

Cook's Meadow
Yosemite National Park

Cultural Landscape Report
Summer 1996

Yosemite National Park

CULTURAL RESOURCES DIVISION • WESTERN DIVISION • YOSEMITE, CALIFORNIA

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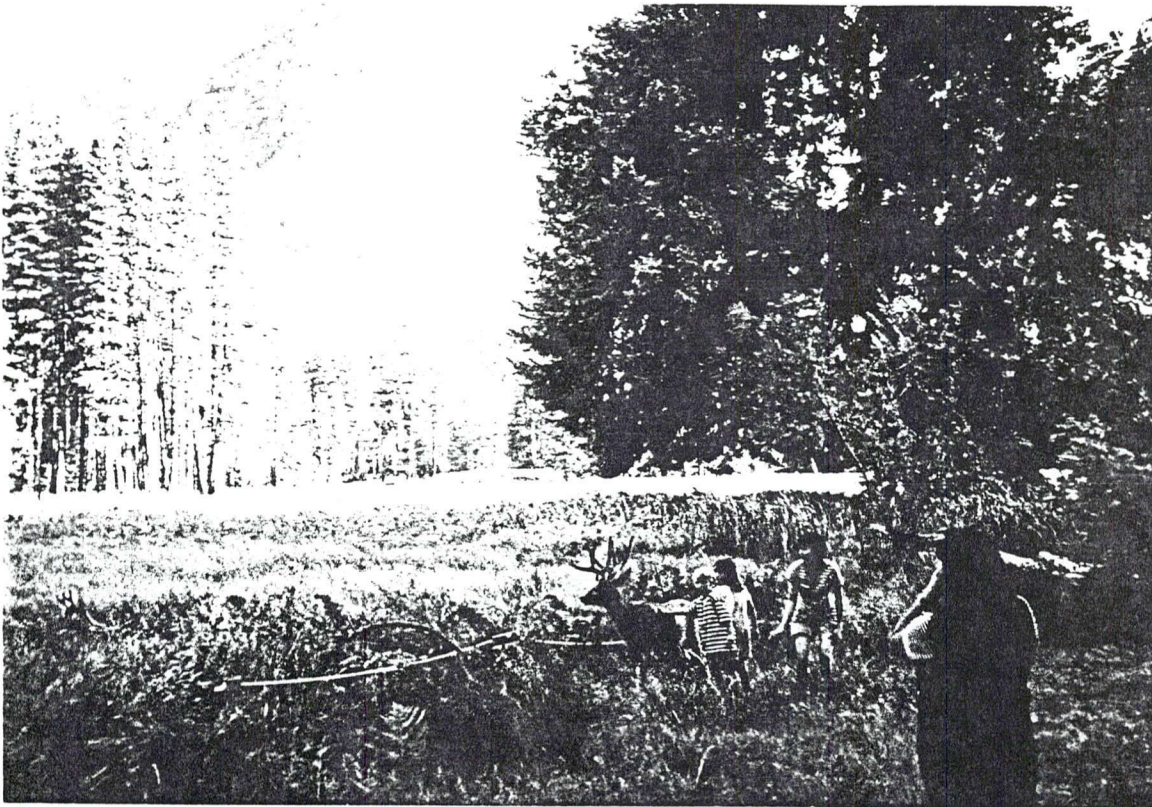
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This Cultural Landscape Report identifies the historic landscape at Cook's Meadow, in the Yosemite Valley area of Yosemite National Park, and documents its characteristics. This report analyzes the development and evolution of Cook's Meadow from the earliest non-native settlement to its present use by the National Park Service. The purpose of the report is to identify and evaluate historic landscape resources. Additional work will be required prior to implementation of specific recommendations and/or design concepts.

In conducting the research for this cultural landscape report, both primary and secondary sources were utilized including construction reports, interviews, theses, and books on Yosemite Valley and Cook's Meadow. On site inventory and analysis of landscape features such as vegetation and small-scale features was also made.



People and deer in Cook's Meadow

This document was developed in the Yosemite National Park Cultural Resources Division. Previous documents addressing historic resources in Yosemite National Park include: Yosemite Valley Cultural Landscape Report, 1994, Historic Resource Study, 1987.

NAME OF PROPERTY

Common: Meadow between Old and New Village

Historic: Cook's Meadow

Current: Cook's Meadow

LAND USE

Historic: Agriculture; Pasture; Residential agricultural field, animal grazing, residences for Army and NPS employees

Current: Landscape Interpretive Use; Outdoor Recreation; Scenic

Landscape Type: Vernacular

LOCATION

Cook's Meadow
Yosemite National Park, CA
USGS Quadrangle: Half Dome, California
County: Mariposa; unsurveyed for township and range
UTM: Z 11, E 271800, N 4180480

ACCESS

Yes--Unrestricted
 Yes--Restricted

OWNERSHIP

Public
 Private
 Both

NATIONAL REGISTER STATUS

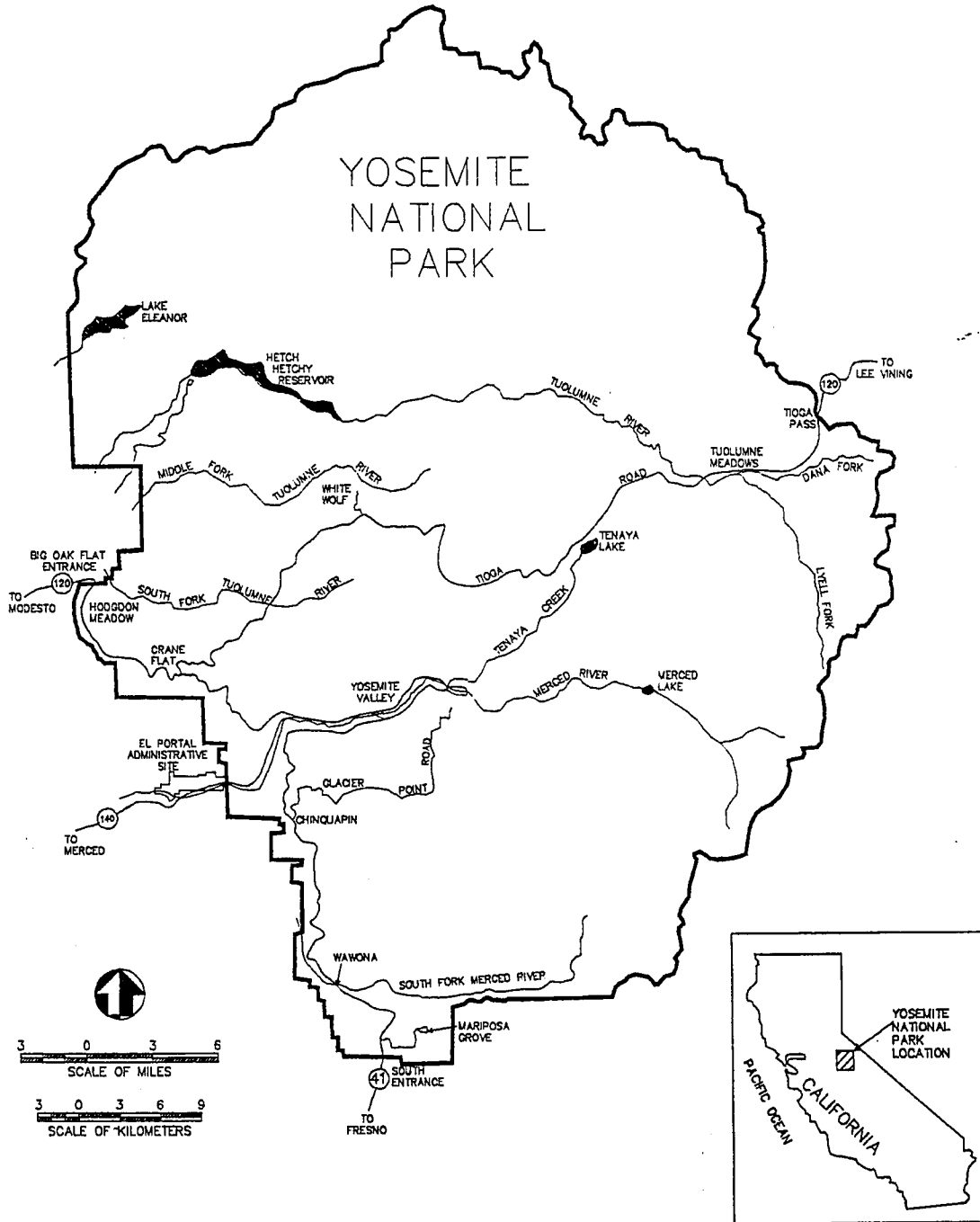
Determination of the National Register status of Cook's Meadow pending nomination

ASSOCIATED NATIONAL REGISTER LISTINGS

Superintendent's Residence
National Register of Historic Places, 1978
Local Significance: NPS Rustic Style

Yosemite Valley Archaeological District
National Register of Historic Places, 1979
State and Regional Significance: Prehistoric archaeology, 19th and 20th-century historic archaeology and commerce

VICINITY MAP



CONTEXTUAL BOUNDARIES

PHYSIOGRAPHIC

The lowest of a series of river terraces staircased north of the Merced River, Cook's meadow is on the active and intermediate floodplain in Yosemite Valley. It was a part of a larger meadow floodplain traversing virtually the entire length of the valley in the 1850's, but currently encompasses an area of approximately 35 acres- roughly bounded by Merced River to the south, Yosemite Creek to the west, North Side Drive to the north, and Sentinel Crossover to the east. A series of abandoned and active oxbows parallel the active river channel throughout the meadow. A wide array of meadow vegetation types occur in the meadow.

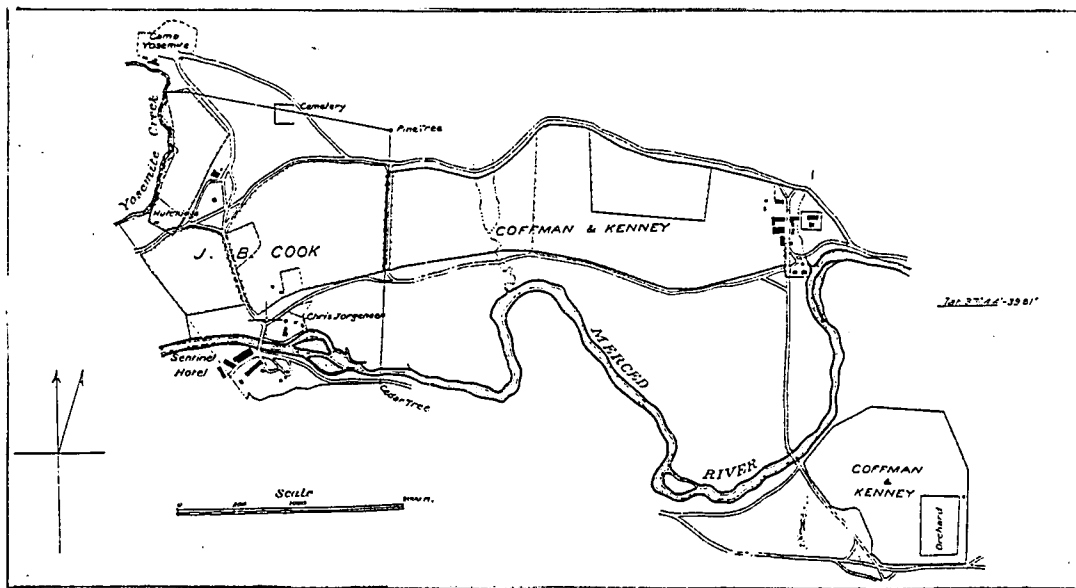
CULTURAL

Cook's Meadow is located in the central portion of the Valley, connecting with Leidig Meadow across Yosemite Creek and Sentinel Meadow across the Merced River. Its historic prime location, just opposite of the non-extant Sentinel Hotel resulted in heavy use of the land. The name, Cook's Meadow comes from the period between 1886-1910, when the father-son team of John Jay Cook and Jay Bruce Cook managed the Stoneman House and Sentinel Hotel, respectively, and leased the land for the

purpose of keeping dairy herds and their patrons' visiting stock.

POLITICAL

While the state of California acquired the rights to Yosemite Valley, including the area now known as Cook's Meadow in 1864, this right was contested by James Hutchings who had an unsurveyed pre-emption claim on this land, until 1874, when the state bought out his land and improvements. The state commissioners allowed landscape artist Chris Jorgensen to build two seasonally occupied residential units on the southeast corner of the meadow in the early 1900's. During the army occupation of the valley, four residential units were constructed on the western edge of the meadow. The only remaining structure within the present boundaries of Cook's Meadow is the former superintendent's resident, also known as Residence #1, now used for NPS administrative purposes. Other houses were moved to the Yosemite Housing Village. The NPS relocated a schoolhouse building to the northern border of Cook's meadow in 1909 and built the Ranger's Club, a National Historic Landmark, in 1921 just north of the eastern portion of the meadow.



Plat of land leased to J.B. Cook, Chris Jorgensen, and Coffman and Kenney

SITE BOUNDARIES

VEGETATION

_____ grasses and flowers carpet most of the meadow floor. Willows, alders, and some pine trees, line the southern edge along the Merced River. A black oak woodland lies to the north of the meadow and is interspersed with incense cedars and giant sequoias and an understory of ferns on the northeast corner. An elm tree in the north-central part of the meadow and three apple trees near the southern portion of the trail loop are introduced exotics from the 1860's and 70's. A coniferous stand dominates the southeastern part of the meadow along Sentinel Crossover.

TOPOGRAPHIC

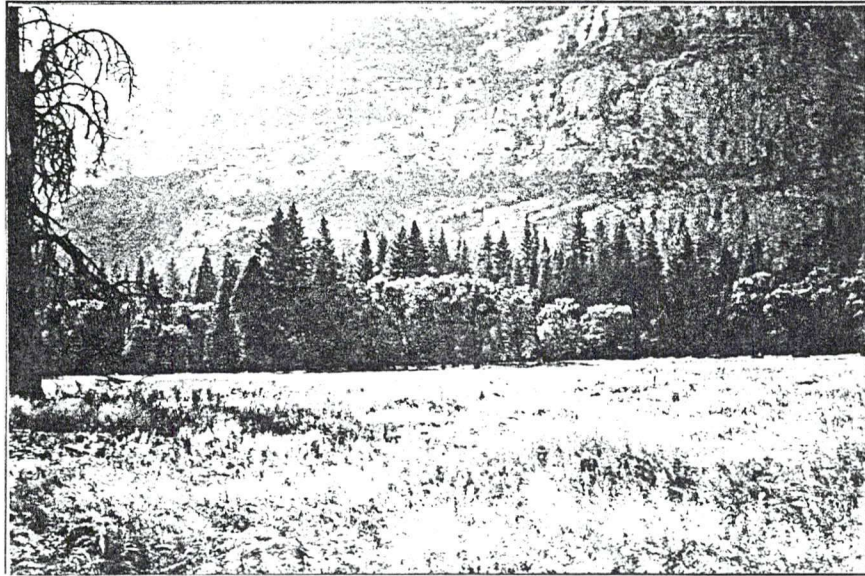
Although Cook's Meadow does not extend to the foot of any of the cliffs which rise 3,000 to 4,000 feet above the valley floor, it lies between Yosemite Falls to the north, Half Dome and Royal Arches to the East, and Sentinel Rock to the south.

CIRCULATION

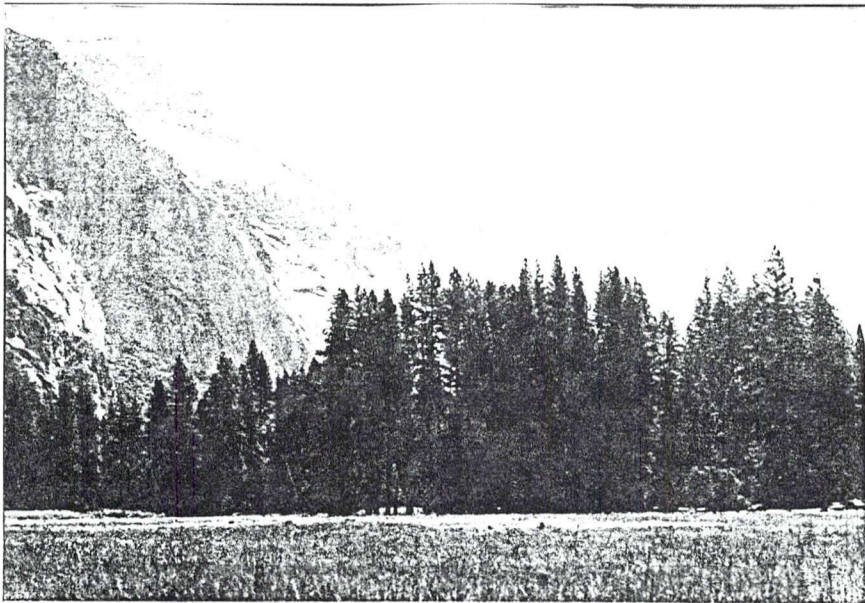
North Side Drive and Sentinel Crossover delineate the current northern and eastern boundaries of the meadow, respectively. Past circulation patterns carved the meadow area differently. Now abandoned, Sentinel Road (also known as the road across Cook's Meadow) bisected the meadow in a perpendicular fashion. A paved trail loop within the central part of the meadow extends across North Side Drive to the administrative building. Another paved trail branches off the loop near Residence #1, heading south toward the footbridge across the Merced River. The Sentinel Bridge parking area on the southeast corner of the meadow serves as a vista point and entry point to the trail loop through the meadow. A bridle path extends across the northern boundary of the meadow, parallel to North Side Drive. The remnant of another bridle path which is now used by bicyclists extends across the southern boundary of the meadow, parallel to the Merced River.

STRUCTURES

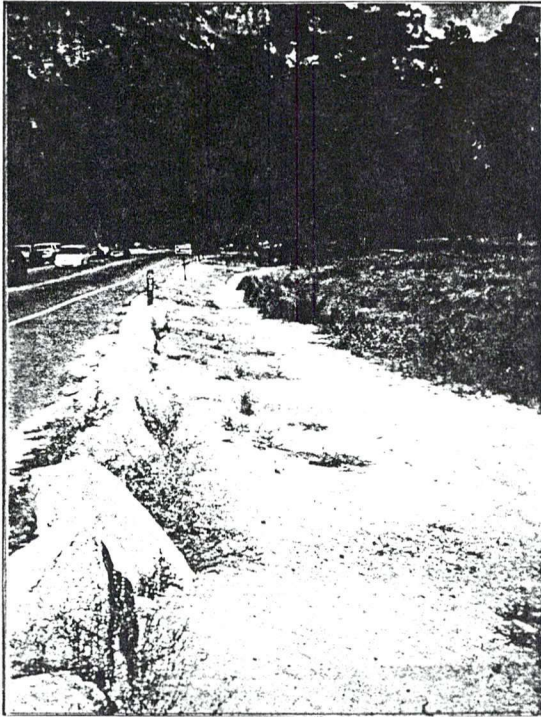
Simple wood post signs with painted and numbered oak leaves dot the loop trail and correspond with an interpretive self-guided walk pamphlet which can be picked up just outside of the administration building. Wood rail fences line portions of the meadow as part of a meadow restoration project.



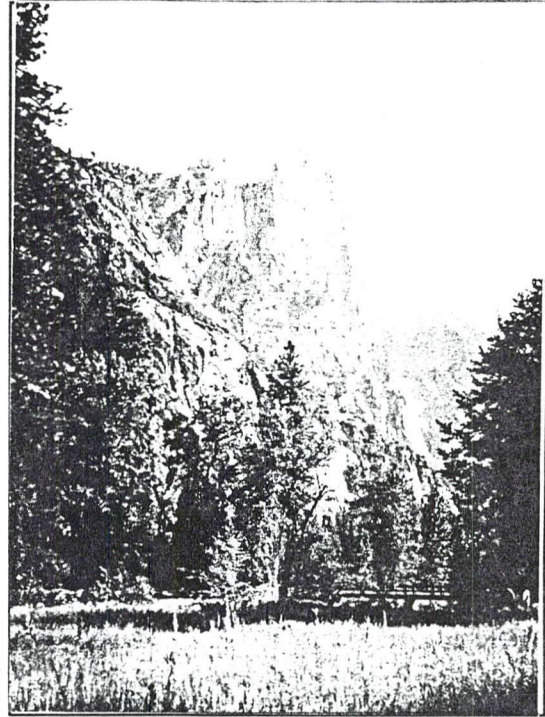
Northwestern boundary



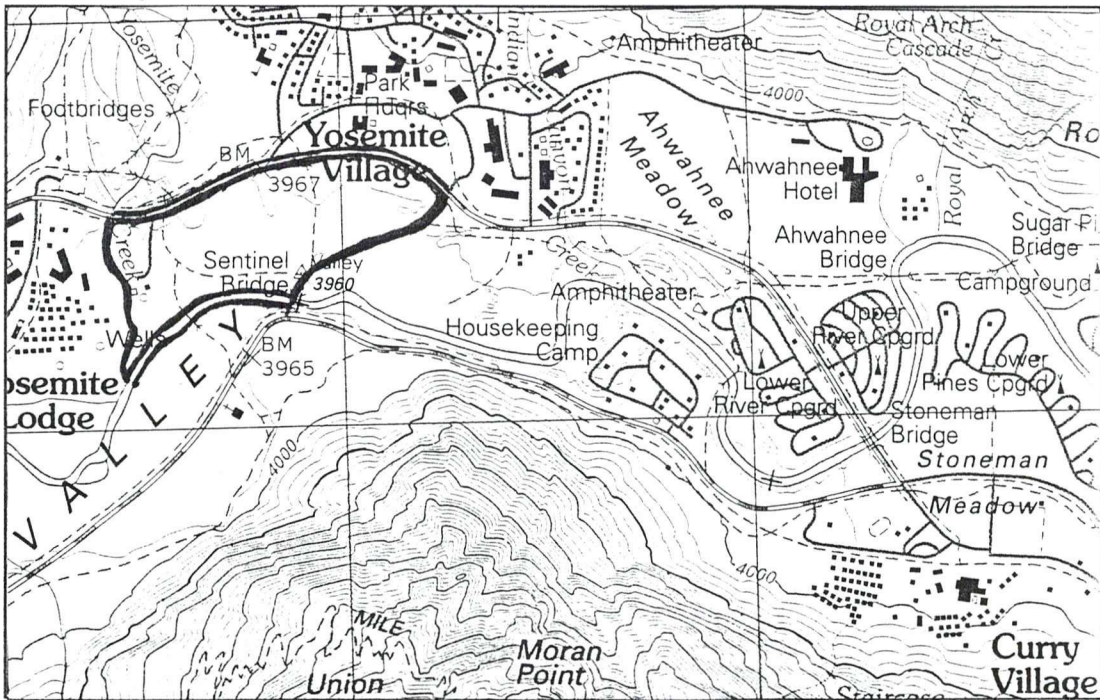
southeastern boundary with Half Dome in back



Boulders and bridle path along northern edge of meadow



Sentinel Rock and Footbridge over Merced, south of meadow



Map showing rough boundaries of Cook's Meadow

Establishment of the Yosemite Grant, 1864-1889

Through the Yosemite Grant bill which was introduced to Congress in 1864 by California senator, John Conness, Yosemite Valley and the Mariposa Grove of Big Trees became the first state park ever established in the United States. No public reservation had ever been set aside purely for the purpose of preserving and protecting the natural scenery for the enjoyment of the citizenry, but the Yosemite area had the advantage of national recognition as “a marvel of the continent”, an idea generated by popular articles written by James Hutchings and Thomas Starr King and photographs by Charles Weed and Carleton Watkins. Signed into law by President Abraham Lincoln on June 30, 1864, the act stipulated that the Yosemite Grant be managed by a board of nine commissioners, who would be appointed by, and include the governor of California. Their first major issue would be how best to deal with the individuals who had taken up or purchased pre-emption claims in the Valley before the land was set aside by federal decree.

Prior to the establishment of the state grant, land in Yosemite Valley was a part of the public domain and therefore open to pre-emption and settlement under the Pre-Emption Law of 1841. The law specified that a person could file a land application on a maximum of 160 acres and immediately occupy the property. If he improved his claim and lived on it for six months, he could buy it from the federal government for 1.25 an acre. By 1862, nearly all of the best areas on the floor of the Valley had been appropriated by pre-emptors. However, in an effort to eliminate delays, proponents of the Yosemite bill emphasized that the area contained nothing of commercial value and would not require an appropriation from the federal government- making no mention of the nine pre-emption claims, two hotels, and assorted other structures that had already been in place in the Valley for some years.

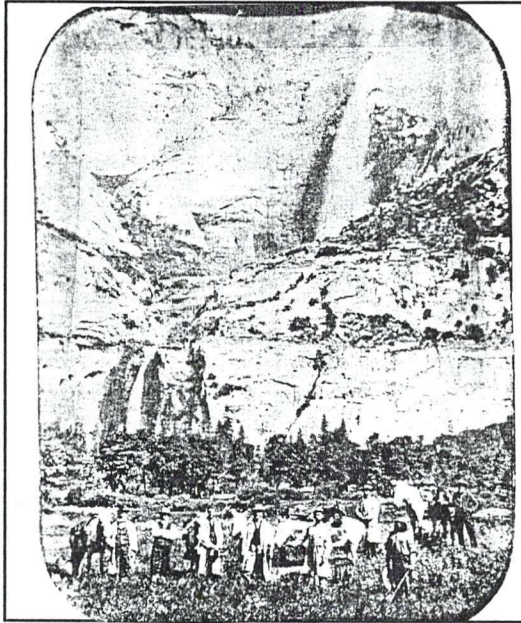
The Yosemite commissioners conceded that James Lamon, the first permanent white settler in the Valley who had a cabin under Royal Arches, and James Hutchings, proprietor of the Upper Hotel (also known as Hutching’s House, Barnard’s Hotel, Yosemite Hotel, and Sentinel

Hotel) would eventually have been able to consummate their claims had Yosemite not been withdrawn from the public domain and had their lands been surveyed prior to their claim. In a sympathetic gesture, the Yosemite Commissioners proposed to buy the claims of the valley settlers and lease the land back to them at a nominal rate. Hutchings, however, still claiming the rights of a settler on the basis of having purchased land already pre-empted, refused to accept a lease and convinced Lamon to do the same. After a bitter ten-year long legal struggle, the California legislature established the precedent for land acquisition in Yosemite by appropriating \$60,000 to extinguish all private claims in Yosemite Valley. Lamon finally accepted a lease, but Hutchings and his family were evicted from the valley in 1874.

During his ten years of legal wrangling, Hutchings had continued to improve his land and expand the facilities at his hotel in an effort to cater to the growing numbers of visitors following the establishment of the state grant and the opening of the transcontinental railroad in 1869. His 118 acres encompassed the meadow (known as Cook’s Meadow today) between his hotel on the south bank of the Merced River and the log cabin that he built near the foot of Lower Yosemite Falls. This meadow was a popular destination for early tourists as it provided a splendid view of Yosemite Falls. Early circulation patterns in the Valley made this area relatively heavily trafficked, for visitors who chose not to use Ira Folsom’s ferry had to travel farther up the valley on the north side, through or alongside Cook’s Meadow before crossing the Merced over a log bridge opposite Hutchings’ hotel. Hutchings rebuilt this bridge twice, replacing Gustavus Hite’s original log structure some time before 1865 and then again after a flood washed it away in 1867.

Despite the scenic value of the meadow, Hutchings used part of the meadow to produce hay for winter feed. Most of Hutchings’ work centered around his cabin area and his hotel. He added a large barn and shed, corrals, and fences near his cabin. In 1866, he constructed an elm-lined boardwalk across the meadow from his cabin to the his bridge (later known as Sentinel Bridge) leading to his hotel. He established an orchard of 200 fruit trees in the vicinity of the

present Yosemite Village. He used the water-powered sawmill packed in from San Francisco installed at the base of Yosemite Falls in 1869 to supply the lumber needed for repairs and improvements to his hotel. The commissioners adjudged all of his various improvements to be worth \$24,000 in 1874, when they acquired his land.



An early tourist party in Cook's Meadow across from Yosemite Falls, June 20, 1870.

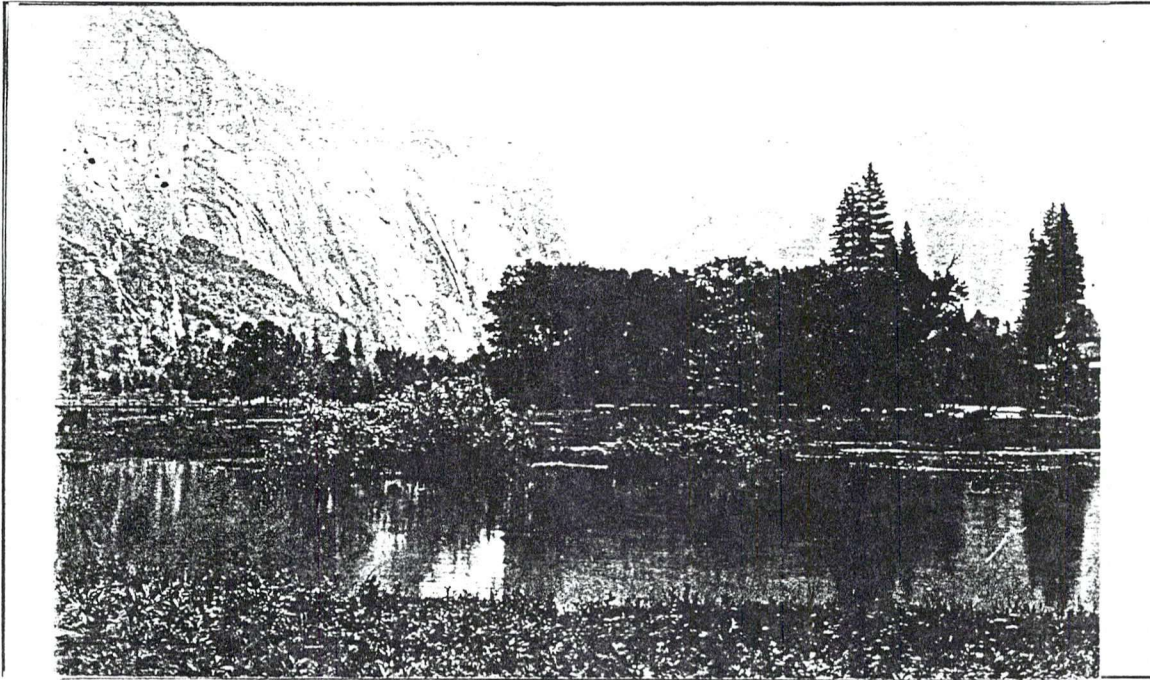
By this time, the Yosemite Board of Commissioners was preoccupied with many other issues, including how to best manage the land for the enjoyment of visitors. The seasonal flooding of meadows lessened the visitor experience by creating marshy conditions, ideal breeding grounds for irritating mosquitoes. Wet conditions also hampered farming and grazing which was necessary on the Valley floor to provide food staples for tourists and the earliest concessionaires. In 1879, Guardian Galen Clark used dynamite to blast away much of the moraine at the foot of El Capitan to alleviate the problem of the winding Merced River's tendency to change its banks and threaten crops and buildings. The action would also hopefully drain some of the valley's swampy meadows for development. With the natural dam removed, the water table dropped at least 5 feet, affecting the vegetation and soil character of the meadows upstream.

The Commissioners also worked on improving the circulation system to keep up with the increasing visitation. The Pacific Bridge Company of San Francisco constructed two iron bridges across the Merced River. Replacing Hutchings' former log structure with the Upper Iron Bridge (Sentinel Bridge) in 1878 enabled a greater traffic flow onto Cook's Meadow. In 1882, a continuous thoroughfare was completed which passed by Sentinel Bridge.

Near the end of this period, the main project of the Commissioners was the construction of a high quality, state owned hotel in the Valley. In their *Biennial Reports* of 1880-82, 1883-84, the Commissioners cited dissatisfaction toward what they called, "the inadequacy and discomfort of the three apologies that now provide hotel accommodations," (Barnard's Hotel, Black's New Sentinel Hotel, and Leidig's Hotel) within the Yosemite Grant, and asked the State of California for funds so that they could erect and own the only hotel to be allowed in the valley. The state owned hotel was called the Stoneman House and leased to J.J. Cook, an affluent businessman from New York and brother-in-law of Henry Washburn, on January 1, 1888. The meadow that was fenced and used as a dairy pasture to supply the Stoneman House acquired the unofficial name of Cook's meadow, a name which has inadvertently lasted to the present day. Cook remained the manager of the hotel until it burned in 1896.

NATIONAL PARK UNDER CHANGING JURISDICTIONS, 1890-1916

Preservationists, led by John Muir, won a battle in 1890 with the establishment of a national park that would surround Yosemite Valley. During the next seventeen years, Yosemite Valley would still be administered by the state of California while the much larger surrounding territory would be managed by the federal government. Following the example of military management at Yellowstone National Park, the army and troops of cavalry were called into Yosemite to maintain and protect the land and unofficially function as a civil government. During this time, from 1891-1907, the US Army used the present site of the A. E. Wood Campground on the South Fork of the Merced River near Wawona as its main camp and

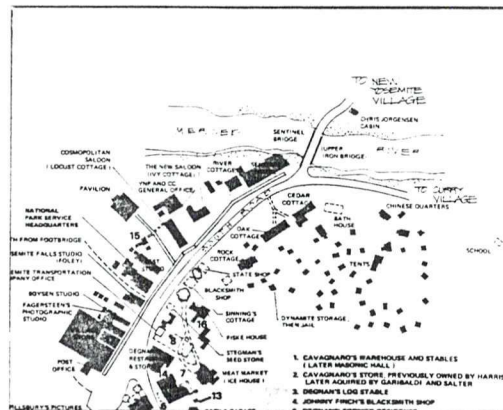


Cattle Grazing in Yosemite Valley in _____

administrative headquarters. The Yosemite Board of Commissioners, who had lost in their bid for control of the newly reserved area, made their continuing autonomy in the Yosemite Grant clear to the army. The presence of soldiers anywhere in the grant—even when off duty was unwelcome.

Administration of the Valley continued in much the same manner as before. As a result of the Commissioners' encouragement of further development which would publicize the park and increase tourism, several photographic and art studios were established. In the case of the landscape painter, Christian Jorgensen, the commissioners allowed him to build a studio and cottage on the north bank of the Merced River just opposite of the Sentinel Hotel in 1900, under the terms that he maintain in his home a studio open to the public and that it would belong to the state upon his permanent departure from the Valley. Located on the southeastern edge of Cook's Meadow, his studio was in periodic danger from the Merced River. In 1902, a four hundred foot granite wall was constructed on the north bank of the Merced just above Sentinel Bridge to keep the river from inundating Jorgensen's Studio. The river was threatening to alter its course from under the bridge to run across the meadow.

The Commissioners' plans for tourist development faced a serious setback with the destruction of the Stoneman House by fire in 1896. The only other hotel on the valley floor was the Sentinel Hotel which was duly enlarged and refurbished in an attempt to compensate for the loss of the Stoneman House. In 1897, the Sentinel lease was awarded to J.J. Cook, (former manager of the Stoneman House) who named his son Jay Bruce Cook resident manager. The lease to use Cook's Meadow as a dairy pasture to now supply the needs of the Sentinel Hotel were thus also given to J.B. Cook. The senior Cook died in 1904, and J.B. Cook committed suicide in 1910.



Map of Old Village and Jorgensen's Cottages

The recession of the Yosemite Grant in 1906 to the federal government resulted from the disenchantment of many over the lack of state funding to care for and develop the Valley. The War and Interior departments were pleased with this resolution as it allowed for the establishment of a more suitable post (in the Valley) for the army troops than their seasonal encampments in Wawona. After Army headquarters moved to Yosemite Valley, establishing Camp Yosemite at the present site of Yosemite Lodge, Acting Superintendent, Major H.C. Benson, requested that Gabriel Sovulewski report for duty in Yosemite Valley as park supervisor. He was housed in the deteriorating Hutchings cabin until it was razed in 1910 after the completion of Sovulewski's new residence, also located in front of Yosemite Fall-- the first one built in the valley by the Department of the Interior.

Four similar cottages were built on the eastern edge of Cook's meadow in 1912, including the structure that would later be known as Residence #1, or the Superintendent's Residence. It is reported that under the supervision of the resident engineer, four small cottages "of an appearance appropriate to the environment" were built for the resident engineer, a clerk, and two electricians. They were frame buildings adjacent to the military camp, and sat upon concrete foundations and had electric lights and plumbing.

In addition to the military administration's concerns over the development of their own facilities, they also had to deal with questions of improved road systems; water, sewer, and electrical requirements; the need for better communication and administrative facilities; and regulation of a growing concession industry. Many of the acting superintendents were serious in their attempts to limit injurious effects on the Valley and to improve the appearance and organization of the structures located there. Several campgrounds were closed due to sanitary reasons; automobiles were banned from the valley by the superintendent in 1907 for having a destructive force on vegetation and on road surfaces; and most importantly, the idea for a master plan for future development was advocated.

Cook's Meadow was unfenced in 1913, the same year that Secretary of Interior, Franklin Lane rescinded the order barring automobiles from Yosemite National Park. While the meadow might have recovered from grazing scars, the advent of cars and increased numbers of people that automobiles brought into the park brought about new threats to the health of the meadow. With the meadow unfenced, tourists were free to picnic, camp, and drive over it. Cook's Meadow may have been very attractive for these activities as it was located in between the Old Village and the developing government center, surrounded by unbarricaded roads on the north, east, and south, with Sentinel Road which provided the most direct route between the Sentinel Hotel and the new army headquarters, bisecting it in the middle.

THE MATHER YEARS, 1916-1931

The haphazard development and administration of Yosemite and other national parks was addressed with the creation of the National Park Service (NPS) in 1916. Director Stephen T. Mather's approach to the national parks was visitor oriented--he believed it imperative to fully and efficiently develop park resources for the pleasure of the public. However, both Mather and his assistant Horace Albright recognized the need for broader and sounder policies based on serious study of the issues and current data. One of the more important new divisions created was that of landscape architecture, established to ensure the harmonization of park structures with their environment. That unique advisory group concerned itself with devising ways of constructing buildings, campgrounds, roads, and the like with minimal sacrifice of natural scenery.

One of the most significant problems in Yosemite to be remedied through thoughtful planning was the inadequacy of roads, accommodations, and other service facilities for the increasing numbers of tourists who were arriving by automobile. The decision to build a new administrative area in Yosemite Valley was made, in part, to respond to the growing volume of traffic in the summer. Commercial and service activities of the park still centered in the early village at this time, a site, which as a whole contained no room for expansion. During

a study for new locations for that facility, the north side of the valley appeared more climatically and scenically agreeable and less susceptible to flooding. The New Yosemite Village residential district was located among the trees and brush against the north valley cliffs.

The actual construction of the New Village necessitated the building of access roads to and among that growing complex of structures. The state of all roads, both primary and auxiliary, were in poor condition at the time the NPS took over Yosemite National Park (YNP). Just a year before, private automobiles were not allowed to travel in the valley except when entering or leaving, due to the narrow width of the valley's roads. Of the approximately 103 miles of road that the government controlled in 1916, only about one mile had a good hard surface. The two miles of macadam covered roads on the valley floor contained bad ruts, while the approximately five miles of road surfaced with river gravel, which pulverized quickly under wear, required heavy sprinkling to keep down the dust.

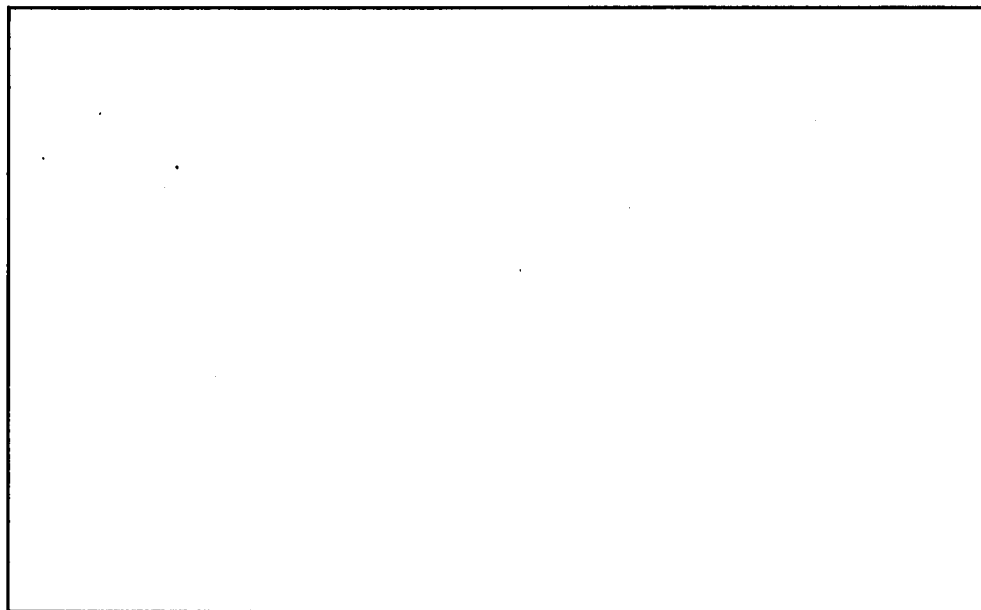
The road across Cook's Meadow, called Sentinel Road on the earliest automobile map guides of YNP, was one of the early roads inherited by the NPS. It was included in a 1916 list of all the existing roads and trails within the park as Sentinel Bridge Road between Sentinel Bridge and the Grizzly hotel site, .20 miles in length.¹ Due to its north-south alignment connecting the Old and New Villages, it received priority in the flurry of activity that took place in the 1920's and 30's, when most roads were widened, realigned and paved. The Sentinel Bridge was replaced in 1918-19 with a new reinforced concrete structure to facilitate the traffic flow between the two centers. It branched off at a Y-intersection into Sentinel Road to the north and Center Road to the northeast. The road, itself, was "constructed" in 1924, the same year that Congress voted the Park Service its first real road-building authorization--seven and a half million dollars for a three-year program. 1924 was the also the last year that all roads in the national parks would be planned by the office of George Goodwin, Chief Engineer of NPS. The Park Service made an agreement in 1925 with the Bureau of Public Roads for the building and maintenance of major park roads. From various

maps and photos, Sentinel Road appears to parallel the boardwalk from the 1860's, if not having the same general alignment. Documentary pictures reveal culverts, wide shoulders and footpaths, a foot below the grade.

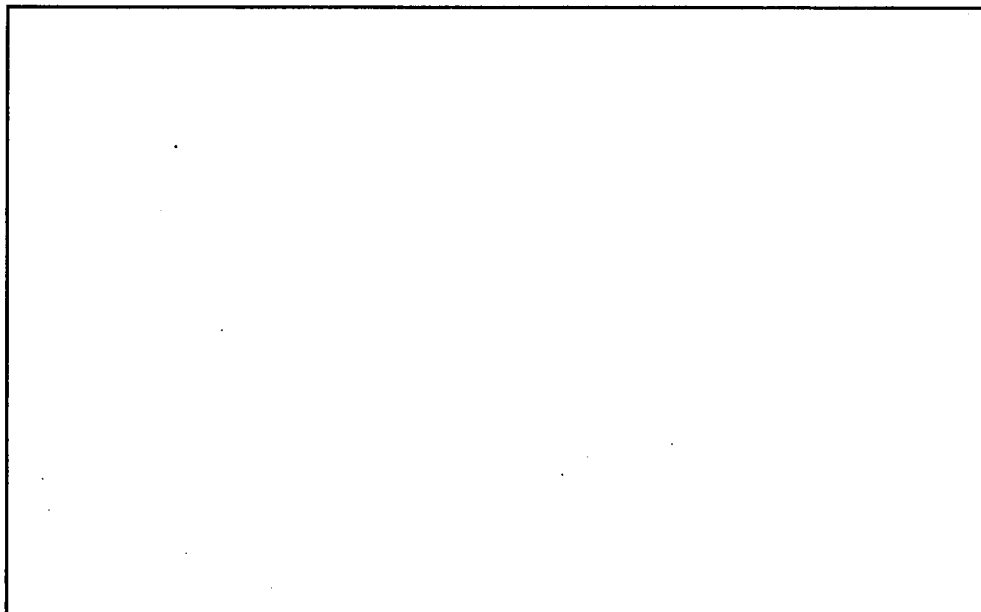
Other roads and trails built across Cook's Meadow during this time included foot trails and bridlepaths. In 1919, the footpath on the north side of the Merced between Sentinel Bridge and the western footbridge was raised 16 inches to prevent flooding. A map in Ansel F. Hall's Guide to Yosemite, 1920, shows a footpath originating off the main road north of Residence #1 headed southeast, branching off near Residence #1 with one path heading toward the footbridge across the Merced and the other passing over Sentinel Bridge to the Yosemite Museum, formerly known as Jorgensen's cottage and studio. A wide-scale bridlepath construction program was initiated in 1928 with the goal of having most paths parallel major roads so that it would be possible for equestrian riders to travel almost anywhere in the Valley without traveling on the roads or having to make many road crossings.² In 1928, a bridlepath was constructed on the northern edge of Cook's Meadow from Yosemite Creek extending west beyond Camp 6. Surfaced and oiled, one portion of the bridle path also followed along side of Sentinel Road.

Improvement of the visitor experience encompassed more than bettering circulation patterns. The NPS also considered the preservation of scenic values and viewsheds as integral to their management policies. The objective of the clearing and thinning operation was set for the NPS in 1919. The report of the landscape engineer, Punchard, said that it was necessary to thin the valley floor for two reasons--first to preserve the health of older trees and as a protection against serious fires, and second, that thinning and clearing of the meadows would tend to open up and develop very interesting open spaces and vistas on the valley floor.³ Along with Ahwahnee and Bridalveil meadows, Cook's Meadow was intentionally burned in 1919, 1920, 1921, and 1930, preserving the viewsheds it offered.

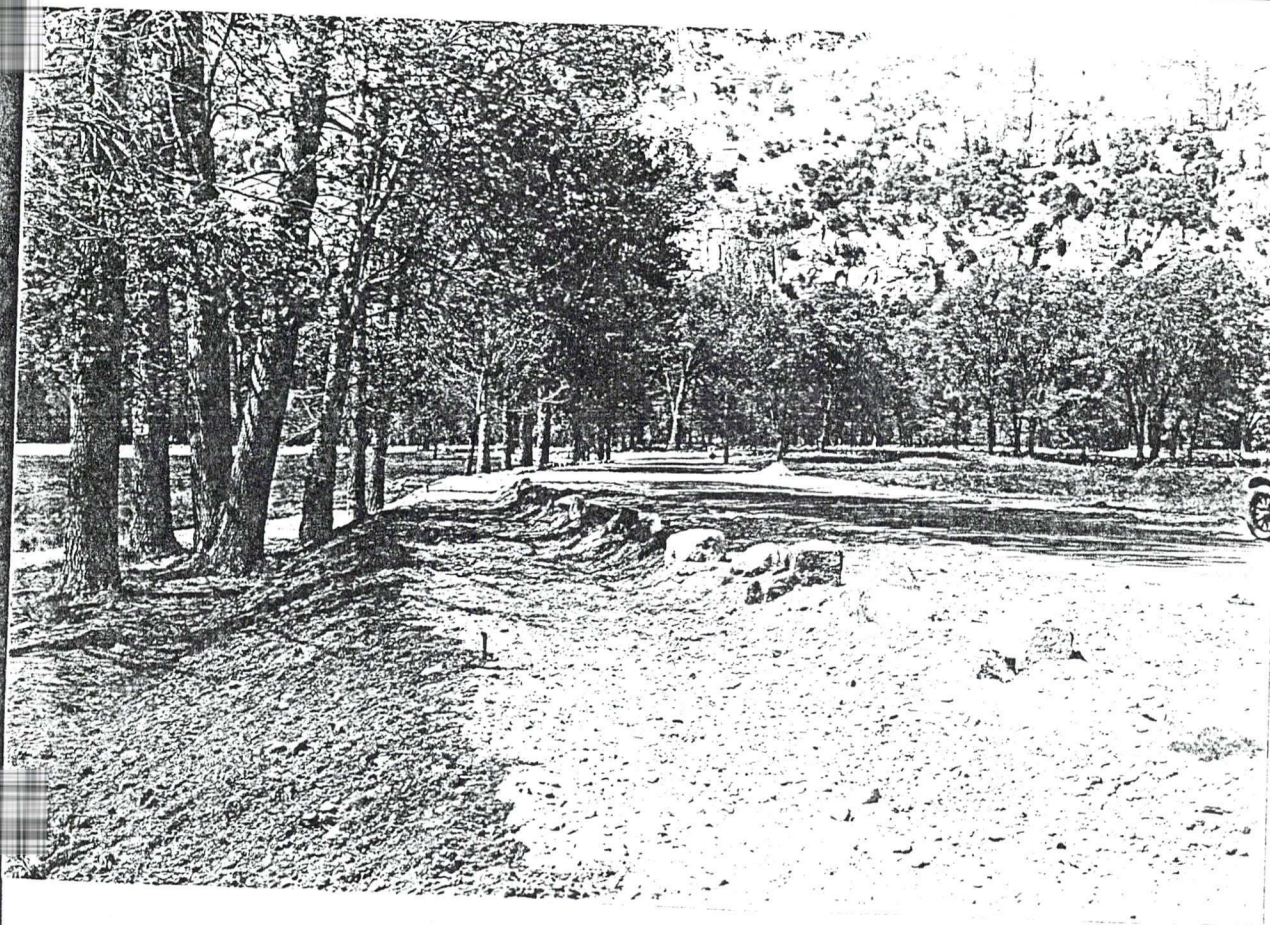
Further improvement of the scenic meadows included addressing a source of long complaint--most of the dairy herds and their accompanying



Sentinel Road with Culverts



Telephone Lines along Sentinel Road



ROADS
General M

Negative No:
RL-7467

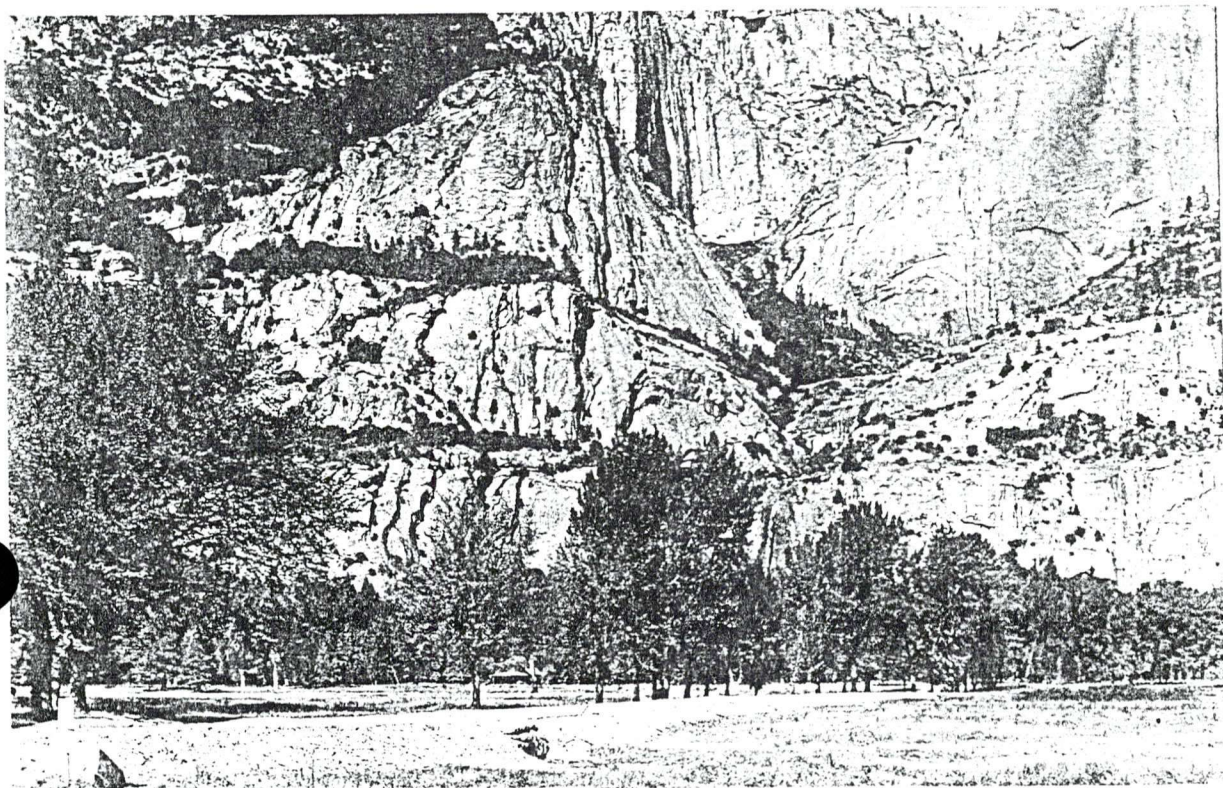
Film Size:
5 x 7

Photogr:

Date:
May 1, 1928

Meadow road between Old & New Village showing wide shoulders & footpaths, on foot below the grade.

• Sentinel Road w/ Culverts



ROADS
General
Valley Floor

Negative No:
RL-7624

Film Size:
5 x 7

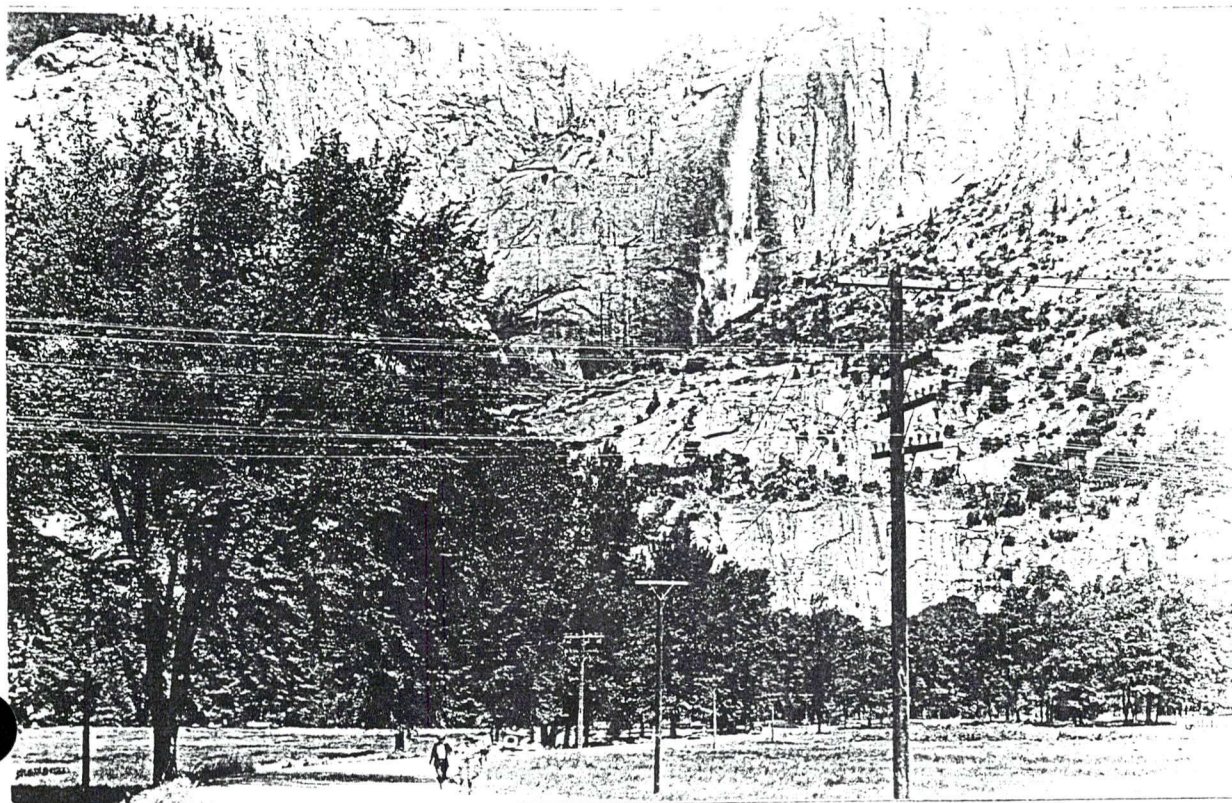
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From Sentinel Bridge looking across meadows after lines were removed.

• Telephone lines along Sentinel Rd

MAINTENANCE
Power & Telepho
Lines



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RL-7247

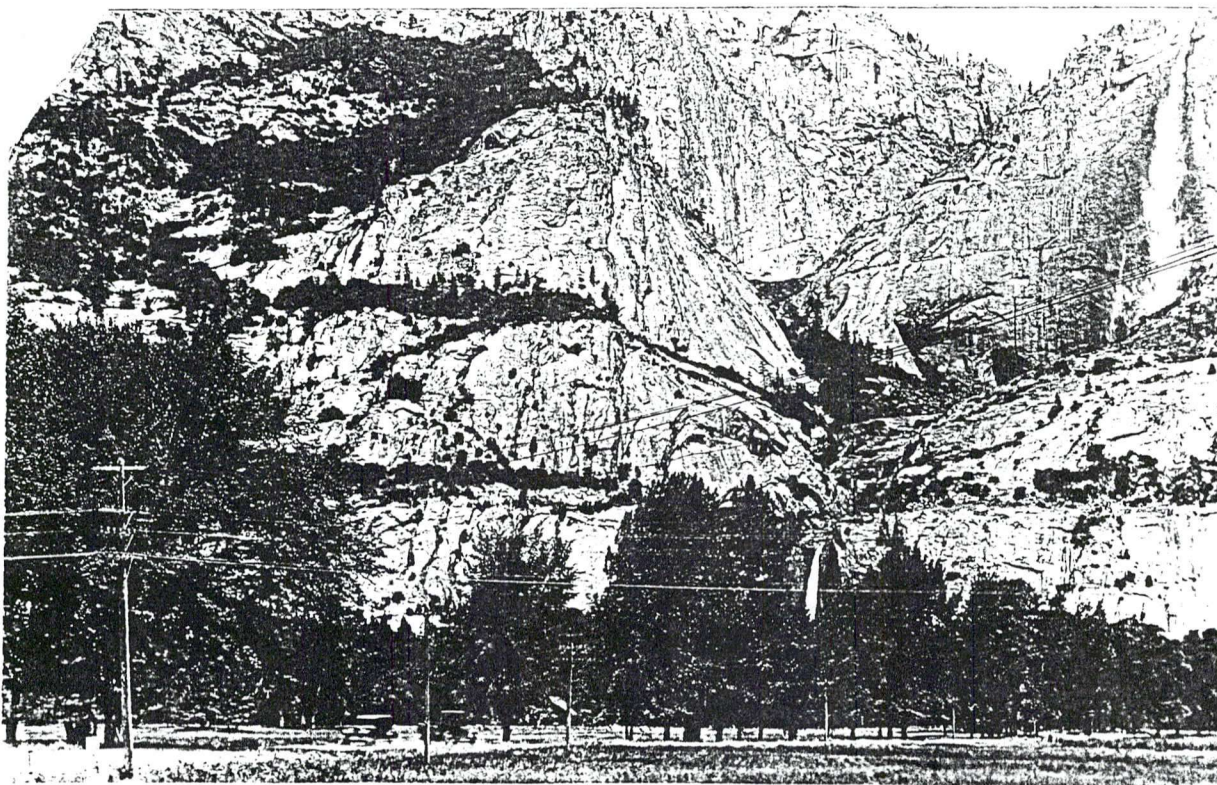
Film Size:
5 x 7

Photogr:

Date:

From Sentinel
Bridge, looking
across meadow
before pole line
were removed.

MAINTENANCE
Power & Teleph
Lines



Negative No:
RL-7619

Film Size:
5 x 7

Photogr:

Date:

Power & teleph
one lines near
Sentinel meado

fences were phased out in the early 1920's. There was also a decline in meadow use for hay and pasture as the advent of the auto had resulted in a decline in the use of horses and horse-drawn conveyances. That some utilitarian use should be made of the meadows was a hard concept to extinguish, however, so a meadow retired from grazing by domestic animals was given to grazing by wild animals. The eastern half of Cook's Meadow became known as the elk paddock in 1921 and hosted a herd of Tule Elk who were brought into the Valley with the hopes of increasing their depleted numbers. The elk occupied the meadow year round, having a much greater impact on the land than the previous grazing dairy herds who had only occupied the meadow seasonally. While other meadows needed ditches and rock curbs placed around them to protect them from the roving automobiles, Cook's Meadow was surrounded by an eight-foot wire fence.

The decision to allow the elk to come to Yosemite Valley was made, in part, for conservation purposes, but it also fit in well with a host of other unnatural tourist attractions existing or created at that time. The nightly firefalls off Glacier Point and the electrically lighted feeding place for bears a mile below the Old Village were some of the other events of the day.

Whereas wildlife was displayed on the meadow floor, man-made structures were not. In 1929, the superintendent's residence was rebuilt according to the National Park Service Rustic style. The exterior of the building was built in redwood rustic to harmonize with the other buildings in the Park, the second floor laid vertically and the first floor laid horizontally. Its roof consisted of the best cedar shingles laid in an irregular manner. The grounds around the building were also landscaped, with a stone path to the entrance laid and the driveway graveled. In 1917, the relocated schoolhouse north of Cook's Meadow was turned into a residence. The Ranger's Club was erected just east of it in 1921 amongst a screen of trees. Upon Jorgensen's permanent departure from the park in 1917, his cottage and studio on the southeastern edge of the meadow were first turned into a mess hall for park employees, and then into the Yosemite Museum in 1920.

MATHER'S CONTINUED LEGACY, 1931-1956

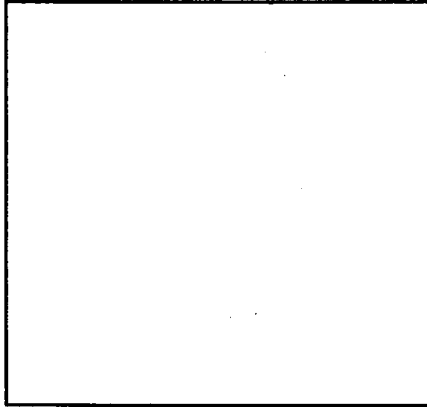
Mather's death in 1930 did not threaten the continuation of his principles for resource conservation and park protection, because his long-time assistant and successor, Horace Albright, knew how to build on the achievements of the early Mather years and was as skillful as Mather in Washington's political arena. The continuity of developing and implementing sound policies from the 1920's into the 1930's was also facilitated by the Yosemite Advisory Board which was formed in 1927 to address the extremely heavy visitor impact in Yosemite Valley. A unique planning body whose first three expert advisors consisted of the distinguished Fredrick Law Olmsted, Jr., Duncan McDuffie, and John Buwalda, its purpose was to formulate a basic plan for the valley floor, including all of its administrative and service needs, taking into consideration the park's fundamental values.

Construction and improvements proceeded in YNP in the 1930's despite the onslaught of the Depression. Director Albright was able to secure funds from Washington well into the early part of the New Deal, when the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) was created to perform needed work in America's federal and state forests and parks.

In 1931, riprap was used to protect the bank of Yosemite Creek in back of the superintendent's residence, and river revetment was done at the junction of Yosemite Creek and the Merced River at the southeastern corner of Cook's Meadow.⁴ In 1932, Residence #2 was relocated from the western border of Cook's Meadow to the Yosemite Valley housing area as part of valley landscape plans calling for removal of residences in conspicuous locations in meadows or near main thoroughfares. In 1933, the last grazing in the valley ended when the Tule Elk were removed to Owens Valley.

The fence was taken down and the area restored to a more natural appearance. From their research in the early 1960's on vegetation in the Valley, Robert Gibbens and Harold Heady concluded that aside from the shift to plants adapted to a drier habitat, there was little remaining evidence of the plowing and heavy

grazing of the past. "The Elk Paddock has completely recovered from the relatively recent heavy grazing...if the Elk Paddock and the adjacent Superintendents part of Cook's Meadow which was not grazed during the same period are compared, it is evident that differences in kind and abundance are minor."⁵



Preparations for moving Residence #2

While these physical changes were taking place within the meadow, future changes affecting the meadow were being discussed by the Yosemite Advisory Board members. Meetings held in 1935 focused on the future of the Sentinel Hotel, possible relocations and/or modifications to Sentinel Bridge, and possible revisions of the thoroughfare around and through Cook's Meadow. Mr. Olmsted desired to make a through east and west road north of the Merced without the tendency for diversion of traffic to the south side of the river, via the Sentinel Bridge. It is likely that the removal of Sentinel Road and Center Road were first discussed at this time.

In December of 1937, a severe flood occurred, turning Cook's Meadow into a "Lake Yosemite." The footpaths in the meadow were bodily raised by flood waters and deposited in chunks near by. Footpaths were repaved and bridlepaths reoiled in 1938.

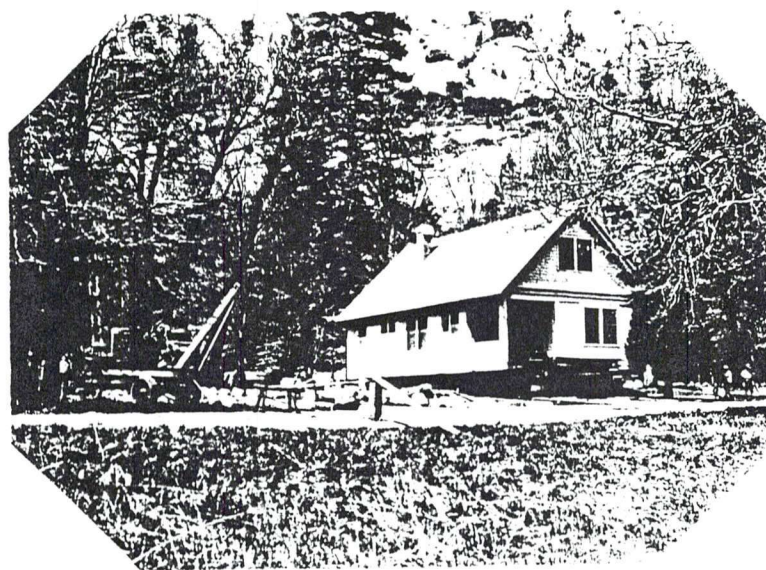
The immense amount of construction, conservation, and protection work that occurred in YNP in the 1930's came to an abrupt end in the 1940's when the US became actively involved in World War II. The only significant project done in Cook's Meadow at this time was a large-scale tree removal program in 1942-43. In the 1950's increased park visitation was

made possible by increased leisure time, more prosperity, and improved transportation. Many changes on the Valley floor were made in response to this influx, as well as to two devastating floods also occurring in this decade.

After a serious flood in 1950, seven cedar trees were planted in 1951 at Residence #1 to replace a natural screen of trees that had been washed out. The flood had also washed out the shoulder on the footpath by Sentinel Road and washed away signs at the Sentinel and Center Road Y-intersection. These two roads and the North Valley road on the north edge of Cook's Meadow were removed in 1952-53, seemingly in accordance with the Advisory Board's recommendations from the 1930's. Sentinel Road was not replaced, but landscaped. The old roads had bounded the meadow in a somewhat rectangular fashion, whereas the new roads formed a loop outline around the meadow. Replacing Center Road, Sentinel Crossover headed northeast from Sentinel Bridge, connecting to the newly constructed portion of North Side Drive which had less of an east-west linearity than the previous North Valley Road. The Sentinel Bridge parking area was created in 1954 out of the space that had been the Sentinel Road and Center Road Y-intersection. In 1955, another serious flood occurred, but damages were less as the park had made better preparations for such an event.

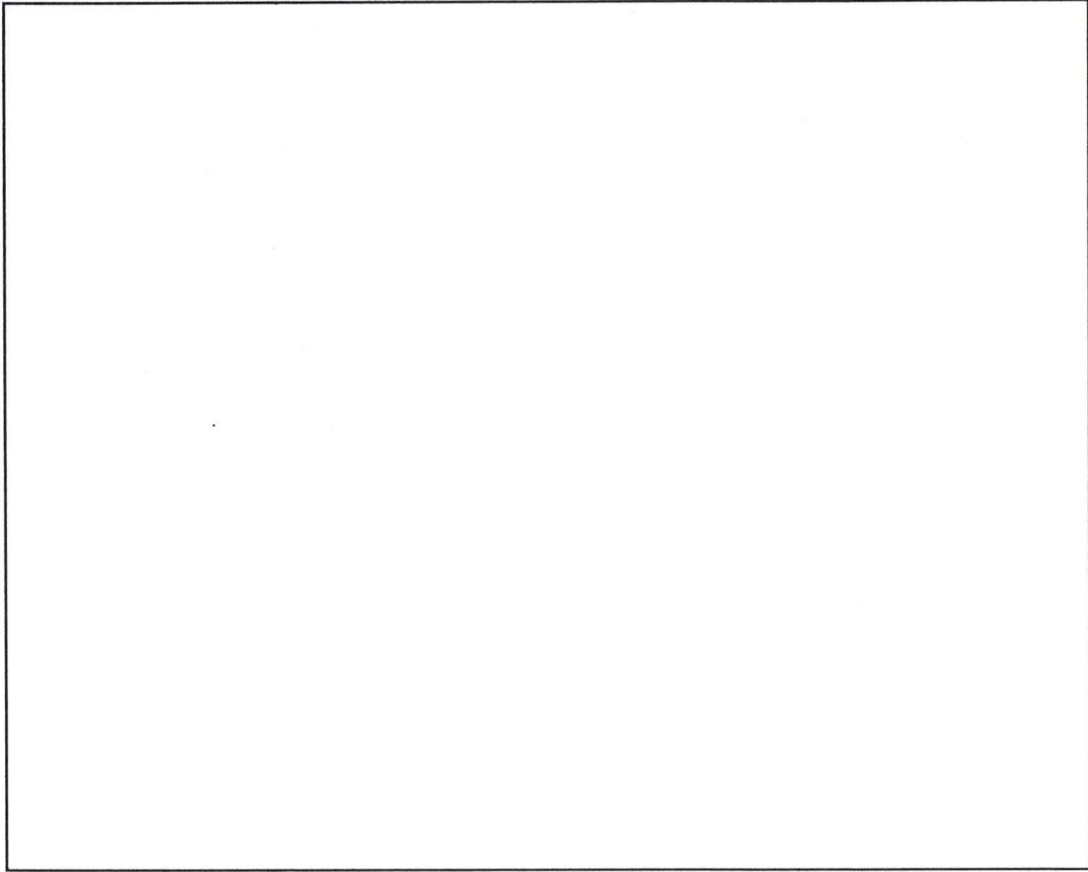
MISSION 66 AND RECENT HISTORY, 1956-PRESENT

By the mid 1950's, the National Park system was hosting more visitors than ever before, barely keeping pace with the situation due to a lack of maintenance and shortage of funds. Consequently, in 1956, Director Conrad L. Wirth began a comprehensive ten-year program to upgrade and expand national park facilities to accommodate anticipated visitor use by 1966. Construction became an important element of this Mission 66 program, involving the replacement of outdated, inadequate facilities with improvements designed to handle increased loads but to be located in such areas as to reduce impact on the environment. At Yosemite, Mission 66 planning incorporated many of the thoughts of the Yosemite Advisory Board regarding resolution of Yosemite's manmade problems. In the Valley itself, the park

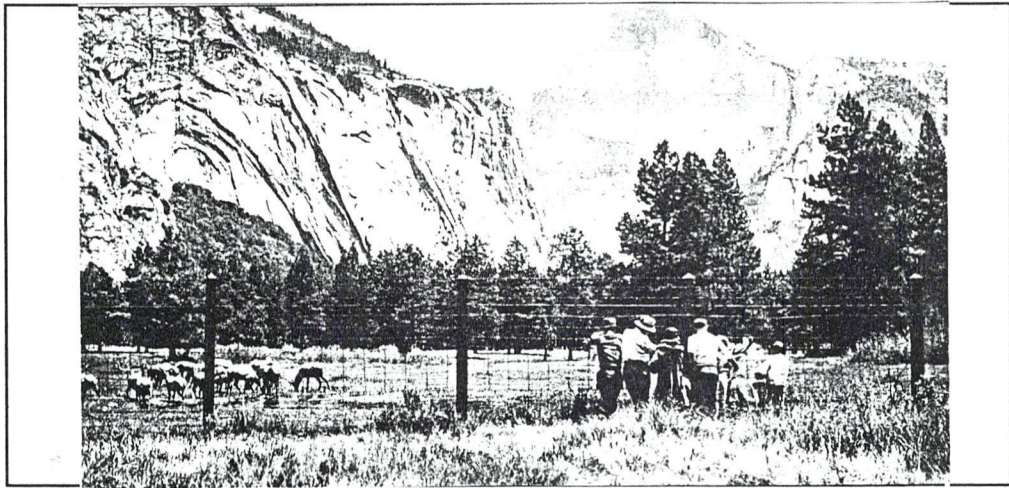


Residence #2 moved part way from old foundation.

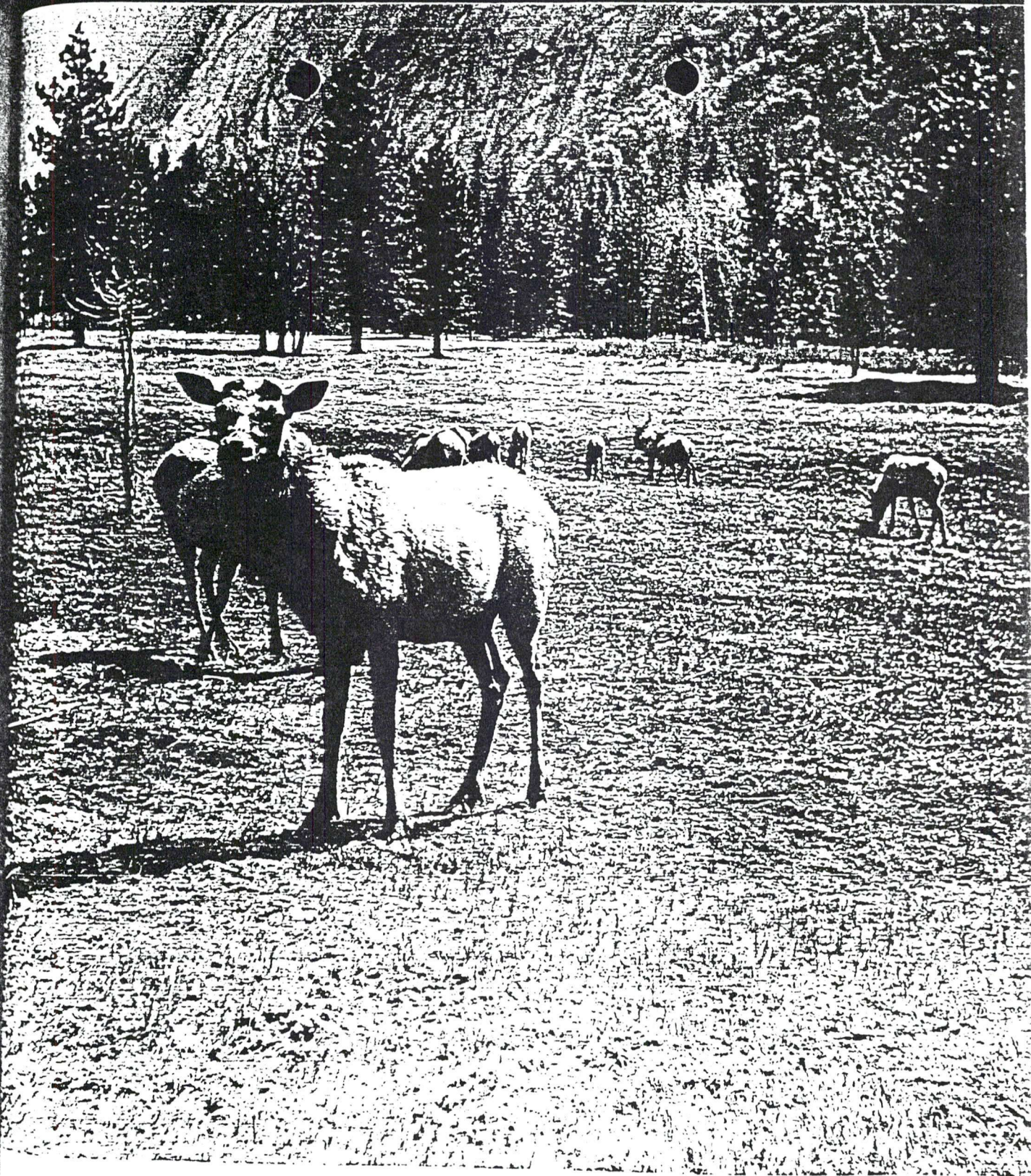
*Completion
from report # 97*



Tule Elk in Cook's Meadow



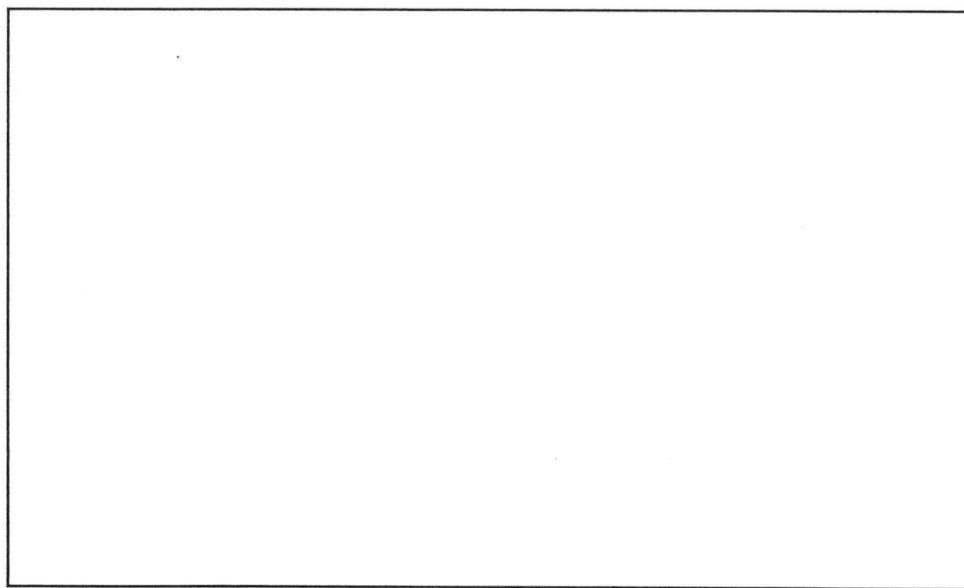
*Elk Paddock portion of Cook's Meadow between 1921 and 1933;
note heavily grazed condition inside the fence.*



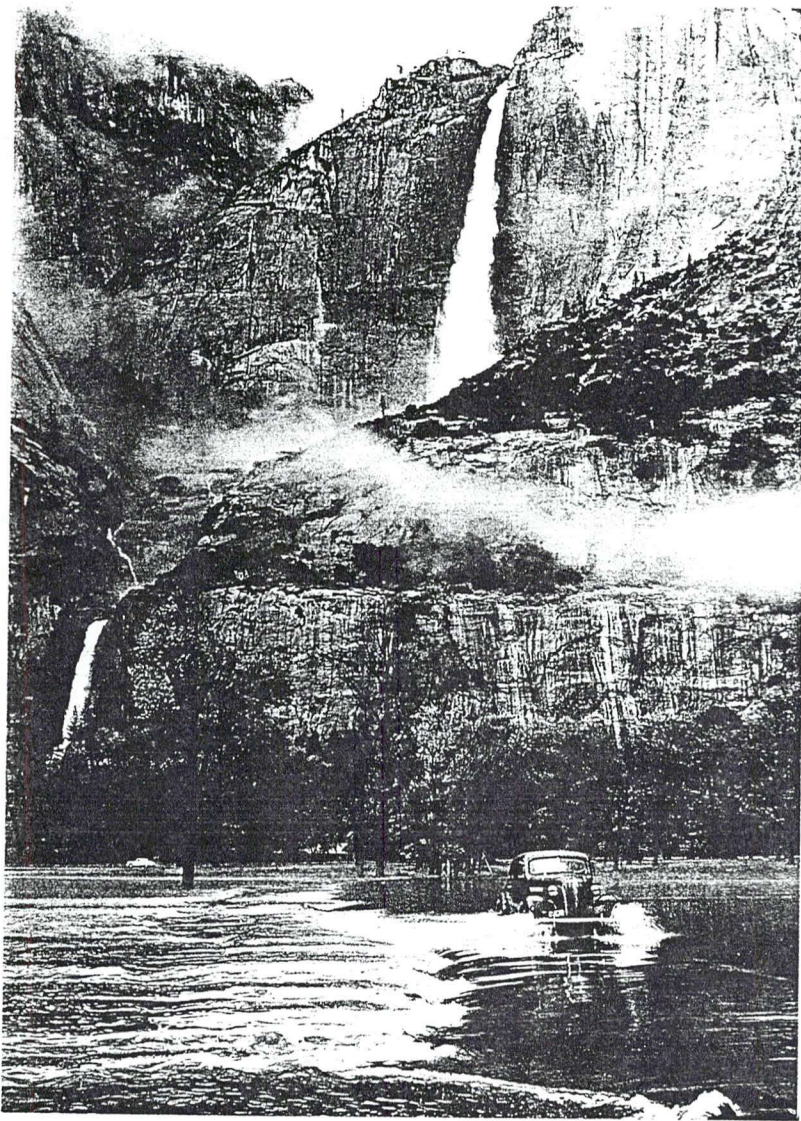
This is indicative of the intensive grazing use to which the Cook or Elk Paddock meadow was placed between 1921 and 1933. From at least 1888 to 1920 or 1921, this same area was used by the dairy herd supplying the needs of the Stoneman and Sentinel Hotels. In spite of this heavy grazing, these meadows have been reduced in size by the ever encroaching forests. The photograph was taken in the spring.



*Sentinel Road covered by Lake Yosemite
in flood of 1937*



Conifer encroachment in front of Superintendent's Residence, before tree removal, c.1943



Although the flood of 1937 was exceeded by those of 1950 and 1955, it created an impressive lake. (Stewart Cramer Collection)

of power, and without any heat. I remember watching tent frames floating down the river.

"What was really comical was watching some of the resident ranger-naturalists going around with gunny sacks, picking up the moles and gophers that were being driven out of their holes by rising water. That was far from a life saving mission; the rodents were needed to feed all the snakes on exhibit at the Museum."

Although the main buildings at Yosemite Lodge were safe, its numerous, widely-scattered cabins were flooded. A couple of the lowest cabins at the Indian Village "had water in 'em," according to Ralph Parker, then seven. "They

came down and got us in some trucks and took us up to the Lodge. We all stayed there together and it was fun."

Fellow refugee Jay Johnson agreed. "It was exciting. Yosemite Falls was huge. You could feel spray clear down at the Lodge."

Teenaged Della Dondero was less thrilled. For some reason, she and her grandmother, Louisa Tom, who was over ninety, had to walk—almost wade—to the Lodge.

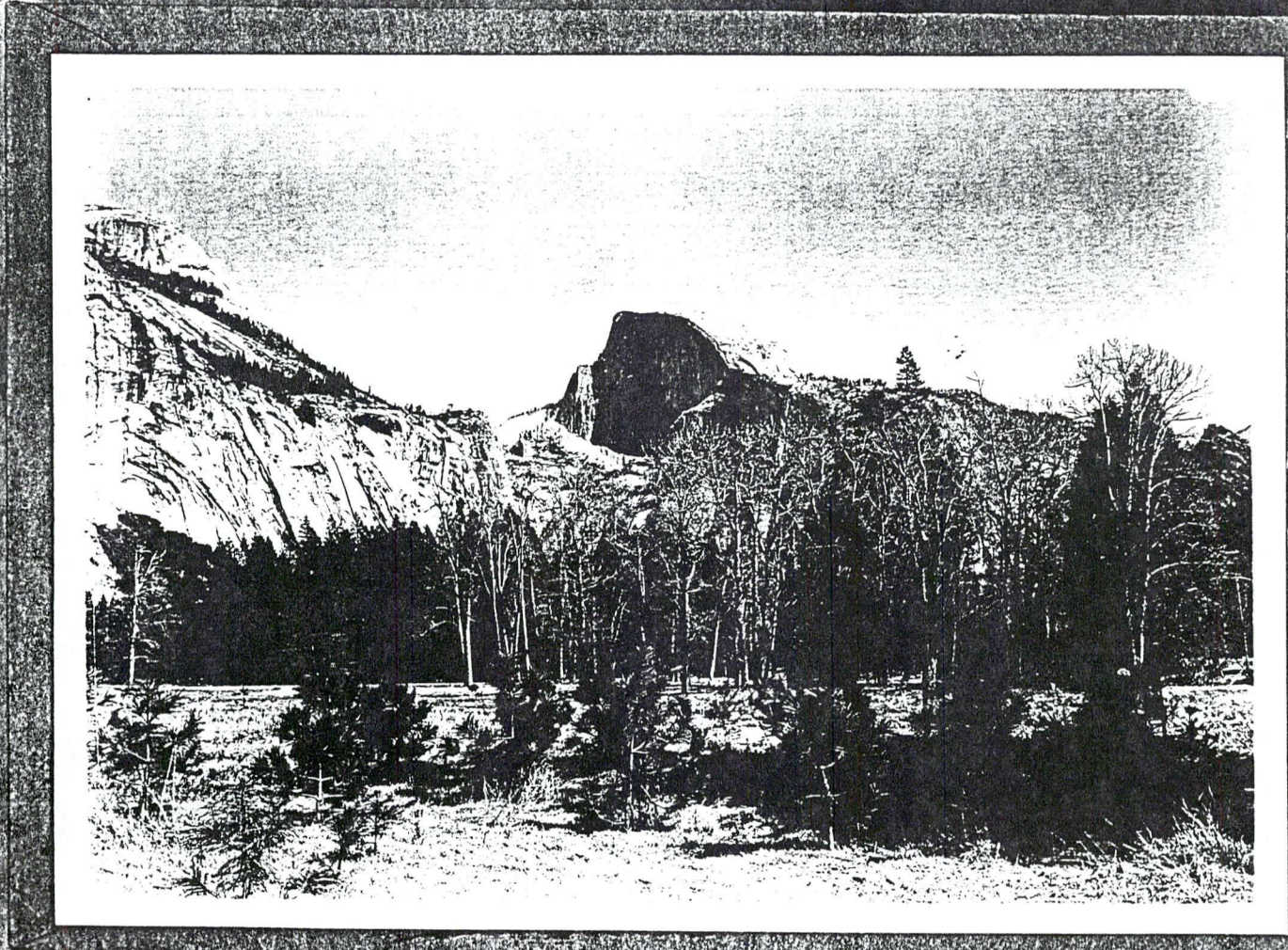
"To me, only three," Charlie Castro said, "it seemed as if the entire rock wall above us was one gigantic waterfall. It was very dark, water running everywhere, rocks falling. Large slides made the ground shake."

Mary Degen and Beverley June Riddle also remembered the frightening noise of landslides, and rocks crashing down near their houses.

Suzanne and Jane McKown, young daughters of the Park Service's landscape architect, witnessed the flood's rearrangement of the landscape as "mountains of water and debris poured down the cliffs in back of our place (below Sunnyside Ledge) and streams ran down the driveway. My father and another ranger grabbed my sister and me from our beds and took us down to Yosemite Lodge," is Suzanne's memory. "We slept on the floor with many people—quite exciting!"

Altogether, damage to the Park's roads, trails, bridges (seventeen trail bridges in the Valley alone were washed away), campgrounds, and buildings—particularly the superintendent's house—amounted to \$272,000. The Curry Company's loss was about \$150,000, a lot of that because of the general store and employee housing in Old Village.

"We didn't have to evacuate," said Stewart Cramer, then seven, "because our house, the old Chinese laundry, and the Patterson's next to us, formerly the ice house, stood on rocky, rising ground a few hundred feet from rickety old Cedar Cottage.



Photos of road removal.

authorities intended to limit valley facilities to those necessary to directly serve the visitor. An example of a Mission 66 project was the widening and heightening of the Sentinel Bridge in 1960 to alleviate congestion. Its distinguishing features of old stone lanterns and guard rail pylons were removed, drastically altering its appearance. The mission to scale back manmade structures situated in the Valley led to the razing of Jorgensen's Studio and relocation of his cottage to the Pioneer History Center in Wawona in 1962.

Little else occurred in or adjacent to Cook's Meadow until the early 1980's when the footpaths circulating through Cook's Meadow became part of an interpretive nature walk. Still in use today, the self guided tour is illustrated in a pamphlet, which can be picked up outside of the administration building. Painted and numbered wood posts were placed along the footpaths, corresponding to the self-guided walk. In 1991, Sentinel Bridge was replaced and moved upstream. The parking area was also redesigned and now hosts a shuttle stop. Visitors stop at the parking area to take photographs of the scenic views and to walk along the footpaths.



Pamphlet Pick-up Outside of Administration Building

RESPONSE TO NATURAL FEATURES

Post-Columbian human manipulation of the naturally dynamic relationship between Cook's Meadow and the surrounding woodland and waterways has been due, in part, to its situation between and viewshed of the geologic and scenic wonders of Yosemite Falls to the north and Sentinel Rock to the south. The shifting boundaries of forest and meadow lands have also been influenced by the natural hydrology of the area. Currently, a black oak woodland forms the northern line of demarcation; a stand of conifers lines its eastern edge in a southwest to northeast orientation; the Merced River and accompanying riparian trees border the meadow to the south; and a mixed forest community grows along the Yosemite Creek boundary to the west.

Located centrally on the flat, wide, floodplain of the Yosemite Valley floor just north of the Merced River, waters have historically entered Cook's Meadow by subsurface flows, surface flows from the north, and overbank flooding of the Merced River, Yosemite Creek, and Indian Creek. A Mediterranean climate of cool, moist winters and hot, dry summers characterizes the area. Winter storms have a profound effect on the functioning of the meadow due to the effects of flooding. A large area of the Valley floor is inundated whenever the river flows over the limits of its banks. The whole meadow system may be saturated to the forest edge, thus limiting tree growth and delimiting the forest-meadow boundary.

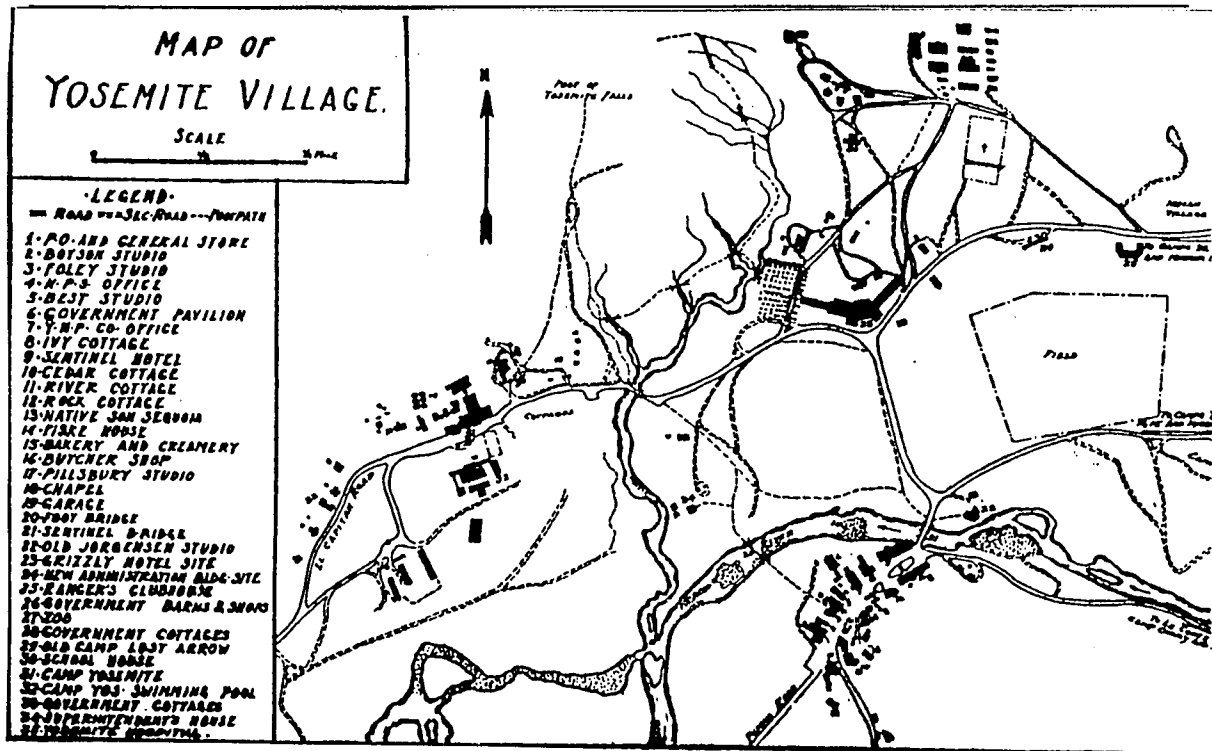
The physical use and development of this seasonally flooded area with buildings and circulation systems has relied on alteration of both the river and creek channels and the naturally flat landform of the meadow.

SPATIAL ORGANIZATION

The woodland edges of Cook's Meadow have been the only historic sites of development in the meadow. Both Jorgensen's seasonal settlement on the southeast corner of the meadow and the complex of army residences in the midst of a mixed black oak community on the western edge have been encroachments spreading from nearby concentrated developments in the Valley. Jorgensen's studio/residence, erected in 1900 on the bank of the Merced River was oriented just east of Sentinel Bridge which connected his establishment with the tourists/patrons and services provided by the Old Village across the Merced River. Because his contract with the Yosemite Board of Commissioners stipulated that his studio be open to the public, the site became a tourist attraction. His buildings had spectacular views of Yosemite Falls to the north and Half Dome to the east.

Built in 1912, the siting of the complex of army residences later assumed by the NPS, reflects the incipient relocation of administrative and commercial activity to the north side of the valley. The four structures were oriented just east of Yosemite Creek and the major army camp established on the present location of Yosemite Lodge. The physical separation of the residences from the main activity of the army to the west by Yosemite Creek gave prestige to this wooded area. By housing the superintendent in Residence #1, the NPS continued the hierarchical use of this area which was separated from NPS development in the north by a major east-west valley road. Like Jorgensen's establishment to the southeast, the structures were aligned to provide optimal views of Yosemite Falls and Half Dome.

The organization of both developments reveals a lack of awareness of the environmental constraints inherent in lowland areas on the edge of waterways and both necessitated riprapping sections of the Merced and Yosemite Creek respectively, to prevent them from being washed away. The relocation and removal of all structures on Cook's Meadow by 1962 with the exception of Residence #1, has come in tandem with a shift in management policies recognizing the sensitivity and rarity of Valley meadows.



LAND USE

Early Native American groups utilized the abundant resources of Cook's Meadow and its surrounding creeks and rivers. Findings reveal a large prehistoric village site that was utilized primarily during the Crane Flat phase (B.C. 1500-A.D. 500). Manipulation of the land consisted primarily of periodic burning for the purpose of clearing the land from unwanted vegetation growth and favoring the growth of black oaks which provided the main food staple of acorns.⁶

Management of the land since Euro-American arrival to the Valley has been much more contested and anxious than Native American policies toward and treatment of the land. Despite the constancy of the desire to preserve the Valley's spectacular scenic natural resources, the advent of new conservation philosophies and techniques and various advancements in technological capacity has made certain that change has been constant in the management of the Cook's Meadow landscape.

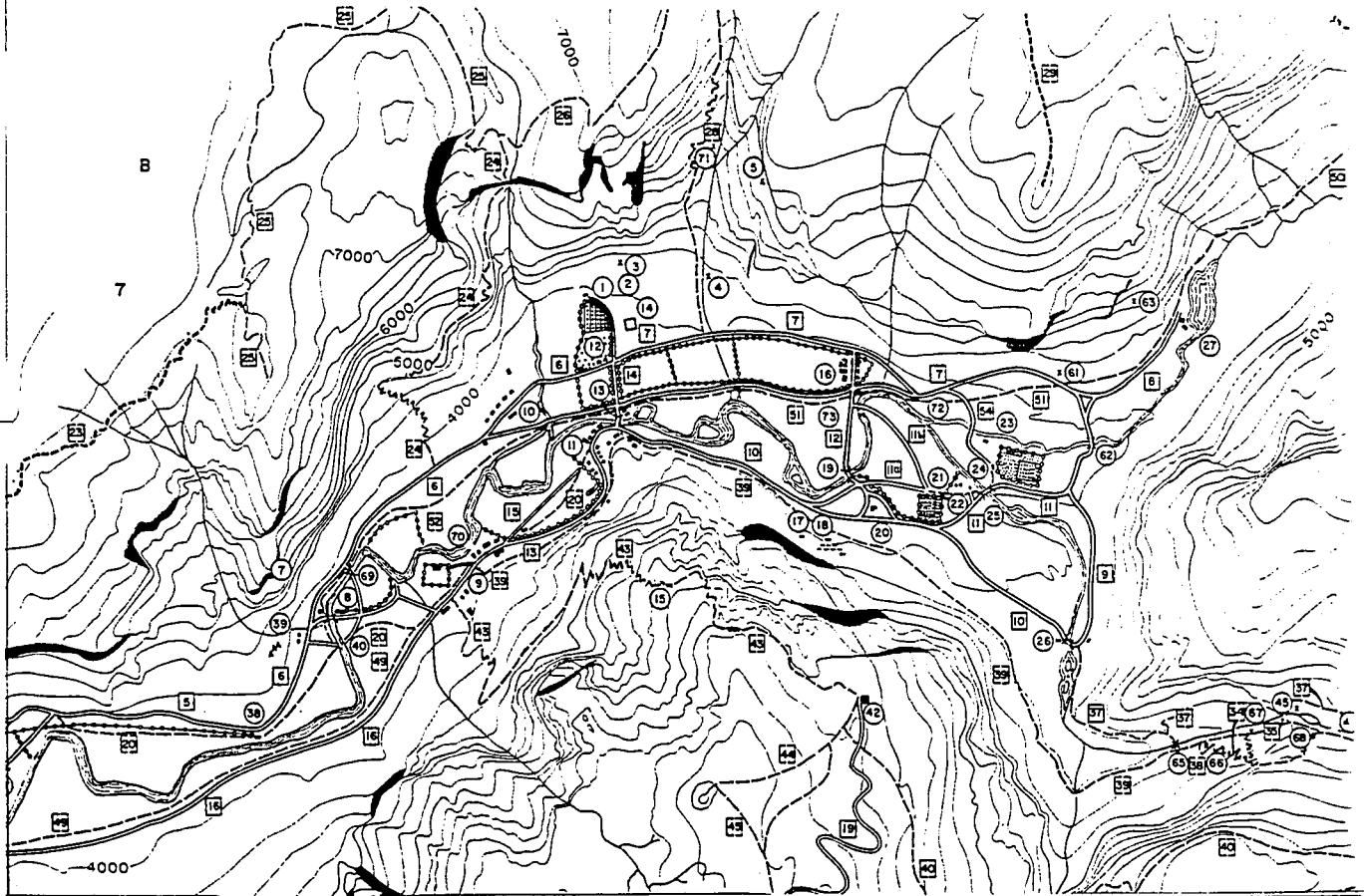
Since travel and shipment of supplies into the valley took days, weeks, or even months in the period of initial settlement and state control of the Valley, there was a need to farm and pasture the land to provide basic necessities for early tourists and settlers. The blasting of the El Capitan moraine in 1879 was done in hope of opening more meadow land for these purposes. As the second permanent settler in the Valley who owned structures just north and just south of Cook's Meadow, James Hutchings modified the land for agricultural purposes. He dug ditches to alleviate the swamp-like conditions of the meadow in order to grow hay and plant trees. For homesteading purposes, the 118 acres of his claim were fenced. Hutchings further impacted the meadow by establishing a rough circulation route across the meadow which would be in use for nearly a century, albeit in different forms.

Prevention of forest encroachment upon the meadow was aided by cattle and elk grazing, which occurred from the late 1800's to the mid 1900's. Dairy herds, located on either side of the road across Cook's Meadow grazed on the land from 1896-1913 to supply the needs of visitors to the Stoneman House and Sentinel Hotel. The central and eastern portion of the meadow was refenced and grazed upon again from 1921-1933 by wild Tule Elk, becoming a popular site with visitors. During that decade, intentional burning was utilized in an effort to preserve the meadow and its viewshed of Yosemite Falls and Half Dome. The circulation use of the meadow was increased when the road across Cook's Meadow was raised, widened, and graveled in 1924.

The trend in Post-World War II management of the meadow has been to promote its recreational possibilities as a destination for hikers, sightseers, bicyclists, artists, and naturalists. The circulation route through the meadow was taken out in 1953, the function of Residence #1 was changed to administrative purposes in 1979, and interpretative uses of the meadow by the NPS began in the early 1980's. Much of the open space is used for recreation, visual habitat, and wildlife habitat. Current conservation philosophies focus on the role meadows play in the valley-wide ecosystem. Meadow restoration programs intended to contain non-native plant species and control access to sensitive areas are currently in progress.

ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION

1890 Before and After Map.



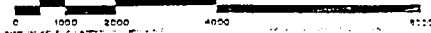
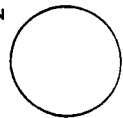
L E G E N D

ROADS before 1890
 TRAILS before 1890
 ROADS const. after 1890
 TRAILS const. after 1890
 FENCES
 CULTIVATED AREAS
 ORCHARDS
 BUILDINGS



ORIENTATION

• CONTOUR INTERVAL
 FEET
 • SCALE IN



ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION

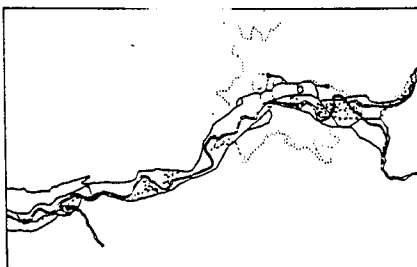
CIRCULATION

Due to the long, narrow floor of the Valley, primary circulation systems have remained relatively simple and constant through time, with the main road sited to follow the valley contour from southwest to northeast on both sides of the Merced. Generally sited above the floodplain, it is currently used as a one-way loop with the south road heading east and the north road heading west. Roads running north-south connect the main road across the Merced at various points along the valley.

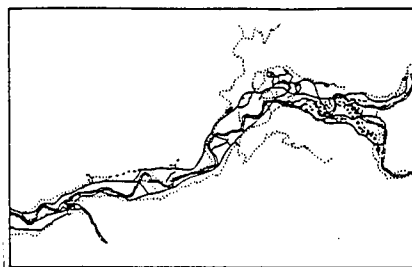
The earliest connecting road was the road across Cook's Meadow, later known as Sentinel Bridge Road. Its existence and alignment was intricately tied to the siting of the Upper Hotel (Sentinel Hotel) and the adjacent bridge built by Gustavus Hite, the original proprietor of the hotel. It was the first bridge built across the Merced in the Valley, and was later known as Sentinel Bridge. The road was paved, raised, and constructed with culverts in 1924 as its importance increased as the most direct route between the Old and New Village. Sentinel Crossover, built around the time of Sentinel Road's destruction in the early 1950's, is the only contemporary connecting road in that area. The design of the parking area also created at that time took advantage of the location formerly occupied by Sentinel Road to present the scenic and well-photographed view of Yosemite Falls.

As with Sentinel, North, and South Valley Roads, the now paved foot/bike trails meandering through Cook's Meadow were once rough pack dirt trails. Generally aligned in a loop fashion that includes the southern portion of Yosemite Village, one path branches off toward the old village passing by Residence #1 over the Superintendent's footbridge while the other continues toward Sentinel Bridge before heading back north. They were likely formalized during the time of army occupation after the complex of four residences were built in 1912. Today, employees residing in Yosemite Village utilize a portion of the footpath to travel to the Chapel, the last building remaining from the days of the Old Village. The entire bike path is utilized by all for leisure and interpretive purposes. The bridlepaths along the northernmost and southernmost edges of the meadow were constructed in the late 1920's as part of Mather's plans to improve recreational possibilities for the visitor. They are now used by pedestrians and bicyclists only.

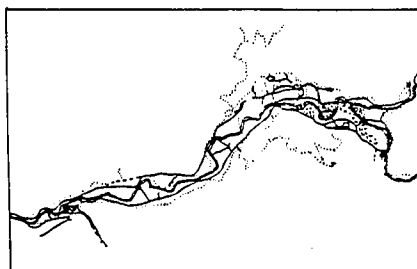
Valley-wide Chronology Circulation Diagrams



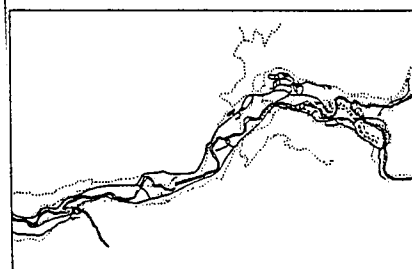
1916-1931 Circulation Diagram
Unpaved roads in the meadow at the foot of Cathedral Spires and in the meadows north of Curry Village appeared on maps for the first time during this period and paved roads proliferated in the new Yosemite Village area. The configuration of roads at Yosemite Lodge was slightly altered while road alignments near the new Ahwahnee Hotel were changed substantially. Bridges were constructed across the Merced near the Ahwahnee and the Swinging Bridge appeared while the road that had once crossed Folsom's Bridge was removed. Trails leading to Mirror Lake and parts of the Valley Loop Trail were constructed. The Four Mile Trail was realigned.



1946-1972 Circulation Diagram
Road alignments remained generally the same except in the Yosemite Village and Yosemite Lodge areas. The loop road had been restricted to one-way traffic several times since it was constructed in 1882; by 1972 one-way traffic had become a permanent condition. Roads in the campgrounds were slightly altered. Trails were developed near Happy Isles and Mirror Lake.



1932-1945 Circulation Diagram
Additional roads were constructed at Yosemite Village while circulation systems for the Old Village were removed. Roads and access spurs for campgrounds were further established and the entry road and parking alignments for Curry Village were developed. Parking was constructed at Happy Isles near the fish hatchery. The El Capitan Bridge collapsed and was rebuilt upstream requiring realignment of the roads in that area. Trails were constructed near Bridalveil Fall and along the length of the valley floor to roughly parallel the loop road.



1973-1993 Circulation Diagram
Road alignments for Curry Village and the Sentinel Beach Picnic Area were substantially altered and the road that once bisected the Ahwahnee Meadow was removed. Many trails that had crossed meadows were removed or rerouted to avoid disturbing the fragile vegetation.

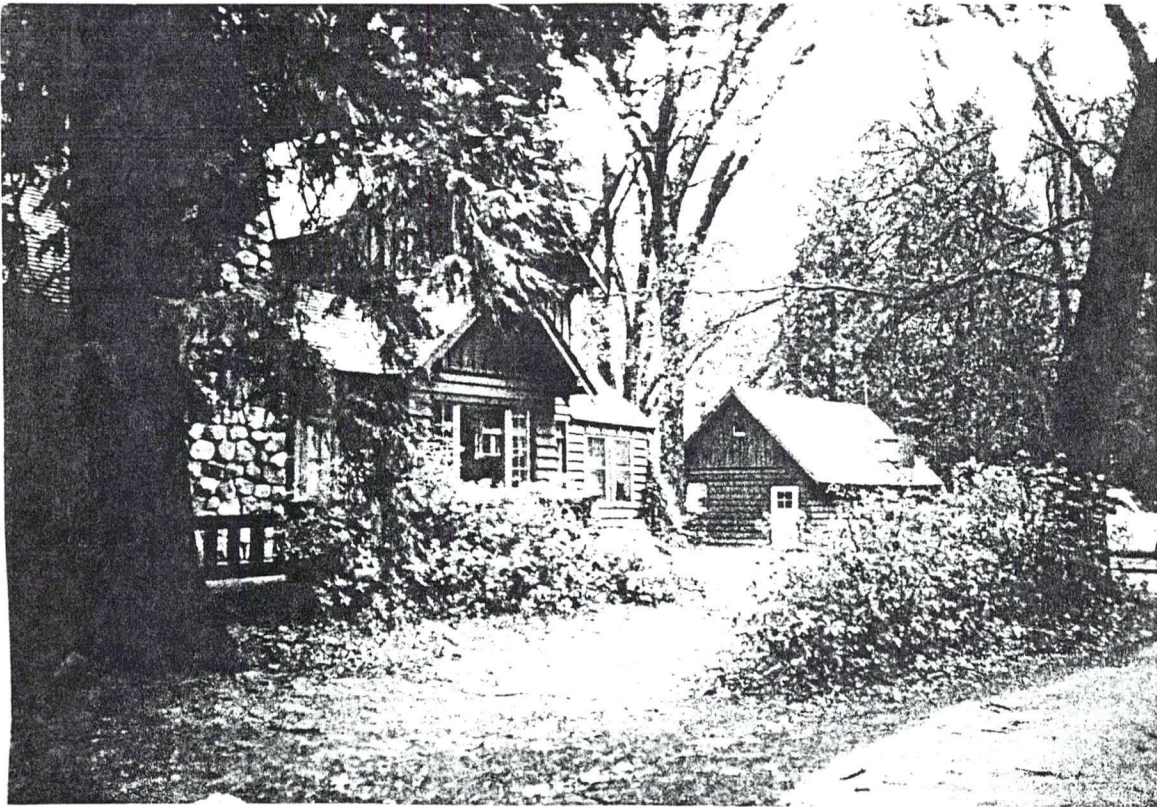
CLUSTER ARRANGEMENT AND STRUCTURES

The structural complexes of army residences and Jorgensen's small establishment included six structures during the historic period. All were recessed into the boundary forming woodlands, respecting and using the open spaces of the meadow for impressive views of Yosemite Falls to the north and Half Dome to the east. Jorgensen built his studio/residence on the southeastern corner of the meadow, the site where he had set up camp the previous two summers. He built the cottage for his son a few years later in 1903? as part of a Norwegian tradition in which boys were presented with a cabin of their own at the age of sixteen. On the western edge of the meadow, the four residences were lined along Yosemite Creek in 1912 with their fronts oriented toward Half Dome to the east.

Three of the residences have been relocated to higher grounds along the outer edges of the Merced. In a process to naturalize the Valley floor, Jorgensen's Cottage was to be razed and his studio relocated to the Wawona Pioneer History Center. However, a mistake was made by the NPS and his studio was razed in the early 1960's while his cottage structure was moved to the history center instead. The cottage was nominated to the National Register of Historic Places in 1979. As the only surviving structure in its original location, the nationally registered Residence #1 cannot convey the sense of design once imparted on the landscape, but remains significant for its rustic architecture.

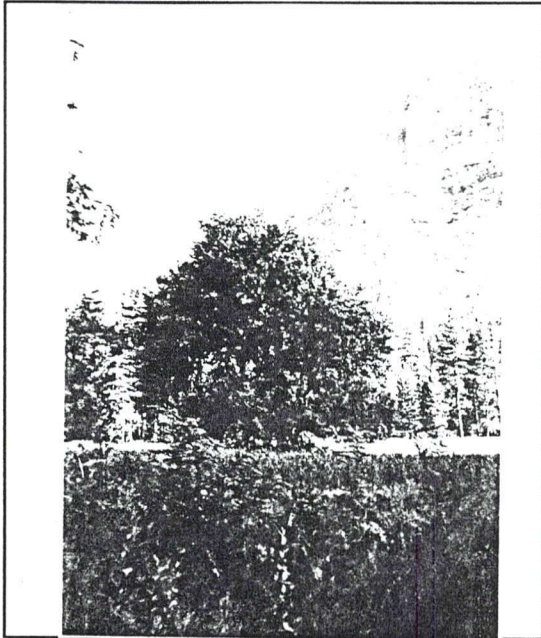
ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION

RESIDENCE #1: Located off an access road stemming from North Side Drive, Residence #1, also known as the Superintendent's Residence, became a fine example of rustic architecture after a major rehabilitation in 1929. It was originally built by the army as one of four identical frame buildings. Only the framework of the dining room, kitchen, pantry, breakfast nook, one bedroom, and one bath were kept during the rehabilitation which produced a modern nine room home having three complete baths. The most significant attributes of the structure: sugar pine shake roofing and lapped redwood siding, the use of granite for the foundation and a massive fireplace, were created during this time and still exist today. It was and is well screened from all sides by oaks, cedars, and pines. Floods in 1937, 1950, and 1955 damaged the first floor, necessitating repairs each time. It was abandoned as a residence in 1979 according to the General Management Plan of YNP, and turned into an administrative center. It was nominated to the National Register of Historic Places in 1978.

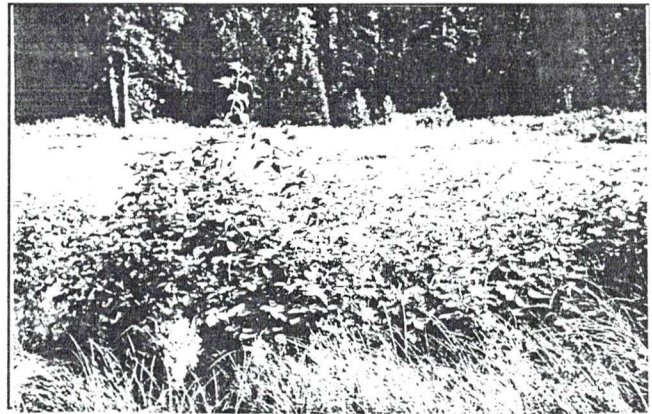


VEGETATION

The vegetation of Yosemite Valley by the classification of Munz (1959) is a Yellow Pine Forest community. Black oak are found on some of the less steep colluvial slopes and are distributed throughout the Valley as a minor species in conifer stands and in open areas that are capable of supporting conifer species. *Poa pratensis*, *Elymus spp.*, and *Agrostis alba*, which probably came to the valley as seed in hay, now cover the meadows. These introduced species are better adapted to the meadow conditions in Yosemite Valley and have permanently replaced the original meadow climax species of *Calamagrostis canadensis*, *Phragmites communis*, (reeds) and *Glyceria nervata* (manna grass). Black oak (*Quercus kelloggii*) is the dominant tree species along the northern edge of Cook's Meadow and is represented well in the mixed pine forest on the western boundary. Bracken fern (*Pteridium aquilinum*) and various grasses cover the site surface. Bordered by the Merced River and its tributary, Yosemite Creek, Cook's Meadow has two borders consisting of riparian species such as willows and white alders. Exotics like raspberries, apple and elm trees. Sequoias and cedars intentionally planted.



Elm tree in Cook's Meadow



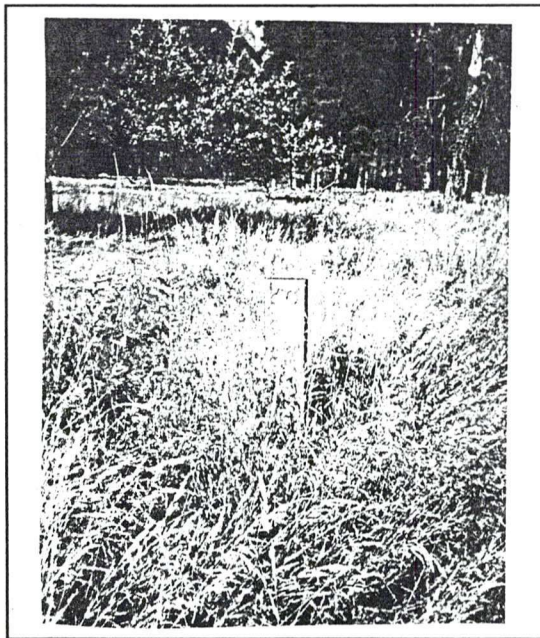
Blackberry bush in Cook's Meadow

SMALL-SCALE ELEMENTS

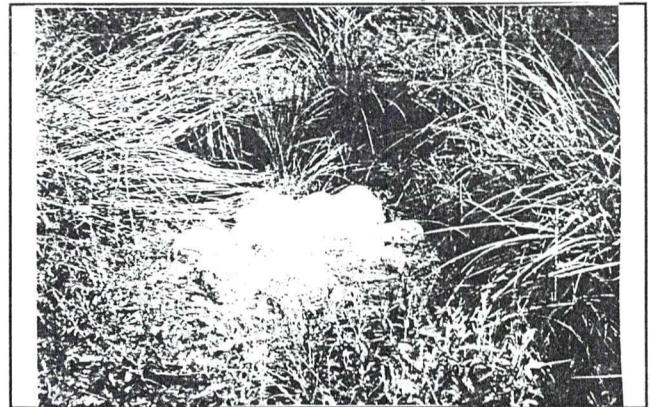
Signs: Development of the mall area by the Administration Building in the early 1980's included the creation of a self-guided nature walk from the Administration Building across North Side Drive and through Cook's Meadow. Brown-painted wood posts with numbered green-colored oak leaves serve as distinct markers for this interpretative walk along the foot/bike trail through Cook's Meadow. Miniature stop signs may also be found at the junctures of foot/bike trails and North Side Drive—a precautionary warning for speedy bicyclists. Other safety/warning structures include wood signs on the north side of the meadow advising hikers to keep a safe distance away from deer.

Stone Features: Medium-sized stone boulders line the paved path toward Residence #1. Less obvious stonework may be found surrounding culverts within the meadow. Stone constructed riprap exists on both the Merced River and Yosemite Creek borders of Cook's Meadow.

Wood Fences: Wood rail fences protect the north and south edges of the meadow from random human wandering by directing bicyclists and pedestrians toward the trails. The three-foot high fences end inconspicuously as one progresses further into the meadow.



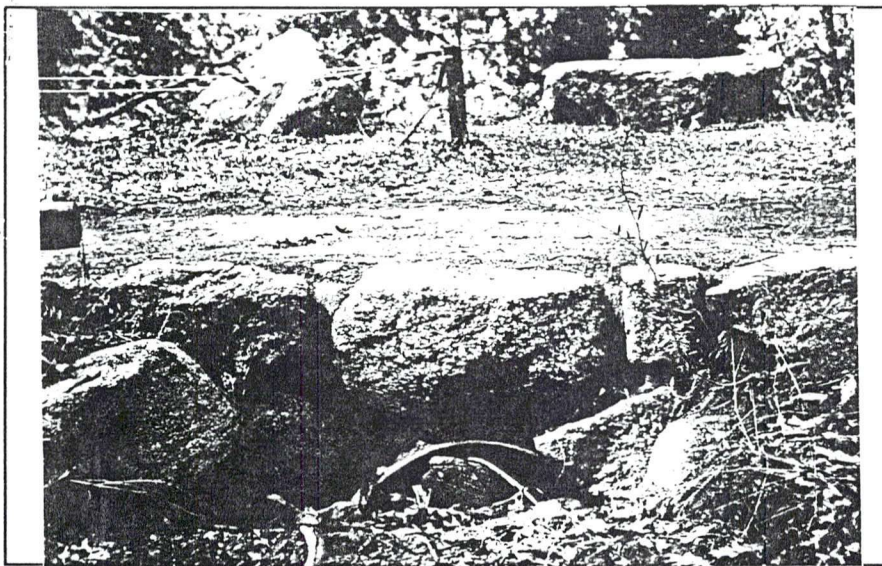
Nature trail wood post #8



Hidden stonework off northern bridlepath



Wood Fencing near Sentinel Bridge parking area



Stonework surrounding culvert of north side bridlepath

Located at the center of Yosemite Valley, which in turn is at the heart of Yosemite National Park, human occupation and activity in and around Cook's Meadow has been intense from the days of its first exploration and non-native settlement. With amenable land being scarce on the Valley floor, the discontinuation of one land use activity simply meant the beginning of another. New conservation techniques and philosophies were another source of cultural influence on the meadow as they were exercised, sometimes experimentally, on this conspicuous landscape. With land use needs and preservation philosophies changing so fast, little attention has been devoted to the documentation and protection of the historical and physical components of the meadow landscape.

This documentation project on the landscape evolution of Cook's Meadow originated to satisfy compliance requirements for a proposed removal of an abandoned road in Cook's Meadow, and is the first attempt to analyze the significance of non-building components of the landscape.

The cultural landscape evident today, reflects layers of park management philosophies in a variety of forms. The road in question, formerly known as Sentinel Road, is potentially significant for its illustration of early circulation patterns in the Valley, and of technological improvements through time in national park roads. The foot/bike trails within the meadow are also feasibly significant for their representation of pedestrian and equestrian pathways used by residents of the valley in the first half of the twentieth century and for the clues they reveal of the spatial organization of the past. The exotic species of vegetation found in Cook's Meadow are significant for their association with the settlement/homesteading period of Yosemite National Park, with the lone elm tree as the only surviving feature from James Hutchings' boardwalk across Cook's Meadow. Three apple trees and the present composition of exotic grasses on the meadow landscape reflect its agricultural/pastoral past. Residence #1 was included in the National Register of Historic Places in 1978. The building is considered significant for its architectural design in the National Park Rustic style.

It should be noted that Cook's Meadow is a significant landscape resource, in and of its own, for while aspects of it may have changed—including vegetative composition, circulation systems, hydrology, and land uses—the meadows contribute to integrity of location, setting, and association in Yosemite Valley. Although the remaining aspects of integrity are diminished by the physical alterations that have been wrought through a series of changing management philosophies, the over-riding integrity of the meadows as open spaces through and across which dramatic land forms are viewed remains.

The physical modifications imprinted on Cook's Meadow from various human activities and land uses allow for the landscape to be analyzed within the paradigm of historic vernacular landscapes. These types of landscapes are continually reshaped by their inhabitants, illustrative of peoples' values and attitudes toward the land and reflective of patterns of settlement, use, and development over time. Function plays a significant role in vernacular landscapes.

Cook's Meadow is significant as a historic vernacular landscape under Criterion A: for its association with events that have made significant contributions to the broad patterns of history; under Criterion B: for its association with the lives of persons significant in our past; under Criterion C: for distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of design, and under Criterion D: for the pre-historic and historic information it has yielded or is likely to yield.

Criterion A:

Cook's Meadow is an excellent example of the various efforts to utilize, manage, and protect the natural recreational resources of one of our oldest national parks. Extant landforms and major features, such as vegetation, irrigation and circulation features, contribute to the evolutionary picture of the cultural landscape. From the conspicuous elm tree in the middle of the meadow to the hidden scars left by the removal of Sentinel Road to the rebuilt and altered function of the rustic structure of Residence #1, Cook's Meadow contains the clues not only to its own physical history, but also to the changing needs, technologies, and

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

cultural values of its caretakers. Subtle components of this remarkably elastic ecosystem remain to illustrate the land use patterns of the earliest white settlers including the agricultural/pastoral development associated with the emergence of remote hostelry/resorts. Pioneer homesteading and establishments catering to tourists are significant for their role in the stimulation of national interest in Yosemite, and for providing the means with which Yosemite could be opened up for the enjoyment of the nation. The open qualities of the meadow attained through intentional burning and manual tree removals are less visible but equally significant cultural attributes of the landscape. The preoccupation in preserving the scenic viewsheds offered by the meadow and the scenic value of the meadow itself as a gentle, flat land, is significant for its association with the scenic preservation movement in America that claimed the cultural recognition of the United States through its scenic wonders. Yosemite was one of the first objects of scenic nationalism and its history as such is remembered.

Criterion B:

The early popularization and development of Yosemite Valley as a tourist destination was in large part, due to the work of James Mason Hutchings. After organizing the first tourist party to journey to the valley in 1855, he published enthusiastic articles illustrated with Thomas A. Ayres' lithographs of the cliffs, domes, and falls of Yosemite, in his California Magazine, which was copied and republished by papers throughout California and the rest of the country. Public knowledge and appreciation of Yosemite Valley began at this time, and tourist travel to Yosemite began as those interested readers became interested in viewing such extraordinary grandeur for themselves.

After revisiting Yosemite several times after his initial trip, Hutchings became convinced that he wanted to reside at the Upper Hotel, and in the spring of 1864, arrived in the Valley with his wife Elvira and mother-in-law, Florantha Sproat, as proprietor of the Upper Hotel. He made many improvements to the hotel, using lumber from his sawmill operated by John Muir. He also erected several farm buildings, a bridge across the Merced, and another over Yosemite

Creek. He cultivated a vegetable garden and planted trees whose fruits were valuable as both staple and luxury goods in the tourist-oriented economy of the isolated 19th-century Yosemite. His activities had a lasting impact on Cook's Meadow specifically, which was located between his cabin and his hotel. He planted and sowed the land with apple trees and hay. He dug ditches which are present to this day, and set up the general alignment of Sentinel Road for years to come. His many improvements were tourist-oriented, as they made travel, accommodations, and food much more palatable for early visitors.

Criterion C:

The spatial organization and the circulation patterns on the vernacular landscape of Cook's Meadow has been a combination of fortuitous and planned designs. While environmental design considerations were negligible in the development of the earlier infrastructure, the initial land use organization is significant for its role in the larger site planning efforts of the entire Valley floor.

The decision to relocate Yosemite Village from the south side to north of the Merced River had important implications for Cook's Meadow. The former Sentinel Road was raised from auxiliary to primary road status during Mather's time. The siting of it and the foot trails throughout the meadow are significant for the historic places they once connected. They were heavily traveled during the transition years when activity occurred at both the Old and New Villages.

Specific changes to the infrastructure within Cook's Meadow are significant for the change in philosophy they represent on how the meadow should be enjoyed and presented. These changes include the rebuilding of Residence #1 in Rustic Style in 1929, the removal of Sentinel Road in 1953 and Jorgensen's establishment in 1960, and the change in function of Residence #1 from residential to administrative.

Criterion D:

Cook's Meadow yields important information about former settlement practices and orientations as well as attitudes toward the particular scenic qualities it possesses. Future

archeological work may produce original materials used in road construction and fencing. Archeological survey near the gravel path toward Residence #1 and on the site formerly occupied by Jorgensen's structures, have yielded important prehistoric information. Recommendations have been made to analyze more of the greater meadow area to determine chronology and potential uses.

The historic vernacular landscape of Cook's Meadow possesses integrity of:

Location: The primary features defining the boundaries and vista points of the meadow, including vegetation and extant structures like Residence #1 in the northwest, and circulation in and surrounding the site, are in their approximately original location.

Design: Elements of the original spatial organization for the site and the larger Valley as a whole, including building structures and circulation pathways, are still intact. Although many man-made elements have been removed from the meadow, surviving structures and the subtle remnant of Sentinel Road allow one to imagine the sense of utilitarian use this meadow once endured. Little visible evidence remains, however, of the grazing period in Cook's Meadow.

Setting: Cook's Meadow remains adjacent to the center of activity in the Valley, although Yosemite Village is now north of the meadow instead of south. With the Yosemite Chapel still located on the south side of Cook's Meadow as the lone legacy of the Old Village, one can envision the high visibility and travel use through the meadow that must have occurred during the transition years of relocating the Village. While tree borders on the edges of meadows naturally shift, they have remained relatively constant in delineating the boundaries of Cook's Meadow.

Materials: The location and materials of Residence #1 from its reconstruction in 1929, retain their significance in revealing the stylistic goals of rustic architecture. Historic drainage patterns are still determinable, and it is likely that historic road materials including historic culverts still lie beneath the remnant of Sentinel Road. Existing plant materials are compatible

with the historic site of agricultural and pasture use. The three apple trees are remnants of a much larger planting; the elm tree and blackberry bushes present throughout the meadow reflect the plantings of the earliest homesteaders.

Workmanship: Residence #1 remains an excellent example of rustic architecture and reflects the sensitivity of the landscape architecture division toward development on the meadow during the Mather years.

Feeling: The primary use of this land today as a visually open space on the valley floor to be enjoyed by the visitor, evokes the same sense of scenic wonder it had for the earliest traveling parties to Yosemite Valley.

Association: Cook's Meadow, today, functions as it did in its historic period, as a scenic spot for drawings or photographs of geologic highlights in Yosemite Valley. Its historic utilitarian use is reflected by the extant Residence #1, which is associated with development projects of the NPS in its earliest years. Extant exotic vegetation also reflects the utilitarian use of the meadow, but of an earlier time of homesteading and agriculture.

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1. W.B. Lewis, Supervisor, Yosemite National Park, to Superintendent of National Parks, Department of Interior, October 28, 1916 in Separates File, Yosemite-Roads, Y-20, #8, Yosemite Research Library.
2. "Bridlepath Construction: 1928-1931." Completion Report #71.
3. Gibbens and Heady, 1964: 19.
4. "Merced River Revetment, 1931." Completion Report #86.
5. Gibbens and Heady, 1964: 24.
6. Vittands, John. Report: Data Recovery at Site CA-MRP-749, 1995-1996: 5.

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- page 6... Plat of land leased to J.B. Cook, Chris Jorgensen, Coffman and Kenney. Greene, vol. 1, Illustration 60, p 465.
- page 8...photo of Northwestern Boundary. CMA: neg. 9A
photo of Southeastern Boundary. CMB. neg.
- page 9...photo of Boulders and Bridlepath. CMA: neg. 1A
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Map showing rough boundaries of Cook's Meadow. USGS Half Dome map.
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- page 12...Cattle grazing in Valley -Sell's Cows. YRL and Leroy Radanovich.
Map of Old Village. Greene, vol. 3, Historical Base Map 3, p 1213.
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- page 17...photo of Removal of Residence #2. Completion Report #97.
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- page 19...photo of Flood of 1937. Sargent, Enchanted Childhoods: 82.
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- page 21...photo of Pamphlet Pick-Up. CMA: neg. 00A
- page 22...Aerial photo of ditches in Cook's Meadow. Acree, 1995.
- page 23...Map of Valley Floor in 1920. Hall, 1921: __, or Greene, vol. 2, illustration 80, p 578.
- page 25...Map of Yosemite Valley Land Use before and after 1890. (Division of Maintenance, ask Don Fox, Landscape Architect).
- page 26...Circulation Diagrams. Jones and Jones, Architects, vol. 2, Figures Y-20a, b, c.
- page 27...no picture, but spatial analysis drawing would be nice
- page 28...photo of Residence #1. CMA: neg. 18A, or any other photo of Residence #1.
- page 29...photo of Elm Tree in Cook's Meadow. CMA: neg. 20A
photo of Blackberry Bush in Cook's Meadow. CMA: neg. 6A
- page 30...photo of Stone Work. CMA: neg. 2A
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photo of Stone work surrounding culvert. CMA: neg. 5A

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Remaining problems

1. Don't know what year aerial photos were taken. not in bib.
 2. Missing bib info on orchard report - Don Fox knows
 3. Missing Bib info on Sargent's Enchanted Childhoods
 4. Map on p 25 - ask Don Fox for whereabouts
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- Radomitch photos were neg no.'s - 3, 5, 6, 7, 9 & Cows