

YOSEMITE NATURE NOTES

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EASTER SUNRISE SERVICE AT MIRROR LAKE

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Yosemite Nature Notes

THE MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF
THE YOSEMITE NATURALIST DEPARTMENT
AND THE YOSEMITE NATURAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION

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VACATIONING IN THE HIGH SIERRA

By Frank A. Kittredge, Superintendent

Last year towards the close of the busy summer we took four different pack trips into the High Sierra region of Yosemite National Park, studying the condition and use of the 700 miles of trails serving this area. These back country trips were all a constant succession of unfolding vistas, great meadows with rippling streams flowing through them, glaciated valleys which have become gardens of mountain vegetation and flowers, sheer cliffs, great mountains, and myriads of beautiful lakes.

I was amazed at the grandeur and beauty of the High Sierra, but surprised also at how few people were enjoying the splendor and the inspiration of this country.

I wondered why there were not more hikers on the trail, why the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts were not there with their Scoutmasters, why there were not more families enjoying this superb region.

Here was to be found thrilling adventure, scenery that could not be found anywhere in the world, the thrill of going through these wilderness areas under your own power, the sleeping out, the cooking of your

own food in the wilderness, and yet only a few using this great heritage.

We came to the conclusion that one of the reasons that you people are not visiting the High Sierra is that you don't know about it, or how to go about packing in.

Several years ago, the Yosemite Park and Curry Co. established five High Sierra Camps which are readily available to saddle parties and by hikers. This year, the Company is prepared to sell the kinds of foods that hikers would like to buy and to carry with them on their backs. This program is going to revolutionize the possibility for men of your means and my means to get out into that country with our families, or to send our youngsters into the region as Scouts under the direction of a Scoutmaster.

When the war came on, it was our first thought that our hopes for back country trips were gone, but after some reflection we realized that there is going to be more need than ever before for us to get closer to God and to the things of nature which He has given us. It is going to be more than ever important that we

get away for a few days or a week or two from the present-day worries and problems, to clear our minds and to refresh our bodies by the exercise of traversing these virgin areas under our own power, by the sweat of our own brow.

Now let me draw a little picture of what you may do, that is, if you have the courage to break away from the cushions of your automobile. The fact that rubber is scarce is going to help you. Of course you won't dare, this year, to wear out your tires by a great tour of states, but without doubt there is enough rubber left on your tires so that by driving slowly you can reach Yosemite and return in perfect safety. Bring with you a light sleeping bag, which might weigh seven to ten pounds. Bring also your two or three aluminum utensils, and enough food for two days. If the youngsters carry their own sleeping bags and dad carries the food, it is going to be a very light pack for everyone.

Upon arrival in the Valley, or at Glacier Point, or at Tuolumne Meadows, you park your car and start hiking. You travel until you think you would like to fish or stay for the night, and you do just that thing. You have everything you need with you.

The next day, you leisurely hike on to the Merced Lake Camp, where you may replenish your food supplies. Then from Merced Lake Camp you perhaps hike to Washburn Lake where you can fish to your heart's content, or to Red Pass, or some oth-

er point of interest; stay overnight, perhaps two nights, and return the following day. Then there are several side trips from the Merced Lake Camp of one to three days each which you can take at will, since you will have your food and bed with you.

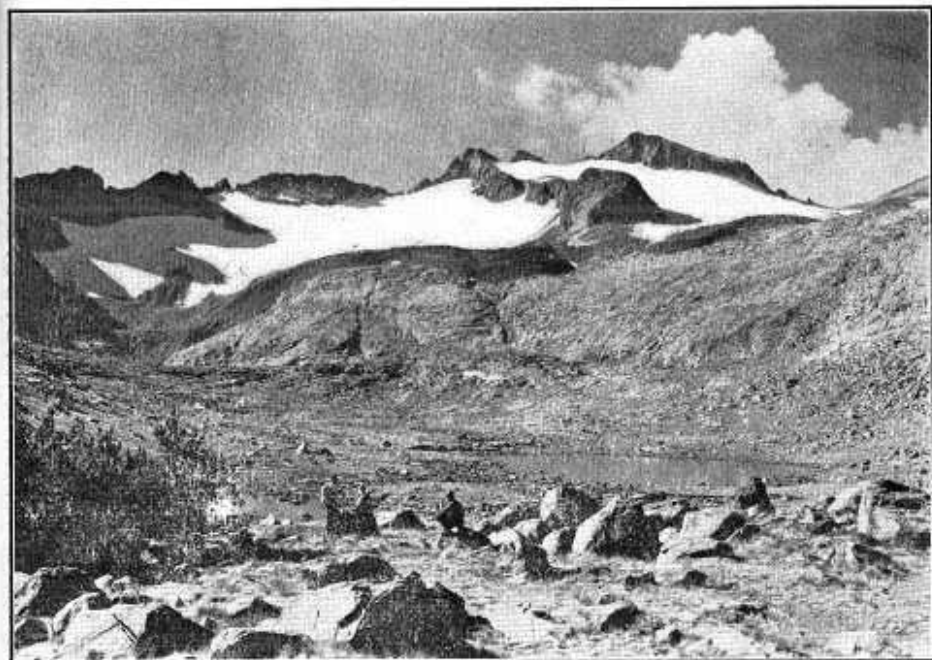
Then back to Merced Lake again where you will replenish food supplies and start out again the next morning, perhaps for Vogelsang. But after traveling about half the way you may see one of those beautiful camping spots, with the falls in the distance, and so you just camp and enjoy it all the afternoon, enjoy sleeping under the stars, and the next morning leisurely resume your hike towards Vogelsang Camp. At Vogelsang Camp, which is really up in the High Sierra, you can take several side trips to points of interest in the high country—to mountain passes, to the glaciers—one could easily spend a week hiking out on two-day trips from this one camp, replenishing your food every second day or so and always traveling light.

And then there are Tuolumne Meadows and Glen Aulin and May Lake Camps, all beautifully situated in superb country. They may all be reached on horseback, and we recommend them for all of those who can and like to ride, but in this talk to you today I am emphasizing that this same route through the same superb country is available to the person who likes to hike and the person who can't afford to ride, or can't afford to pay for the good food and

mattresses that are furnished at these camps. (Rates for meals at the High Sierra Camps are a dollar each and a dollar for lodging.)

The action on the part of the Company in stocking the kinds of foods that hikers should take with them is making it possible for everyone to get the rejuvenation of the back country. The food which you will buy on the trip will cost you little more than that which you would buy to eat at home. It's hard to imagine how you could spend money for any other purposes in this high country. Thus, aside from your sleeping bags which you bring with you—and even these may be rented—the cost of this trip will be as small as any trip I can imagine.

We are convinced that a week or two weeks on the High Sierra loop will bring much life and rejuvenation, mentally and physically, to the war worker, to the persons whose nerves are frazzled by the conditions of the times, to the youngster who is torn between the desire to get into war work or the Service and the necessity of returning to school in the fall. And we are sure, too, that anyone who spends a week or two in the back country of Yosemite National Park is forever after going to appreciate the great importance of protecting and conserving our wilderness areas: preserving the trees, not for lumber, preserving the waterfalls, not for power, but preserving all these great natural wonders in the



The Lyell Glacier may be reached from either the Vogelsang or Tuolumne Meadows High Sierra Camp.

park for the greater value of rejuvenating mentally and physically those people who have to live in the cities or in the more congested areas.

After two weeks in the mountains, they are going to realize as never before the stabilizing influence of nature upon us; they are going to realize as never before the great stabilizing influence, the character-building influence, of living close to God and His handiwork. Write to the Superintendent of Yosemite National Park if we can help you further in planning your summer trip to the High Sierra.

Try it this summer when your tires

will not permit you to travel far and when you and the whole family should get out and enjoy and receive the great benefits of a hike through the wilderness areas together.

In these areas, the mind finds peace from the strife of the war-torn world; the body gains fresh vigor for renewed efforts in the fight to preserve the things for which America stands.

(The above is an excerpt from a radio address entitled, "Yosemite National Park—A Great Stabilizing Influence in Time of War" presented by Superintendent Francis A. Kittredge over Radio Station KYOS, Merced, California, on February 19, 1942.)

MOUNDS IN MIGUEL MEADOW By Howard H. Cofer, Field School '41

There has been a great deal of conjecture by students and faculty of the Yosemite School of Field Natural History as to the nature of mounds occurring in Miguel Meadow, as well as similar structures in other areas.

There were twenty mounds in an area of approximately five acres, varying in size from 26 feet in length, 14 feet in width, and 4 feet in height, to less than half this size. There was no regularity in the distribution or arrangement of the mounds over the area. The entire meadow, including the mounds, was covered with grasses and other meadow flowering plants, and was sur-

rounded by coniferous forest.

A representative mound was selected for study and a trench 8 feet long and 2 feet wide was dug to a depth of 6 feet. At this depth, which was about $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet below the surface of the surrounding level ground, water was found. The soil profile was homogeneous throughout — a fine, black, sandy soil, and was found to be identical with that of the level meadow.

The mounds are definitely not of Indian origin and probably not of glacial origin. They are possibly the result of silting by a stream or lake against some obstruction, although no sign of the obstruction was found.



A PIONEER'S DAUGHTER RETURNS TO YOSEMITE

By Elizabeth H. Godfrey, Museum Secretary

Occasionally, like homing pigeons, pioneer residents return to Yosemite National Park after years of absence to view cliffs, waterfalls, and Giant Sequoias that remain unchanged throughout generations, and to contrast conditions that existed in years gone by with present-day, modern practices.

One of the most delightful and interesting of such visitors during August of 1941, was Mrs. Cosie Hutchings Mills, the second white child born in Yosemite National Park, on October 5, 1867. After an absence of 42 years, she had the thrill of driving through Arch Rock Entrance Station in a panel truck bearing a Massachusetts license number. Accompanying her was a younger woman and friend, Miss Margaret Burnham, of Waltham, Massachusetts.

Mrs. Mills had a definite purpose in traveling to Yosemite in the panel truck. Such a car was necessary to accommodate sleeping bags, camping equipment, and luggage; for she and Miss Burnham had made up their minds to sleep out under the stars, to bathe in the river, and to cook over a campfire. At 73, Cosie Hutchings Mills was eager and physically fit to experience again the

vigorous activities of her youth. Moreover, a panel truck was required to transport one of the gifts which Mrs. Mills was delivering in person to the Yosemite Museum—a quaint armchair of knarled manzanita with seat upholstered in cretonne and made by her father, J. M. Hutchings.

Upon arriving at park headquarters, Mrs. Mills called upon Superintendent Kittredge, and introduced herself. She was a slim, straight woman 5 ft. 4 in., with deeply set blue eyes and silvery hair drawn back from her forehead and coiled at the neckline. As she displayed her unique gift she at once commanded interest and attention, for simultaneously, the pages of Yosemite history turned back to the year 1855, when her father, J. M. Hutchings, formed a party to visit Yosemite so that they might verify for themselves rumors circulated about its spectacular scenic grandeur. James D. Savage and a small company of soldiers had discovered the valley on March 21, 1851, but it was through the pages of Hutchings' California Monthly Magazine, published in San Francisco, that Yosemite National Park was first widely publicized.

Later in 1864, Hutchings became the proprietor of a two-story inn, located in the Old Village area, which many will recall as Cedar Cottage, so named because of the lower trunk of a cedar tree encased in the living, or "Big Tree" room. It was in this room that many distinguished persons visited with Mr. Hutchings in front of the open fire, and enjoyed the comfort of sitting in the rustic manzanita armchair, which years later, Mrs. Mills was bequeathing to the Yosemite Museum in memory of her father.

"Among the celebrities who have sat in this chair," explained Mrs. Mills, "were General James Garfield, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Helen Hunt Jackson, Charles Kingsley, Horace Greeley, Professor Joseph Le Conte, and the botanist, Dr. Albert Kellogg, for whom the California Black Oak, *Quercus kelloggii*, is named.

In the morning, following her arrival, Mrs. Mills was accompanied by a number of Park Service officials on a tour of Yosemite Valley. When visiting the site where Cedar Cottage once stood, she related how the trunk of the cedar tree was first enclosed in the family kitchen, and that her grandmother had hung her pots and pans on a wire strung about its girth. She spoke of the upstairs sleeping quarters of Cedar Cottage with flimsy, cloth partitions, that afforded guests scant privacy, especially at bed-time when there appeared strange silhouettes, like moving pictures, on the muslin walls; of the efforts made by her father in

constructing a sawmill so that lumber would be available for improving sleeping accommodations for his guests, as well as for the building of a more livable winter home for his family on the "sunny" side of the valley.



In connection with the sawmill, Mrs. Mills mentioned John Muir whom Hutchings employed to operate the mill. "In the top of the sawmill," said Mrs. Mills, "there was a small tower room with built-in seats. Here Muir would sit unobserved to watch what was going on around him in his beloved out-of-doors. He was always kind and friendly to children, and on one occasion when he was explaining the parts of a flower to me, he took utmost care not to injure it in any way as he gently pointed out stamens, corolla, and pistil."

Mrs. Mills emphasized the fact that John Muir prided himself, as did J. M. Hutchings also, on never cutting down live trees for use in the sawmill. In-

stead, they used Ponderosa Pine that had been felled by the might of a ruthless hurricane.

It will be noted that Mrs. Mills was born in Yosemite Valley in 1867. Three years previous, Yosemite Valley and the Mariposa Grove of Big Trees had been set aside by Act of Congress as a park to be administered by the State of California. Under this regime, a guardian and board of commissioners were appointed to oversee the area and to supervise the activities of numerous homesteaders, who had taken up land in the park, and were operating hostleries, stables, stage coaches, and other business in connection with the ever increasing tourist demands.



Sketch by John Muir

"I miss the meadows filled with horses, cattle, and flowers," said Mrs. Mills; "the stage coaches, driven by expert drivers, many of whom became nationally known for their skill-

ful manipulation of a six-horse drawn coach; the Indians who caught and sold trout to the hotel-keepers, and the warmth of personal human interest."

When visiting Mirror Lake, she exclaimed, "It's only half the size it was in 1899, when I left here to be married! There were few willows at that time—only open lake. Frequently I visited here with Galen Clark."

Glancing up to Glacier Point, where the firefall is seen every evening at 9 o'clock during the summer season, Mrs. Mills told of the time in the 90's when she had been employed by Henry Washburn, a stage coach owner and proprietor of the Glacier Point Mountain House. "I often built a fire of pine cones myself, and pushed them over," she laughed, "but my firefall was skimpy in comparison with the present lengthy ones."

On one occasion during her visit, Associate Park Naturalist Beatty took Mrs. Mills to the demonstration Indian Village in the rear of the museum wildflower garden for a visit with Ta-bu-ce, the aged Indian woman. They found her seated under an Incense Cedar weaving an Indian "hickey" or papoose carrier. Ta-bu-ce was wearing bright calico with a gay bandana around her gray head, and as her callers approached, she lifted her wrinkled, brown face, and gave them a priceless smile of welcome.

Ta-bu-ce did not remember ever having met Cosie Hutchings Mills. In her faulty English she explained

that in the 80's and 90's, being a Mono Lake Indian, she frequented Yosemite Valley only in the summer time, and remained for the harvesting of the acorn crop. However, those two early-day Yosemite residents had many fond memories and mutual acquaintances to discuss. They spoke, particularly, of "One-Eyed Dick," a full-blooded Yosemite Indian.

"He do woman's work," Ta-bu-ce laughed with mingled scorn and amusement in her expressive dark eyes.

Mrs. Mills agreed with a smile, and for the benefit of others in the group explained that Mrs. Fiske, who was the wife of an early Yosemite photographer, had employed this old Indian to do her housework and laundry.

Incidentally, "One-eyed Dick" is to go down in the records of the Yosemite Museum in connection with another gift donated by Mrs. Mills to the historical collection. This is a powder horn and coonskin bag for holding shot, with horn powder measure, and place for caps, all of which are attached to a leather shoulder piece. Powder was poured from the horn into the small measure, and the shot was kept in the coonskin bag with the paper gun wads. This old relic once belonged to "One-eyed Dick," who had probably secured it from the Monos—they in turn having likely obtained it from one of the cross-country immigrant trains. At his burial, "One-

eyed Dick" fully intended to have this treasured possession cremated with him on his funeral pyre, but being old and penniless, he took into consideration that fire-arms become obsolete with newer inventions, and that money was more necessary to him in this earthly existence than the powder horn might prove to be in the Happy Hunting Grounds. Consequently, he brought the powder horn to Mrs. Mills and persuaded her to buy it, with the one provision that she would tell any possible future owner that it had once been his treasure. In presenting this gift to the museum, Mrs. Mills fulfilled this promise.

During her stay in Yosemite National Park, Mrs. Mills and Miss Burnham motored to Tuolumne Meadows, and went thence on horseback to the foot of Mt. Conness. Before returning to the valley, they visited Mono Lake, where Mrs. Mills took a dip in the saline waters near the mouth of Lundy Creek.

Few people in their 70's have sufficient energy, vigor, and desire to sleep out-of-doors in a sleeping bag, to go on lengthy horseback trips, or to swim in Mono Lake, as did Mrs. Mills. To her, one of the earliest living Yosemite pioneers, goes a tribute of genuine admiration for her ability to keep eternally young and physically fit by participating in vigorous out-of-door activities and by scorning to become in later years a fussy slave to Comfort.



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Dan Anderson