

HOSPITAL ROCK FORMERLY SEAT OF INDIAN GOVERNMENT

PICKNICKING SPOT IS OF PARTICULAR HISTORICAL PROFIT

Great Natural Shelter Used By Indians as Tribal Headquarters,
Hospital, Store House for Over 2,000 Tribesmen

(By Walter Fry, in charge Nature Guide Service, Sequoia National Park)

It is the glory of the Sequoia National Park that it contains not alone the mightiest forest and groves of California Big Trees (*Sequoia Gigantea*) but also many other regions of majestic scenery and historical interest. Not the least of these is the noble canyon of the Kaweah River, a stream which tumbles within a few miles from the 13,000 foot peaks of the Great Western Divide down to the oak and yucca-clad foothills of the Three Rivers district.

About six miles above park headquarters at Ash Mountain (Alder Creek) near the north bank of the Middle (or main) Fork of the Kaweah River, stands Hospital Rock. This mammoth glacial boulder is about sixty feet long and twenty feet thick; and it overhangs in such a way that there is a circular room under one side. This natural dwelling place is thirty feet long and seven feet high. Over fifty people might sit in this room and, indeed, in the days when Hospital Rock was a great Indian Rancheria the room was used for tribal gatherings.

A Scenic Amphitheater

Just one glance at this Hospital Rock country is all that is necessary to convince one of its great importance as an Indian rancheria. It is one of the most beautiful spots of the Sierras. Situated at an elevation of 2,600 feet, it is poised beside the beautiful tree and vine bordered

canyon of the Kaweah River--a brawling, foaming torrent. Moro and Castle Rocks, like guarding sentinels, stand a little to the eastward on either side of the canyon, and lift their colossal domes heavenward from 4,000 to 6,500 feet above the river. At Hospital Rock the canyon widens out with sloping expanse to about four miles in width and over 4,000 feet in depth. The lower slopes are heavily studded with six varieties of acorn bearing oaks as well as other graceful deciduous trees, while the upper crests are bordered with heavy forests of pine and sequoia. It is in this canyon that most of the wild animals of the region for miles around are forced to spend the winter months when deep snow clothes the higher country. In the river fish abound. Thus it will be seen that the Indians of this camp were in a position to obtain both acorns, deer and bear meat and fish with but little effort.

An Historical Spot

Of great historic interest is this Hospital Rock and surrounded by an atmosphere of romance. Before the white man came to California and for an all too short period thereafter, this region was an Indian rancheria. Indeed it was one of the principal gathering places for Indians in this part of the state. The massive natural house served as a storehouse for supplies, a hospital for the sick and for new born babes. Here was the seat of government for over two thousand Indians. Here was the home of the chiefs and medicine men of the tribe, where councils were held, marriage ceremonies solemnized and funeral rites given. It was here that the men of the tribe returned from long hunting expeditions to rest and recuperate. Here it was that campfires were kept burning the year round. The Indians belonged to the Potwisha tribe; the dividing line between this tribe and the valley Indians of the Watchumna tribe was at Lime Kiln Hill, Lemon Cove.

Pictograph Records of Past Days

On the south side of the rock there is a smooth perpendicular surface, 20 feet by 30 feet, where the builder split in twain by the Master Mason of the Universe. This expanse of smooth rock is covered by hieroglyphics and picture paintings, dark red in color, and for which no key or interpretation has yet been found. Latter day Indians claim that these makings were made before their time and that they cannot interpret them; nor do they even know the ingredients and materials used for painting these seemingly indestructible pictures. It would therefore seem that a prehistoric people inhabited this spot, a people antedating perhaps by centuries the Indians who were there when the white men came in the middle of the nineteenth century. Although this region shows signs of having been inhabited down through the ages no written records were left except these hieroglyphic and pictograph writings which have not yet been deciphered.

For hundreds, yes, perhaps thousands of years those primeval peoples lived out their lives according to their destiny at this Hospital Rock rancheria with little or nothing to disturb them. But when white men entered their country and took practically all their land away from them it was a serious and painful matter for the Indians. For then they were compelled to surrender their birthplace and the home they loved so well to a stronger and more enlightened race of people. This they did without bloodshed or armed resistance. They left their lands to our keeping with tearful eyes and melancholy thoughts and departed forever to other lands--we know not where. For the tribe is now practically extinct, and not one remains in the vicinity to tell its sad story.

In view of the long occupancy of this region by Indians, both prehistoric and modern, it may be expected that when its archaeology is carefully studied many interesting facts and objects will be disclosed. Meanwhile all excavation or disturbance of existing conditions is forbidden under

National Park Service regulations.

Earliest Settler's Story

Regarding the Indians' former occupancy of the Hospital Rock country and the Tree Rivers region, this is best given in a report from the late Hale D. Tharp who was the first white person to enter the Three Rivers country and the Sequoia National Park region. This is the account as I obtained it from him on May 25, 1910:

"When I first came to the Three Rivers country in 1856, there were over 2,000 Indians living along the Kaweah Rivers above Lemon Cove. Their headquarters camp was at Hospital Rock. That was the seat of government where all tribal business was transacted and festivities were held. Chief Chappo, his council, and the medicine men lived there. The camp was never vacated during either winter or summer and the campfires were kept continually burning. All the Indians who were sick, extremely old or crippled, as well as most of the women with young babies remained there the year round. During the summer months a great many of the Indians went to the higher mountains, but the camp at Hospital Rock was always kept filled.

"I made my first trip to the Hospital Rock camp during the summer of 1858. Chief Chappo and I had become the very best of friends and he asked me to come up and stay with him over night. He sent down two young Indian men to pilot me in, as there were no trails in the country, just Indian foot-paths. I went on horseback and it took me about eight hours to work my way in, the distance being about 18 miles from my Three Rivers ranch. When I arrived at the camp Chappo and his men extended me a cordial welcome and gave me the best his camp afforded. He called out every individual in the camp ^{with} much dignity and long ceremony introduced me to all. There were over 600 Indians then living at the camp. My arrival at the camp

excited the curiosity of most of the Indians, as I was the first white man that had ever visited their camp, and only a few of their leaders had ever seen a white person before. As for myself, I did not attract half so much attention as did my horse and saddle, my weapons, and the clothing I wore. These were all new to most of the Indians for they had never seen such things before.

"On the following morning Chappo showed me all through his camp and explained its many advantages over that of others. It was the cleanest camp that I have ever seen. He showed me the house-rock, the spring, the river, the sweat-houses, and what extra supplies he had. The supplies were all stored nicely under the rock, leaving just enough space for two beds. In one of the beds was a woman with her leg broken, and in the other a woman with a very young baby. The bed mattresses were bear robes, and the quilt coverings were of nice white buckskin. Nearly all the Indians wore buckskin suits. They had great quantities of acorns, meats, skins, medical herbs, and other supplies stored under the rock. There was no smoke on the room ceiling then. This has been caused by the whites camping in there after the Indians left. He showed me the paintings on the rock and asked me to tell him what they meant. He said that none of his people understood them, or knew from what material they were made. He had given orders that none of the Indians should touch them, as undoubtedly they had been put there by some people before their time and that maybe some day some person would come along and tell him what they meant.

"By the spring of 1862 quite a number of whites had settled in the Three Rivers section, and the Indians were gradually forced out. Then, too, the Indians had contracted contagious diseases from the whites, such as measles, scarlet fever, and smallpox and they died off by the hundreds. I helped to bury 27 in one day up on the Sam Kelly place. About this time Chief Chappo and some of his men came to see me, and asked me to try and stop the whites from coming into their country. When I

said that was impossible, they all sat down and cried. They told me that their people loved this country, did not want to leave it, and knew not where to go. A few days later Chappo came to me with tears in his eyes and told me that they had decided not to fight the whites but would leave the country. From that time on, they moved out little by little and from time to time until all were gone. I think by the summer of 1865 the Indians had left the district. Their Hospital Rock camp was the last vacated and they left it clean as a ribbon. For a few years after they left one or two of the Indians would occasionally drift in for just a short while; but this practice soon ceased, and I gradually lost track of them. I don't know what has become of them now. I named the camp Hospital Rock when Everton got shot there in 1873."

A Hospital for White People

Not only has this Hospital Rock been used as a hospital for Indians down through the ages, but of late years it has been used by the white people in the same way.

During the summer of 1860, John Swanson and Hale D. Tharp, while on one of their exploration trips, stayed under this rock for a period of three days and three nights. Swanson had injured one of his legs so that the pain and agony prevented him from going further. The Indians doctored him by binding his wounds with hot applications of crushed green jimson leaves and bear's fat which practically cured the patient within three days.

Naming the Rock

The name "Hospital" Rock arose through an accident that befel Alfred Everton while camping there in the autumn of 1873. Mr. Everton and George Cahoon were hunting and trapping for bear and had put out several set guns. The guns were to be discharged by means of strings attached to the triggers and stretched across the trails for the bear to walk into.

Everton, while traveling through the brush accidentally came in contact with the string of one of the guns. He received the load in one thigh, causing a very serious and painful wound, which crippled him for the remainder of his life. Cahoon succeeded in carrying Everton to the rock under which he left him and went to the settlement for assistance. His call for help brought out the following pioneers: Dr. Bradley of Visalia; George Cahoon, Joseph Palmer, George Swanson, Almer Lovelace and Dhris Devoe of Three Rivers. These men proceeded to Hospital Rock and Brought Everton out on a litter the third day after the accident. As Hospital Rock the place has ever since been known.

Following the Everton tragedy at Hospital Rock, next comes that of James Wolverton, the sick man. It was here that Mr. Wolverton, a pioneer hunter and trapper, was stricken with a groin abcess while living at Hospital Rock during the spring of 1893. Mr. Wolverton, at that time, was employed by Hale D. Tharp and his son Nort, as a lookout to prevent their stock from drifting out of the mountains from above. Mr. Wolverton's failure to come down to the Tharp ranch for supplies, a distance of some 18 miles, on the date agreed upon, caused Nort to suspect that something unusual had happened--so he went to the Rock to see. Upon his arrival he found Wolverton lying prostrate and helpless and immediately returned to the settlement for assistance. The following named individuals are the persons who helped Mr. Tharp carry the patient to his home: B. W. Southward, Ernest Britton, Charles W. Blossom, Wm. Reeves, Frank Carter, Wm. Trauger, Dick Lane and U. B. Luce, all of Three Rivers. After a short stay at the Tharp ranch Mr. Wolverton was taken to the Harry Trauger ranch about six miles above Three Rivers, at which place he died and was buried. Thus ended the calamities at Hospital Rock.

The Heritage of the Indians

It is a strange coincident and not without interest that in the creation of the Sequoia National Park, this spot, which may be termed the capitol grounds and capitol building for the government of a tribe of Indians, was, inadvertently, included within its boundaries. Never-

was fortunately the case, and Hospital Rock will here-
be remembered by posterity in sacred memory of a people that has passed
the face of the earth.

Although the Indians that inhabited the Hospital Rock country were
forced to surrender their homes to the white invaders, in so doing they
left an heritage which we, as white citizens, are morally bound to res-
pect. This is the heritage left by the Indians: they turned over to the
white race the beautiful canyon of the Kaweah river, the spacious amphi-
theater around Hospital Rock and the noble forests of sequoia, pine and
fir which crown the whole; and when they bequeathed it to us they left it
with all of its natural resources and scenic beauties unimpaired.

Of such an heritage every American citizen should feel justly proud;
and he should feel the responsibility of handing down that scenic heritage
unspotted to future generations of Americans.

Can the white man do less than the untutored Indian? Is progress
only measured by mechanics and man-made things? What profiteth a nation
if it build city upon city at the cost of destroying all natural beauty?
Let the many civilizations which have risen--aye and fallen--answer those
questions.

As for Americans, they have answered those questions by creating
the federal reservations known as National parks and thereby declaring
that the preservation of beauty has its place in our national life.

RED SNOW

by

Judge Walter Fry

What color is snow? White is the natural answer, which may be right or wrong, as the case may be. Snow is generally white, so white that it has become a synonym for exceptional purity. But snow may also be red - blood red, as Judge Walter Fry recalls having seen it on one or two occasions in the Sequoia National Park.

Judge Fry first encountered bloody snow in July, 1905, when, with two troopers of U. S. Cavalry then stationed at Giant Forest, he went to the top of Mount Silliam, 11,188 feet, on a snow measuring trip. They had a hard trip to the summit, as everything above 8,000 feet was under a heavy snow blanket; so coming back down the mountain they cut some poles of foxtail pine which they used as toboggans or brakes to speed down the frozen slopes of snow.

They shot down at terrific speed. Trooper Lynch was ahead of Judge Fry, and left a white spray of snow in his wake. But when they were about at the 10,000 foot level, Judge Fry noticed that the snow spray behind Lynch had turned to a bloody red, and the marks left by his feet and the pole were, apparently, lines of blood. The sight sickened the Judge, who thought the pole had broken, stabbing Lynch and causing a terrible hemorrhage. But the red spray turned again to white and stopping to examine the phenomenon, they found a circular patch of red snow about eight inches deep and on top of over four feet of which snow.

A few days later Judge Fry returned to measure the red snow again, and found that it had spread in every direction thirty-six feet, and had added another inch in depth. Specimens were taken and sent to the U. S. Department of Agriculture, whose chemists found it due to a minute form of life of the genus *Sphaerella*.

On another occasion, in June, 1915, Judge Fry was looking over a proposed road with Ranger Carl Keller and found many patches of red snow in the Clo Creek basin, not far from what is now the route of the Generals' Highway.

Giant Forest to General Grant National Park.

Red snow has been reported from various parts of the world, but is rare in the United States. Judge Fry remarks that as the Generals' Highway now passes within a mile of the place where he found the red snow in 1915, it seems likely that the phenomenon may appear this summer, particularly as we have had much snowfall that is heavy, which seems to conduce to the appearance of this freak of nature.

February 12, 1932

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Historical SeriesSEQUOIA NATURE GUIDE SERVICE

(by Walter Fry)

First Ascent of Moro Rock

Moro Rock is one of the outstanding features of the Sequoia National Park, and stands at the south border of the Giant Forest. Its crest can be reached on the north side by a climb of less than four hundred feet; but one can look down over the east side at Hospital Rock Camp and the Kaweah River Canyon nearly 4,000 feet below. In 1917 a series of wooden stairways was constructed up the backbone of the north side of the rock, and since that time some hundreds of thousands of visitors to the park have made the ascent.

As people group at the top and look back over the steep, almost sheer, slope up which they have just come, the question is often asked, "Who was the first to reach the top of this great rock?" Park officers have been as interested in this bit of history as the visitors, and Judge Walter Fry, former superintendent of the park, after much investigation, places the credit with three former residents of Three Rivers. These men, Hale D. Tharp--discoverer of Giant Forest, John Swanson and George Swanson, are now dead; but Judge Fry, while discussing the discovery and exploration of the Sequoia National Park region, secured the following statement from Mr. Tharp on May 25, 1910:

"By the spring of 1861, a few white men had come to the Three Rivers country and I decided it was about time for me to begin occupying the Giant Forest range in order to hold it. So when summer came I drove some horses up to Log Meadow, where I left them all summer. George Swanson, my stepson, and John Swanson helped me drive in. George was just a small boy then. The day after we arrived we all went over and climbed to the top of Moro Rock."

There appears to be no question but that these pioneers of the Giant Forest region were the first to reach the top of Moro Rock, and that the ascent was made in the summer of 1861.

The distinction of being the first woman to climb the rock rests with Mrs. Bernard Mohrten (formerly Miss Fanny Tharp), of Three Rivers. In company with her father, Hale Tharp, and her brother Mort, she climbed up the north slope to the summit in either 1872 or 1873, when yet a girl in her teens.

The climb to the top before the stairway was installed was indeed a mountaineering feat attempted by only the most intrepid. The wooden stairs took away the dangers of the climb, but still left many thrills for visitors. Complete physical and psychological safety is assured the public in the all-rock route to the summit which will be built during the coming year, and which will be so located that no damage will be done to the landscape features of the rock. The peak of the rock, where the Geological Survey Bench Mark records the elevation of 6,719 feet, can be reached in a 10 minute trip from the automobile parking area. The view presented of the rugged 13,000 foot peaks of the Great Western Divide is equal to that obtainable in many parts of the Sierra only by several days hard pack-train travel into the mountains.

World-wide travelers, who have seen the best scenery of the Alps, the Andes, the Himalayas and other mountain ranges, have declared the view from Moro Rock to be the equal of any. Yet it may be reached by excellent paved or oiled roads in two hours from San Joaquin Valley towns on the Golden State Highway.

A TWENTY-FIVE YEAR SURVEY OF THE ANIMALS OF

SEQUOIA NATIONAL PARK -- 1906-1931

Vol. 2

Bulletin 2.

by

Judge Walter Fry

America's National Parks are "maintained in unimpaired form for the use of future generations as well as those of our own time." To most people this means the protection of scenic features and the preservation of the deer, bears and other animals or birds commonly seen by park visitors. A less noticeable but highly important work of conservation in the National Parks is the maintenance of the natural balance of wild life; that is, complete, or practically complete, protection for all forms of wild life, even for the so-called vermin or predatory animals and birds, such as the lion, wild cats, racoons, skunks, foxes, eagles, hawks and owls.

The benefits of such complete conservation in the Sequoia National Park is clearly shown by the records kept by Judge Walter Fry over a period of twenty-five years, and the following bulletin expresses his observations. A notable result of the natural balance may be observed in the control of ground squirrels, which, within the park, are kept down by the other so-called vermin; poisoning being rarely if ever necessary.

In comparing wild life of today with that of twenty-five years ago, many changes are noted: some species have increased, others have held their own, some have lagged behind, and others have vanished from the area.

Bears and deer have increased at least sixty percent. Mountain and valley coyotes, skunks, weasels, porcupines, pikas, rats, mice, gophers, moles, shrews, mountain beavers, and bats have held their own. Mountain lions, lynxes, fishers, martins, minks, foxes, racoons, ring-tailed cats, marmots, squirrels, chipmunks, hares and rabbits (other than the California jack rabbit), have decreased about forty

percent. Mountain sheep, wolverenes, and badgers are verging on extinction. Four mountain sheep were reported seen by tourists on the western slope of Mt. Whitney last year, and their tracks have been reported on Sugar Loaf Creek this year. Wolverine tracks have been reported on Kern River this year, while badgers have been noted at Willow Meadow. The last wolverenes taken in the vicinity of the park, of which we have record, were the five trapped during the winter of 1924-25. Two were taken at Big Meadow, two at Mineral King, and one at River Valley. Of the five taken, four were males and one female. They were all beautiful specimens and in fine condition. This trapping near the park boundaries has, of course, been responsible for diminishing the fur-bearing animals.

Two native species, the gray wolf and the California jack rabbit, have disappeared. The only gray wolf seen within the park since the time of its creation was one killed by Charlie Howard at Wolverton, September 25, 1908. Mr. Howard at the time was slaughtering beef for a troop of soldiers, and the wolf came up within fifty yards of his camp in broad daylight and was eating on some of the beef offal. It was a large male in fairly good condition, but quite old, as evidenced by badly worn teeth. California plains jack-rabbits have always inhabited sparingly a small area at Shepherd Cove and Ash Mountain within the park; but during the summer season of 1918, when poisoned grain was put out along the park boundary to kill ground squirrels, it not only killed the squirrels but the rabbits as well. None of the rabbits have been seen within the park since August 25th of that year.

The opossum, an animal foreign to the region, has recently arrived in the park. These animals are one result of the drought of 1924, when the waters over their breeding grounds, some fifteen miles west of the park, dried up. As the waters dried out, the opossums kept following up the Kaweah River into the mountain section, until

colony of the animals is reported living at Camp Potwisha in the park. The opossums are descendants from stock imported from Missouri some twenty-five years ago and liberated a short distance east of Visalia.

I have not listed the California Grizzly bears in this report, because we have never considered them a resident of the park; although at very rare intervals individual animals have been reported within the park, and a few have been killed west of the park. From 1921 to 1922, a large bear seen at various times within the park was, undoubtedly, a grizzly. This is possibly the bear killed at Horse Corral by Jesse Agnew in 1922.

So comparing the wild animals of Sequoia National Park for 1931 with those of the first survey of 1906, twenty-five years ago, we find the following changes:

Of the 63 known species that inhabited the park in 1906, 2 have increased, 35 have held their own, 21 have been greatly reduced, 3 are verging on extinction, and 2 have disappeared. One animal has been added, the opossum, which now gives us 62 different species of animals within the park today.

I look for a marked increase if animals within the park in the next quarter century. This increase may be attributed to enlargement of the park and the creation of the Sequoia National Game Refuge, which took place in 1926. This prevents hunting and trapping in the new area and adjacent territory, and has increased the breeding and feeding grounds about three fold.

It is indeed fortunate that we have the National Parks, not only because they preserve animals that would otherwise be exterminated, but because they illustrate the benefits of complete conservation and the maintenance of the natural balance of wild life, so often carelessly upset by man in his killing and poisoning campaigns.

SEQUOIA NATURE GUIDE SERVICE

THE GREAT SEQUOIA AVALANCHE

by Walter Fry,
U. S. Commissioner.

Those Valley residents who are cast into a slough of despondency by the recent cycle of dry years, may find fresh courage and hope in this account by Judge Fry of the great rains and flood of 1867, when it rained and snowed for 41 days almost without cessation.

This graphic account of the South Fork Avalanche in December, 1867, is one of a series of historical bulletins by Judge Fry, who has others in preparation.

A Big Tree (*Sequoia gigantea*) Grove in the Sequoia National Park was the scene of the greatest known avalanche in the southern Sierra, and this mighty landslide occurred within comparatively recent times. On December 20, 1867, the north side of Dennison Mountain broke away and dropped into the South Fork of the Kaweah River about 15 miles above Three Rivers, and about 42 miles east of Visalia. Apparently without warning, several hundred acres of land and timber crashed 3,000 feet in to the South Fork Canyon. The devastated area is in one of the most heavily forested regions of sequoia, pine and fir within the Sequoia National Park, and in the very heart of the Garfield Big Tree Grove. Many of the Sequoias^w were from 20 to 30 feet in diameter, and from 250 to 300 feet height. Their ages undoubtedly ran into the thousands of years. The pines and firs were particularly large and fine. I have made a survey of the area involved, and estimate that some 350,000,000 board feet of timber were destroyed. No other figure could better bring out the enormity of the loss to the park.

The devastated area is between the elevations of 6,000 and 7,500 feet is about 2½ miles in length, and from 1500 to 4000 feet in width. The avalanche appears to have started near the crest of Dennison Ridge, below

8000 feet. It gathered volume so that upon reaching the river it formed a dam half a mile wide and over 400 feet high completely across the canyon, and entirely stopped the flow of the river. Naturally, this barrier backed up the stream into a great reservoir. Finally the loosely formed dam broke and the flood swept down the Kaweah River, carrying with it thousands of tons of crashing trees and debris, and spreading for miles over the San Joaquin Valley. Today, sections of huge Sequoia trees will be found in the Valley, scores of miles from the groves in the mountains and great distances from present river beds.

Early settlers of the Three Rivers and Visalia districts have told me of the great flood of 1867. Joseph Palmer, a homesteader, was the only person in the South Fork Canyon on the night of December 20, 1867, and the statement I obtained from him on October 5, 1890, runs as follows:

"It had been raining in the Three Rivers district almost steadily for 41 days and nights, with heavy snows above the 5,000 foot level. All the rivers were very high. On the morning of December 20, the weather became warmer, and a hard rain fell all day, even at high elevations. It was still raining when I went to bed that night, and a strong wind blew down the canyon. Just before midnight I was aroused by a heavy rumbling sound such as I had never heard before, and which lasted for an hour or more. Then a great calm set in, and even the roaring of the river ceased.

"On leaving my cabin in the morning, I found that despite the heavy rain the river was low. From this I knew that a great slide had blocked the canyon above and that later the dam would give way and cause a flood. I went up the river to Bonnet Creek, but saw nothing wrong; returned and watched all day, but no flood came, so I went to bed at 10 p. m. About 1:30 a. m. I was aroused by a tremendous thundering and rumbling sound which made my hair stand on end. I jumped out of bed, grabbed my clothing, and ran for safety up the mountain side some 200 yards from the river.

In a few minutes the flood came along with a breast of water some 40 feet in depth that extended across the canyon, carrying with it broken up trees which were crashing end over end in every direction with terrific force and sound. The river remained high for several days, and all the while timber was going down and being swept clear out to the Valley."

It is interesting to note what old settlers say about the flood upon its reaching Visalia. In the past I have obtained statements from several of these, whose names and the dates of their statements are as follows:

A. J. Samstag, May 14, 1902: "I was living in Visalia at the time of the '67 flood. The flood reached Visalia prior to midnight on December 23. The water was about 5 feet in depth. There were logs and driftwood floating everywhere. Some poultry and live stock were drowned."

Ira Blossom--June 2, 1906: "I was working in the grist mill in Visalia at the time of the '67 flood. It came sometime prior to midnight on December 23. The water was about 5 feet in depth at the mill. There were logs and driftwood scattered for miles around. Many Sequoia logs were left out at the Hilliard place. Some stock was drowned."

Margaret Oaks--October 24, 1925: "I was living in Visalia at the time of the '67 flood. It occurred in the night a few days before Christmas. The water was 5 feet deep where I lived. One big red-wood log was left by the flood right along the side of the grist mill. Much live stock was drowned."

Betty Townsend--January 31, 1926: "I was living out near Cutler Park at the time of the '67 flood. The flood occurred on the evening of December 23. Mr. and Mrs. S. C. Brown, Mr. and Mrs. Deneley, Frank Kellenberg with his son Frank, Jr., and four other people sought refuge in my home that night, and remained as refugee guests for a week. Our Christmas dinner, in part, consisted of a turkey feast. The turkey was captured by one of the party from a bale of hay which was being swept down the torrent. A pig was similarly rescued and consumed."

The major immediate causes of the avalanche were the geological formation of the area and the prevailing conditions of the weather. The devastated area was on a mountain side resting at about a 45 degree angle. A rich, sandy loam, ranging in depth from 5 to 12 feet, lay over the solid granite formation of the mountain. When the soil down through to bed rock became thoroughly saturated by the heavy rains, and then weighted down by heavy snows, the loosened mass, with all its timber and vegetation, slipped into the canyon below.

Because of its recent occurrence, we consider the crashing of this vast tract of land from the mountain side as a major event in the eyes of mankind; yet it is only a small incident in the age-old geological history of the Sierra^s, which records the constant recession of the mountains to the valleys below.

Although the Garfield Big Tree Grove has been reduced by about one-third of its former size, it still remains third in order of the largest groves within the Sequoia National Park. Careful estimates indicate some 1600 trees over 10 feet in diameter are preserved in this grove alone.

Residents of Visalia may wonder if another flood will ever reach their city from such cause as the one described above. This seems unlikely, as nowhere else in the Kaweah River Basin is there any soil and forest conditions so favorable to an avalanche as that on the South Fork which slid in 1867.