members of the earlier 1833 Joseph Walker reconnaissance trip into Utah, Nevada, and California gazed down into Yosemite Valley as they made their way westward over the Sierra. The army found only a few Indian trails in the backcountry beyond the rim of the Valley. To aid their work, they improved upon these and established new trails as the need arose. Most of the current backcountry trail system was laid down by the army during this period. To aid patrols after the first snowfalls, the army also marked trails with distinctive blazes cut into the bark of trees. The development of trail building methods in Yosemite is closely related to other factors in park history such as early Exploration, landscape architecture, and recreation. Yosemite trails were most often designed with beds of dry-laid stone. This removed much of the need for cutting into the natural slope, reduced the risk of erosion, and preserved the existing vegetation on either side of the trail. The designs of these trails were based on the design of roads using natural stone for parapet walls, and when crushed as a source of gravel for trail surfacing. By the 1920's trail design had an increasing emphasis on wide sturdy trails that would accommodate horses as well as foot traffic. In 1934 the Engineering Division published the first standards for trail construction, calling for a set width of four feet throughout, and grades of no more than 15 percent except when absolutely necessary. The grade was to be varied at regular intervals, to avoid overworking one set of the visitor's leg muscles, while drainage dips or water breaks were preferred over culverts and bridges. They were also designed to be invisible from anyone not using them



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in order to preserve the scenic landscape. Although many of these trails have been redesigned since their original use, they should continue to convey a strong sense of the wilderness conditions that the Indians or first explorers encountered. Blazes are distinctive marks used by particular groups to mark territory or a route through the park; they are significant in the early history of the park.

**Subtype: Rock Climbing:** The rich and well documented history of rock climbing presents one of the most exciting areas for creative future National Register work in Yosemite National Park. The granite walls of Yosemite had attracted western climbers for years, including John Muir in 1869. The first bolts used for rock-climbing in Yosemite were drilled into Half Dome in 1871. Attaching ropes to these bolts allowed people to ascend these great cliffs that were previously deemed insurmountable. Yosemite National Park was the birthplace of modern rock-climbing and climbing in the park established international standards still in place today. Modern rock-climbing equipment, including that produced by successful companies like *Patagonia*, evolved from the first pitons or bolts hammered into the great granite cliffs of Yosemite. Camp 4 in particular served as a laboratory for the development of highly sophisticated equipment designs that enable climbers to ascend the vertical rock of the Valley and in the process create an influential business model that greatly contributed to the mass appeal of outdoor recreation and the growth of "green" consumerism in the late twentieth-century. Many of the most historically significant rock climbs in the world are found in Yosemite Valley. These routes are very well mapped with excellent historical records pertaining to their development and history. There are routes on El Capitan, Half Dome, the Lost Arrow and surrounding cliffs that qualify for listing on the National Register. In many cases there are extant historic resources in the form of pitons and bolts that need to be recorded and preserved in place where possible.

**III. Significance:** The national park idea maintained that the natural wonders of the United States should be held in perpetual trust for the entire population, rather than being exploited by private entrepreneurs. The idea derived in part from the transcendentalist traditions of Henry David Thoreau and Ralph Waldo Emerson, which advocated the contemplation of natural beauty as an antidote to the increasingly urban society of the nineteenth century. This combined with the popular conception of the West as a place of rugged independence, somehow more innately American and democratic than the settled, domesticated East. Yosemite's half-mile high granite cliffs and giant redwood trees were a larger-than-life epitome of what seemed to be the West's unlimited potential.

The American national myth invests special meaning in the wilderness as the true source and keeper of national character. The wilderness was commonly seen as a natural counter to European claims of cultural superiority, and as such had to be personally experienced in order to be a proper American. This idea calls to mind Theodore Roosevelt's glorification of the strenuous life as a counter to excessive civilization, and lay behind many of the earliest attempts to preserve natural scenic wonders as American treasures. These attempts illustrate the religious devotion of environmentalists such as Muir, and point to the distinctly elitist mindset that characterized the movement in its earliest days. The conservation movement reflected the Progressive tradition in America and its efforts to mitigate the impact of modernity and a changing society. "Back to Nature" carried with it the additional message of "Away from the Cities" and their corrosive influences—particularly the apparent threat of immigrants challenging the established order. Those visiting the newly-created national parks, it was supposed, would find the true and authentic America.

The hotels and lodges created in the parks, particularly in the decades during and after the First World War, emulated to a degree the chalets of Europe, suggesting to visitors the permanence of the American experience,

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together with the nation's new role on the world stage. The slogan "See America First" explicitly put forward the notion that American culture was the equal of anything that could be found across the Atlantic. Under founding director Stephen Mather, the National Park Service readily cooperated with commercial interests to promote visitation as a patriotic duty. Extensive transportation infrastructures and lodging to suit every budget emphasized that in America, the environment was not only spectacular, but democratic.

Mather and his successors encouraged Americans to think of the parks as their great national playground, where they could rejuvenate mind and body through outdoor recreation. Official policy was to encourage any sporting activity that did not conflict with the basic mandate of the national parks. In practice, anything other than hunting and organized team sports could be regularly practiced by visitors at Yosemite. Stephen Mather and Horace Albright were especially interested in developing winter sports at Yosemite, in hopes that the park would develop into a year-round resort. Facilities to support camping and hiking were intended to bring visitors into closer contact with nature, and in the process fostering public support for the park and park service.

The ability to experience nature at Yosemite also promoted support for the environment apart from—or even in opposition to—the park service's official policies. Visitors who sought to follow John Muir's examples in backcountry hiking and rock climbing formed the core of the modern environmental preservation movement, as exemplified by the Sierra Club. The controversy over the Hetch Hetchy dam project on the Tuolumne River was a key moment in the history of American environmentalism, and represents the essence of the debate over the purposes of the nation's public lands. Rock climbing at Yosemite gave rise to a new form of environmental awareness through the development of the modern outdoor recreation industry and the principles of "green consumerism." These have come to exert a major influence on Park Service policies from the late twentieth century.

**IV. Registration Requirements:** Properties related to Tourism, Recreation, and the Preservation Ethic are eligible under Criterion A if they reflect aspects of Yosemite history that contributed to the growth of outdoor recreation, environmentalism, tourism or trends in the post-war leisure economy. Properties in this category may also be eligible under Criterion C. The historic materials, form and setting, and association of the historic resource must be intact. Properties or sites need to display integrity of original design, craftsmanship, and materials, and if possible be located in or on their original site. These properties must be associated with the property type of Tourism, Recreation, and the Preservation Ethic in Yosemite National Park. Examples of eligible properties include but are not limited to hotels and tourist resources, camps, trails and trail resources, climbing routes, crags or rocks with clear and verifiable climbing histories, and any properties associated with recreation in the park. Properties may also be associated with the National Park Services efforts to promote conservation or environmental protection.

**Examples of Properties Associated with Tourism, Recreation, and the Preservation Ethic are:**

**Tourism:**

Ahwahnee Hotel  
Camp Curry Historic District  
Chinquapin Historic District (nominated 2003)  
Glacier Point Trailside Museum  
Mariposa Grove Comfort Station

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Mariposa Grove Museum  
South Entrance Historic District  
Tuolumne Ranger Stations and Comfort Stations  
Wawona Hotel  
Yosemite Valley Bridges  
Yosemite Village Historic District

**Camping, Hiking:**

Glen Aulin High Sierra Camp Historic District (nominated 2003)  
May Lake High Sierra Camp Historic District (nominated 2003)  
Merced Lake High Sierra Camp Historic District (nominated 2003)  
Sunrise High Sierra Camp Historic District (nominated 2003)  
Tuolumne Meadows High Sierra Camp Historic District (nominated 2003)  
Vogelsang High Sierra Camp Historic District (nominated 2003)  
White Wolf High Sierra Camp (nominated 2003)  
Trails

**Winter Activities:**

Ostrander Ski Hut (nominated 2003)  
Snow Creek Cabins (nominated 2003)

**Rock Climbing:**

Camp 4  
Half Dome Cables  
Historic Climbing Routes. These might include but are not limited to historic routes on: El Capitan, Half Dome, Cathedral Spires, the Lost Arrow and other significant Valley cliffs.

**I. Name of Property Type: Resources Associated with Architecture and Design (1856-1964)**

**II. Description:** Yosemite's built environment is the result of nearly a century of effort by the National Park Service to balance its twin mandates of preserving natural scenery and providing for public enjoyment, use, and appreciation. As in other areas of Park Service history, Yosemite served as a model for ideas and practices that would subsequently be put into place in other parks throughout the country. Because Yosemite quickly became the focus of intensive tourism and haphazard development in the nineteenth century, it has been an especially significant example of the Park Service's attempts to introduce alternative forms of development that would accommodate ever-increasing levels of visitation, while still harmonizing with the natural surroundings. These forms of development not only included new buildings and structures that were sympathetic to Yosemite's unique scenic environment, but also subtle expressions of landscape architecture that would guide and enhance the visitor's experience. Together, these have formed what landscape architect Ethan Carr has termed Wilderness by Design: a middle ground between the totally depopulated wilderness and the dedicated tourist resort, combining elements of both while never quite satisfying advocates for either extreme.



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**Subtype: Vernacular Building Traditions in Yosemite, 1856-1904** These properties were designed to be temporary and functional, they included cabins, ranch-houses, farmhouses, barns, out buildings, corrals, adits, tunnels, ore bins, and other miscellaneous structures associated with trailblazing, sheep and cattle raising, farming, lumbering railroads, and mining activity. The cabins and barns were mostly simple one-story, one-room structures characterized by exterior peeled logs, often hand hewn on the interior, laid in alternating layers, with saddle box, v-notched, or dovetail joints. Mud, grass or wooden shake, wedge, or pole chinking may be present. Roofs were originally wood-shingled gable style. The majority of these properties were characterized by round logs with saddle-notched corners. Many times a v-notch cut was used because it was an easier cut than the U cut used for a saddle-notch. A more difficult but more satisfactory method of corner joining was the dovetail or box corner, usually performed on hewn logs. Dovetailing produced a tighter fit and eliminated the need for chinking. There were various types of chinking used: such as split shakes laid flat or on their edge between logs; small poles cut to fit into crevices; wedge-shaped slabs laid between logs; or a complete covering of split shakes laid vertically against the side walls. The latter type of chinking was most common in Yosemite because of the abundant supply of sugar pines for shakes.

**Subtype: Pre-NPS Rustic:** structures established an aesthetic tone for the valley development before the Park Service was present in Yosemite. As early as 1870 people were already becoming apprehensive about the type of construction and development taking place in the Yosemite Valley. They felt that the properties should blend in with the surrounding environment. These properties included residences and outbuildings, commercial structures, visitor service facilities, guest accommodations, and any other buildings or service structures connected with early settlements, commercial activities, or visitor service functions in the area now contained within Yosemite National Park. They were built in the period prior to the Park Service's emphasis on formally designing rustic architectural style. The majority of examples of this design were originally located in Yosemite Valley, and were constructed by businessmen, the state of California, the U.S. Army, or by private corporations, such as the Yosemite Valley Railroad, in the late 1800's and early 1900's. They represent an early rustic, park-oriented type of architecture, based on compatibility with the environment, which was later refined and used by the National Park service throughout the U.S. Common structural and decorative characteristics included wood frames of heavy structural timber, the use of cedar bark strips in decorative patterns as exterior sheathing, unpeeled logs as structural members and design elements, hand laid stone foundations, and wood shingles. These structures were usually stained dark in color and had gabled or hipped roofs with overhanging eaves. This style is differentiated from the vernacular log cabin style described earlier by its more conscious planning of style and design elements used to create a rustic stick-style appearance. They are similar to those found in nineteenth-century Eastern Adirondack resorts, and are environmentally unobtrusive and aesthetically pleasing. A California variant of this style was especially important in Yosemite, where it yielded several of the park's most notable buildings. The work of Pasadena architects Charles and Henry Greene demonstrated the use of massive design features and an even greater degree of blending with the local topography, while incorporating elements of traditional Japanese architecture. Bernard Maybeck developed a school of architecture in the San Francisco Bay Area which combined the indigenous Shingle style with northern European influences such as steeply-pitched roofs, vaulting, and floor to ceiling windows. Properties from this time period should date from circa 1870 to 1916 when the National Park Service officially took over Yosemite National Park.

**Subtype: Heavy Log, Stone, Wood Frame:** National Park Service Rustic properties have been recognized as significant products of a unique twentieth century architecture program. They are categorized by their quality of workmanship and beauty of design. The materials for this property type were taken from the natural surroundings of

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the park. Granite boulders from the cliffs and gravel and river-run stones were used for the foundations, chimneys, and steps. Timber from the park forests were used for heavy logs, rough milled lumber, shingles, and shakes that were then used for framing, porches and detailed trim. The buildings were then stained a very dark brown, which made the buildings unobtrusive to the surrounding landscape. Buildings were designed to flow with the topography of the surrounding land and natural landscaping became widespread. The Park service also designed wood frame structures with clapboard siding stained dark brown, wood shingled roofs, and random rubble foundations. Although these structures followed the rustic style of using all natural features, they had less of the "log cabin" feeling that characterized many of the other rustic buildings. In the 1930's the National Park Service also constructed a second type of wood frame structure unique to Yosemite. It was an early California, almost territorial, type of frame architecture that simulated a style present in Yosemite Valley and its environs when the Park Service assumed management of the area. The earlier California style can be seen in the Wawona and Sentinel Hotel. Park service designers resurrected this early California style in the 1930's. It is particularly hard to categorize because it appears to blend with several different styles such as Spanish Colonial, Tidewater South, and Midland traditions. In addition, individual buildings displayed variation in the placement of chimneys and window styles. All display the full-width, overhanging gable front porches originally designed to provide a cool shelter in summer and protection from thunderstorms.

**Subtype: New Deal Rustic:** From 1933 on, the programs of the New Deal allowed money and labor to pour into the national park system. This resulted in rapid development in park projects. The Public Works Administration (PWA) funded capital improvement in the parks, especially on roads and buildings, which would be undertaken by private contractors. The Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) performed emergency conservation work. In Yosemite, the PWA funds were used for additional housing in Yosemite Village, development of the Tuolumne Meadows campground, cabins in the Indian Village, and construction of the Henness Ridge Fire Lookout. These properties, like in earlier years, were designed to harmonize with the environment. However, because these properties needed to be built quickly the designs of these properties tended to be more simple and functional, with less attention to detail. The properties incorporated more modern, durable materials, such as concrete, which might then be stained or textured. The Chinquapin intersection of the Wawona and Glacier Point roads was one of the most significant examples of National Park Service projects during the New Deal era. The comprehensive design also included details of road construction, curbing, walkways, and the complete vegetation scheme required for landscape naturalization.

**Subtype: Reinforced Concrete, Simulated Logs:** These structures are representative of a functional trend in architecture that characterized Park Service architecture in the 1930's and after World War II. Constructed of reinforced concrete, these large, often massive buildings housed machinery and utilitarian functions that needed sturdy, reliable fireproof accommodations. These structures were not totally utilitarian as they incorporated features of design also such as quoining, eave molding, roof form, exterior wall patterns, and occasional structural additions, such as towers with decorative features. The designers also occasionally blended the unnatural construction materials with the environment by painting the concrete to match the cliffs behind it or applying shingles of varying colors. These structures were built from the late 1930's on and were associated with the park services efforts to provide greater efficiency, simplicity, and functionalism in service building and design. They reflected new materials offering greater flexibility and decreased maintenance needs, constructed from reinforced concrete with steel trusses and columns supporting interior framework. Cement floors and commercial steel window sashes and doors may be present. Paint schemes and decorative exterior touches have been used to harmonize with the environment.

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**Subtype: Mission 66 in Yosemite, 1955-1964:** After the Civilian Conservation Core was abolished, there was little construction done in Yosemite National Park, until Mission 66 was adopted in 1956. Mission 66 intended to limit valley facilities to those necessary to directly serve the visitor, all supporting facilities were to be moved elsewhere, such as El Portal. Many road or portions of roads and trail systems were completed under this plan including the Crane Flat, Tioga, and Big Oak Flat Roads. Uniform entrance markers listing park resources and paved trails to popular points of interest were also part of the Mission 66 plan. Mission 66 architecture is characterized by little intensive labor, utilitarianism, efficiency rather than craftsmanship, and urban sensibility. The structures were plain so as to not distract from the surrounding environment. Practical, more liberal use of steel, glass and concrete became popular. The roots of these design elements came from Le Corbusier, Mies van der Rohe and the Bauhaus movement.

**III. Significance:** Since the time of the first American settlement in Yosemite, the entire area was open for private development under various land laws. Upon establishment of Yosemite National Park in 1890, private individuals held approximately 60,000 acres within the park boundaries. Numerous cabins were built in the valleys and high country in conjunction with homesteading, stock grazing, mining, and lumbering. Evidence of early land use in the Yosemite area exists today in the form of place names, cabins, activity sites and other various materials. Yosemite Park Ranger Robert F. Uhte noted that the architecture of early log cabins and similar buildings were simple and crude. Many of them are fine examples of a local vernacular building tradition, designed to be temporary and functional using minimum funds and effort. These properties are significant because of information they relay about early settlement and use patterns, construction materials, daily activities, and life in early Yosemite. These remaining structures provide detailed information on the use of natural materials and the construction technology of ordinary buildings of this time period. These structures comprise an important aspect of American architectural history, and give an understanding of the park's early social and economic history. They are locally important in early western farming, ranching, mining, lumbering, or railroad structures graphically displaying pioneer or other very simplistic construction techniques.

In the course of its efforts to conserve the natural and cultural resources, the National Park Service built a variety of structures to house administrative, interpretive, and resource management functions, as well as, visitor services, employee housing, and recreational facilities. This early park developmental style- classified as rustic architecture- emphasized harmony with nature and the physical environment. Rustic architecture in Yosemite is representative to a number of styles that have as their central concept the use of native materials in proper scale. This included the avoidance of rigid straight lines, the appearance of pioneer crafting with limited hand tools, and informal motifs inspired by American log cabins and larger Bavarian and Swiss alpine retreats. The park buildings built during the heyday of rustic architecture could be magnificently crafted and designed because of the large and enthusiastic labor supply, liberal government spending, and the emphasis on recreational facilities. All of these structures are representative of building styles associated with important themes in the history of Yosemite National Park. They convey a unique twentieth-century architectural style and program. The park service turned to rustic architecture as a way of accomplishing several objectives; it expressed the romantic ideals of many Americans who desired to hold on to pioneer traditions in the face of trends toward increasingly functional designs; it provided park areas with a distinct conservative image that appropriately characterized the guardians of American heritage; and it allowed park development to be compatible to the scenic vistas and historical structures that the Park Service was seeking to conserve and protect. They are an important part of history and heritage of the National Park Service itself. Specifically, Pre-NPS Rustic is found in commercial buildings, visitor service facilities, guest accommodations, and



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residences. These structures pre-date Park Service administration, but represent excellent examples of the early rustic style first manifested in the Yosemite region and that later became an example of the Rustic architecture style nationwide. Heavy log, stone and wood frame structures that are found in National Park service residences, comfort stations, offices, entrance stations, fire lookouts, museums, lodges, bridges, and others they were buildings of quality workmanship and simple beauty, which are traits that are increasingly rare in today's environment. Reinforced Concrete, simulated log properties are significant because they exemplify the end of the national park service rustic architecture era. These buildings were created out of budgetary restrictions and employment shortages. They embody a type of architecture that is not widely seen. They are a functional, simple, design that uses non-natural resources while still harmonizing with the environment. These structures are associated with the demise of Park service rustic architecture.

World War II had a tremendous impact on the National Park Service affecting almost every aspect of the system. The crisis of war was used to withdraw and negate the effects of most if not all emergency New Deal programs. The first of these was the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), which was completely eliminated by June 1942. With the end of these New Deal Programs were drastic cuts of funds and deterioration of resources. This deterioration was experienced first in trails and roads, and quickly expanded to buildings, campgrounds, utilities and tourist facilities. The 1950's brought help with Mission 66, a ten-year development plan which began in 1955 and was to be completed by 1966, the fiftieth anniversary of the National Park Service. The program generated funding for the construction of roads, camping and picnic areas, sanitary facilities, housing, and visitor centers with supplements of museum exhibits, informational pamphlets, and audio-visual programs to increase visitor awareness of the park and National Park system. Post-World War II era architecture had been influenced by modernism rather than the romanticism of the earlier rustic architecture. Many of the engineers that now worked for the park service had military background, and tended to have modern and utilitarian design tastes. The primary focus of these structures was not to aesthetically please, but to be functional and blend in. They required little traditional craftsmanship and were less labor intensive and cheaper to build. These structures were intended to blend into the landscape through plainness rather than natural features. They were not to vie for attention from the landscape, but were to be practical and austere. They were built to meet the demands of visitors, with the ultimate purpose being to serve. This purpose fit with the Park Services goals of progress, efficiency, health and innovation. The same became true for landscape architecture. Roads and trails were designed for visitor purposes and conserving or harmonizing with the environment was not a major consideration.

**IV. Registration Requirements:** Properties related to Architecture and Design are eligible under Criterion A if they represent the efforts of the National Park Service to provide access and facilities for visitors that would guide and enhance their experience, while protecting the park's scenic beauty. The historic materials, form and setting, and association of the historic resource must be substantially intact, while allowing for routine maintenance.

Properties related to Architecture and Design are eligible under Criterion C if the historic materials, form and setting, and association of the historic resource are intact. These properties represent the best surviving examples of their particular group. Examples of vernacular architecture are significant under Criteria C. Most were fashioned from simple, cheap materials found close at hand. They were constructed quickly and meant to be functional in nature. Some structures, such as line cabins were used seasonally. Also important under this criterion are outbuildings and other structures, such as corrals, related to the overall site. These buildings provide information on spatial

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relationships and specific activities at the site; they are also functional and simple in design. In order to be eligible for listing in the National Register properties should be in their original locations and retain physical surroundings similar to the historical period. Properties that have been moved from their original setting have not been included on this nomination form, with the exception of Hodgdon homestead cabin, which was entered in the National Register more than twenty years ago. Properties associated with rustic architecture should display elements of early, often primitive, construction techniques and materials. They may show adaptive construction techniques, alterations, or repairs as a result of the scarcity of materials and distance from supply points. Properties associated with Mission 66 architecture should exhibit modern design practices and construction techniques, including extensive use of concrete and steel, with minimal decorative elements. Remains should suggest their original construction style and appearance. Structures that have fallen into disrepair, and thus do not provide an accurate picture of their historical appearance or use, should not be included in this nomination.

To be eligible for nomination in the National Register the properties ideally, should be on their original property and in their original historical setting. They should exhibit the original design and workmanship associated with their style, with minimal change due to repair or deterioration. Districts, buildings, structures, objects and sites must clearly be associated with: Vernacular, pre-NPS or National Park Service Rustic architecture or Mission 66.

**Examples of Properties associated with Vernacular architecture are:**

- Hodgdon Homestead Cabin
- McCauley and Meyer Barns
- McCauley Cabin
- McGurk Cabin

**Examples of Properties associated with Pre-NPS Rustic architecture are:**

- Camp Curry Historic District
- Chris Jorgensen Home
- Le Conte Memorial Lodge
- Parsons Memorial Lodge
- Yosemite Transportation Company Office
- Yosemite Valley Chapel

**Examples of Properties associated with Rustic Architecture are:**

- Log, Stone, wood frame**
- Ahwahnee Hotel
- Glacier Point Trailside Museum
- Henness Ridge Fire Lookout (nomination 2003)
- Hetch Hetchy Comfort Station (nomination 2003)
- Mariposa Grove Comfort Station (nomination 2003)
- Mariposa Grove Museum
- Merced River Ranger Station
- South Entrance Historic District (nomination 2003)
- Tioga Pass Entrance Station

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Tuolumne Meadows  
Tuolumne Meadows Ranger Station  
White Wolf Lodge (nomination 2003)  
Wawona Ranger Station (nomination 2003)  
Yosemite Village Historic District

**New Deal Rustic**

Chinquapin Historic District (nomination 2003)  
Henness Ridge Fire Lookout  
Merced Grove Ranger Station  
Tuolumne Meadows Campground Comfort Station

**Examples of Properties associated with Mission 66 are:**

Happy Isles Visitor Center  
Yosemite Visitor Center

**I. Name of Property Type: National Park Service Landscape Architecture in Yosemite (1916-1940)**

**II. Description:** The development of the National Parks was heavily influenced by contemporary trends in American landscape design. Park Service officials adopted the naturalistic practices growing out of nineteenth century romanticism in order to make the parks accessible to the general public, while maintaining harmony with scenic features. These practices advocated blending the necessary built features with the existing natural surroundings to minimize their physical and visual impact. Much of this ethic was based on the pioneering work of Andrew Jackson Downing, author of *Treatise on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening* (1841). Downing set out the basic principles of rustic landscape embellishments, stressing that they must be appropriate to the location and in their use of materials. His work set precedents, which would be long favored in the National Park Service, in the use of woodwork which retained its natural bark covering, and in the use of native stone in naturalistic rockwork. Downing believed that the placement of roads and walkways should be guided by the "genius of the place," and laid out to guide visitors to a series of carefully framed views. He also advocated the selective use of vegetation, to enhance certain views while screening others.

**Road Resources:** The development of roads became a matter of great importance in Yosemite National Park because of increased tourism. Yosemite was in need of a more reliable means for transporting visitors in to the Valley. It was determined that new roads would be constructed. The philosophy behind the design of these roads was to build them only when necessary and that modern, high quality roads would be less likely to distract the visitor's attention than those that were too rough or winding. It was recommended to lay out roads so that significant views to the side would be arranged alternately. By 1929, a set of provisions was established for the protection of the landscape during construction. This included the prohibition of large-scale blasting beyond the immediate margins of the roadway. They made a considerable effort on the matter of banks and road cuts, to ensure that they blended with the natural topography. They also established the practice of disguising evidence of human activity on the landscape. Erosion became a considerable concern for the landscape engineers and led to a cooperative agreement with the park's natural history program, who experimented with different types of natural plants to help stabilize banks and conceal work



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surfaces. The ever popular pull-offs and scenic overlooks were another design principle of this time. These were based on garden terraces to present to the visitor a spectacular, sweeping vista. The Inspiration Point overlook at the end of the Wawona Tunnel was the most ambitious of these projects. It was created by fill from the Wawona Tunnel excavation. The Western Field Office developed standards for guardrails and curbs. They were designed to protect visitors while maintaining harmonization with the environment. The El Portal road stonework featured the use of weathered and irregularly shaped stones laid in patterns to avoid straight lines or right angles to suggest the appearance of natural stone outcroppings. Guardrails were designed to prevent the monotony of horizontal lines by the use of "crenulating piers". In more forested areas the guardrails were constructed of roughly shaped log posts and crossrails. Curbing made of unfinished boulders was installed in Yosemite Village in the mid-1920's, but was later replaced by embedded log curbs in the 1930's to be less conspicuous.

**Bridges, Culverts, and Tunnels:** In the 1920's landscape engineers began to design bridges for the park roads. They were responsible for selection of materials, standards of workmanship, and the harmony of the design with the environment. The Yosemite Creek Bridge was one of the earliest results of this collaboration. Culverts permitted streams to pass under roads and trails without interruption. They were designed to be harmonized with guardrails and roads. A standard design was adopted in 1928. The specifications for masonry structures called for the use of weathered stones and deep mortar joints to give the culvert an irregular, naturalistic appearance. Tunnels built in the National Park drew heavily from railroad experience. The landscape engineers were specifically concerned with the portals of these structures. The earliest tunnels imitated the arched openings of caves or rock outcroppings, which became difficult to achieve when tunnel openings grew in size. Instead, they turned to masonry or masonry-veneered portals using the same naturalistic design principles as bridges and culverts. The Wawona Tunnel is an excellent example of this.

**Modern Campgrounds:** With the increase in tourism, the park began to notice an impact on native vegetation. Stephen Mather commissioned a study by plant pathologist Emilio P. Meinecke in 1926, to determine the extent of the damage. Meinecke discovered that campers and cars were compacting the soil in heavily-used areas. This was having a negative impact on native ground cover, shrubs, trees and even the Giant Sequoias. In 1932, the Park Service adopted a radical reconstruction of campground design and management, from the influence of Meinecke. Camps were to be located based on considerations such as the type of soil, length of seasonal use, the composition, density, and distribution of native vegetation, and type of camper. The campsites were to be carefully laid-out to limit the possibility of cars leaving the road. Meinecke defined a one-way road system to minimize congestion. Logs or boulders defined the edges of the roads and campsites to keep both car and camper in their assigned spaces.

**III. Significance:** The development of the National Parks was heavily influenced by contemporary trends in American landscape design. Many park service officials adopted these naturalistic practices in order to make the parks accessible to the public, while maintaining harmony with scenic features. These practices advocated the blending of the necessary built features with existing natural and cultural surroundings. In Yosemite, as in other national parks, the process was often so successful that the landscaping became accepted as an integral part of the scenery. In many cases the landscaping helped to define this scenery by guiding visitors to carefully selected vantage points, enhanced by the thinning or planting of vegetation to frame views or direct sightlines. Landscape architects expended considerable time and effort ensuring that each visitor was given the opportunity to discover Yosemite's iconic vistas from the most spectacular angles. The roads, trails, and scenic outlooks designed by these architects were parts of a

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larger, comprehensive planning process developed for each national park that sought to prevent the sort of haphazard development so characteristic of Yosemite's early years. Drawing on the experience of urban planners, the Park Service developed zoning guidelines that would direct land use in each area of a park. This enabled administrators to designate "wilderness" zones that would be kept separate from areas of intensive use. As a result, they were better able to fulfill the dual mandate of preservation and public recreation. Because Stephen Mather regarded Yosemite as one of the jewels of the National Park Service, many aspects of landscape design developed in the park were later standardized for use in national parks across the country.

**IV. Registration Requirements:** Properties related to Landscape Architecture are eligible under Criterion A if they represent the efforts of the National Park Service to provide access and facilities for Yosemite's visitors that would guide and enhance their experience, while protecting the park's scenic beauty. The historic materials, form and setting, and association of the historic resource must be substantially intact, while allowing for routine maintenance.

Properties related to Landscape Architecture in Yosemite are eligible under Criterion C if they represent the essential features of the National Park Service's landscape design and planning philosophy. The historic materials, form and setting, and association of the historic resource must be intact in fair or better condition, with minimal change due to repair or deterioration. Road resources should exhibit the fundamental principle of "lying lightly on the land," meaning they retain the design elements intended to blend the road into the natural landscape. These may include, but are not limited to blended banks and cuts, rustic stone or wood guardrails, rustic curbs, and crenulating piers. Bridges, culverts, and tunnels should reflect the same philosophy, presenting evidence of irregular, naturalistic design work. Campgrounds are eligible if they maintain the distinctive Meinecke one-way road system, together with the logs or boulders used to define the edges of the roads and campsites. In order to be eligible under Criterion D in the area of Landscape Architecture, resources must be the best surviving examples of National Park Service design process. They must retain original materials, site orientation, design configuration, and quality of workmanship, and must be able to yield important information on the application of the historic design philosophy to Yosemite's specific environmental, topographical, or cultural situations. Eligible properties should date from 1916-1940.

**Examples of Properties associated with Landscape Architecture 1916-1940:**

Chinquapin Historic District (nomination 2003)  
Grading and bank sloping  
Meinecke campgrounds  
New Big Oak Flat Road (nomination 2003)  
Retaining walls, sidewalks, guardrails and related resources  
Scenic overlooks and pull-offs  
Tioga Road  
Trails and paths  
Viewpoints and vistas  
Wawona Tunnel (nominated 2003)  
Yosemite Valley Bridges and roads

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**Geographical Data**

The properties identified in this nomination are all found within the boundaries of Yosemite National Park, located in the Sierra Nevada Mountains of North Central California, and established by Congress on October 1, 1890.



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The multiple property nomination for Yosemite National Park is result of a collaborative agreement between the University of Nevada Las Vegas Public History Program, the National Park Service Western Regional Office, the Great Basin Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Units program and Yosemite National Park. The project was funded through the NPS Western Regional Office and via the Great Basin CESU and provided an opportunity for graduate students from a variety of academic disciplines to learn the process of conducting the research and preparing the documentation for National Register listings. In return Yosemite National Park was able to secure the labor of 22 historians, anthropologists and landscape architects in training who contributed their efforts to the project. Education was a key component of the project from the beginning. This Multiple Property nomination represents a partnership between many individuals all working to help secure the future of Yosemite's remarkable cultural resources.

**Research Methods**

Project team members carefully reviewed the extensive secondary literature on Yosemite, the National Park Service, environmental history, western history, and the many related sub-topics necessary to evaluate the history and cultural resources of the park. The vastness of the related secondary literature is reflected in the bibliography in Sec I. The available primary sources for Yosemite are equally vast. Most significant for this project were the collections in the Yosemite archives. Students spent many days with the help of park archivist Jim Snyder working in the archives during three different extended trips to the park. In addition to primary research in the Yosemite archives the NPS archives in Oakland were critical for this project. Maps, historic images, blueprints and historic documents related to the individual nominations attached to the MPD were located in the Oakland NPS archives. Of particular importance were historical materials dealing with the design and original layout of the High Sierra Camps. Additionally, there are many excellent existing cultural resource management documents related to Yosemite available. This MPD relies heavily on the significant research work of previous historians, especially Linda Wedel Greene, who authored two invaluable documents for this project. Of primary importance was the excellent and exhaustive 1987 *Yosemite National Park Historic Resource Study*. The *Historic Resource Study* provides a comprehensive inventory and evaluation of historical resources in the park up to 1960. Additionally this noteworthy document provides a very thorough history of the park with a special emphasis on the cultural resources. Also of obvious value were the nearly complete 1989 draft Yosemite MPD and the incomplete draft versions of nominations that were also researched in 1989. Information in these documents was confirmed and corrected as needed through reference to Superintendent Michael Finley's review memorandum to the Regional Director, Western Region, dated September 7, 1989. Further information on the Ahwahnee Hotel and the Camp Curry Historic District was drawn from the Yosemite Valley Historic District National Register nomination, authored by Ethan Carr, et al. *The Archeological Synthesis and Research Design* for Yosemite by Kathleen Hull and Michael Moratto served as a basis for sections of the narrative relating to prehistoric settlement, while the Merced Wild and Scenic River management plan informed discussions of setting and environment. Historic American Building Survey/Historic American Engineering Record (HABS/HAER) files for Yosemite properties provided details of materials and construction. Students working on the MPD also carefully researched documents that could potentially influence future historic preservation work in the park. Most notable in this category were the *Yosemite Valley Plan* and the *Merced Wild and Scenic River Draft Comprehensive Management Plan*. Both of these plans, if carried out as proposed at the time this document, will raise important issues about the balance between environmental and cultural preservation in Yosemite.

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The research phase of this MPD project lasted for two academic years. In 2001-2002, three students completed a site visit and survey of existing documentation and archival resources at the park, together with developing a new preliminary bibliography and transferring existing draft individual property nominations into electronic format. In Spring 2003, fifteen students participated in a graduate research seminar with the history of Yosemite cultural resources as the theme. Nine of these students participated in a second site visit to undertake further archival research, meet with NPS cultural resource management personnel, and perform on-site surveys of selected properties as seasonal weather conditions allowed. A narrative structure was developed for the MPD, with historic contexts incorporating the new Themes and Concepts of the NPS Park History Program. Students created the narrative by drawing on the existing NPS literature, archival sources, and the most recent scholarly works on the American West, National Park Service history, tourism and outdoor recreation, architecture, landscape design, the environment and environmentalism, and theories of national identity. This draft was edited for style and consistency in Summer 2003, while additional research was completed at the NPS archives in Oakland. Students involved in the research during 2001-2002 included Charles Palmer, Roger Carey, and Edgar Weir under project director Andrew Kirk. 2003 added Susan Jones, Jennifer Hansen, Richard Coop, Crystal Aubuchon-Mendoza, Christine Brehm, Daniel Bubb, Tim Cotterman, Susan DeSilva, Jason Frayer, Karen Loeffler, Bruce Parshall, Janell Reed, and Susan Vollmerhausen. Richard Coop returned as a project intern during the summer of 2003 finishing research in the park archives and the Oakland NPS archives. He then completed the revision work on the individual nominations based on his research.

In consultation with Park Service historian David Louter, the historic contexts were refined so that properties will best reflect the five major themes that define Yosemite and its cultural resources: (1) the Native American occupation and use of the Yosemite region from prehistory to the final removal of indigenous housing in 1969; (2) the exploration of the Yosemite region by European Americans and their subsequent settlement and exploitation of Yosemite's natural resources from the 1850s to the 1950s; (3) the establishment of Yosemite as a protected reserve and its management by the State of California and agencies of the federal government; (4) the history of Yosemite as a place of recreation and tourism from the mid-nineteenth century to the 1970s, together with its integral role in the development of the American environmental movement and outdoor sports industries emphasizing environmental activism; (5) the distinctive architecture and landscape design developed in Yosemite from the era of early settlement to the Mission 66 period that guided visitors' experiences at the park and became essential features of the larger cultural landscape. The significant property types are based on the chronological and thematic functions detailed in the historic contexts. Properties relating to architecture are further organized by style. Yosemite is a complex park with thousands of cultural resources. The MPD was designed to work as an organizing tool to aid future researchers and resource managers in their efforts. The authors worked to include as many specifics about the various contexts, property types, and sub-types as possible without creating an unwieldy document.

**Integrity**

Based on consultation with the NPS, it was determined that all known properties relating to prehistory in Yosemite are subject to highly specialized archeological guidelines and provisions for the protection of indigenous remains and cultural artifacts. As such, they fall outside the scope of the normal registration requirements of the MPD. Information on these properties may be found in the Archeological Synthesis for Yosemite by Kathleen Hull and Michael Moratto.

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The majority of the Yosemite properties are eligible under Criterion A, C, or both with many archaeological sites and ruins eligible under Criterion D. Significance under Criterion A required that the properties serve as important reminders of the movement of Americans into the Yosemite region, and their attempts to make use of the land for its natural resources as well as a scenic resource for tourism and outdoor recreation or other activities closely associated with the five contexts identified in the MPD. The baseline integrity assumption was that in most cases sites, buildings, structures and objects nominated under the MPD must retain a high percentage of their historic materials, form and setting, and association. There are two categories of property types prevalent in Yosemite that present particular integrity problems. The first are historic circulation resources that are frequently modified because of technological change, engineering concerns, or as part of a regular maintenance program. These resources have also been frequently, and at times dramatically, impacted by weather related events such as the 1997 flood. In the case of the Arch Rock retaining walls much of the original material has been completely lost. The replacement design and materials are consistent with the historical character and to all but the most observant the walls appear historic. Many of the Park's historic circulation resources have been similarly altered over the years because of heavy use and weather. What makes an integrity judgment difficult for these resources is the intended use. Roads, bridges, culverts, retaining walls and tunnels were all designed and built to receive heavy use and regular maintenance therefore the standards for integrity can be stretched in many cases to take into account the regular replacement of historical materials as long as there was a consistent effort to maintain the historic design and retain as much of the historic material as possible. Future cultural resource managers in Yosemite will need to evaluate these resources very carefully to determine the integrity of the resource. Many of the same issues apply to the Park's extensive historically significant recreational trails. Like circulation resources these trails were designed to be used with regular maintenance assumed by the trail designers and park managers. Many early trails were built with private initiative for very practical purposes and were frequently modified to accommodate the changing nature of Yosemite tourism and recreation. Also, because of the naturalistic design principals that guided much of the trail design it is difficult to date the materials and modifications. Although many of these trails have been redesigned since their original use, they should continue to convey a strong sense of the "wilderness" conditions that early explorers and tourists encountered. To qualify for listing the trails must retain a high percentage of historic materials and clearly demonstrate the historic landscape design principals used in their creation.

In order to be eligible under Criterion C in the areas of Design and Construction the resource must reflect the Park Service's developing emphasis on structures that would harmonize with the environment and present a minimal visual impact. This should be represented by features illustrating significant efforts in architecture, landscape design, landscape naturalization, and/or engineering to preserve the "natural" appearance of the surroundings. Eligible properties should be considered even if alterations to form and materials exist so long as the significant design or means of construction is prominent and intact.

Districts, buildings, structures, objects and sites associated with the MPD contexts should ideally be on their original property and in the original historical setting. They should exhibit original design and workmanship with minimal change due to repair beyond their period of significance (with exceptions as noted for circulation and trails). These properties should retain integrity of setting, feeling, and association with the patterns of history detailed in the identified contexts in the Yosemite Region. In some cases deterioration due to benign neglect should not prevent properties from being considered so long as their setting, feeling, and association are deemed to be intact.



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Additionally, the effects of Civilian Conservation Corps "forest cleanup" efforts between 1933 and 1940 should not prevent consideration of specific properties if no other examples of the subtype are available. Resources associated with exploration and resource exploitation may include intact or remnant examples of railroad structures including trestles and foundations, mine structures and residences, tree blazes, and snow survey cabins.

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Box 3: Washburn Papers.

Box 10: Advisory Board Correspondence and Files.

Box 11. Floods and Water Supply.

Boxes 15, 58-59: Park Buildings – Removed.

Box 17: Land Appraisals (Foresta and Wawona).

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Box 56: Misc. Correspondence, Washburn/Wawona/Yosemite Stage and Turnpike Company.

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Box 58: Non-Existing Buildings.

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Box 63: Yosemite Stage and Turnpike Company.

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Shaffer, Dick, by C.P. Russell, 22 April 1951. ("The First Garage in Yosemite.")

Shaffer, Dick, by C.P. Russell, 2 July 1951. ("Some Historical Facts Regarding the Desmond Company.")

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section I

Historic Resources of Yosemite National Park

Page 142

**Resources Currently on the National Register**

Resource Name	Address	Listed
Acting Superintendent's Headquarters	Yosemite National Park	1978-06-09
Ahwahnee Hotel	Yosemite Valley	1977-02-15
Bagby Stationhouse, Water Tanks and Turntable	CA 140	1979-04-13
Camp Curry Historic District	Yosemite Valley	1979-11-10
Camp 4 (Sunnyside)	Yosemite Valley	2003-02-21
Crane Flat Fire Lookout	N of Big Oak Flat Rd., near Crane Cr., Yosemite National Park	1996-04-04
El Portal Archeological District	Address Restricted	1978-08-18
Glacier Point Trailside Museum	E of El Portal in Yosemite National Park	1978-04-04
Hetch Hetchy Railroad Engine No. 6	CA 140	1978-01-30
Hodgdon Homestead Cabin	Yosemite National Park	1978-06-09
Jorgenson, Chris, Studio	Pioneer Yosemite Historic Center	1979-04-13
Le Conte Memorial Lodge	Yosemite Valley, Yosemite National Park	1977-03-08
Mariposa Grove Museum	SE of Wawona in Yosemite National Park	1978-12-01
McCauley and Meyer Barns	N of El Portal in Yosemite	1978-06-15

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section I

Historic Resources of Yosemite National Park

Page 143

	National Park	
McGurk Cabin	S of Yosemite Village	1979-06-04
Merced Grove Ranger Station	N of El Portal in Yosemite National Park	1978-06-15
Rangers' Club	Yosemite Valley	1987-05-28
Track Bus No. 19	CA 140	1978-05-22
Wawona Hotel and Pavilion	On CA 41 in Yosemite National Park	1975-10-01
Yosemite Transportation Company Office	N of Wawona in Yosemite National Park	1978-06-09
Yosemite Valley Archeological District	Address Restricted	1978-01-20
Yosemite Valley Bridges	8 Bridges over Merced River, Yosemite National Park	1977-11-25
Yosemite Valley Chapel	Off CA 140	1973-12-12
Yosemite Valley Railroad Caboose No. 15	CA 140	1978-05-22
Yosemite Village Historic District	E of El Portal in Yosemite National Park	1978-03-30
Great Sierra Mine Historic Site	W of Lee Vining in Yosemite National Park	1978-05-24
Great Sierra Wagon Road	N of Yosemite Village	1978-08-25



National Register of Historic Places  
Memo to File

# Correspondence

The Correspondence consists of communications from (and possibly to) the nominating authority, notes from the staff of the National Register of Historic Places, and/or other material the National Register of Historic Places received associated with the property.

Correspondence may also include information from other sources, drafts of the nomination, letters of support or objection, memorandums, and ephemera which document the efforts to recognize the property.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: COVER DOCUMENTATION

MULTIPLE NAME: Yosemite National Park MPS

STATE & COUNTY: CALIFORNIA, Multiple Counties

DATE RECEIVED: 06/02/14

DATE OF 45<sup>th</sup> DAY: 07/19/14

REFERENCE NUMBER: 64501214

\_\_\_\_ ACCEPT \_\_\_\_ RETURN \_\_\_\_ REJECT \_\_\_\_ DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

RECOM./CRITERIA Accept Cover Document

REVIEWER Paul Lusignea DISCIPLINE Historic

DATE 7/12/2014

DOCUMENTATION see attsched comments Y/N

**OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION**

1725 23<sup>rd</sup> Street, Suite 100  
SACRAMENTO, CA 95816-7100  
(916) 445-7000 Fax: (916) 445-7053  
calshpo@parks.ca.gov  
www.ohp.parks.ca.gov



July 19, 2013

Kimball Koch  
Acting Historic Preservation Officer  
Yosemite National Park  
PO Box 577  
Yosemite, California 95389

**Re: National Register Multiple Property Nominations, Yosemite National Park**

Dear Mr. Koch,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the National Register Multiple Property nomination for Yosemite National Park. I concur that the properties identified and evaluated in the nomination do constitute a coherent group of geographically dispersed resources that are eligible for listing in the National Register. The nomination does an excellent job of defining separate, but related contexts that make clear the significance of the individual resources, as well as the reasons that they collectively constitute a multiple property. The inclusion of a number of the park's less elaborate, high altitude resources is particularly noteworthy. The context statements synthesize a large amount of historic documentation in a clear and concise manner and the descriptive material that is provided for the individual resources or resource groupings is excellent.

We concur in all of your findings regarding the resources enumerated in the multiple property nomination. We agree that the following properties are eligible for the National Register as parts of a multiple property nomination.

Historic Resources of Yosemite National Park MPDF  
Tuolumne Meadows High Sierra Camp  
Vogelsang High Sierra Camp  
Sunrise High Sierra Camp  
Merced Lake High Sierra Camp  
May Lake High Sierra Camp  
Glen Aulin High Sierra Camp

I have signed the application as commenting authority. If you have any questions, please contact William Burg of my staff at (916) 445-7004 or [wburg@parks.ca.gov](mailto:wburg@parks.ca.gov).

Sincerely,

Carol Roland-Nawi, Ph.D.  
State Historic Preservation Officer

**OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION**

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October 30, 2012

Kimball Koch  
Acting Historic Preservation Officer  
Yosemite National Park  
PO Box 577  
Yosemite, California 95389

	Initial	Date
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> S. [Signature] President		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> [Signature] Superintendent		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> [Signature] Administration		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> [Signature] Finance & Revenue		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> [Signature] Management		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> [Signature] Education		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> [Signature] Planning		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> [Signature] Land Management		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> [Signature] Resources & Science		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> [Signature] Law Enforcement		

☒ Action FYI  
[Signature]  
[Signature]  
I [Signature] [Signature]  
[Signature]

**Re: National Register Multiple Property Nominations, Yosemite National Park**

Dear Mr. Koch,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the National Register Multiple Property nomination for Yosemite National Park. I concur that the properties identified and evaluated in the nomination do constitute a coherent group of geographically dispersed resources that are eligible for listing in the National Register. The nomination does an excellent job of defining separate, but related contexts that make clear the significance of the individual resources, as well as the reasons that they collectively constitute a multiple property. The inclusion of a number of the park's less elaborate, high altitude resources is particularly noteworthy. The context statements synthesize a large amount of historic documentation in a clear and concise manner and the descriptive material that is provided for the individual resources or resource groupings is excellent.

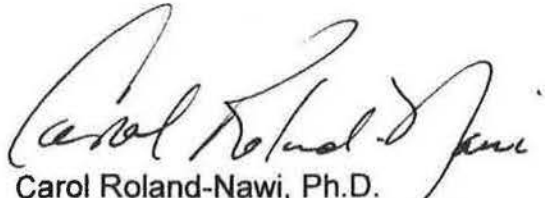
We concur in all of your findings regarding the resources enumerated in the multiple property nomination. We agree that the following properties are eligible for the National Register as parts of a multiple property nomination.

Buck Camp Patrol Cabin  
Frog Creek Cabin  
Lake Vernon Snow Survey Shelter  
Sacshe Spring Snow Survey Shelter  
Merced Lake Ranger Station/Snow Survey Cabin  
Miguel Meadow Fire Guard Cabin/Ranger Station  
Ostrander Lake Ski Hut/Yosemite National Park  
Snow Creek Ski Hut/Snow Creek Cabin, Lodge  
Snow Flat Snow Survey Shelter/Patrol Cabin



I have signed the application as commenting authority. If you have any questions, please contact William Burg of my staff at (916) 445-7004 or [wburg@parks.ca.gov](mailto:wburg@parks.ca.gov).

Sincerely,



Carol Roland-Nawi, Ph.D.  
State Historic Preservation Officer



## United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Yosemite National Park

P.O. Box 577

Yosemite, California 95389

January 29, 2007

### Memorandum

To: Division Chief, Resources Management and Science

Through: Division Chief, Project Management  
Branch Chief, Environmental Planning and Compliance MB

From: Park Historic Preservation Officer/Native American Liaison JF 1-27-07

Subject: Multiple Property Documentation and 20 National Register Nominations

We have received review comments from the NPS WASO National Register, History, and Education staff concerning the Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPD) for the Historic Resources of Yosemite National Park and 20 Nominations to the National Register of Historic places submitted by the park in June 2006.

Please assign staff to review and integrate the attached comments in consultation with Dr. David Louter, NPS PWRO History Program Lead, as appropriate. Revisions should also consider current efforts identifying and evaluating cultural landscape elements for the Chinquapin Historic District. Please keep us advised on the status of the review and revisions, and provide a date when we can expect to re-submit the Revised MPD and 20 Nominations to the WASO Federal Preservation Officer.

Enclosure: MPD and 20 Nominations Review Comments

Cc-Dave Humphrey, Branch Chief History, Architecture, and Landscapes



Laura Feller  
01/19/2007 03:07 PM  
EST

To: Jeannette Simons/YOSE/NPS@NPS  
cc: David Louter/Seattle/NPS@NPS, Tim Davis/WASO/NPS@NPS, Karen  
Mudar/WASO/NPS@NPS  
Subject: notes on the multiple-property form and nominations for "Historic  
Resources of Yosemite National Park"

hi, Jeannette,

Many thanks, as ever, for your patience with the review process. I am grateful to you.

Attached is a compilation of comments from me, Tim, and Karen. We all want to compliment you (and the project team) on all the good work that went into this major project, as you'll see in the attached file. It's a really big and impressive undertaking-- and I understand that you're bringing closure, in some cases, to nominations that have been hanging around for years. Cheers to you and everyone involved in the project.

Please don't interpret the length of the attached file as any indication of how much editing/ revision might be involved. As you'll see, much of the bulk is from notes on relatively minor, technical points. I'll look forward to talking with you about this, and getting your critical evaluation of these comments.



yosemite multiple props 2REVISED.doc

thanks, again,

Laura Feller, historian  
National Park Service  
Park History (2261)  
(202) 354-2219

"The past is never dead; it's not even past."  
William Faulkner

Combined Notes on the "Historic Resources of Yosemite National Park" documentation package

**MULTIPLE PROPERTY FORM**

The context statements cover a lot of ground, fairly economically. Basic historical narratives for pre-NPS contexts are generally well-researched and concise; NPS context sections seem a bit less accomplished, but perhaps they just appear so to us, given our reviewers' familiarity with these contexts. I applaud the technique of using a graduate-level class to get this work done, and trust that the comments below will be taken in that spirit. We think that the context statements have some clear strengths resulting from that approach, and in my opinion the more technical issues raised in the comments below (about how to describe boundaries, for example) involve details of National Register practices that would not be difficult to communicate to students.

Section E, pages 1 and following: I would have liked to have seen the notion of Yosemite as the "archetypal" park treated in a more critical, nuanced way. For example, the assertion that "many, if not all, of the issues encountered in the history of the National Park Service first came to light in Yosemite" seems in need of qualification and explanation if it remains here. It really seems unnecessary to make such a statement in this document. We also question the statement that Yosemite was the first attempt at scenic preservation in the U.S. It seems arguable and unnecessary to state that Yosemite is "the standard . . . by which all national parks are judged" (page E34). In the same vein, it seems unnecessary to say that the Ahwahnee Hotel was never afterwards equaled in terms of artistic significance; modernists, for example, might praise Jackson Lake Lodge (E41-42).

It might be helpful to mention Catlin's writings in discussing the beginning of the national park idea.

Section E, page 16: The statement that "many" non-Mexican European-Americans developed "amicable relations with the tribes" seems to gloss over a situation(s) that were inherently and obviously laden with conflicts—actual and potential—as exemplified by the narrative that immediately follows this statement. At the very least, "working" seems a better word than "amicable" here and "sometimes" should also be added.

Section E, page 34 says that "loving Yosemite to death" emerged in administrators' consciousness in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. Criticism that Yosemite was over-used/over-developed can be traced back to 19<sup>th</sup> century, and grew stronger in 1920s and '30s as auto traffic increased.

Section E, page 51: In the two paragraphs at the bottom of this page, we would suggest a little editing so that this discussion will have more dispassionate tone. For example, the text could acknowledge that rock climbing and the Patagonia company thrived in a larger context that included other forms of outdoor recreation, and other outfitters. There could also be more acknowledgement that the shift from "what is climbed" to "how it is



climbed” was well underway in 1970s – and was not just a recent development. I do not find the comparison of this group to family, home, and community very enlightening— would it be possible here to say more about the sense(s) in which these climbers formed, or acted as, a community? The comment that “...social standards were abandoned...” also seems to need clarification; every group that interacts in meaningful ways has some kind of “standards” for those interactions, drawn from a larger society and culture and/or invented for immediate circumstances.

The section E Mission 66 discussion doesn’t seem to fully appreciate or convey the significance of the Tioga Road controversy and neglects concessionaire modernism (Yosemite Lodge, for example).

Section F: Significance, integrity and registration requirement sections are impressively thorough and generally well-done

Section F, page 78: In the last paragraph on this page, should the first sentence have the phrase “associated with transportation and circulation” inserted between “sites” and “should”? It looks as if this paragraph is intended to apply to that one subtype.

Section F, page 86: The first text block on this page says “Although many of these trails have been redesigned... they should continue to convey a strong sense of the wilderness conditions that the Indians or first explorers encountered.” I think this sentence should be re-thought, in light of several points. One is that this text should show awareness of how the mythology of the frontier continues to affect our vision of the nature of the American landscape-- and of the cultural and political conflicts that can be masked by the word “wilderness” and the notion of non-Native people as “first explorers.” A second is that, I think, NPS has become more sophisticated about those issues since the days when we talked of parks as “vignettes of primitive America,” but this sentence suggests otherwise. A third is that there’s a difference between “natural” and “naturalistic” that should be clearly and critically discussed. It’s a mistake to frame as a management goal a loosely-defined and romanticized impression of, or a gauzy idealized reference to, past conditions. We should instead be clear, precise, and self-aware in talking about both ecological and aesthetic considerations.

Generally, the context on tourism, recreation and preservation is said to extend to 1973; however, the headers for the text on the context for outdoor recreation and environmental preservation (as opposed to the text on property types) take it only to 1971. I hate to seem picky— is this a minor editorial inconsistency or does it reflect something that happened (or didn’t happen) during those two years?

There seem to be a few questions about overlapping/redundant contexts. Some of these properties are, of course, eligible for nomination under multiple contexts, and that’s not a problem. Wawona Tunnel and Ahwahnee Hotel, for example, are nominated under at least three contexts. Roads and bridges, though, could also go under these contexts but don’t – and this seems like a consistency issue, especially since bridges appear under a couple of contexts, and roads appear under a couple, but not the same two.

Yosemite Lodge does not appear under any of the relevant contexts, despite its status as a continuation of efforts to develop Yosemite to accommodate tourists and as an exemplary blend of California modernism and NPS rustic. An over-reliance on European ideas about, and models of, modernism may be leading us to undervalue this resource.

Given the extensive "improvements" that made the Tioga Road an exemplar of Mission 66, we question its listing as a property associated with "NPS Landscape Architecture 1916-1940."

Several Yosemite Valley bridges are from Army Corps era, pre-1916.

Some miscellaneous points: Page 29 could be misread to imply that NPS controls all national cemeteries. Mather put up some of his own money for Tioga Road, but didn't do it all by himself: he also solicited donations from friends and supporters (E-38). On page 39, it would be good to note that constructing park landscapes to be experienced from moving vehicles had been a key aspect of park design since the eighteenth century and was integral to nineteenth-century park development throughout the U.S. A. J. Downing's *Treatise on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening* – largely derivative of J.C. Loudon-- was originally published in 1841, not 1875 (E62 and F95). We think that page 64 implies too much credit to Downing for originating design principles of creating "sequential experience" (E64). Would it not be fair to note on page 63 that Olmsted's plan for Yosemite dropped out of sight pretty quickly before being "rediscovered" after the state/NPS blueprint for Yosemite was set? We don't agree (see page 92) that Mission 66 designs were not meant to be aesthetically pleasing, and question whether El Portal road construction "led to standardized rustic stonework for national parks nationwide" (F95).

#### **GENERAL COMMENTS ON ARCHEOLOGY:**

Three of the nominated properties pertain to transportation; these are the Old and New Oak Flats Roads, and the Wawona Tunnel. I concur that there appears to be little potential for archeological resources that contribute to a better understanding of either historic or prehistoric uses of the site. Likewise, the Hetch Hetchy Comfort Station, oriented to a reservoir that is relatively recent in origin, is not expected to contain potential for significant archeological resources.

The majority of the properties that were submitted for consideration are located at higher elevations in the backcountry of the park (5 snow survey cabins; 2 ski huts; 1 fire lookout; 7 high sierra camps). While intensive archeological surveys in other western national parks have identified evidence of Native American exploitation of high altitude areas at levels greater than previously thought, the potential for discovery of significant Native American utilization of these properties that are not associated with significant aquatic or lithic resources is low. There was also no evidence cited that suggested that the sites were used by historic European-American settlers.

The one exception to this is the Golden Crown Mine. The mine site consists of the remains of four cabins and a shaft house, dating to 1879. As such, the site has potential to yield information about industrial activities in the park, specifically mining. In addition to the significance of the site for industrial archeology, the mine is located at Mono Pass, on a route used by Native Americans traveling into and out of the valley. Because of the potential for retrieving information that pertains to mining and to Native American activities, I recommend that the nomination for the Golden Crown Mine be amended to include Criterion D - "Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history."

## **INDIVIDUAL NOMINATIONS**

### **BUCK CREEK CABIN**

It's not clear why the period of significance ends with 1938.

Related to this is a question about whether during the period of significance there were no associated structures, or none that survive. The nomination notes 6 non-contributing structures in section 5. I assume that these are the tack shed, privy, spring box, flagpole, new outhouse, and 1984 rock wall. If the period of significance were extended would any of these then be considered contributing?

The verbal boundary description needs either enough specificity so that someone on site could figure out where the boundary lies on the ground, or an accompanying to-scale sketch map that shows the boundary. Do the corral, pasture, hitching post, and nearby trail constitute part of the cabin's "immediate setting?"

Photos date from 1986; do they reflect current conditions?

Level of significance?

### **CHINQUAPIN HISTORIC DISTRICT**

It's good that the nomination notes the plaza and intersection as integral components; the nomination would be stronger with more description and evaluation of those features.

Generally, the nomination focuses on the buildings and their architectural significance. Designing and developing an attractive and efficient service station/visitor facility/ranger station complex was an important achievement; it would have been good for this nomination to do more to address the entire complex, relationship between elements, circulation, traffic islands, signage, landscape plantings and arrangements, etc. Were there historic planting plans and arrangements? Would it be possible to include here more visual documentation of aspects of the service station that remain?

It's not clear why the deteriorated condition of the light plant and barn makes them non-contributing. Do they not contribute to our understanding of how this complex

functioned? Also, section 5 and section 7 seem not to take into account the gas and oil house, building 5003 as mentioned in section 8, in the resource count and description. What about including the fire hydrant shelter and fuel shut-off valve in the enumeration?

It may be a stretch to nominate these buildings under "NPS Rustic," as that term is usually construed. With their white clapboards, green shutters, columned porches, white picket fences and general pseudo-historic appearance, they might fit better under the rubric of vernacular revival, territorial revival, or colonial revival – would we call the Wawona Hotel "Rustic," too?

Why does the period of significance end in 1938?

The UTM's don't seem to be in the right place given the map location that pops up in the website Topozone when you enter the numbers provided here. If these coordinates come from a park system, I will of course accept that as more accurate than Topozone.

Level of significance?

#### GLEN AULIN HIGH SIERRA CAMP HISTORIC DISTRICT

The nomination provides basic local context, but might also refer to broader precedents, European and American. The nomination would also be strengthened by more specific descriptions of structures and landscapes and integrity.

Tuolumne and Vogelsang camps both are noted as meeting criterion C. Especially given that, why is criterion C not checked for this nomination?

Section 10 says the district includes one acre. 18 contributing resources seem like a lot for just one acre, so I wonder whether this acreage is accurate.

The verbal boundary description needs either enough specificity so that someone on site could figure out where the boundary lies on the ground, or an accompanying to-scale sketch map that shows the boundary. In other words, it's not clear what "immediate environment" means here. The nomination does include a photocopy of a map of the area with an "area boundary" but it's not clear that this boundary line is intended to delineate the NR district; it seems to have been originally done to mark a concessioner's land assignment.

Level of significance?

#### GOLDEN CROWN MINE

Please see the comment on archeological resources and potential at this site, above.

The verbal boundary description needs either enough specificity so that someone on site could figure out where the boundary lies on the ground, or an accompanying to-scale



sketch map that shows the boundary. In other words, it's not clear what "immediate surroundings" means here.

The description in Section 7 concentrates on five log buildings. What do we know about related, additional physical evidence of mining here, including what remains of the shaft? Is there not more information available to us about this mine, related mining efforts, and the full range of the remaining evidence of mining here? It seems likely that more physical evidence of mining survives (more than the five nominated cabins, that is), if only as ruins and ground disturbance, and if so, that would provide reasons to nominate a broader site here.

Level of significance?

#### HENNESS RIDGE FIRE LOOKOUT

Why does the period of significance end in 1938? Would it make sense to have an end date of 1966 – when the property was last used for its original purposes?

The verbal boundary description needs either enough specificity so that someone on site could figure out where the boundary lies on the ground, or an accompanying to-scale sketch map that shows the boundary. In other words, it's not clear what "immediate surroundings" means here.

Page 3 of section 8 mentions surveyors "laying out a meridian." Does any evidence of that meridian survive today?

Level of significance?

#### HETCH HETCHY COMFORT STATION

Why does the period of significance end in 1938?

The verbal boundary description needs either enough specificity so that someone on site could figure out where the boundary lies on the ground, or an accompanying to-scale sketch map that shows the boundary. In other words, it's not clear what "immediate surroundings" means here.

Photos date from 1984; do they reflect current conditions?

Level of significance?

#### LAKE VERNON CABIN

Why is the period of significance only one year?

The verbal boundary description needs either enough specificity so that someone on site could figure out where the boundary lies on the ground, or an accompanying to-scale sketch map that shows the boundary. In other words, it's not clear what "immediate environment" means here.

Is there any tangible evidence of the snow course remaining at the site today?

Level of significance?

#### MAY LAKE HIGH SIERRA CAMP HISTORIC DISTRICT

The nomination provides basic local context, but might also refer to broader precedents, European and American. The nomination would also be strengthened by more specific descriptions of structures and landscapes and integrity.

Tuolumne and Vogelsang camps both are noted as meeting criterion C. Especially given that, why is criterion C not checked for this nomination?

Section 10 says the district includes less than one acre. 18 buildings seem like a lot for that acreage, so I wonder whether this is accurate.

The verbal boundary description needs either enough specificity so that someone on site could figure out where the boundary lies on the ground, or an accompanying to-scale sketch map that shows the boundary. In other words, it's not clear what "immediate environment" and "immediate setting" mean here. The nomination does include a photocopy of a map of the area marked with an "area boundary" but it's not clear that this boundary line is intended to delineate the NR district; it seems to have been originally done to mark a concessioner's land assignment.

Do the "miscellaneous structures" mentioned in the verbal boundary description include features such as the storage tanks and pumphouse?

Why is the period of significance only one year?

Level of significance?

#### MERCED LAKE HIGH SIERRA CAMP HISTORIC DISTRICT

The nomination provides basic local context, but might also refer to broader precedents, European and American. The nomination would also be strengthened by more specific descriptions of structures and landscapes and integrity. For example, did the 1980s replacement of shake roofs with galvanized metal affect integrity? Why or why not?

Why does the period of significance end with 1938?

Tuolumne and Vogelsang camps both are noted as meeting criterion C. Especially given that, why is criterion C not checked for this nomination?

What are the non-contributing resources enumerated in section 5?

Section 10 says the district includes one acre. Given the number of contributing buildings, I wonder whether this is accurate.

The verbal boundary description needs either enough specificity so that someone on site could figure out where the boundary lies on the ground, or an accompanying to-scale sketch map that shows the boundary. In other words, it's not clear what "immediate environment" and "immediate setting" mean here. The nomination does include a photocopy of a map of the area with an "area boundary," but it's not clear that this boundary line is intended to delineate the NR district; it seems to have been originally done to mark a concessioner's land assignment.

Do the "miscellaneous structures" mentioned in the verbal boundary description include features such as the water storage tanks, fire pit, corral and hitching racks?

Level of significance?

#### MERCED LAKE RANGER STATION

Since this one was jointly constructed by NPS and California, should it not be listed under contexts #3-#5?

The verbal boundary description needs either enough specificity so that someone on site could figure out where the boundary lies on the ground, or an accompanying to-scale sketch map that shows the boundary. In other words, it's not clear what "immediate environment" and "immediate surroundings" mean here.

The UTM doesn't seem consistent with the map location, if you plug these numbers in at the website Topozone. If these coordinates come from a park system, I will of course accept that as more accurate than Topozone.

Why does the period of significance end with 1938?

Level of significance?

#### NEW BIG OAK FLAT ROAD

It could be more clear why the newer road should be listed under criterion D (A & C make sense.)

While some might agree that one particular style of parkitecture is "less aesthetically pleasing" (8-2), others might find "rustic" styles crude and cloying and prefer sleeker,

modern styling. If we're talking about aesthetic judgments, we should be talking about historic, and historicized, judgments. "Beautifully styled," for example, is not a particularly illuminating phrase (and, again, both rustifiles and modernists might disapprove of bridges in question)

Does this nomination encompass only bridges, tunnels, and retaining walls, or are road layout and landscape design elements part of the package? We think it's important not to focus solely on discrete architectural and engineering features and to look at the whole package of features and design intent.

Why does the period of significance end in 1938? This question seems especially pertinent because the text says that some of the construction on this road ended in 1940.

The verbal boundary description needs either enough specificity so that someone on site could figure out where the boundary lies on the ground, or an accompanying to-scale sketch map that shows the boundary. The simplest way to revise the verbal description **might** be to add to the existing VBD by specifying the beginning and ending points of the stretch being nominated, and a statement about how wide the nominated corridor is. (That width **could** be expressed simply as some number of feet extending on either side of the center line of the road, if that's appropriate in this case.)

There's no page 2 in the package we received. Is there some text missing, or was that a blank page? If a page is missing, perhaps that's a page that has an explicit statement about what are the eight contributing structures enumerated in section 5; otherwise, I'm guessing that the 8 are the three bridges, three tunnels, retaining walls/embankments, and the roadbed itself. Is that correct?

Also, this nomination came with a copy of the El Portal quadrangle USGS map; judging from the locations the Topozone site shows for the UTM coordinates in section 10, it seems the nominated property also extends to the El Capitan quad map. Were these UTM coordinates generated by the park's system?

Level of significance?

#### OLD BIG OAK FLAT ROAD

If the new road was completed in 1940, wouldn't that be a better date for the end of the period of significance than 1938?

Significance seems clear, but is integrity an issue? Is there enough of the original resource left to communicate its historic character? It's no longer maintained as vehicle road, and some constructed features remain, but does it retain overall historic character? We found this hard to tell from the written and visual sources provided. What do we mean when we say 80 per cent is still intact, especially given that "the lower portion of the road was obscured about 1949" and that the switchback area was lost in a landslide.



Overall, more specific description of surviving features would strengthen this nomination.

Why is this not listed under D, as the New Big Oak Flat Road is?

The verbal boundary description needs either enough specificity so that someone on site could figure out where the boundary lies on the ground, or an accompanying to-scale sketch map that shows the boundary. In other words, it's not clear what "immediate environment" means here. Also, the map that accompanies this nomination may not encompass the area of the Tamarack Flat campground, which is noted as an end point of the nominated stretch of road.

Photos date from 1985 and '86; do they reflect current conditions?

Level of significance?

#### OSTRANDER LAKE SKI HUT

Should this one be listed under contexts #3 and #5, as well as #4 (especially since CCC associations and architectural significance under "NPS Rustic" are emphasized)?

Why does the period of significance end in 1950?

The verbal boundary description needs either enough specificity so that someone on site could figure out where the boundary lies on the ground, or an accompanying to-scale sketch map that shows the boundary. In other words, it's not clear what "immediate surroundings" means here. Also, there seems to be a typo here, in that the boundary description refers to the Buck Camp cabin.

Photos date from 1986; do they reflect current conditions?

Level of significance?

#### SACHSE SPRINGS CABIN

This nomination would be stronger with more description of the site. How is the cabin sited?

What does "typical log construction" mean in this case? Is "log pole" accurate in referring to this structure?

Why is the period of significance just one year?

The verbal boundary description needs either enough specificity so that someone on site could figure out where the boundary lies on the ground, or an accompanying to-scale

sketch map that shows the boundary. In other words, it's not clear what "immediate environment" and "immediate setting" mean here.

Is there any tangible evidence of the snow courses remaining at the site today?

At the end of page 5 (section 8) there seem to be a few words of text missing.

Level of significance?

#### SNOW CREEK CABIN

Section 5 enumerates one non-contributing resource, but the verbal boundary description mentions three non-contributing elements. Is the shed here noted as non-contributing the same as the lean-to added in the 1960s? If so, it is not standard National Register practice to consider a lean-to as an element separate from the building to which it's attached. It is not clear why the privy and well are considered non-contributing; do they not contribute to our understanding of how this cabin functioned? Do they not date from the period of significance?

Why does the period of significance end in 1938?

The verbal boundary description needs either enough specificity so that someone on site could figure out where the boundary lies on the ground, or an accompanying to-scale sketch map that shows the boundary. In other words, it's not clear what "immediate environment" means here.

Level of significance?

#### SNOW FLAT CABIN

Since cabins were and are used by NPS, would it not be logical to nominate them all under related contexts #3 and #4-- and maybe #5, too?

This nomination would be stronger with more specific description of the site. It would also be relevant to have more information about the transition to use for backcountry ranger support -- when did this begin? Did it result in physical alterations?

Why is the period of significance one year?

The verbal boundary description needs either enough specificity so that someone on site could figure out where the boundary lies on the ground, or an accompanying to-scale sketch map that shows the boundary. In other words, it's not clear what "immediate environment" and "immediate surroundings" mean here.

Level of significance?

## TUOLUMNE MEADOWS HIGH SIERRA CAMP

This would be a stronger nomination with more specific description, both of structures and landscape, and of the "immediate setting." CLR categories such as circulation, cluster arrangement, etc., would have been useful as organizers here – what about trails and other features within camp? Are there trees, plants, topography itself, views, etc., that are significant? There could also be more on the assessment of integrity

Section 10 says the district includes one acre. Given the number of contributing buildings, I wonder whether this is accurate.

The verbal boundary description needs either enough specificity so that someone on site could figure out where the boundary lies on the ground, or an accompanying to-scale sketch map that shows the boundary. In other words, it's not clear what "immediate environment" and "immediate setting" mean here. The nomination does include a photocopy of a map of the area with an "area boundary" but it's not clear that this boundary line is intended to delineate the NR district; it seems to have been originally done to mark a concessioner's land assignment.

Level of significance ?

## VOGELSANG HIGH SIERRA CAMP HISTORIC DISTRICT

Why is the period of significance just one year?

Section 5 enumerates 5 non-contributing resources, but it's not clear from the narrative in section 7 what those are. The verbal boundary description mentions restrooms and bathhouses, but the narrative in section 7 does not discuss them. A related question is about the status of the corral, woodshed, hitching post, and trails. One could assume these are these among the "miscellaneous structures" mentioned in the verbal boundary description, but it should be very clear whether they're contributing or not.

In general, this nomination would be strengthened by more specific descriptions of structures and landscapes, boundaries, and integrity.

Section 10 says the district includes one acre. Given the number of contributing buildings, I wonder whether this is accurate.

The verbal boundary description needs either enough specificity so that someone on site could figure out where the boundary lies on the ground, or an accompanying to-scale sketch map that shows the boundary. In other words, it's not clear what "immediate environment" and "immediate setting" mean here. The nomination does include a photocopy of a map of the area with an "area boundary" but it's not clear that this boundary line is intended to delineate the NR district; it seems to have been originally done to mark a concessioner's land assignment. The LCS site map has no boundary.

Photographs date from the mid- and late 1990s. Do they reflect current conditions?

Level of significance?

#### WAWONA TUNNEL

More specific assessment of integrity would strengthen this nomination, as would more explanation of why criterion D applies.

The nomination does not mention the viewing platform created by the tunnel spoils, and only obliquely refers to the spectacular manner in which the tunnel frames one of the park's signature views.

Why does the period of significance end in 1938?

The verbal boundary description needs either enough specificity so that someone on site could figure out where the boundary lies on the ground (here, the entrance areas would be the question) or an accompanying to-scale sketch map that shows the boundary.

Level of significance?

#### WHITE WOLF LODGE

It's not clear to me why this nomination focuses only on architecture, rather than also invoking broader patterns of Yosemite use and development—especially when the one building being nominated is reconstructed. If this complex were to be evaluated within other contexts, is it possible that some of the structures now considered non-contributing would be contributing? Are the modifications that occurred to all these non-contributing structures after 1951 so very different from what happened at other complexes that are being nominated? In other words, shouldn't we consider whether to nominate a district here rather than a single building, based upon contexts additional to architectural significance? Why **not** nominate the entire complex, just as Camp Curry and other complexes have been nominated?

If the decision to nominate only the main lodge building is not reconsidered, then I suggest revising this nomination to include additional language to explain the case for excluding the rest of the complex. The nomination for a single building would also be stronger if, where section 8 says the walls and roof "are basically the same as the original," the text expanded on that statement to specify in more depth how this building meets the provisions of the National Register regulations (3 CFR Part 60. 4) criteria consideration on reconstructed buildings.

For a nomination of the main building only, it would also be best to revise the description of the "non-contributing" structures to note in section 7 that they're outside the boundary and remove them from the enumeration in section 5; listing them as non-contributing implies they're within the boundary (which seems not to be the intention, given that the



acreage is  $\frac{1}{4}$  acre). Also, then, the verbal boundary description will need either enough specificity so that someone on site could figure out where the boundary lies on the ground, or an accompanying to-scale sketch map that shows the boundary. In other words, it's not clear what "immediate environment" and "immediate setting" mean here. The nomination does include a photocopy of a map with an "area boundary" but this boundary line seems intended to mark a concessioner's land assignment rather than to delineate the NR district. The other site map included has no boundary.

**OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION**

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August 23, 2004

Dr. Stephanie Toothman  
National Park Service  
Pacific West Region  
909 First Street  
Seattle, Washington 98104-4159

Dear Dr. Toothman:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the National Register Multiple Property nomination for Yosemite National Park. I concur that the properties identified and evaluated in the nomination do constitute a coherent group of geographically dispersed resources that are eligible for listing in the National Register. The nomination does an excellent job of defining separate, but related contexts that make clear the significance of the individual resources, as well as the reasons that they collectively constitute a multiple property. The inclusion of a number of the park's less elaborate, high altitude resources is particularly noteworthy. The context statements synthesize a large amount of historic documentation in a clear and concise manner and the descriptive material that is provided for the individual resources or resource groupings is excellent.

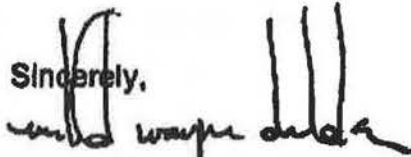
We concur in all of your findings regarding the resources enumerated in the multiple property nomination. We agree that the following properties are eligible for the National Register as a part of a multiple property.

Lake Vernon Cabin Building #2450  
May Lake High Sierra Camp Historic District  
Hetch Hetchy Comfort Station Building #2104  
Henness Ridge Fire Lookout Building #5300  
The Golden Crown Mine  
Glen Aulin Sierra Camp Historic District  
Chinquapin Historic District  
Buck Creek Cabin Building #4800  
Snow Flat Cabin Building #3501  
Snow Creek Cabin Building #3450  
Sachse Springs Cabin Building #2452  
Ostrander Ski Hut Building #5110  
Old Big Oak Flat Road  
New Big Oak Flat Road  
Merced Lake Ranger Station Building #3400  
Merced Lake High Sierra Camp Historic District

Wawona Tunnel  
Vogelsang High Sierra Camp Historic District  
Tuolumne Meadows High Sierra Camp Historic District

I have signed the application as commenting authority. If you have any questions, please call  
Gene Itogawa of my staff (916) 653-8936.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Milford Wayne Donaldson", written over a vertical line that extends from the typed name below.

Milford Wayne Donaldson  
State Historic Preservation Officer

Cc: Kimball Koch



# United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
Yosemite National Park  
P.O. Box 577  
Yosemite, CA 95389

**JAN 27 2014**

Memorandum  
IN REPLY REFER TO:  
H3417 (RMS-YOSE)

To: Federal Preservation Officer, WASO

From: Superintendent, Yosemite National Park

Subject: National Register Documentation for Multiple Property Nominations - Yosemite High Sierra Camps and Yosemite Backcountry Cabins

We are forwarding, for your approval, National Register Multiple Property documentation for High Sierra Camps:

- ~ Glen Aulin High Sierra Camp
- ~ May Lake High Sierra Camp
- ~ Merced Lake High Sierra Camp
- ~ Sunrise High Sierra Camp
- ~ Tuolumne Meadows High Sierra Camp
- ~ Vogelsang High Sierra Camp

Backcountry Cabins:

- ~ Buck Camp Patrol Cabin
- ~ Frog Creek Cabin
- ~ Lake Vernon Snow Survey Shelter
- ~ Satch Spring Snow Survey Shelter
- ~ Merced Lake Ranger Station and Snow Survey Cabin
- ~ Ostrander Lake Ski Hut
- ~ Snow Creek Ski Hut
- ~ Snow Flat Ranger Station and Snow Survey Cabin

The multiple property documentation provides a broad contextual history of Yosemite National Park. The nominated properties all fall within the boundaries of the park and cover a range of dates. We originally received concurrence on the eligibility of these properties for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (Register) by the California State Office of Preservation (SHPO) under a multiple property nomination that included the current fourteen properties submitted, as well as seven others. The letter of concurrence was sent from SHPO August 23, 2004 and a copy is enclosed for your reference. The documentation was then sent on to WASO and comments were received by the park on January 19, 2007 (copy enclosed). The final nominations reflect changes that address these comments.

Multiple property documentation for fifteen properties was resubmitted to SHPO and their eligibility was again concurred on in letters dated October 30, 2012 for the Backcountry Cabins, and July 19, 2013 for the High Sierra Camps. Copies of these letters are enclosed. Unfortunately, since this last review, the Miguel Meadows backcountry cabin and other contributing structures were lost in the recent Rim Fire. This wildland fire entered Yosemite on August 22, 2013, and burned



over 78,700 acres of park lands. Consultation with SHPO regarding the fire and its effects is ongoing and the nomination for Miguel Meadows Cabin will not be submitted.

We look forward to your final determination, and submission of these nominations to the Keeper of the National Register. If you have any questions concerning these documents please contact Laura Kirn at 209-379-1314 or by email at [laura\\_kirn@nps.gov](mailto:laura_kirn@nps.gov) or Kevin McCardle at 209-379-1418 or by email at [kevin\\_mccardle@nps.gov](mailto:kevin_mccardle@nps.gov).

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Don L. Neubacher". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Don L. Neubacher

Enclosures (20)

cc: Linda Mazzu, Chief Resources Management and Science, Yosemite National Park  
Laura Kirn, Cultural Resource Program Manager, Yosemite National Park  
Kimball Koch, acting Historic Preservation Officer, Yosemite National Park  
Kevin McCardle, Historical Landscape Architect, Yosemite National Park



# United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
1849 C Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20240



June 4, 2014

## Memorandum

To: Acting Keeper of the National Register of Historic Places

From: Deputy Federal Preservation Officer, National Park Service *Almut A. [Signature]*

Subject: Multiple Property Submission for Historic Resources of Yosemite National Park, context document and 14 individual National Register Nominations

I am forwarding a multiple property submission for the Historic Resources of Yosemite National Park, consisting of the context document and 14 individual nominations. The individual nominations are for the following properties: Glen Aulin High Sierra Camp, May Lake High Sierra Camp, Merced Lake High Sierra Camp, Sunrise High Sierra Camp, Tuolumne Meadows High Sierra Camp, Vogelsang High Sierra Camp, Buck Camp Patrol Cabin, Frog Creek Cabin, Lake Vernon Snow Survey Shelter, Satche Spring Snow Survey Shelter, Merced Lake Ranger Station and Snow Survey Cabin, Ostrander Lake Ski Hut, Snow Creek Ski Hut, and the Snow Flat Ranger Station and Snow Survey Cabin. The Park History Program has reviewed the context document and each nomination form and found the properties eligible under various Criteria and Areas of Significance, all at a local level of significance.