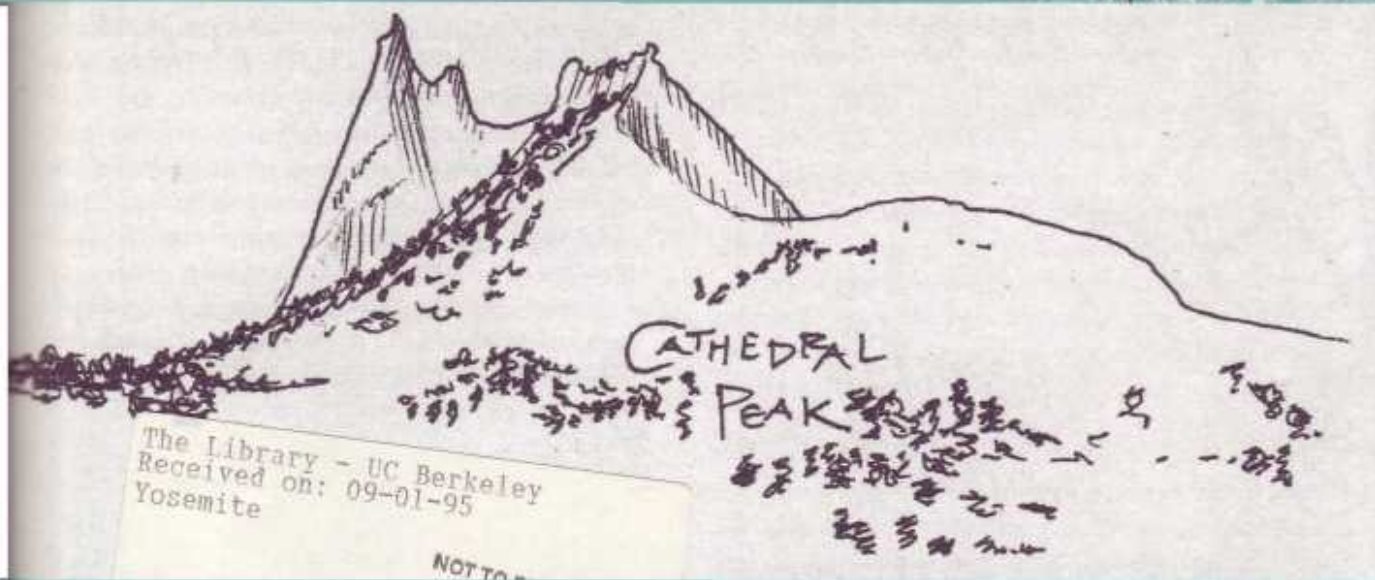


Portable Magic

KEEPING A JOURNAL
IN YOSEMITE

BY SARAH RABKIN

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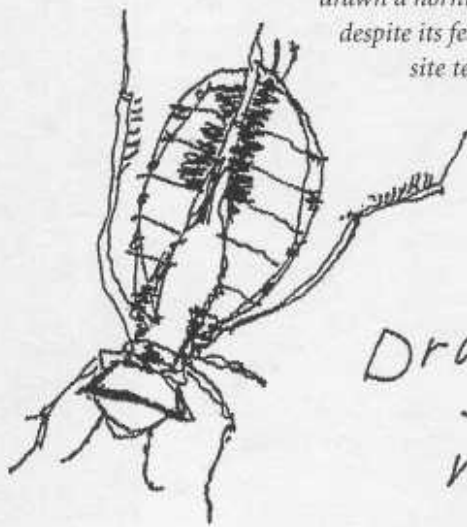
You don't need special skills or fancy equipment to write and draw in a journal—a practice that can heighten your awareness of the moment and deepen your relationship with a place.

FROM MY YOSEMITE JOURNALS

•Vernal equinox. On the last day of winter, the sun brews balmy weather in a snowless Yosemite Valley. I sit barefoot by a creek with my notebook, working on an assignment for a writing workshop—transcribing into words and music the rush and twiddle of water over rock.

That night a blizzard moves in, and the first day of spring in Yosemite dawns frozen under a white muffler. As the storm clouds break apart, frigid winds toss banners of new snow from the brow of Half Dome; the flying crystals sparkle like ground glass against blue sky. My classmates and I stoke the woodstove in our cabin and sing the creekside chorus I have composed to celebrate this topsy-turvy equinox.

•July, Crane Flat. At eight-thirty in the evening, a scary-looking insect drills her egg-laying tube beneath the surface of a red fir stump. I sketch the creature's coppery wings and yellow antennae. My naturalist friend Paul tells me I have drawn a horntail, a relative of wasps, stingless despite its fearsome looks. When I revisit the site ten hours later, she is still pumping eggs into wood.



Dragonfly
nymph

FROM LUKENS LAKE
BROWN AND BLACK

•Early August. Backpacking in the Cathedral Range, three friends and I come across an abandoned campfire that has burrowed beyond its rock ring, igniting the surrounding duff. The smoldering ground and charred logs emit black smoke and occasional tongues of flame.

Another group has already discovered the fire and sent one of their party jogging several miles to a ranger station. My friends and I contribute our tiny latrine shovel and col-

lapsible yellow bucket to the makeshift brigade—but our two-gallon loads of creek water seem to turn to steam before they land. Within a couple of hours, a copter delivers two Park Service firefighters with pulaskis and five-gallon backpacks. Yosemite needs its wildfires, but this is one blaze I'm glad to see put out.

•Late August. On the last night of a Clark Range hike, I perch on granite at the edge of Middle Chain Lake, reminiscing about the mountain terrain that our group has moved through—and that has moved through me—over the past six days. Stars blink on; bats skim over the water, rippling a reflected moonrise as they dip to the surface to drink.

These and a thousand other Yosemite moments have made it into my journals over the past 20 years. When I pull old volumes from my shelf now and leaf through the pages, I can recall the hiccupy bobbing motion of the first killdeer I ever noticed in Tuolumne, or the tang of sagebrush rubbed into my hands on a hot East Side climb—details that would be far more difficult to retrieve if I had not recorded them in words and pictures.

But more than memory books to be perused after the fact, the journals I keep during my Yosemite sojourns become companions during the time it takes to fill their pages. Working in them channels my energy, focuses my attention, and awakens my powers of observation.

Journals provide a place to celebrate beauty and to contemplate our place in it. They can help an observer of human nature or of the natural world to formulate questions, to take notes, to play. They can be enjoyed by virtually any park visitor: by adults and children alike; by people whose physical limitations keep them from more strenuous activities, and by those without a lot of extra money. Whether during a solitary ramble or in the midst of a crowd, a journal kept in the park makes a fine teacher—for like the wisest human companion, it enables Yosemite itself to be the guide.

A CHANNEL FOR THE FLOOD

On your first visit to Yosemite or your hundredth, the possibilities can be overwhelming. How to respond to this infinitely intriguing place? Perhaps, like me, you find yourself kicking aimlessly at pine cones, berating yourself for “wasting” any moment of precious Yosemite time in self-absorbed indecision. You may feel called by spectac-

Working in a journal channels my energy, focuses my attention, and awakens my powers of observation.

Watch one bird for at least fifteen minutes and write down everything you notice about its appearance and behavior. As you write, make a few quick sketches. List whatever questions occur to you about the bird. Then choose one question and try, through further observation and contemplation, to answer it.

Read a few published journal-keepers and try out their ideas. Henry David Thoreau, Loren Eiseley, John Burroughs, and Opal Whitely—among countless others—have much to teach.

Some trained naturalists limit their notes and sketches to scientific observations, and make all their journal entries conform to a time-honored structure shared and recognized by other field scientists. This standardized format allows fellow naturalists to use the information on the notebook pages, sometimes decades or even centuries after the fact. Journal-keepers of this school normally reserve their more subjective kinds of writing and sketching for a separate volume, so as not to interfere with the collection and communication of data.

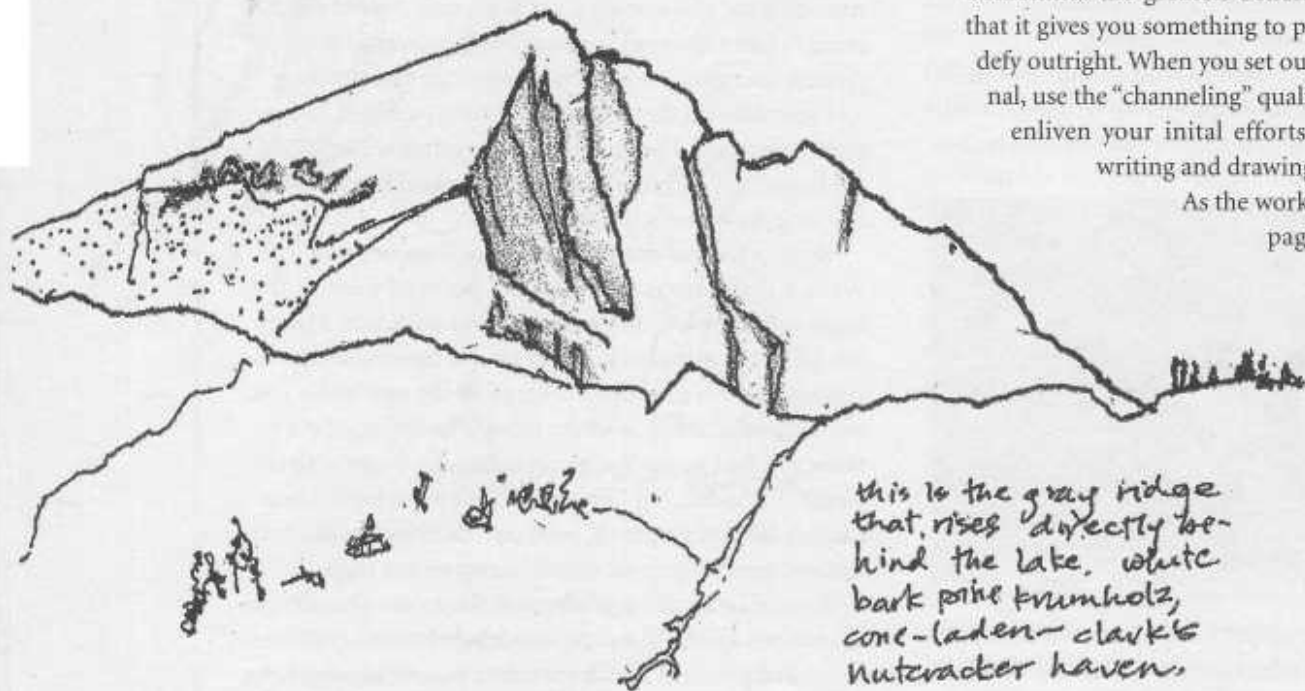
I usually prefer, however, to throw everything into one book—a “capacious hold-all,” as Virginia Woolf called her journal. Like Woolf and like contemporary journal-keeping naturalist Hannah Hinchman, I would rather not separate my inner and outer worlds so strictly. “Over the years the content of the journals has broadened to include every aspect of my life,” writes Hinchman. “I try to see it all as natural history, and have become a naturalist on the trail of my own life.”

Whether you decide to focus inward or outward, do not let the limits imposed by an assignment censor your creative process. If you find yourself sitting in a breathtaking meadow, ignoring your own dictum to sketch flowers and instead writing about why you hate your job, don’t berate yourself with a lecture about “being here now.” It may turn out that you need to roam freely inside your own psyche before you can attend more fully to Yosemite itself. Conversely, you may find that in focusing exclusively on the intriguing world “out there,” your journal entries will ultimately shed light on your inner landscape as well. I don’t think anybody has put it better than John Muir, a consummate Yosemite observer, who said, “I only went out for a walk, and finally concluded to stay out till sundown, for going out, I found, was really going in.”

Sometimes the greatest benefit of an assignment is that it gives you something to push against, or even to defy outright. When you set out to work in your journal, use the “channeling” quality of an assignment to enliven your initial efforts—but then allow the writing and drawing to go where they will.

As the work that wells up onto the page begins to violate your self-imposed boundaries,

17 AUGUST 8:45 A.M.



this is the gray ridge that rises directly behind the lake. white bark pine krumholz, cone-laden—clark's nutcracker haven.

RED PEAK FROM RED DEVIL LAKE

If you do care about making aesthetically pleasing pages, they will come with time and practice.

you may be pleasantly surprised by the new creative channels it opens up. At times, you may also experience resistance from your own personal Corps of Engineers—those internal censors and critics who try to tame the wilder currents in all of us. But keep writing; keep drawing, and you will prevent those forces from damming the flow of your imaginative spirit.

SKILL IS NOT THE POINT

Enjoying Yosemite with a journal requires no training in art or writing. Unless your specific aim is to develop skills in those areas, the quality of what you produce matters less than the process itself. Whether you ever create a finished drawing worth framing or a piece of writing that cries for a wider audience, the very act of putting thoughts and images on paper will free up new ways of responding to the world. You may find yourself actively mining your journal's raw material for other projects months or years after generating it, or you may feel the transformative influence of your journal-keeping more subtly, like ripples moving outward into all areas of your life.

If you do care about making aesthetically pleasing pages, they will come with time and practice. It may help to remember the advice that a teacher once gave to wildlife artist Robert Bateman: "In order to learn to draw, you have to make ten thousand mistakes. So get busy making them." Toward that end, you can take weekend workshops in art, calligraphy, and writing; observe other journal-keepers' approaches; play with format, size, and spacing of words and images on the page; try different media, different kinds of lettering, different styles of drawing. But above all, let the journal remain a refuge from punitively high standards, a sanctuary free of "shoulds"—in short, a place in which to make fruitful mistakes.

A FEW SIMPLE TOOLS

My artist friend Jenny calls her drawing tools "toys"—a perfect way to think of them. Remember the excitement of a child with a new set of crayons, and choose the implements that make you feel that way. Experiment with different pens, pencils, and blank books, as you develop your personal toy box. You don't need to spend a lot of money on equipment and materials for this hobby. Mainly, you want them portable and field-proof: compact, light, rugged, well protected in a knapsack or some other convenient carrier.



Following Jenny's example, I keep my equipment in a small fanny-pack, always loaded so that I can take off sketching at a moment's notice. My "toys" include a couple dozen colored pencils, three or four graphite pencils in a range of hardnesses, a small pencil sharpener (the kind that keeps the shavings contained), a couple of erasers, a travel field watercolor kit with retractable brushes, exacto knife, a glue stick, a small magnifying glass, a roll of tape, and an assortment of pens. Be sure to avoid technical drawing pens, disposable pens, and those metallic-ink pens you shake before using. All tend to leak, especially at high altitudes.

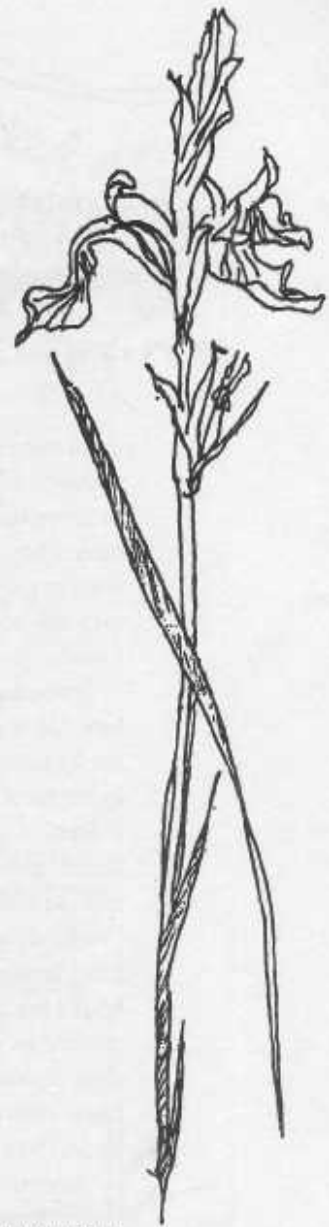
What size and kind of journal you choose is your particular preference. Some people prefer a particularly portable, pocket-sized notebook; others are typically confined by anything smaller than nine inches. If you want your work to last for years, choose a book with acid-free paper. Try a variety of paper faces: some work better for pen and ink, others for pencil or watercolor. There are even waterproof pens for working in wet climates or carrying on rivers. If you use one of these, avoid water-soluble ink. I recommend blank rather than lined pages, which can be confusing when you want to combine writing, drawing, and other elements of design.

Extra-stiff notebook covers and the cover of bound blank books provide a good writing surface. Spiral-bound books can be folded back on themselves, making them less cumbersome for working outdoors; fully bound books, on the other hand, allow you to work right across the "gutter" between pages, creating expansive two-page layouts.

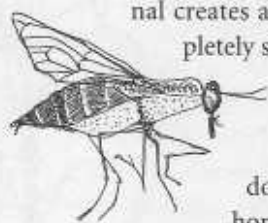
Whatever type of book you choose, decorate it in some way to make it your own. Save the first page or two for introductory material; a frontispiece sketch, a dedication, a quotation. Date each entry and make a few notes about your location, the surroundings, your mood, the weather. Besides orienting you to the moment, these ritual opening lines will help bring it all back the next time you look through your journal.

PEACE IN A CROWD

If you join group trips or take natural history seminars, you may find yourself caught uncomfortably between the impulse to interact with others and the desire to plumb your thoughts in solitary silence. A jour-



Like the wisest human companion,
a journal enables Yosemite itself to be the guide.



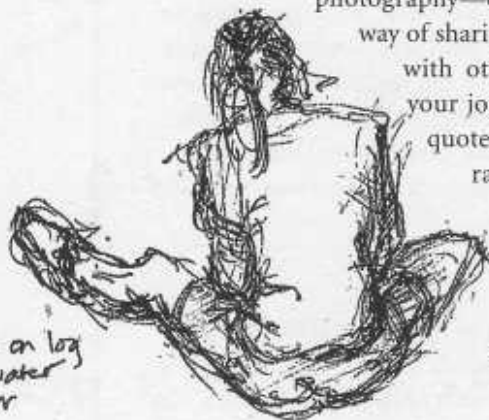
nal creates a perfect middle ground: without completely shutting people out, it lets you enter and define your own relationship with the surroundings. You can use it to take notes on an instructor's lecture, jot down other participants' comments, and home in on whatever draws your interest.

In my experience, groups actually seem pleased by the presence of a journal-keeper. Children in particular like to investigate what I'm doing, and are inspired to try it themselves. I am often surprised by the courtesy I receive from curious children: they ask interesting questions, and they also seem to respect my need for space and silence as I work.

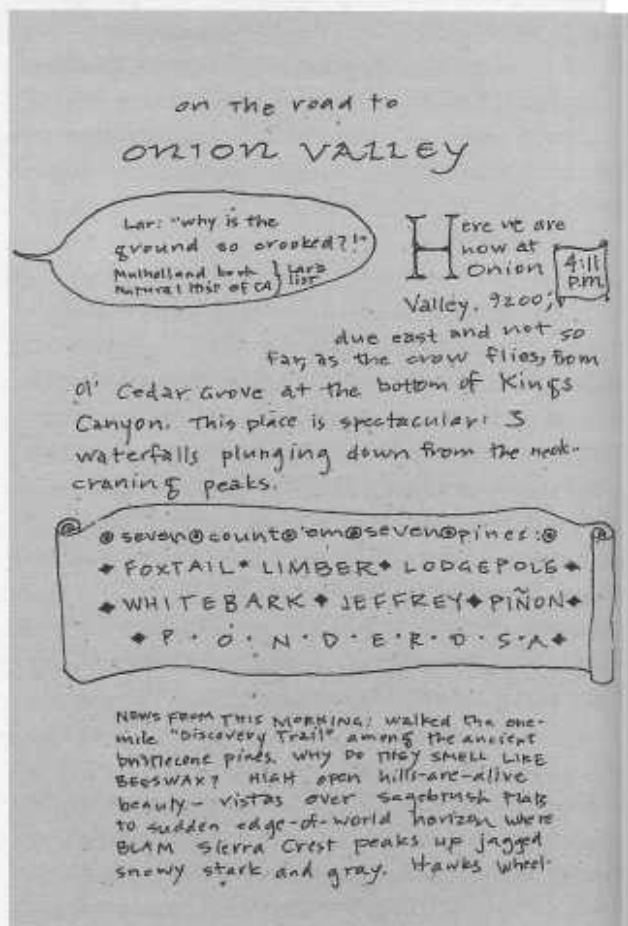
Sometimes the book becomes a repository for group lore. Once during a Tuolumne Meadows insect seminar led by naturalist Michael Ross, the whole class—including several children—ended up devoting a page of my journal to a collaborative list of insect idioms. I served as scribe; every once in a while, during a walk or over trail mix, somebody would burst forth with a contribution. "Write down 'Don't bug me!' someone would yell over from across the pond. "How about, 'social butterflies'?" added his dad. "Or 'a fly in the ointment!'" his mother chimed in. Over the course of the weekend we filled the page. Sharing this light-hearted endeavor helped us get to know each other as we netted grasshoppers and peered under river rocks for creepy critters.

Journals not only offer calm in a crowd; they can also help you reconnect your solitary experiences with public life. For some people, exploring the park in solitude may be an end in itself; but the rest of us need to make some kind of meaning of these intense, unpeopled moments. Recording your perceptions and responses in a journal can aid in that meaning-making process, and—like some

photography—can eventually provide a way of sharing newfound perspectives with others. Whether you read your journal entries to a friend, quote them in letters, incorporate them into essays, or photocopy your sketches to create personalized notecards, you bring the park back into your larger world.




Karen on log
with water
filter



A WAY TO RE-INHABIT TIME AND PLACE

Some of Yosemite's interpretive rangers used to offer day-long group hikes every day of the summer season. Gradually, they have cut back to one all-day walk a week—and not just because of budget cuts. There simply aren't enough takers anymore for daily ranger-led hikes. When asked why, visitors explain that they don't have enough time to spend several hours walking.

I think this trend in the park reflects the larger culture of productivity and performance in which so many of us these days are steeped. We live in a world where "busyness" is a necessary virtue and the drained, gray look of a friend struggling to juggle too many responsibilities is seen as a badge of courage. Such a world tends to view illustrated journals (except those created by accomplished artists) and long, rambling walks (except those celebrated in published adventure tales) as frivolous and



This critter wriggled up to the lakeshore as I walked down to wet my bandana at the water's edge. It stopped, cying me, its head resting on warm dry rock and the rest of its body in the green-brown tceeming

self-indulgent.

As a society, we have lost the art of doing something purely for the sake of self-education, aesthetic pleasure, or spiritual deepening—or for no reason at all other than the sheer joy of the process. And we have forgotten how profoundly valuable those seemingly frivolous activities can be.

When you transcend this attitude and develop the habit of carrying and using a journal, it becomes more than a place to write and draw. It takes on the power of a talisman, a magical companion whose heft in your hand has the power to shift your mood. To open it is a declaration of your engagement in the moment, this moment. You begin to associate the journal with an awakened, meditative state, and you can use it to transport yourself into a world where here is the only place and now the only instant that matters. You learn the peaceful yet excited sensation of total attentiveness, the surprising rewards of giving way to intuition.

I am tempted to say that if more visitors to Yosemite were to make receptivity, joy, and playfulness our watchwords, if more of us were to sit under a lodgepole now and then with a blank book and lose track of time, we might in some subtle way begin to change the world. Maybe that's putting it too strongly. Still, at the least, we would develop a better sense of balance and inner peace, would learn something about ourselves and our surroundings—and that's a start. I had a music teacher who used to say that "if you're too busy to sing, you're too busy." I believe without a doubt that the same is true of keeping a journal.

Freelance writer and editor Sarah Rabkin teaches writing at UC Santa Cruz and leads outdoor journal workshops around the western U.S. Parts of this article will appear in a forthcoming book about exploring places with an illustrated journal.

RECOMMENDED READING

- Julia Cameron, *The Artist's Way*
Betty Edwards, *Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain*
Frederick Franck, *The Zen of Seeing: Seeing/Drawing as Meditation*
Natalie Goldberg, *Writing Down the Bones; Wild Mind*
James Gurney and Thomas Kinkade, *The Artist's Guide to Sketching*
Steven G. Herman, *The Naturalist's Field Journal*
Hannah Hinchman, *A Life In Hand: Creating the Illuminated Journal*
Cathy Johnson, *The Sierra Club Guide to Sketching in Nature*
Clare Walker Leslie, *The Art of Field Sketching; Nature Drawing: A Tool for Learning*
Tristine Rainer, *The New Diary*
Running Press, *Ways of Drawing Birds: A guide to expanding your visual awareness*

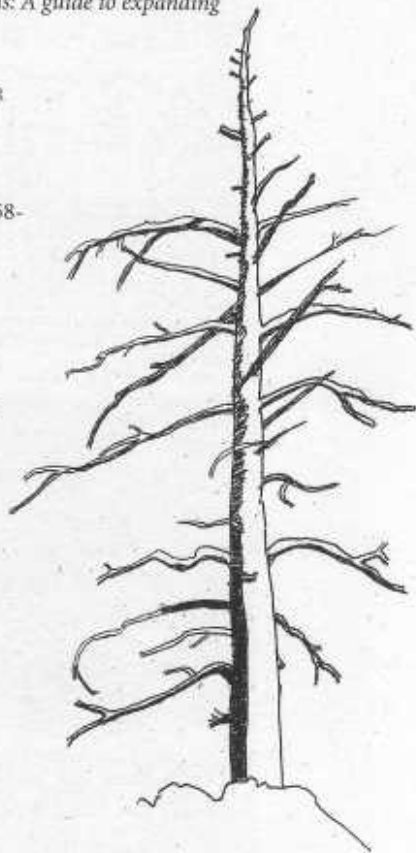
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Daniel Smith Inc.,
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(in Seattle: 223-9599)

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Yosemite Association offers many drawing and writing workshops throughout the year. See page 12 of this journal for a list of full field seminars that still have openings.

FOREWORD

On June 30, 1864, the federal government ceded Yosemite Valley and the Mariposa Grove of Big Trees, 12 1/2 air miles to the south, to the state of California as America's first scenic preserve—"inalienable for all time." This historic legislation, enacted only 13 years after the Valley was effectively discovered by non-Indians, marked the real beginning of the national park idea, a concept long since embraced by countries around the world. At the time the state assumed active management of the properties in 1866, two rudimentary, hand-riven wooden structures (originally known as the Upper and Lower Hotels) provided the only tourist accommodations on the Valley floor. In the spring of 1870, a third rustic hotel called Leidig and Davanay's opened for business.

In their *Biennial Reports* to the California Legislature for both 1880–82 and 1883–84, the Yosemite Board of Commissioners evinced serious concern about what they called "the inadequacy and discomfort of the three apologies that now provide hotel accommodations" within the Yosemite Grant. "The buildings erected for the purpose by private enterprise, and lapsed to the State by the terms of their leases," the Commissioners said, "are totally inadequate to the demands of a proper hospitality, and sadly at variance with their natural surroundings. The Yosemite Valley is preeminently the wonder of this continent. It is within two days ride of San Francisco, where are hotels rivaling the finest in the world. It is impossible, therefore, to convince the world's travelers that there is any cogent reason why this resort of the earth's most appreciative visitors should not have a hotel of an inviting capacity and class, commodious, solid, and furnished with the conveniences which modern civilization has exalted to the list of necessities. . .

The Stoneman House opened on April 1, 1888. When the season ended on November 15, more than 2,200 guests had been accommodated—nearly three times the number that patronized rival John K. Bamard's Yosemite Falls Hotel.

"How, then, can such a hotel be secured? Private enterprise will not build it because the Act of cession from the United States to the State of California limits the term of

all leases in the ceded area to ten years. The shortness of the term will not justify capitalists in making the necessary investment, however remunerative the business in itself. The uncertainty as to what would become of the property of the lessees at the termination of the lease will deter from the venture.

"The Commissioners deem it proper to express their conviction that the State of California, holding in trust so distinguishing and remunerative an interest, should itself build and own the only hotel allowed in the valley. We therefore unanimously ask the Legislature for an appropriation of \$75,000 to erect and furnish a State-owned hotel suitable to the needs of the traveling public and creditable to the only State in the Union which can boast of a Yosemite."

On March 9, 1885, the Twenty-sixth California Legislature responded to the Commissioners' petition by appropriating \$40,000 for the hotel project. Although the sum was far short of the requested amount and resulted in an inferior wooden structure rather than the substantial native-stone lodge they had envisioned, the Commissioners—in what seems a bit of overstatement—called the grant the "wisest, most statesmanlike, and defensible appropriation ever made by a legislative body."

Construction of the new hotel by the well-known Sacramento contracting firm of Carle, Croly & Abernathy began in 1886 and was essentially completed by the spring of 1888. Lumber for the ornate, three-and-one-half-story edifice, described as being of "slightly modern gothic suspicion," was purchased from a steam-powered sawmill set up for the purpose by Joseph Hutchins (not to be confused with James Hutchings, Yosemite's noted editor-innkeeper) on the site of Gentry's Hotel at the northwest corner of the Yosemite Grant. From here, heavy freight wagons carried the many board and beams required for the structure down the Big Oak Flat Road to the Valley floor. Called the Stoneman House in honor of California Governor (1883–1887) George Stoneman, who played an important role in obtaining the appropriation, the hotel stood at the south end of the large meadow directly in front of present Camp Curry.

(The meadow and stone bridge in the area are also named for Stoneman. At their annual meeting, held June 2, 1886, the Commissioners voted five to two to build the Stoneman House "near the Glacier Wall" rather than between Yosemite Falls and the Merced River. The Board felt the latter location as "too dangerous to be thought of



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—contiguous to threatened overflows in front, and to the titanic hurling of boulders of all denominations of weight from the rear. . . . Nineteen out of every twenty persons concede that its location—all things considered—is the best that could have been made.”)

The rectangular front of the L-shaped building, 100 feet wide by 56 feet deep exclusive of porches, faced southwest. A wing, 34 feet wide by 68½ feet deep, adjoined the rear on the north, thus giving a total depth of 124½ feet along that side. The hotel interior contained 92 rooms, not counting closets, lavatories, or storage areas. The first floor's 19 rooms included a large vestibuled parlor, spacious manager's office, reading and writing rooms, commodious kitchen, barbershop, four bedrooms, and dining accommodations for 200 people. The second floor had 31 bedrooms; the third floor, 27; and the gabled attic, 15. Bathrooms and toilet rooms for both sexes—the first indoor toilets in Yosemite Valley—were conveniently situated on each floor. Maximum occupancy was about 150 guests.

A short distance north of the hotel, a store, billiard parlor, and saloon occupied the front section of a long one-story frame structure; the rear of the building was used as sleeping quarters for employees. Later a cold storage room, smokehouse, stable, and corral were added.

Besides the initial \$40,000 appropriation, the legislature provided another \$5,000 to pipe water to the premises from an “inexhaustible spring” at the base of Glacier Point a few hundred yards away. “The spring is one of the finest in the world,” said a state official. “The water is so clear and beautiful, four or five feet deep, that you could have seen a needle in the bottom.”

In 1886 the Commissioners asked the legislature for additional funding to furnish and equip the hotel. “At a low estimate, it will cost \$15,000 to prepare the house for occupancy,” the Commissioners said. “At the end of ten years' lease, the furniture, however valuable in its place, would not pay the expense of removal. Under such circumstances it will be difficult, probably impossible, to obtain a desirable tenant.” The legislature failed to act on the request.

On January 1, 1888, the Commissioners leased the Stoneman House “after careful and elaborate conferences, and examinations of bids and bidders, to J. J. Cook, a responsible man, and long a polite and painstaking hotel keeper in the valley, for the sum of \$100 [3 percent of the \$40,000 cost], the year round, for a term of ten years.” Cook also paid \$350 annually for “other privileges,” which included the right to operate a store and saloon in conjunction with the hotel, and fence in a portion of the surrounding meadow for pasture and a vegetable garden. A major factor in Cook's acquisition of the much sought-after lease was his willingness to invest more than \$10,000 to furnish the hotel. His close association with brother-in-law Henry Washburn, one of the Mariposa County's most influential businessmen, may also have played a part in the Commissioners' decision.

The Stoneman House opened on April 1, 1888. When the season ended on November 15, more than 2,200 guests had been accommodated—nearly three times the number that patronized rival John K. Barnard's Yosemite Falls Hotel. The Commissioners' *Biennial Report* for 1888-89 quotes a number of letters from prominent citizens, which contain complimentary remarks, such as:

Disaster finally struck on the morning of August 24, 1896,
when fire swept through the Stoneman House,
burning it to the ground.

"The Stoneman House is well kept and very comfortable." "Mr. Cook makes everything delightful for the traveler." "The furniture is nice oak and ash, light colored, and as good as I would want in any hotel. The carpets were splendid. There were bathrooms on every floor and plenty of hot water." "The bill of fare was fine and the terms most reasonable." "The courtesy of the proprietor, clerk, and servants was all that could be expected." "Every comfort and many of the luxuries of a San Francisco hotel."

There were some, however, who felt the hotel was "ugly and poorly located." John Muir thought the building had "a silly look amid surroundings so massive and sublime." The Commissioners responded to the criticism by saying that "while the amount expended would not admit of an enchanting architectural display, it was quite

enough to rear an exceedingly pretty structure—all that could possibly be got out of the \$40,000 appropriation."

As it turned out, the Stoneman House proved a continual headache and source of expense to the state right from the start because of serious internal defects that occurred during construction. On August 22, 1889, engineer George D. Nagle submitted an inspection report of the building at the Commissioners' request: "It is a mixture of gravel, broken rock, and a limited quantity of cement. The chimneys are cracked horizontally, vertically, and obliquely in many places, the cracks in some of them being open a half inch clear through the chimney. It is only a question of time when the building will be destroyed by fire from defective chimneys. It is urgently recommended that all chimneys be taken down and rebuilt." Nagle estimated that it would cost nearly \$6,000



Stoneman House

YOSEMITE, CAL.

During its nine-year existence, the innovative state-owned hotel provided a comfortable and attractive stopping place for thousands of Yosemite visitors.

to rebuild the fireplaces and chimneys with brick pipe. Nagle's ideas were considered "absurd and extravagant" by the Board, which bought a new fire hose instead. "The contractors slighted their work in the most open and flagrant manner," the Commissioners said at their July 14, 1891, meeting, "owing to the Board's inability to appoint an inspector, and the State Comptroller refusing to pay the salary of same. We must now preserve the building to the best of our ability."

Unusually heavy snows in the winter of 1889–90—more than 25 feet on the Valley floor—added to the Commissioners' problems. The hotel's porch roofs were crushed, rafters and pipes broken, and ceilings displaced by the weight of the accumulated precipitation. In 1890 the Commissioners reported that the "Stoneman House needed and received extensive reparation." Two years later, another wet winter caused more damage. "Night storms weighted the Stoneman House roof," the Board said, "and its sill and frame were damaged, making necessary very comprehensive repairs of the entire building."

The Commissioners considered converting the Stoneman House to steam heat instead of wood, thereby reducing the fire danger. Faced with the expense of replacing the lower iron bridge near El Capitan, which fell into the Merced River on April 1, 1890, under the weight of the collected ice and snow, as well as repairing many damaged buildings and roads, the Board pronounced the estimated price of \$2,900 for the hot-water heating apparatus "too costly." Proprietor J. J. Cook was instructed to close the hotel by September 15 before extensive use of the fireplaces would be required.

In 1895 Guardian Galen Clark said in his annual report that "the roof over the hotel kitchen recently caught fire and it is a matter of great wonder that the house was saved from total destruction. This is the third time the roof of the house has caught fire from sparks from the chimneys."

Disaster finally struck on the morning of August 24, 1896, when fire swept through the Stoneman House, burning it to the ground. Fortunately, few guests were on the premises at the time, and no serious injuries or loss of life resulted from the conflagration. The insurance adjuster who inspected the remains of the hotel for J. J. Cook after the fire (Cook's furnishings were insured)

attributed its loss to "the weight of snow of the previous winter settling the roof, thereby causing cracking of the concrete around the flues, as there were no brick chimneys in the building." Engineer George Nagle's dire prediction seven years earlier turned out to be right on the mark.

In spite of its inherent flaws, the Stoneman House nonetheless set a new standard for public accommodations on government property at the time. During its nine-year existence, the innovative state-owned hotel provided a comfortable and attractive stopping place for thousands of Yosemite visitors.

The loss of its principal tourist facility created a serious problem for the Yosemite Board of Commissioners because there were no funds available with which to replace the elegant frame structure. "Under the laws of the State," the Commissioners said in a plea to Governor James H. Budd for help in the matter, "the Stoneman House could not be insured, and was not insured. The State insures its own property and, we are informed, has saved a great deal of money doing so. At the same time, under this policy, when any Commission loses a building or a portion of the State property under its care by fire, it seems only just and right that the State should take, from the amounts thus saved in insurance, a sum sufficient to compensate that particular branch of the State's service that is the loser. We are informed that the total cost of the Stoneman House was nearly \$60,000, and we therefore submit the claim that the State still owes the Yosemite Valley Commission that sum of money."

The legislature failed to act on the Commissioners' request for indemnification. Subsequent petitions by the Board for an appropriation to build a new hotel in the Valley—the last in 1904—also went unfulfilled. In 1906 the state re-ceded the Yosemite Grant to the federal government.

This article is an excerpt (minus footnotes) from Hank Johnston's forthcoming book, The Yosemite Grant (1864–1906): A Pictorial History, to be published this fall by the Yosemite Association. Johnston, a 23-year resident of Yosemite, is the author of 13 books on California history. His most recent works are Yosemite's Yesterdays and Yosemite's Yesterdays, Vol. II.

Author Michael Frome to Speak at Members' Meeting

The 20th Annual Members' Meeting will be held in Tuolumne Meadows on Saturday, September 16, 1995. Michael Frome, noted author, educator, and spokesman for the environment and wilderness, will be the featured speaker. His talk for the event is entitled: "Americans Will Save Their National Parks—Here's How."



Dr. Frome has explored parks in the United States and elsewhere in the world, and has written extensively about national parks, national forests, and wilderness. Former Senator Gaylord Nelson of Wisconsin declared in Congress: "No writer in America has more persistently and effectively argued for the need of environmental stewardship than Michael Frome."

His books include: *Regreening the National Parks*, *Strangers in High Places—The Story of the Great Smoky Mountains*, *Promised Land — Adventures and Encounters in Wild America*, *Conscience of a Conservationist*, and the *National Park Guide* (now in its twenty-ninth annual edition). Dr. Frome served as conservation editor of *Field & Stream* for seven years, columnist for the *Los Angeles Times* for five, and columnist in *Defenders of Wildlife Magazine* for seventeen years. In recent years he has combined writing with teaching. He retired in June 1995 from the faculty of Western Washington University, at Bellingham, Washington,

where for eight years he directed a pioneering program in environmental journalism and writing.

The day's official events begin with lunch at noon, with check-in to pick up nametags and lunch tickets anytime from 10:30 a.m. on. After lunch, the Members' Meeting will take place with Dr. Frome's talk. Following the meeting, wine and cheese will be served while people participate in the traditional auction and raffle. All these events will take place in the vicinity of Tuolumne Lodge. Since seating for the meeting is on the ground, people should bring lawn chairs or blankets for comfort.

For people interested in spending the weekend at Tuolumne Meadows, details on tent cabin reservations were mailed to all members in June. There is always a greater demand for accommodations than there is space available. Other lodging is usually available elsewhere both in and out of the park. For people spending the weekend, there will be several naturalist walks on Saturday and Sunday morning.

If you have questions about the meeting or the weekend, call Holly or Connie at the YA office (209/372-2646)

1995 Field Seminars With Openings

Lifeways, Games, Tools and Adornment of Central California Indians

September 9–10, Bev Ortiz

Art in the Field, Autumn Color Backpack

September 23–27, Andie Thrans

Drawing in Yosemite Valley

October 5–8, Jeanné Lamosse

Autumn Light Photo Workshop

October 13–15, Dave Wyman

Poetry Workshop

October 13–15, Kristina Rylands

For more information, call the YA office at 209/379-2321.



ASSOCIATION DATES

August 27–September 2, 1995:

YA Member Work Trip,
Backcountry/Sunrise Lakes

September 16, 1995: 20th Annual
Meeting, Tuolumne Meadows

September 24–30, 1995: YA Member
Work Trip, Yosemite Valley*

October 1–7, 1995: YA Member Work
Trip, Yosemite Valley*

March 30, 1996: YA Spring Forum,
Yosemite Valley**

September 7, 1996: 21st Annual Meeting,
Wawona**

*Space available—call Connie or Holly
for more information at (209)379-2646.

**Members can make their own room
reservations with YCS (209)252-4848.

209/379-2317

If you're planning a trip to Yosemite and have questions, give our phone line a call between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. We don't make reservations, but we can give appropriate phone numbers and usually lots of helpful advice.

Editor's note: Michael Frome will be the featured speaker at this year's Annual Meeting to be held in Tuolumne Meadows on September 16. Reprinted here is an excerpt from a speech he gave at the Northwest Wilderness and Parks Conference in October 1994. Also included, in italics, are two quotes from his most recent book, *Regreening the National Parks*.

National parks are not playgrounds, nor theme parks, but sanctuaries, meant to be forever; they are priceless time capsules for tomorrow that we are privileged to know and enjoy today. By that I mean a national park is ideally suited to exercise the body in a test with nature, stimulate the mind with new learning, and challenge the spirit, the spirit of the individual to connect with something larger than himself or herself, and more lasting than all the mechanization of life and work at home.

As evidence, I cite the experience of Mark Wellman and the lessons from it. Mark was an accomplished California mountaineer who broke his back in a climbing accident in 1982 and was left without the use of legs. He lost direction in his life, lived in pain, loneliness and shattered dreams—until he found his new beginning in Yosemite. Living and working in the park, Mark pushed himself to see as much as humanly possible in a wheelchair. He advanced bit by bit, building his upper body, ultimately making history in 1991 when he and a partner climbed the 3500-foot granite face of El Capitan. Then two years later he pulled himself to the summit of Half Dome, though it took thirteen days to make it. "I've always believed that true adventure involves discovering things

Each person needs his or her own sacred mountain. I visualize a national park as my sacred mountain even when, as in the Everglades, there is no mountain at all. It speaks to me as a place of the spirit. It tells me that transforming society begins with the person. Stealth bombers and nuclear weapons will never force nations to join in recognizing the limitations of a fragile earth, but if I pledge allegiance to a green and peaceful planet, and if others do likewise and we believe strongly, we will make it happen.

about yourself as you edge ever closer toward the boundaries of your personal limits," Mark wrote later. "I learned plenty about myself on El Capitan and Half Dome."

National parks are true adventure, places for discovering things about oneself, for edging toward boundaries of

personal limits. It doesn't have to be intensely physical either. Walk only a short distance from the main paths. In solitude away from crowds I encounter and examine flowers, trees, birds, rocks, and water—separately and then collectively. It's astonishing how I can train my eyes, ears and nose to note things others ignore. Looking at scenery can be a passive experience, but as I explore with the eye and mind, patterns of nature become evident and logical. I can become my own ecologist and enriched in spirit in the process. That is using the parks as they were meant to be used.

Doing so is personally rewarding and benefits the parks cause. We Americans love to travel, when, where and however we want. I hate to moralize, or to advocate strict rules and regulations, or restraints on individual freedom in the out-of-doors. But with this freedom of mobility comes the responsibility to protect the environment and the ability of others to travel freely. In return for what they give, national parks and public lands deserve and need the respect of visitors who come to enjoy them. I believe that Americans make mistakes in the out-of-doors without malice. Wilderness is our common treasure and trust. When the problems derived from overuse and abuse are explained properly, Americans will understand and respond appropriately, and, hopefully, influence the body politic that serves us.

Overuse and misuse clearly depletes the visible physical resource that people care about, but it does something to the invisible spirit of the place as well. Native Americans have that ancestral sense, honoring the earth and life as divine gifts. Here on the Northwest Coast native people for centuries have sought the giant cedar, hemlock and Douglas-fir of the cold rain forest, not simply for canoes and longhouses, but as source of "a sacred state of mind where magic and beauty are everywhere." In *The Vanishing American*, Zane Gray's hero, Nophaie, most loved to be alone, out in the desert, "listening to the real sounds of the open and to the whispering of his soul." Grey wrote that Nature was jealous of her secrets and spoke only to those who loved her. The Rainbow Bridge, just north of the Arizona-Utah border, curving upward to a height of 300 feet, once was a sacred destination for religious pilgrimage, reached by toil, sweat, endurance

National Parks are special places for looking at the stars—for touching stars and being touched and empowered by them. National parks are sources of caring based on inner feeling, on emotional concern for wolf, bear, insect, tree and plant, and hopes for the survival of these and all species. National parks are schools of awareness, personal growth, and maturity, where the individual learns to appreciate the sanctity of life and to manifest distress and love for the natural world, including the human portion of it.

and pain, proving to the pilgrim that the great things in life must be earned. That makes sense even to the European mind, for as Jung wrote, "There is no birth of consciousness without pain." Now, by contrast, however, the impounded waters of Glen Canyon Dam have made visits possible, via boat on the reservoir called Lake Powell to the Bridge Canyon landing, then walking about one mile. Surely some element of critical value — the sense of connecting with the spirit — is lost.

Sacred places are located widely across North America, retreats where native peoples in many different ways have sought to cleanse body, mind, and spirit, to experience visions, revelations, mystic journeys. I can hardly resist in passing to speak in support of the Native American Cultural Protection and Free Exercise of Religion Act, now pending in Congress, to safeguard these sites on federal lands. The whole country will benefit from it.



John Van Winkle

I recognize that sacredness sustained in wild places cannot provide a quick fix for the ills of society, but it can bring new understanding at a very personal level. Society divides by economics, race and religion, gender and sexual preference, and by physical ability. Much of the time people feel separate and fearful, as children of different gods, of greater and lesser gods. Wilderness evokes the unity and wholeness of creation, a community of brothers and sisters all kin, all equal, sharing in common origin, common destiny.

I learned this anew in 1992 in the Boundary Waters of Minnesota, traveling with Wilderness Inquiry, a non-profit group that mixes people with and without disabilities; I mean that participants include wheelchair users, deaf and blind, mentally retarded and that it works.

Wilderness on our trip became more than a physical or intellectual experience, but also a place to think differently about physical competency and accomplishment. We worked on potentials rather than limitations, while paddling, portaging, doing camp chores, sharing songs and sunsets. Committed climbers and kayakers may prefer wilderness where they expose themselves to physical risk — that may be their sacred space — but when people of mixed ability live, work and play together, they expose themselves, too, learning to rise above the barriers of modern society, and to recognize that every life has meaning to it.

Disabled are subject to discrimination everywhere, reminded of their limitations, of how they are different, but the mixed-ability wilderness trips show that everyone has limitations, and that every person has something to give that another needs or wants. On most outfitter-led trips, individuals have things done for them; they are carried along on the strength of the leader, or of the group. I contrast the Wilderness Inquiry mode with the climbing concession at Mount Rainier National Park, operating like an assembly line, shepherding the flock to the summit for a mighty macho exultation. The outdoors has long been dominated by the male macho world view, but I have found that actual physical accomplishment counts less than effort, that an able-bodied person carrying a heavy pack may be worth less than a mobility-impaired person crawling across the trail.

Time spent in wilderness benefits anyone and everyone, that is true. Theodore Roosevelt called the Grand Canyon "one of the great sights which every American if can travel at all should see," but he didn't ask everyone to come at the same time. To the contrary, he pleaded with Americans to do nothing to mar the Canyon's grandeur. Thirty years ago Dr. Bettie Willard recorded the effects of intensive human use on the alpine vegetation of Rocky Mountain National Park. She found areas where, after decades of trampling in the short summer, all plants and five inches of topsoil were gone, leaving a bare mineral surface. Willard estimated that a minimum five hundred years would be necessary to restore the tundra ecosystem. In the history of the earth, five hundred years is not very long. In the meantime, we need to walk lightly, more lightly, and, hopefully, to learn that the gods walk on every road and every road is sacred.

A program to honor the memory of Carl Sharsmith will be held on Saturday, September 9, 1995 at 11:00 a.m. in Tuolumne Meadows near Parsons Lodge. Please bring a mat or folding chair for sitting and a picnic lunch. If you plan to attend, RSVP by sending a postcard with the number of people attending to Georgia Stigall, PO Box 2152, Sunnyvale, CA 94087-0152.

The pikas and the liverworts of Tuolumne Meadows,
The hermit thrushes and shooting stars
Do not live simple lives. It is all intertwined.
How much more confusing is the life of a man!

We stand gingerly at the edge of the world
Awestruck perhaps, even bludgeoned into silence by beauty,
But hardly comprehending
And seldom going in. Never really going in.

We are reduced by nature or our ignorance of nature.
If only we could talk to the flowers!
If we could fly like birds,
Stand pat a few centuries as glacial erratics,
Or flow away like the glaciers themselves!

It was for all this, Carl, that we thank you.
For our ignorance which you helped redress,
For the snippets of knowledge you gave us
That steadied our feet on the shining pathways of rocks,
And while not making us fly like birds,
Allowed us at least to become the familiars of ferns,
See into the hearts of trees, call mosses by their first names
And talk to the flowers.

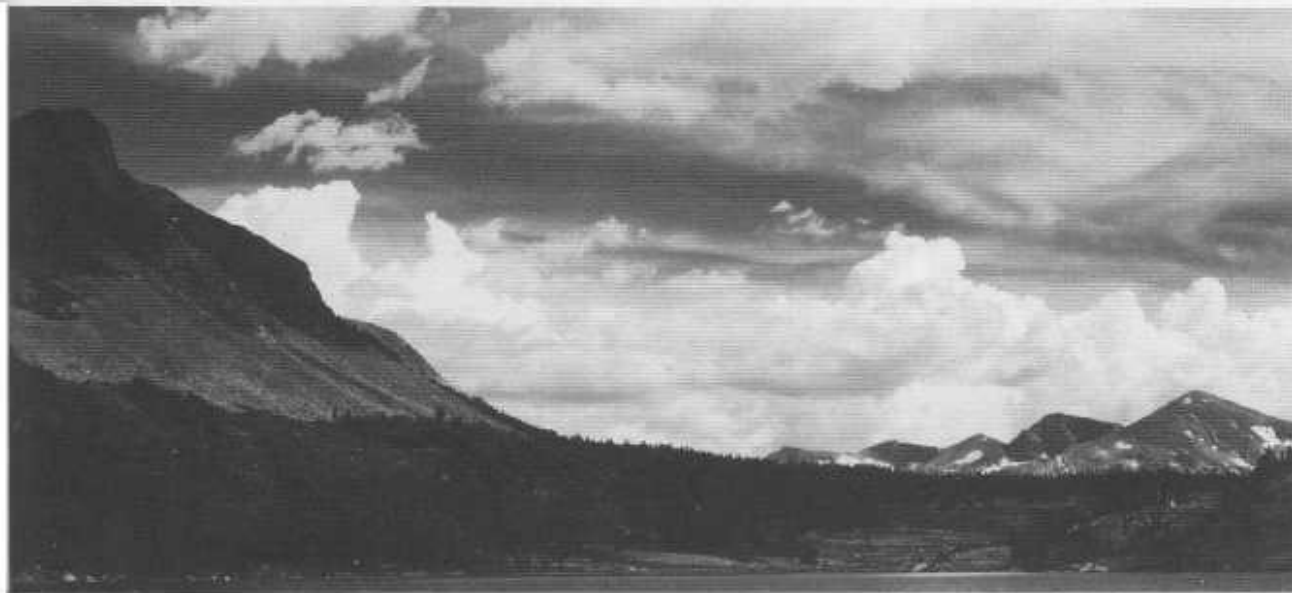
It was a large gift, widely expended,
Gift of cold mornings when the rivulets tinkled with ice,
Of mountain slopes running with streams of flowers,
Of crannies and cracks in the rock, the recesses of soul,

The gift of small visions that expanded our world,
Oddly-shaped bumps in the throat of a current blossom
Appressed hairs on the underside of a leaf:
How important these intimate revelations became!

You were here a long time like a tree, like a rock.
You grew old. The long hikes and climbs became short meadow walks
And at last you sat on a chair on the grass
And went on giving, and still there was more to give.

Now you have gone off like a bird flown south or a star grown dark.
Go softly, Carl.
The great silence is not so threatening because you were here.
We will carry your gifts of knowledge in our backpacks,
We will talk to plants, we will try to fly like birds,
We will look at the undersides of leaves and the throats of flowers
And we will be grateful, now we are on our own.

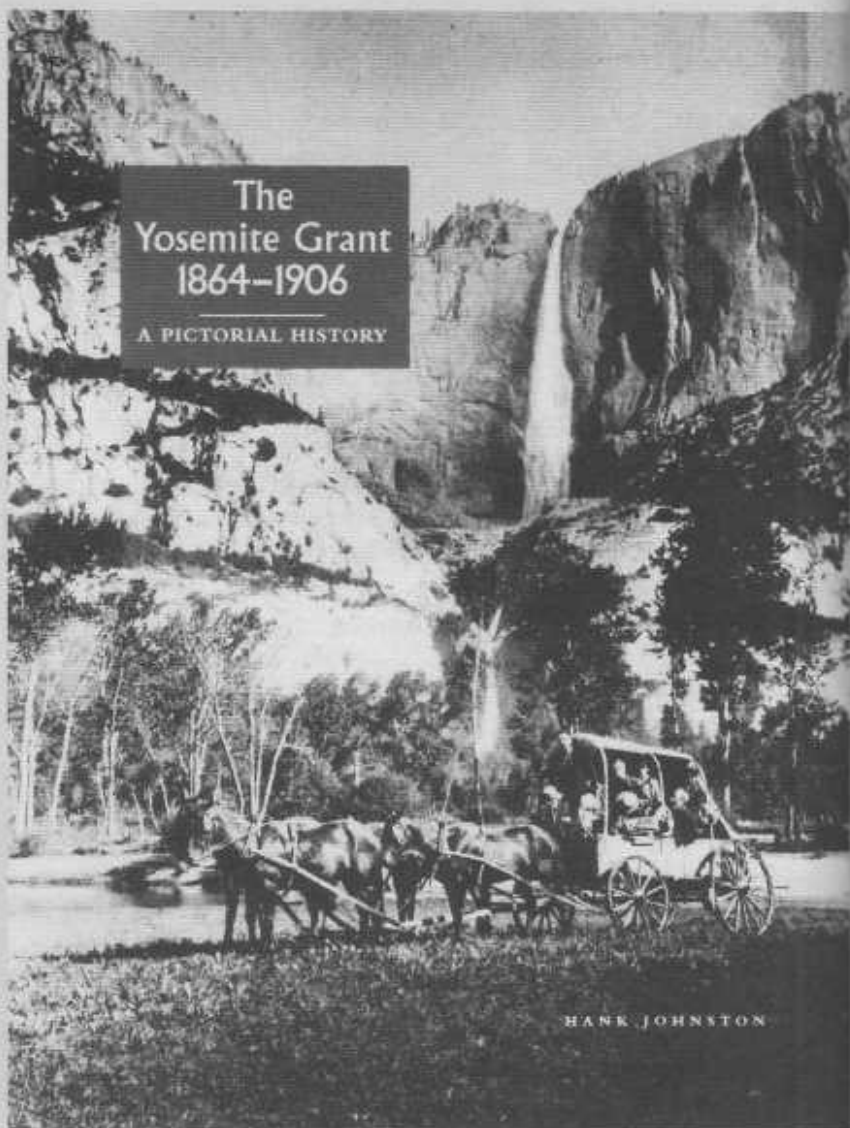
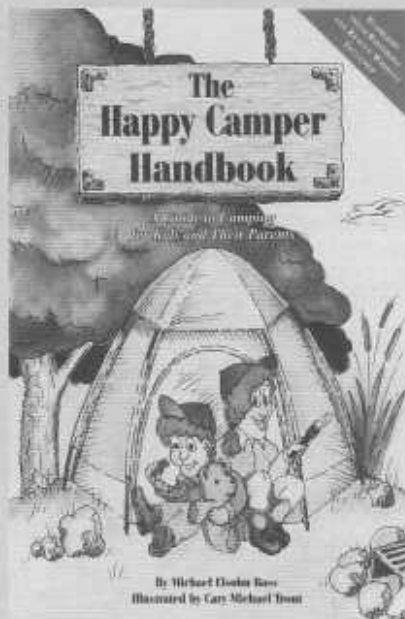
Elizabeth O'Neill is the author of Mountain Sage, a biography of Carl Sharsmith published by YA.



00800 Happy Camper Handbook—A Guide to Camping for Kids and Their Parents

by Michael Ross

This is a fun and informative introduction to the pleasures and rewards of camping for both children and adults. With tips on equipment, clothing, setting up camp, dealing with bears, first aid, and hiking, it's practically a camping encyclopedia for beginners. Kids will love the activities, riddles, camping games, campfire songs—all illustrated with light hearted, full-color drawings. The book comes with a quality Lumilite® flashlight and a sturdy rescue whistle. 64 pages, Yosemite Association, 1995. Paper, \$15.95



02447 The Yosemite Grant, 1864-1906: A Pictorial History

by Hank Johnston.

Never before has the early history of Yosemite Valley been so well-documented or so well-illustrated. This informative work provides an in-depth treatment of important historical figures, plus extensive coverage of hotels and businesses that operated between 1856 and 1904, as well as telling the story of the grant itself. This historical record (which corrects many earlier versions) is complemented with some 210 photographs (many not previously published) and seven maps. For historians and Yosemite-philes the collection of photographs alone should prove a fascinating and invaluable resource. 288 pages, Yosemite Association, 1995. Cloth, \$29.95



300 Yosemite Map & Guide Set.

These three full-color guides cover the most popular visitor locations within the park: Yosemite Valley, the Wawona region, and Tuolumne Meadows. Beside a bird's-eye view area map and inset diagrams of developed areas, each provides an in-depth treatment of a variety of topics including recommended activities and landmarks, natural history, history, and general information. Lists of day hikes and important telephone numbers make these fold-up guides invaluable. The three titles are: *Map & Guide to Yosemite Valley* by Dean Shenk, *Map & Guide to Wawona & The Mariposa Grove* by Steven P. Medley, and *Map & Guide to Tuolumne Meadows* by Steven P. Medley. \$6.75

34530 Wild Country Companion

by Will Harmon.

Described as "The Ultimate Guide to No-Trace Outdoor Recreation and Wilderness Safety," this book is packed full of the most current know-how gathered from all the top experts in the field. This resource provides new methods for reducing human impact in wild areas. Included are numerous practical techniques for leaving "no trace" in all areas of backcountry use. An indispensable guide for all who want to preserve and protect our wild country. 195 pages, Falcon Press Publishing, 1994. Paper, \$9.95

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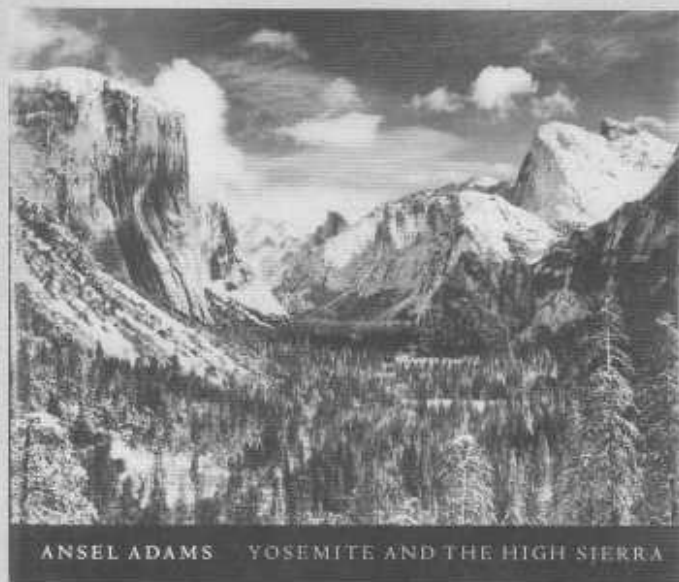
WILL HARMON



26230 Our Endangered Parks: What You Can Do To Protect Our National Heritage

by the National Parks and Conservation Association (NPCA) with profiles by Jeffrey Davis.

In this book, the NPCA explains how people can take action and make a difference in the parks. The suggestions range from "adopting" a park to forming an advocacy group to influence legislation. There are intelligent examinations of the major threats facing our parks and the steps people can take to address them, plus inspiring profiles of individuals who have gotten involved in the preservation of their parks on local, state and national levels. 222 pages, Foghorn Press, 1994. Paper 10.95



14490 Ansel Adams—Yosemite and the High Sierra

This new book captures the heart of Ansel Adams' work in a beautifully produced, reasonably priced hardcover format. It brings together in a single volume the finest photographs from his vast body of work. Adam's exuberant and lyrical writings about the region are interspersed throughout, and an introductory essay by John Szarkowski, a distinguished photography critic, illuminates Adams' place in the American landscape tradition. 135 pages, Little, Brown and Company, 1994. Cloth \$50.00



07510 Yosemite Association Patch.

Our Association logo is embroidered on colorful, sturdy fabric for placement on daypacks, shirts, blue jeans, jackets, or wherever! The newly-designed patch is available in three attractive colors: dark blue, forest

green, and maroon. \$3.00 (please specify color)

07800 Yosemite Wilderness Pin.

Here's a beautiful enamel pin commemorating Yosemite's unparalleled wilderness. The latest in the series of pins for all of California's wilderness areas, it's circular in shape with a beautiful high country scene rendered in blues, grays, and greens. A real treasure for collectors. Approximately 1 inch in diameter. \$4.95



07510 Yosemite Association Mug.

This distinctive and functional heavy ceramic mug feels good with your hand wrapped around it. Available in two colors (green and maroon), it's imprinted with our logo and name in black and white. Holds 12 ounces of your favorite beverage. \$6.50 (please specify color)



07720 Yosemite Bookstore Book Bag.

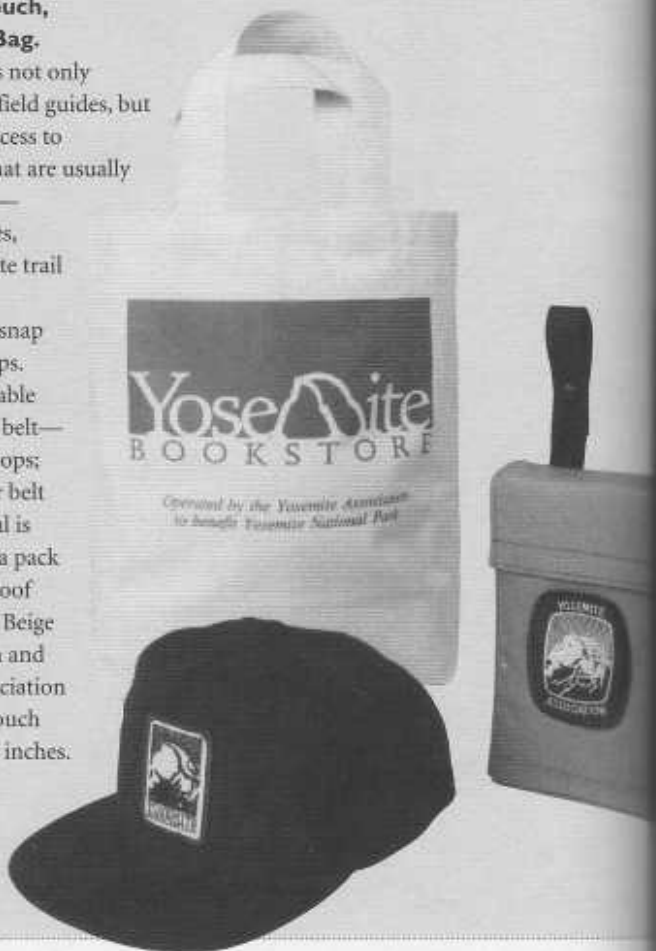
Here's YA's handy book bag made from durable 100% cotton fabric with a sturdy web handle. Cream-colored, it's imprinted in blue with the Yosemite Bookstore logo. Fine craftsmanship and generous oversized design make this a bag you'll want to take everywhere. Conserve resources with a reusable book bag. Approximately 17 x 16 inches. \$8.95

07505 Yosemite Association Baseball-Style Cap.

Our YA caps are made of corduroy with an adjustable strap at the back so that one size fits all. The cap is adorned with a YA logo patch, and comes in dark blue, forest green and maroon colors. The cap is stylish and comfortable, and wearing it is a good way to demonstrate your support for Yosemite. \$9.95 (please specify color)

07700 Pelican Pouch, Wilderness Belt Bag.

The Pelican Pouch is not only perfect for carrying field guides, but also offers instant access to all the small items that are usually buried in your pack—pocket camera, lenses, maps, or your favorite trail mix! The pouch is designed with front snap fasteners on the straps. This allows comfortable positioning on your belt—even between belt loops; no need to take your belt off first. The material is high quality Cordura pack cloth with a waterproof coating on one side. Beige with the dark brown and white Yosemite Association patch, the Pelican Pouch measures 8 x 5 x 2½ inches. \$9.95



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You can help support the work of the Yosemite Association by becoming a member. Revenues generated by the Association's activities are used to fund a variety of National Park Service programs in Yosemite. Not only does the Yosemite Association publish and sell literature and maps, it sponsors field seminars, the park's Art Activity Center, the Wilderness Center, and the Ostrander Lake Ski Hut.

A critical element in the success of the Association is its membership. Individuals and families throughout the country have long supported the Yosemite Association through their personal commitments. Won't you join us in our efforts to make Yosemite an even better place?

MOVING?

If you are moving or have recently moved, don't forget to notify us. You are a valued member of the Association, and we'd like to keep in touch with you.

MEMBER BENEFITS

As a member of the Yosemite Association, you will enjoy the following benefits:

- * Yosemite, the Association journal, published on a quarterly basis;
- * A 15% discount on all books, maps, posters, calendars, publications stocked for sale by the Association;
- * A 10% discount on most of the field seminars conducted by the Association in Yosemite National Park;
- * The opportunity to participate in members' meetings and volunteer activities held throughout the year;
- * A Yosemite Association decal; and

Special membership gifts as follows:

Supporting Member: A selection of 8 handsome notecards and envelopes featuring beautiful photographs of Yosemite;

Contributing Member: A handsome Yosemite Association mug in burgundy or forest green.

Sustaining Member: A copy of the award-winning video, *Yosemite: The Fate of Heaven*;

Life Member: Matted color photograph by Howard Weamer of "Half Dome—Storm Light;" and

Participating Life Member: Ansel Adams Special Edition print of "Yosemite Valley—Thunderstorm."

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Yosemite is published quarterly for members of the Yosemite Association. It is edited by Holly Warner and produced by Robin Weiss Graphic Design. Copyright © 1995 Yosemite Association. Submission of manuscripts, photographs, and other materials is welcomed.

Please enroll me in the Yosemite Association as a ...

Regular Member \$25

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