

PH0507342

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR FEDERAL PROPERTIES

FOR NPS USE ONLY RECEIVED  
RECEIVED NOV 18 1977 AUG 15 1977  
DATE ENTERED DEC 29 1978

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC Moro Rock Stairway

AND/OR COMMON

(same)

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

Giant Forest *n of the ...*

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Sequoia National Park

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

VICINITY OF Three Rivers

17th

STATE

California

CODE

06

COUNTY

Tulare

CODE

107

**2 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

**4 AGENCY**

REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS: (If applicable)

National Park Service, Western Regional Office

STREET & NUMBER

450 Golden Gate Avenue, Box 36063

CITY, TOWN

San Francisco

STATE

California

VICINITY OF

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Tulare County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

Mooney and Mineral King Boulevards

CITY, TOWN

Visalia

STATE

California

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

List of Classified Structures

DATE

1975

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR

SURVEY RECORDS

National Park Service, Western Regional Office

CITY, TOWN

San Francisco

STATE

California

## 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED      DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

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### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Moro Rock Stairway is a series of stairs and ramps, totaling 797 feet in length, and leading to the summit of Moro Rock in Sequoia National Park.

Moro Rock is a granitic dome standing on the southern rim of the Giant Forest plateau. It, somewhat, resembles Half Dome in Yosemite National Park, except that it is a whole dome. The summit elevation is 6,715 feet. The eastern, southern, and western faces of the rock are precipitous cliffs over a thousand feet in height. The northern side of the rock is connected to the Giant Forest plateau by a granite ridge. The stairway ascends this ridge.

Beginning at the 6,500 feet elevation level of the rock (survey point 0), below which point the trail is of recent origin, the stairway follows a natural ledge for nearly 100 feet and then steeply ascends a natural crevice to an observation platform (elevation 6,645). The next 75 feet of trail are steep stairs which closely follow the crest of the ridge. Beginning at the 272 feet survey point, the trail leaves the ridge crest and traverses the eastern wall of the rock on a series of ramps supported by masonry retaining walls. Between survey points 460 and 515, the trail, following a natural crevice, cuts back to the crest of the ridge once again. From 515 to 635, the trail ascends along a natural ledge on the west face of the rock. After passing through a rock cut to the east face at 638, the trail, still following natural ledges, switchbacks the final 160 linear feet to the summit.

Throughout its length, the trail makes extensive use of massive masonry walls (see significance statement). The trail surface is mostly concrete with some areas of natural bedrock.

Although the basic trail route has remained unchanged since 1931, numerous alterations have been effected. Generally, these have taken the form of adding metal safety rails above the stone masonry parapets erected in 1931. In some areas, bedrock ramps have been covered over the concrete steps. Those portions of the route that have undergone the most intensive alteration are between the 200 and 275 survey points and between the 515 and 635 points. The best masonry is between the 0 and 150, and 310 and 515.

The survey points quoted in this form are from the 1932 National Park Service survey of the trail (Map SEQ-4944).

## 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1931

BUILDER/ARCHITECT National Park Service

### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Moro Rock Stairway, Sequoia National Park, is of local significance in the fields of landscape architecture and engineering. These values of significance result from the sensitive design of the stairway and from the craftsmanship present in its construction.

During the summer of 1931, the National Park Service erected a new stairway to the summit of Moro Rock, a granite monolith standing on the rim of the Giant Forest plateau in Sequoia National Park. Previously, a wooden stairway had been placed on the rock, but by the 1920's, it was dangerously deteriorated. Unlike the old wooden stair, which had ascended straight up the barren northern ridge of the rock, the new stairway of 1931 attempted to blend with the rock. Both route and building materials were chosen by Landscape Architect Merel Sager and Engineer Frank Diehl with the intent of harmonizing with the natural scene to the highest degree possible. These intentions were an expression of the then-current architectural philosophy of the National Park Service, a philosophy usually termed "rustic architecture."

The primary design goal of National Park Service rustic architecture was to harmonize with the natural setting through the avoidance of unnatural building lines or materials. At Moro Rock, these goals were pursued in several specific ways. Whenever possible, the stairway ascended along natural ledges or through natural crevices. In this way, unnecessary disfigurement of the smooth surfaces of the Moro Rock dome were avoided. All retaining walls and safety rails along the trail were built of random coursed, granite rubble masonry. The stone used was the same color as the rock itself. This theme was continued into the coloring of the concrete used in the actual stairs and ramps that composed the trail.

As originally designed and built, the stairway was highly successful in terms of harmonizing with the Moro Rock. It is this feature in particular that gives the stairway significance in the fields of landscape architecture and engineering. In addition, the high quality of rustic masonry work present in the structure earns additional local significance in terms of landscape architecture.

Alterations through the years, mainly in the form of metal rails and additional stairs (in place of ramps), have seriously lowered the levels of significance present. This loss of integrity is documented in the accompanying photographs.

Significant values requiring management protection relate primarily to the protection of the visual appearance of the stairway in terms of rustic design.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

1. Historic Resource File, "Moro Rock," National Park Service, Western Regional Office, Cultural Resource Management Division, San Francisco, California.
2. Tweed, William; Laura Soulliere, and Henry Law, National Park Service Rustic Architecture: 1916-1942, National Park Service, San Francisco, 1977.

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1.4

UTM REFERENCES

100                      550

A	1, 1	3 4, 2 0, 5, 0	4, 0 4, 5 6, 8, 0	B	1, 1	3 4, 2 0, 6, 0	4, 0 45 5, 7, 0
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

## VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Beginning at USGS Benchmark 6715, on the summit of Moro Rock, proceed east 25 feet; thence north 600 feet; thence west 100 feet; thence south 600 feet; thence east 75 feet to point of beginning.

## LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

William Tweed, Park Technician

ORGANIZATION

Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Park

DATE

May 20, 1977

STREET & NUMBER

Ash Mountain Headquarters

TELEPHONE

(209) 565-3341

CITY OR TOWN

Three Rivers

STATE

California 93271

# 12 CERTIFICATION OF NOMINATION

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER RECOMMENDATION **SEP 22 1977**

YES

NO

NONE

*W. M. Mellon J*  
STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

In compliance with Executive Order 11593, I hereby nominate this property to the National Register, certifying that the State Historic Preservation Officer has been allowed 90 days in which to present the nomination to the State Review Board and to evaluate its significance. The evaluated level of significance is \_\_\_ National \_\_\_ State  Local.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE *D. H. ...*

TITLE **Deputy Assistant Secretary**

DATE **NOV 10 1977**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST:

*William ...*  
*Robert ...*

DATE

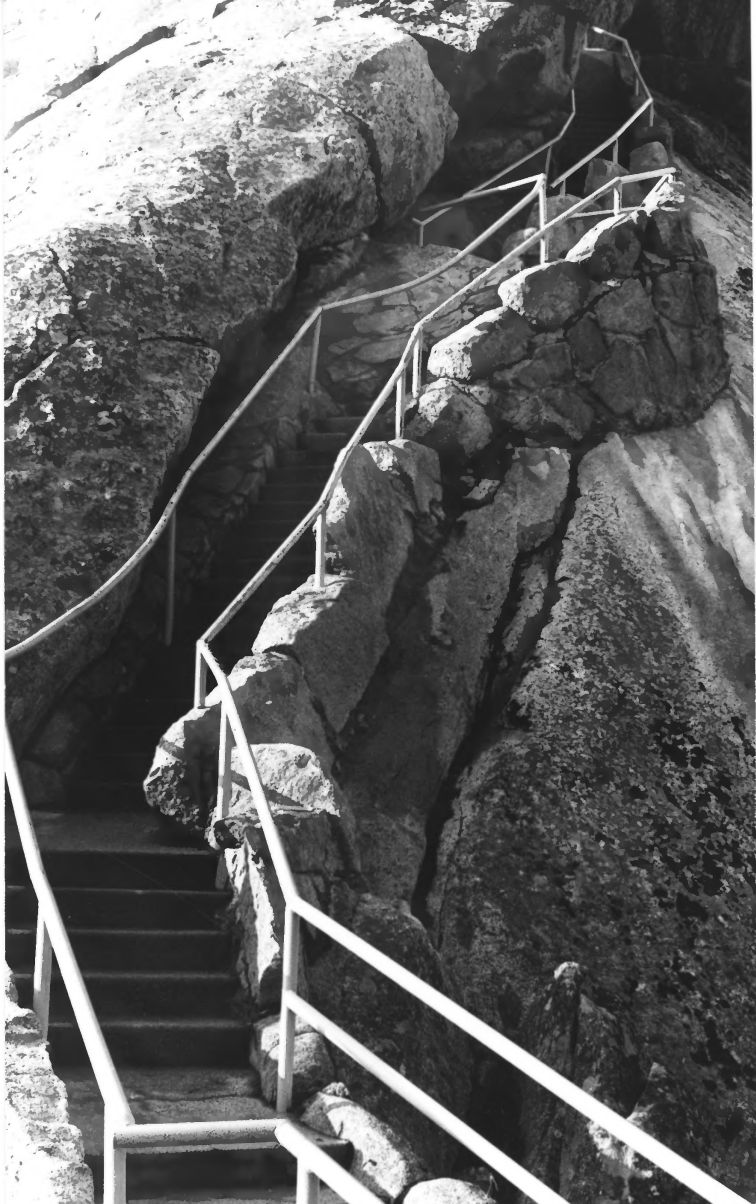
**12/29/78**

DATE

**12/21/78**

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER





DEC 29 1978

NOV 18 1977

ALTERATIONS TO INTEGRITY  
COMPARE TO PHOTO 2 OF SAME SECTION

MORO ROCK STAIRWAY IN 1931

SEQUOIA NATIONAL PARK, CA

PHOTO BY <sup>WILLIAM</sup> TWEED, 1977

NEGATIVE FILED AT:

SEQUOIA NAT. PARK

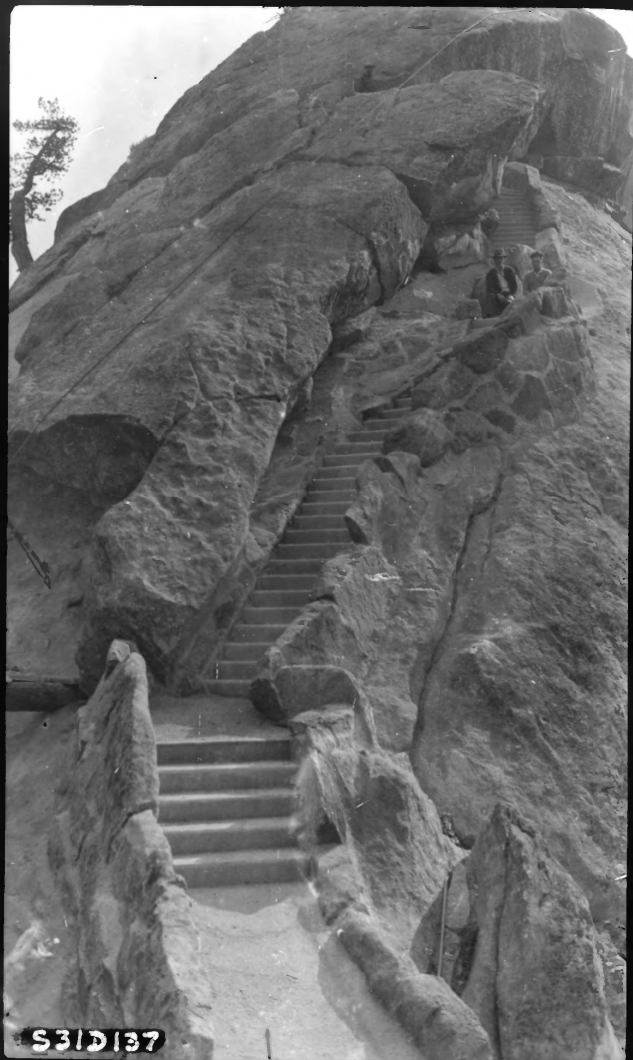
THREE RIVERS, CA

TRAIL BETWEEN SURVEY

POINTS 200 AND 270

(COMPARE TO 1931 VIEW)

PHOTO 1 OF 5



S31D137



DEC 29 1978

NOV 18 1971

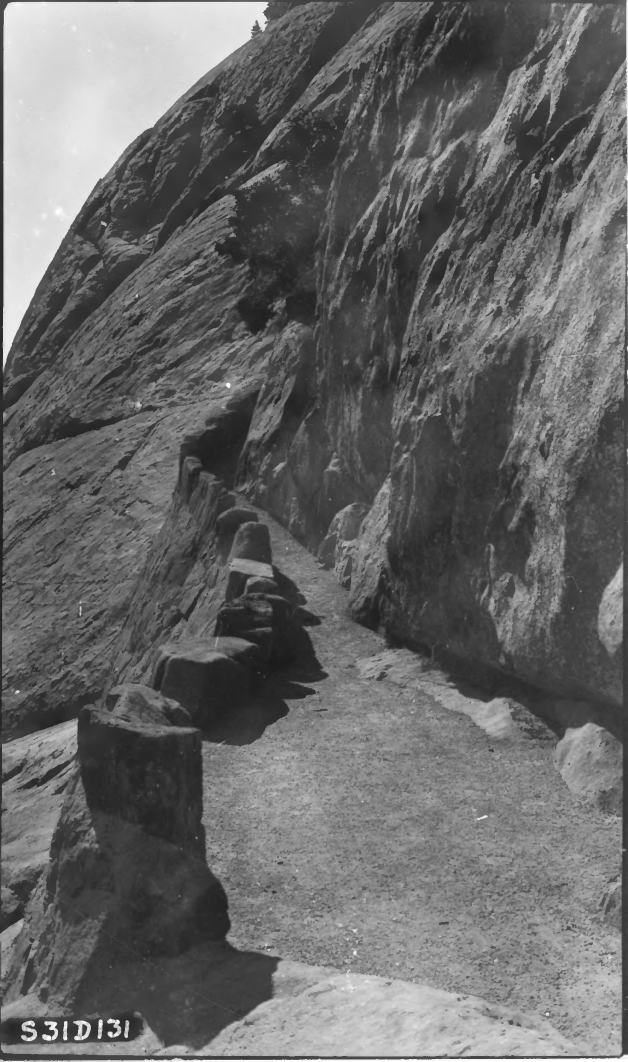
MORO ROCK STARWAY  
SEQUOIA NAT. PARK, CA  
PHOTO BY DIEHL, 1931

NEGATIVE FILED AT:

SEQUOIA NAT. PARK  
THREE RIVERS, CA

TRAIL BETWEEN SURVEY  
POINTS 200 AND 270  
(COMPARE TO 1977 VIEW)

PHOTO 2 OF 5



S31D131

DEC 29 1978

NOV 18 1977

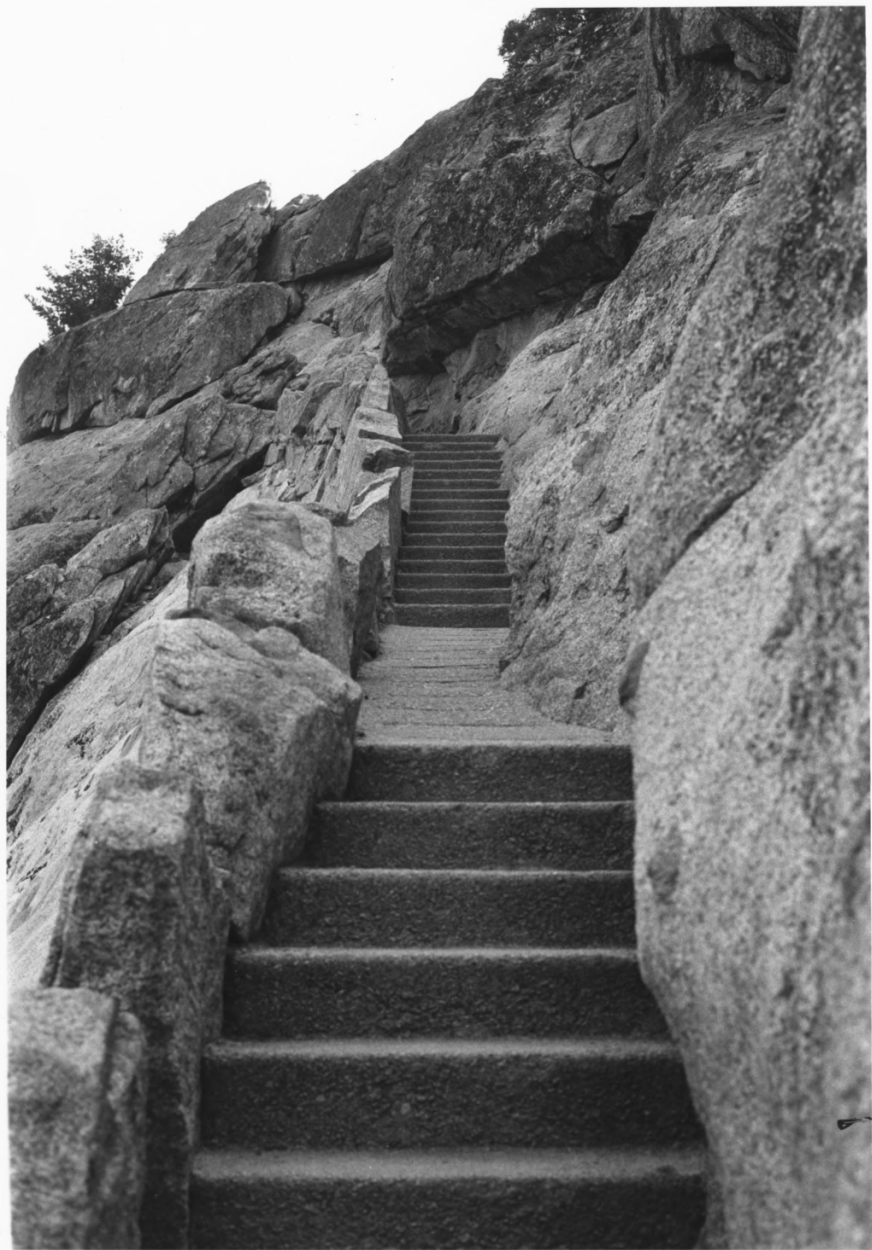
MORO ROCK STAIRWAY  
SEQUOIA NAT. PARK, CA  
Photo By DIEHL, 1931

NEGATIVE FILED AT:

SEQUOIA NAT. PARK  
THREE RIVERS, CA

BEGINNING OF 1931  
TRAIL, LOOKING SOUTH  
(COMPARE TO 1977 VIEW)

PHOTO 3 OF 5

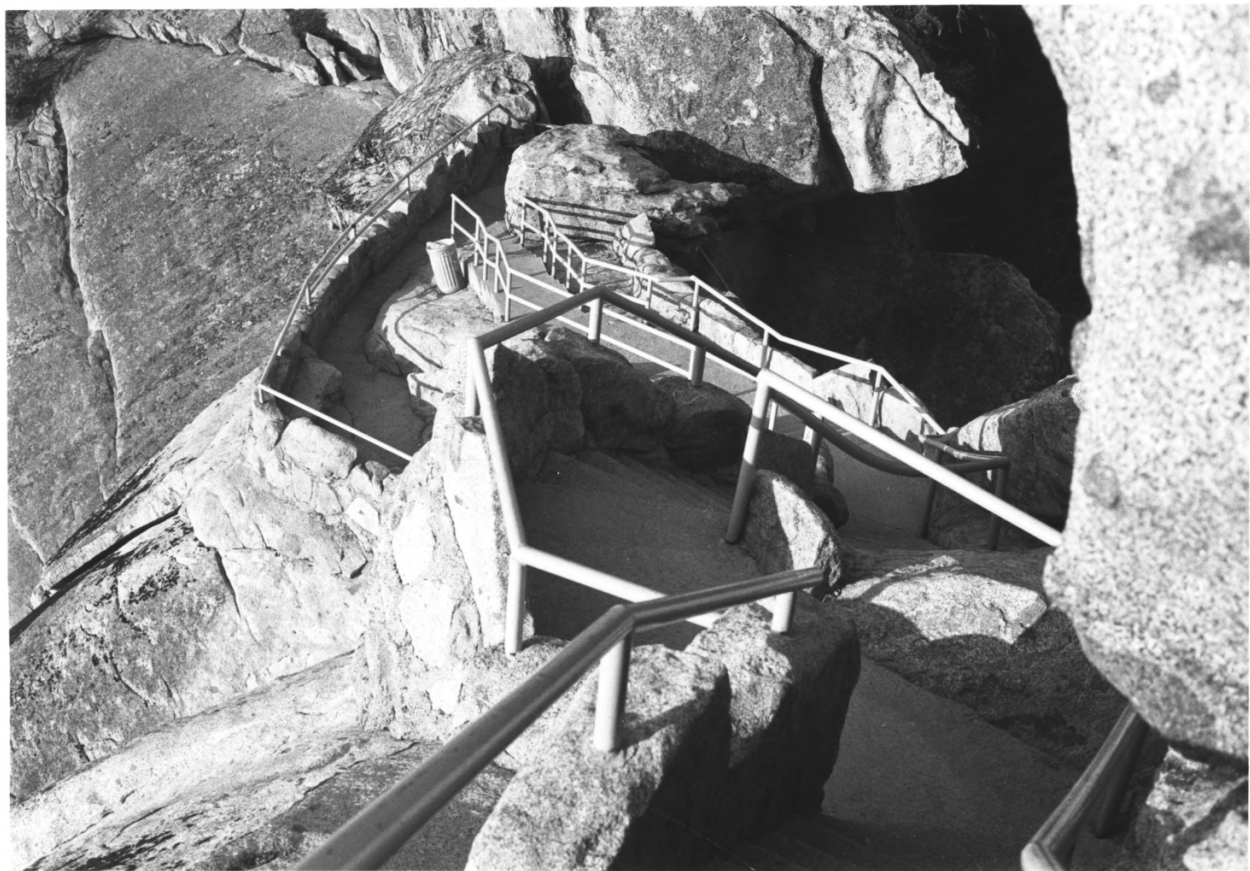


SEQUOIA NATIONAL PARK, CA

MORO ROCK STEPS

NPS PHOTO BY <sup>ROBERT</sup> COX, 10/75

PHOTO 4 OF 5



SEQUOIA NATIONAL PARK, CA

MORO ROCK STEPS

ROBERT

NPS PHOTO BY COX, 10/75

PHOTO 5 OF 5