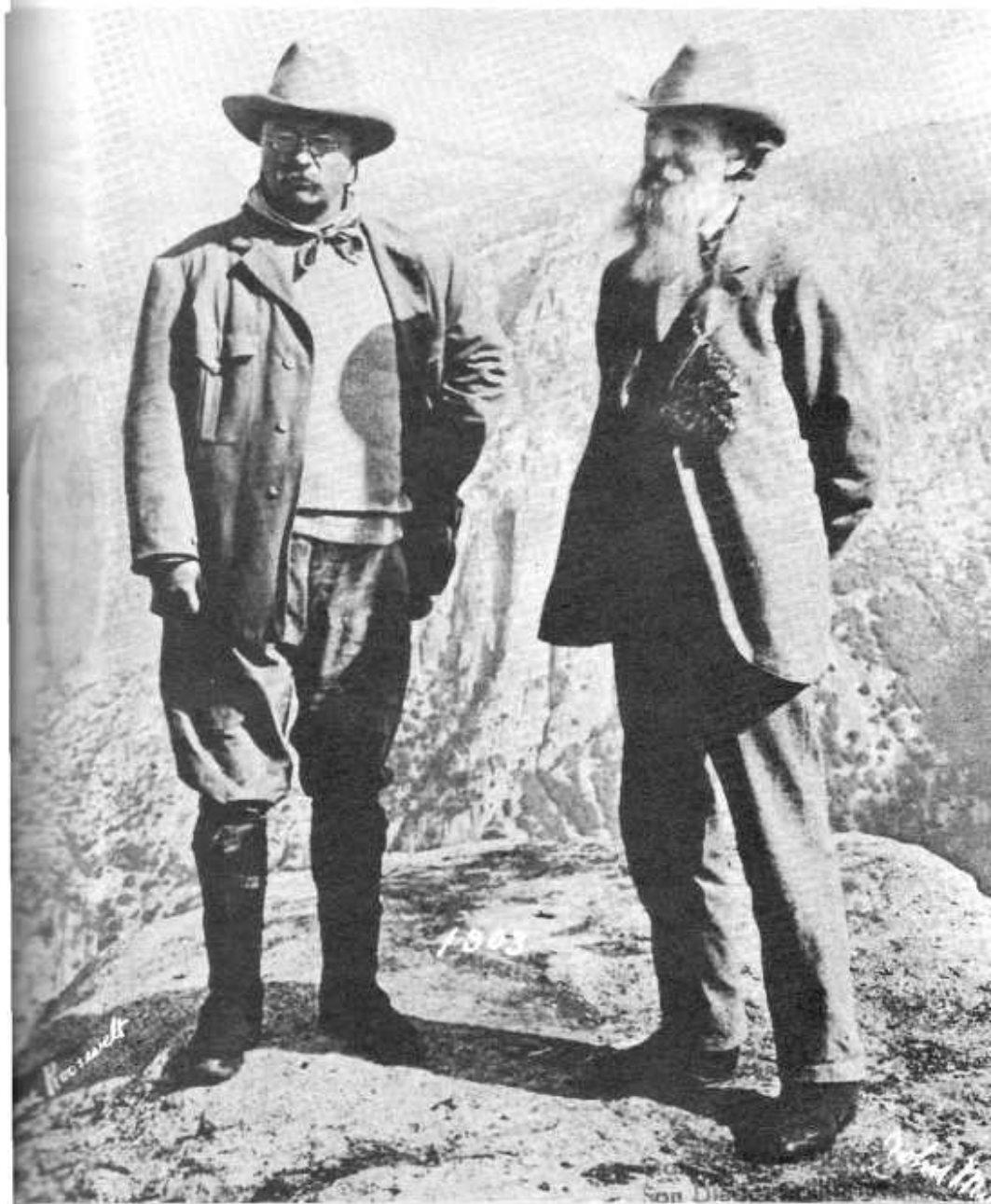


YOSEMITE

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IN COOPERATION WITH THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE.

COVER—Many readers of the March issue of *Yosemite* have expressed interest in a picture of both Roosevelt and Muir. The Underwood and Underwood photographer was on hand at Glacier Point on this day in May 1903 and snapped the picture which is our cover for this month.

John C. Preston, Park Superintendent

Douglass H. Hubbard, Park Naturalist

Robert F. Upton, Associate Park Naturalist

Paul F. McCrary, Assistant Park Naturalist

Herbert D. Cornell, Junior Park Naturalist

Robert A. Grom, Park Naturalist Trainee

JOHN MUIR AND THEODORE ROOSEVELT IN YOSEMITE

By William E. Colby

The article in the March 1959 *Yosemite Nature Notes*, Part II of "Presidential Visits to Yosemite is admirable and contains much valuable first-hand information as related by Charles Leidig, who accompanied Muir and Roosevelt as one of the packers. Immediately on his return from the trip John Muir gave me a detailed account of it and the following recollections of what he told me will add some interesting sidelights. Dr. C. Hart Merriam, head of the United States Biological Survey in Washington was largely responsible for bringing the two men together. He was a close friend of both, having been on trips with each, and as soon as he was advised that President Roosevelt intended to visit Yosemite, he realized that John Muir, with his Yosemite and love-of-nature background, would be the ideal companion for the President on such a

trip. Only two years earlier Dr. Merriam and John Muir were together on a trip into Tuolumne Meadows, on the first major outing of the Sierra Club. Dr. Merriam's suggestion was heartily accepted by Roosevelt and he at once extended an official invitation to John Muir to accompany him. Muir had already promised Professor Sargent of the Arnold Arboretum (one of the world authorities on trees) to take a trip with him to study the forests of Asia and their tickets had already been bought. So, at first, Muir intended to decline the President's invitation. However, Muir's friends told him that an invitation from the President was in effect a command and it would be *lese majeste* to refuse. This argument had little weight with a man of Muir's independence, but when his friends urged that the trip would give Muir an exceptional opportunity to con-



Although John Muir was most active in the Yosemite region, his conservation ideals were so broad as to include many other areas of national interest. He spent some time in Yellowstone and in the -

vert the President to some of his forest and National Park preservation ideas, he at once recognized that the chance was too good to miss. He communicated with Professor Sargent who agreed reluctantly to a postponement of their trip to Asia. Sargent wrote Muir stating that his trip with the President could do them some good if Muir got letters from the President to the Tzar of Russia and the Emperor of China which would facilitate their travel in those countries.

Muir went down to the Oakland Mole where the President's special train was being made up in preparation for his trip. The President was

delivering an address on Conservation of Natural Resources before the Commonwealth Club in San Francisco and would not board the special until after midnight. Muir asked to be shown to his Pullman berth, as it was 10 p.m. and he wished to retire and get some sleep. He was advised that this would be highly improper and that protocol called for his staying up till the President arrived. Anyone who knew John Muir would know what his reaction to this would be. He was in his berth and asleep when the President arrived long after midnight.

In the morning John Muir was taken into the President's private

car and introduced. In order to be sure not to forget what Sargent had requested, Muir had Sargent's letter in his overcoat pocket and handed it over to the President. But Muir had forgotten that Sargent had fallen out with Roosevelt because the President had failed to keep him on the Federal Forestry Commission as Chairman, and in the early part of the letter Sargent had referred to Roosevelt as that blankety-blank President, and laid it on pretty thick. When the President reached that part of the letter, he burst into uproarious laughter. Muir, realizing the mistake he had made, grabbed the letter back. An incident like that "delighted" the President, and he advised Muir that the President never wrote letters directly to the heads of other governments but that letters to our Ambassador in those countries would serve every purpose and these would be forthcoming.

The special train pulled in at Raymond and the party, which was a large one, composed of leading politicians (Governor George C. Pardee, among them, and also Benjamin Ide Wheeler, President of the University

of California), changed to the waiting stagecoaches. They arrived at the Mariposa Grove of Big Trees late in the afternoon. They all got out near the Grizzly Giant and viewed the magnificent forest in that vicinity. Only a favored few were in on the secret that President Roosevelt and John Muir were to spend the night sleeping out under the giants. The politicians had planned otherwise and had arranged for a great dinner at the Wawona Hotel that night. When they found that the principal figure was not to be there they were dumfounded. All the details of the President's trip had been kept strictly secret for security reasons. No secret service men accompanied Muir and Roosevelt, something unprecedented.

Roosevelt's baggage, either by mistake or purposely, had been taken on to the Wawona Hotel although he had ordered it left at the Mariposa Grove. When he found that his orders had been disregarded he lost his temper in characteristic fashion. With gritted teeth he told the men in charge in most emphatic language. "You go down to Wawona and bring

Petrified Forest of Arizona. His keen mind always assembling nature's secrets which he shared freely with his fellowmen.

—Photo by
Helen Muir



back my baggage as quick as God will let you." This incident made quite an impression on Muir and he repeated it to me with all of Roosevelt's fervor.

They slept out under the giant trees that night in a place selected by Muir.

The next morning Leidig and Leonard, Yosemite's first Park rangers, arrived with the saddle horses and pack stock. After viewing more of the wonderful trees on horseback, the party took the old trail to Glacier Point. That night they camped at the crossing of Bridalveil Creek or one of

its branches. Muir told me the camp was in a fine grove of *Abies magnifica* (red fir) and that he made a fir bough bed for the President. A very light snow was falling and, with a great campfire out in front far enough to prevent injuring the trees, they sat cozily under the trees facing the fire. Here they had some of their memorable talks on conservation and Muir convinced Roosevelt that the Yosemite Valley, which was then a State Park, should be turned back to the Federal Government and become a part of the great surrounding Yosemite National Park.



Theodore Roosevelt graciously took Mrs. Thorburn and Mrs. John Burn following to Hill's Studio Fine Paintings won.

Muir had read in the papers that as soon as his Presidential term expired the President planned to take a trip to Africa hunting wild game and that he was going to get pairs and groups of the important animals for mounting and exhibition in the American Museum of Natural History in New York. Muir, with his Scotch forthrightness and natural desire to protect all wildlife, took this opportunity to criticize Roosevelt for what Muir considered a very un-called-for destruction of wildlife. He said, "Mr. President, I understand that you plan a trip to Africa soon and that you are going to slaughter a lot of those poor defenseless animals over there." Roosevelt was quite taken aback by this very blunt criticism, but nothing delighted him better than controversy, so, when he had recovered from his surprise, he said to Muir, "Talk about slaughtering animals, you eat meat, don't you?" To which Muir cannily replied, "Yes, I do, but somebody else slaughters it." Of course Muir's viewpoint had little effect on the President's policy and he visited Africa as planned and brought back to the United States one of the greatest and finest collections of animals ever to be displayed for public view. However, Roosevelt admired Muir for his blunt sincerity and they became the fastest of friends.

The next day they traveled to Glacier Point, stopping on the way to ascend Sentinel Dome. Roosevelt was tremendously impressed with the view of the Valley and the High Sierra from the Dome and from Glacier Point. The photograph of the

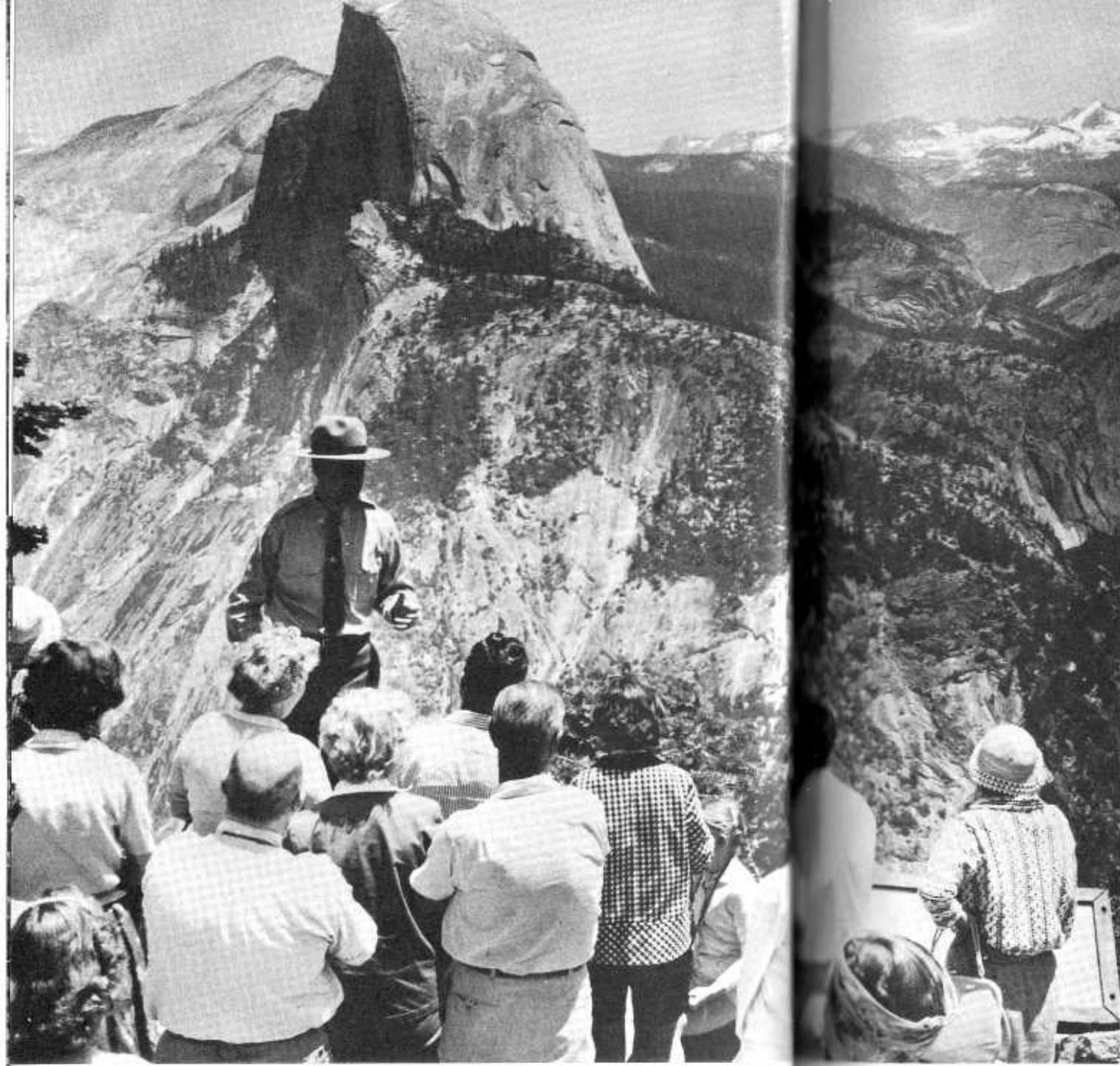
two standing at Glacier Point, which appeared in all the papers, is characteristic of the two men—President Roosevelt exuding vitality, assertiveness and leadership, Muir demure (no pun intended), retiring, shrinking from the limelight—but both of them inflexible when it came to a matter of principle.

From Glacier Point they went down the trail into the Valley by way of Nevada Fall, stopping in the Valley only for a short stay at Jorgensen's cottage where they met a few favored ones. While they were crossing the Sentinel Bridge on horseback a youngster shouted out, "Hello, Teddy." Roosevelt, tired, hot and dusty and evidently a little out of patience at getting back into the crowds, reined in his mount and proceeded to give the small boy a lecture on propriety and deference to elders. To the consternation and disappointment of the politicians, the announcement was made that Roosevelt and Muir would camp that night in view of Bridalveil Fall where the stages leaving the Valley picked them up the next morning. (1)

This trip with Roosevelt gave Muir an exceptional opportunity to discuss with him problems of conservation and preservation of parklands and forests. Muir convinced the President of the great desirability of having California turn back to the United States the jurisdiction and control of Yosemite Valley, isolated as it was by the great surrounding Yosemite National Park created by

(1) See also "We'll Camp Tonight at Bridalveil" by Ralph Anderson, *Yosemite Notes*, May 1951, Vol. XXX, No. 5.

Reader Ralph Anderson of the Washington Office has called to our attention that Roosevelt possibly did not spend the night at the Wawona Hotel as we stated in the March 1959 issue of *Yosemite*. However, the register of the Wawona Hotel for Monday, May 18, 1903, contains Roosevelt's signature along with the signatures of members of his party. Who can tell us for sure?



—McIntyre, NPS

The parks do not belong to one state or to one section.

They have become Democratized.

The Yosemite, the Yellowstone, the Grand Canyon are National Properties in which every citizen has a vested interest;

They belong as much to the man of Massachusetts, of Michigan, of Florida, as they do to the people of California, of Wyoming, and Arizona.

STEPHEN T. MATHER
FIRST DIRECTOR,
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Congress largely on the recommendation and initiative of Muir. At the end of that year, at Muir's request, I drew up a bill which was submitted to the State Legislature in January 1904, receding the Yosemite Valley to the federal government. The bill passed after a long and bitter fight and Congress, after another hard battle, accepted the recession. Roosevelt promptly signed it as he told

Muir he would. It was this friendship, made on this camping trip, which much later resulted in Roosevelt's issuing Proclamations creating the Grand Canyon and also the Petrified Forest National Monuments in Arizona. It was, therefore, mighty lucky for conservation that Muir decided to postpone his Siberian trip with Sargent and to visit Yosemite with Roosevelt.

FOOTNOTE - In the April 1959 article on President Taft's visit to Yosemite Valley in 1909, the fact that John Muir received a special invitation to accompany the party is not mentioned, but in the illustration of the party standing in front of the Grizzly Giant, John Muir is at the right of President Taft. On that trip he was with Taft on the latter's famous walk down the Four Mile Trail from Glacier Point to the Valley floor. Muir managed to get in a few words in opposition to San Francisco's application for making a reservoir of Hetch Hetchy Valley. President Taft's administration later denied the application, but Taft was defeated when he ran for a second term and Congress, taking the matter in hand, passed the bill which doomed the Hetch Hetchy. John Muir grieved so over this that there is no doubt that it hastened his death a short time later.



THE CALIFORNIA BUCKEYE

By Robert W. Crippin, Ranger-Naturalist

The oddly beautiful, shrub-like buckeye (*Aesculus californica*) is an inhabitant of the Coast Ranges of central California and the dry foothills of the central Sierra Nevada. It is native to the upper Sonoran Zone in Yosemite National Park and, in general, is not common above 2000-3000 feet. It is often associated with the foothill oaks and other chaparral. In the park the buckeye extends up the Merced Canyon as far as El Portal and reaches Hetch Hetchy in the Tuolumne Canyon. It usually grows in clumps, scattered among other trees. Seldom is it found in a pure stand.

The Forty-Niners knew it well and they gave it the name of California pear because of its pear-shaped pods. Its common name comes from the shiny brown seed which suggests a buck's eye. Botanically it is a member of the horse-chestnut family.

One might say that this tree best expresses the seasons in California—the wet winters and dry summers. It has adapted itself to our Mediterranean-like climate because, by nature, it is not suited to our long, dry summers. It concentrates its luxuriant growth in the wet springs and sheds its leaves in the late summer to endure the enforced drouth.

Amid all the somber, needle-leaved evergreens and the glittering, broad leaved trees of Yosemite National Park, the buckeye makes a striking contrast. It is one of the most beautiful and unique of western hardwoods; not only in its shining nakedness, which lasts from late

summer until February, but in the spring when the refreshing pale green leaves first appear. Again it is startling in early summer when the trees are covered with thousands of fragrant, white blossoms in great, candelabra-like spires. Finally, it is interesting in the fall when the curious seed pods hang from bare boughs.

California buckeye grows from ten to twenty feet high and from three to six inches in diameter, with gray or whitish, smooth bark. The crown is usually broader than high and is rather flat topped. The leaves are numerous and wide-spreading. They are opposite and palmately compound. Each leaf is made up of usually five leaflets that the broadly lance-shaped, bright green on both sides and three to five inches long. They are shed in August, leaving the bare limbs which cause visitors to the park to think the trees are dying.

The long, compact clusters of snowy white flowers, four to six inches long, reach out stiffly and rather regularly all over the crown. Only a few flowers near the top of the cluster, however, have fertile pistils which can develop into fruit. The flowers come in May and June, long after the leaves have unfolded.

The mature fruit is pear-shaped, two and one half to three inches long. It is golden brown in color, smooth, covered by a green husk and hangs conspicuously from the tips of the bare branches. Frequently more than a thousand seeds are produced by a good sized tree.

Though poisonous to cattle and humans, these seeds were a staple in the diet of the California Indians. Nuts in their raw state were placed in the conventional "baking pit" lined with hot stones and allowed to steam for several hours. They were then sliced and placed in running water for from two to five days, or mashed into a paste and leached. The resulting mash was usually eaten cold. Often the meal was mixed with clay to neutralize poisonous qualities. These nuts were used only when acorns were scarce.

Mashed nuts were often used as a fish poison. The Indians put the mash in creeks and pools and then gathered the stupified fish. They also

used the buckeye as a medicine to ease toothache and other pains.

In areas where the buckeye grows profusely, beekeepers suffer heavy losses from its poisonous nectar, but the honey is safe to use.

The wood, though it has no reputation in the lumber business, is long-lasting, even in contact with the soil. Hence it makes fine fencepost material in the foothill ranching country where it delights to grow.

A buckeye may not grow large but that is not for lack of years. It is said that it takes one hundred years to mature, and that it may live another hundred without making much growth.

FLOWER SECESSION IN MEADOWS

By Glenn B. Coy, Ranger-Naturalist

The meadows of the Sierra are flower gardens. This is because of the abundance of moisture and possibly the greater depth of the soil. These areas undergo a succession of blooms from soon after the spring thaws until well into the summer season. Some may persist until Labor Day or early fall. Many meadows show a distinct succession of predominant colors. The earliest phase is predominantly purple or pink. These may be followed by whites and then yellows.

As if to contradict this, the earliest plants in high areas around Bridalveil Creek are the small marsh marigolds (*Caltha biflora*). These are not showy as single flowers so much as in mass displays, while the grasses are still growing. On the ground

around the borders are dwarf members of the mimulus group. Dogwood gives a green and white frame to the picture.

By the end of June the showy shooting star (*Dodecatheon jeffreyi*) has begun to make its appearance. The wetter meadows then become nearly solid carpets of lavender from these relatives of the cyclamen. Here and there are white tufts of knotweed or tiny green and white spears of the rein-orchis, a tiny but easily recognized orchid. The deep blue shading of camas (*Camassia quamash*) reinforces and gives depth to the general background. On the borders meadow lupines point to the sky and compliment the pink Sierra forget-me-not (*Lappula velutina*) and the blue of mertensia. A delightful

surprise on the ground are diminutive blue and white violets.

With no great fanfare, the scene changes next to a predominance of whites with the blooming of the corn lily (*Veratrum californicum*), often mistaken for skunk cabbage. The spectacular sow parsnip (*Heracleum lanatum*) with its cauliflower-like top is a much less subtle addition to the middle act of the show. The dainty Queen Anne's lace (*Eulophus bolanderi*) is, however, the dominant plant. It replaces former purples and pinks with drifts of white, like midsummer snow banks.

The last part of this changing scene is largely a family affair, involving the sunflowers or composites, almost entirely. Meadows which were formerly swamps are now drying. Yellows are becoming the dominant shades. Gone are the great

masses of color. In drifts and favored spots, however, one can find drifts of sneezeweed (*Helenium bigelovii*), an unpleasant name for a beautiful flower, and the cone flower (*Rudbeckia californica*). Spikes of golden rod (*Solidago elongata*) are clumped here and there. However, as though to break up the family picture, meadow hosackia and other lotuses may take over some meadows almost entirely with their flowers which look like yellow sweetpeas.

As summer ends and fall approaches, the flowers gradually disappear. In their places we find grasses turning to gold bearing full fruiting heads. Each plant, with its display of fruits and seed pods, is preparing for the dormant season and the reenactment of the colorful drama in the coming year.

Cathedral Peak rises serenely above lovely Tuolumne Meadows, largest in the Sierra Nevadas. This meadow displays a bountiful array of alpine flowers throughout the short growing season that exists at this high altitude, 8,600 feet.





The Royal Arches and Washington Column were photographed by Weed from the bank of the Merced River in 1864.

Trees have now overgrown the meadow and provide shade for campers in Camp 7.

—Hood, 1957



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