

Park Development Story of Tulare County's Efforts

Fight-----

Files of Visalia, California, newspapers give a graphic account of the thirteen year struggle to preserve the giant Sequoias from the axe. For those interested, this chronological history of that titannic struggle, is here presented:-

We urge readers to read this statement and judge for themselves why Tulare county is opposing Fresno's present and threatened attitude and to further bolster themselves up with the facts and figures in carrying on their well directed campaign. The statement follows, first from the angle of mountain development from Visalia and later from the Tulare county standpoint. (The Visalia Morning Delta being indebted to the "Father" of the parks, Col. George W. Stewart of Visalia; to Secretary H. J. Beidleman of the Visalia Chamber of Commerce; to A. E. Miot, secretary of the Tulare County Board of Trade and to others who assisted in the gathering of these facts.)

1878-9

A Visalia newspaper advocated saving the big trees and protecting the forests of the Sierra Nevada.

1879

The Register and Receiver of the U. S. Land Office in Visalia both residents of this city, recommended the suspension from entry of the land containing what is now the General Grant grove of big trees, to prevent it from passing into private ownership.

1880

The U. S. Surveyor General for California, A citizen of Visalia, withdrew the above mentioned land from entry.

The same year Visalians protested against applications to enter the land and the Register and Receiver rejected the applications.

1881

Senator Miller of California was made acquainted by Visalia People, with the big tree groves, mountain forests, the canyons of Kings and Kern rivers and the Mt. Whitney region, and he introduced a bill Dec. 13, 1881, to create a national park embracing that territory. It failed to pass.

1885

Visalia people prevented the Giant Forest from passing into private ownership after over 8,000 acres in and near the Forest had been applied for in the local U. S. Land office.

The same year representations from Visalia caused the suspension from entry of eighteen townships nearly all of which contained sequoia groves.

1889

Visalia people initiated and other Tulare county towns supported a movement for the creation of a forest reserve covering all the mountain region from the Yosemite south into Kern county, and embracing 7,524 square miles, or over 4, 813,360 acres.

The same year, for the third time, Visalians protested attempts to enter the General Grant Grove.

1890

After a suspended township west of Mineral King had been ordered restored to entry, Visalia people induced the Secretary of the Interior to revoke his order of restoration, and thus saved the large sequoia groves there.

The same year Visalians initiated the effort to create the Sequoia National Park, which proved successful.

A Visalia resident, who happened to be in Washington, suggested that the bill be amended to include the General Grant grove, and the General Grant National Park was thus created.

It was desired to have the canyons of the Kings and Kern rivers

included, but for the purpose of saving the big trees it was planned to first insure the preservation of the Sequoia groves.

After the park bill had passed the House of Representatives and its passage by the senate was assured, a Visalian read before the California Academy of Sciences on September 1 a paper recommending the extension of the park boundaries to include Kings and Kern Canyons and Mt. Whitney. The report of a committee previously appointed, was adopted the same day and the government was memorialized to create the enlarged park.

1891

A Visalia newspaper in April advocated the extension of the Sequoia National Park to include Mt. Whitney Park and the Kings and Kern river canyons.

Visalians made Captain J. R. Dorst acquainted with these regions, and in his annual report he also recommended the extension of the park.

The commissioner of the General Land office suspended from entry the area of 4,815,360 acres recommended in 1889 as a forest reserve.

1893

Above land made into a forest reserve.

1894

At suggestion of Visalia Board of Trade Congressman W. W. Bowers introduced a bill providing for an inquiry regarding private lands in the parks.

1899

Visalia Board of Trade (now Visalia Chamber of Commerce) paid expenses of Congressman J. C. Needham and party to Giant Forest, Kern River Canyon and Mt. Whitney, also paid for building a trail from Giant Forest to Mineral King.

1901

Visalia Board of Trade financed the building of a shorter trail from Bullion Flat (near Mineral King) to Kern river, the Forest Service then having no money for the purpose; and, with the County Board of Supervisors, financed the building of a trail by a Forest Ranger from Giant Forest to the Kings River Canyon trail at Horse Corral Meadow, the supervisors paying for the work to Fresno County line and the Board of Trade from county line to Horse Corral in Fresno County.

The Visalia Board of Trade took up with Congressman from this district the matter of enlargement of Sequoia National park.

1902

The Visalia Board of Trade, the Mt. Whitney club (a Visalia organization) and County Board of Supervisors, paid the cost of building the Dean Trail from Kern River Canyon to Mt. Whitney, and laid out a new trail from Mineral King to Kern River Canyon via Big Arroyo; also had Forest Ranger lay out new trail into Kings River Canyon and the Board of Trade contributed toward the expense of Bubb's Creek Trail in Fresno County.

1903

The Visalia Board of Trade made a cash contribution toward the building of a trail from Lone Pine to top of Mt. Whitney in Inyo county, and provided for building a road, by the Acting Superintendent of Sequoia and Grant Parks, from Happy Gap to the Millwood road and the west line of Grant Park.

The same year paid expenses of Congressman M. J. Dainels and party to Giant Forest and beyond.

1905

The Mt. Whitney club secured options on private lands in the two parks for the purpose of having same conveyed to the United States,

without charge for services, but Congressman Smith was unable to get a hearing.

The same year the Visalia Board of Trade paid expense of Congressman S. C. Smith and party to Giant Forest and Mt. Whitney. The Visalia Board of Trade again took up with congressional representative the matter of enlargement of Sequoia National Park, and bill was prepared but not introduced.

1906

Congressman Smith, at instance of Visalia Board of Trade, introduced a bill to eliminate private holdings to Sequoia and Grant parks.

1909

Senator Flint, upon request from Visalia, introduced a similar bill.

1915

The Visalia Board of Trade provided transportation as far as Giant Forest for the large Mather party which continued to Mt. Whitney and beyond. Congressman J. N. Gillett, speaker of the House, was one of the party.

1916

The Sequoia Park enlargement bill introduced by Senator Phelan and Congressman Kent was supported by Visalia Board of Trade, other organizations, newspapers and people of Visalia.

1917

New Park Enlargement bill introduced by same men received same support.

1919

Park enlargement bill introduced by Congressman Elston received same strong support at Visalia.

1920

Visalia Board of Trade provided transportation for Congressman Good, chairman of the committee on appropriations, and party, to and from Giant Forest.

1921

Park enlargement bill introduced by Congressman H. E. Barbour was supported in Visalia, but with *opposition* to the provision that the three southern townships of the present Sequoia park be eliminated therefrom.

1922

December 18th a meeting of Directors of the Kings River Parks Company and representatives citizens of Fresno, Tulare, Kings and Kern counties was held in Visalia to consider the advisability of taking over or becoming interested in the park concessions of the company.

1923

January 20, meeting of same company and representatives from same counties held in Visalia. Tulare county pledged \$50,000, Kern several thousand dollars, Kings substantial support, and Fresno nothing.

A few days later members of the Fresno Chamber of Commerce came to Visalia to interview the chairman of the committee having charge of these park matters, stated that on account of the reorganization of the Raisin Association and its uncertain condition Fresno was not in a position to subscribe to the park proposition, and requested that the whole matter be deferred and that Visalia and Tulare county assist in putting over the big raisin drive. This was done and Visalia and other towns in Tulare County worked loyally to help Fresno save the raisin situation.

The Barbour Park enlargement bill was strongly supported in Visalia.

1924

The Visalia Chamber of Commerce provided transportation to Giant Forest and return for a large party among whom were Congressman M. B. Madden, chairman of the House Committee on Appropriations; L. C. Cramton, chairman of an important sub-committee of the same; H. E. Barbour of the Public Land Committee; and Congressman-elect J. D. Fredericks.

Support of Park enlargement bill continued to be heard.

1925

Visalia Chamber of Commerce provided transportation to Giant Forest and return from mountains for another large party, among whom were Congressman H. J. Sinnott, chairman of the House Public Lands Committee and L. C. Crampton Scott Leavitt, Carl Raydon, Frank Murphy, and Congressman-elect A. B. Carter.

1926

Support of the park enlargement bill was given by Visalia. The bill was passed.

Residents of Visalia during years past assisted, without land compensation, in securing options on lands in Sequoia National Park, and in the area now added thereto, and completed transactions on a total of seven tracts, embracing 1650 acres, in the park, and six tracts embracing 520 acres in the proposed additional area, the total purchase price being \$106,400. All of these tracts in the park have been conveyed to the United States and the others conveyed to trustees to be conveyed later to the government. Visalia attorneys examined the abstracts of title and prepared the necessary legal papers without charging for their services.

Residents of Visalia borrowed \$10,000 on their personal note to complete the payment of one of the tracts referred to before the option expired, to prevent it from falling into private hands.

The Visalia Board of Trade, and its successor, the Chamber of Commerce expended considerable sums of money each year for more than thirty years last past for and in aid of park development.

Visalia public and civic bodies, newspapers and private citizens supported every effort to enlarge Sequoia National park from the first attempt.

Tulare County--and the Local National Parks

Residents of Visalia, Tulare and Hanford (then in Tulare County) visited Mt. Whitney in 1881 and in 1883 in a pamphlet giving an account of the trip it was proposed that a national park be established including a large area embracing Mt. Whitney and the scenic mountain region north and west therefrom.

The Board of Supervisors from an early date appropriated money for the building of mountain trails and bridges in the vicinity of the national parks.

The Supervisors paid \$10,000 toward the purchase of land in Sequoia National Park, which sum had been advanced by private parties in an emergency.

Tulare County built a highway from the county seat to Three Rivers, on the direct road to Sequoia Park, at a cost of \$300,000.

The county expended large sums in improving two roads to General Grant National Park.

The county improved the public road to the park line on the north fork of the Kaweah at a cost of \$17,000.

The county purchased the private road to Mineral King, which passes through Sequoia Park, and has maintained same, in and outside the park for forty years.

Residents of this county induced the State of California to continue the highway from Three Rivers to the park line.

Tulare county maintains branch libraries every year at Sequoia and Grant Parks for the free use of visitors.

Residents of Tulare assisted in the formation of Sequoia Park in 1890 and the civic bodies and people of that city have supported every effort of park improvement and enlargement up to 1925.

The Board of Trade and other civic bodies of Exeter have consist-

ently worked for park enlargement and have frequently expended sums for the benefit of the Sequoia park.

Residents of Woodlake up to date have also supported the moves to increase the area of the park.

People of Lindsay and Three Rivers have assisted every year toward making park activities successful.

Dinuba and Orosi have been liberal in their aid to General Grant Park.

People of Porterville and other towns in and near the Tule River section, as well as every other town and community in the county, have appropriated money for bridge and trail building in the mountains in times past, and in recent years have aided in supplying material for enclosing meadows for the use of campers and tourists, the work being done by forest rangers.

A record of all such work and financial aid by the several Tulare County towns is not available in Visalia at this time.

The Tulare County Board of Trade--and the Local National Parks

The greater part of the advertising of the local National Parks, in addition to that of the government publications, has been done by the County Board of Trade during a long term of years.

Of the Tulare County

Booklet, devoted in

part to the National

Parks, there have

been published220,000 copies

Of the Tulare County

Catechism460,000 copies

Of Tulare County's

Wonderland, High-

ways and By-ways,

illustrated, and devoted largely to the

parks and mountains	52,000 copies
Special Park circulars	
and folders	20,000 copies
Total	760,000 copies

The board has also contributed its quota to the expense of publications of 100,000 copies of the San Joaquin Valley Scenic Folder, containing park views.

Twenty-five exhibits have been maintained for periods varying from one week to two years in Chicago, Seattle, San Francisco, Los Angeles and elsewhere, and illustrated lectures showing park views have been delivered to millions of people.

An exhibition with illustrations and lectures carried the message to hundreds of thousandx in several states.

Photographs for illustrations and data have been supplied for hundreds of magazine and newspaper articles.

This board financed the visit of Edmund Mitchell to Giant Forest and the higher Sierra, and his account of the trip has been quoted more freely than that of an other writer except John Muir.

Several local boards of trade have issued publications advertising the national parks and other mountain resorts.

ROMANCE OF ORANGES IN CALIFORNIA TOLD

There is a wealth of romance bound up in the history of the California industry, that is totally unknown to the vast majority of Pacific Coast residents. Had it not been for the patient care of one woman this state would have been deprived of many millions of dollars and thousands of acres of land, that today yield an annual fortune would have been devoted to other purposes than citrus culture.

This is another way of saying that the orange industry was fostered by a woman and that through her close attention, when it appeared that the venture was a failure, the industry was given a start that developed into one that has brought fame and fortune to California.

That woman was Mrs. Eliza C. Tibbets. Fifty years ago a friend of hers, known as William Sanders of the United States department of agriculture, imported a dozen navel orange trees from Brazil, thinking they might thrive in the United States. The trees were planted and when all but two had died, Mrs. Tibbet removed the survivors to Riverside. There she watered and cultivated them and nursed them along until they had begun to put on a healthy growth and developed into a magnificent specimens that produced a new variety of orange in this country.

Favor this Section

From those trees sprang all the early buds that were used in the production of navel oranges in this section, the only section in the United States where they will grow. Many of our readers will remember seeing one of these trees transplanted by the late President Theodore Roosevelt, on the grounds of the Mission Inn at Riverside.

Such was the beginning of the romance of the navel orange.

From those parent trees have sprung up millions of others that have helped to enrich Californians.

As stated, in no other section in the United States will the Washington Orange produce. It has been tried in Florida and other sections of the United States without success.

Because of the careful attention that was given those first two trees there are today in California, 11,000 orange groves whose income amounts to some \$40,000,000 to \$60,000,000 annually. This means something to Southwestern industry in general and to many lines in particular. It means that there are thousands of families in California who would not be here today had it not been for the care given those parent orange trees by Mrs. Tibbet.

There are approximately 50,00 car loads of oranges shipped out of California each year. These are gathered from 25,000,000 trees, the largest proportion of which are navel oranges. Employment is given to tens of thousands of people through the cultivation of the orange groves, the picking of the fruit and in the packing houses. It is safe to say that the total income from all the trees that sprang from the original two, will run over the \$1,500,000,000 mark and wages to help will approximate about one third that amount.

So the navel orange industry today has back of it a romantic story that dates back to a time fifty years ago when men lost heart and laughed at a woman's efforts to save and bring to life two scrubby, sickly looking little orange plants. It is a fact that men did laugh at Mrs. Tibbet. Even the transportation agent who delivered the trees to her told her they were not worth bothering about. Had it been left to those men the navel orange industry never would have been known in the Southwest, the only spot in the United States in which the navel takes kindly.

by E.R. Connelly.

I had tied my cayuse to a rock and was sitting on the top rim of the world, just this side of Saw Tooth and Glacier Pass, and looked down on a flat ~~hazzazz~~ so far that men looked as small as 16-pe nny nails.

As I sat there, I wondered why people put on funny slothes, ~~and~~ ~~gatzfanz~~ donned fancy fishing gear, climbed over an old wrecked trail down the face of that cliff and then crunched ore under their feet that was full of gold, silver a nd everything else, to whip a stream all day for a few small trout. That was my mental attitude, anyhow, for coming as I do from the Montana Rockies, I can recall when we could bend a pin, cut a stick and get all the speckled beauties we could eat.

~~hazzazz~~ I fell to wondering about many things. I wondered what type of human beings were those pioneers who had had the fortitude to build that rock trail down that cliff; I wondered about the nerve of Abe McGinnis who let himself down by a rope to mine, years before the trail was built; I wondered how I ever was going to get down to that old lost mine upon which I was filing and, If I did, how I ever was to get out; I marveled at that great Mankins lode of ore that never could be exhausted and ~~hazzazz~~ wondered what became of the city of 5000 miners that once lived in Mineral King and why the juniper timbering of the mines doesn't rot like the old pick handles laying around.

I had to find potato hill--Dead Dog Flat. I had asked John Benne tt and Stose Prethero about it when along came Jeff Davis looking for his old mule Pete. Well, he told me--

But I had better go back a few years--~~for~~ you may wonder how I knew about lost mines, Mineral King, or how I happened to be there.

m ore

ad one mineral king by connelly

About 35 years ago, I was driving a cab (not of the gasoline variety) in Los Angeles, San Diego and other cities in the south. I was tired of paved streets and thought I wanted to farm. I had married a Visalia ~~girl~~ girl. I recalled having heard Visalia called "Vice Ails You," by the old time preachers--but that, of course, isn't where the town derived its name.

I discovered that my hero, Arizona Charlie who came to Los Angeles and wore long curls down his back and shot glass balls at full gallop, the man who ran Wild West shows throughout the world was her uncle, and that another uncle was Mobley Meadows, the first sheriff of Imperial county, that he was a terror to outlaws and was a native of Tulare county.

The old homestead was near Elbow school, their father, John Meadows, the fighting parson, had come here in a covered wagon, was elected sheriff in 1863 but never served in the office. Being a Southerner, he moved cattle and all down to Tonto basin, Arizona, where he was massacred by the Indians.

Mrs. Connolly told me that if I must farm, I should leave that Los Angeles desert and come with her to God's country.

I bought a span of horses and drove up here--it took 9 and 1-2 days then to cover the distance that can now be traveled in about five hours. I found that the people were civilized, had more and better horses than Los Angeles--and real farming land. I settled here, reared my family and expect to build houses, run for office some more and finally die and be buried here.

While I was city councilman, there was quite an agitation for a publicly owned bi-county gas project and I was introduced to a famous engineer who, with others, told me they had blanket filed on all Mineral King and were getting \$5,000,000 to develop it. They said they must get a master meter out at the swamps to run a smelter at Three Rivers.

ad two mineral king by connelly

They stated they had the assays and that there was an unestimable amount of ore containing gold, silver, copper, zinc, antimony, paint colors and enough aluminum to over-supply the world market.

Well, I remembered Mrs. Connolly having an old diary and day book of her ~~father's~~ father, Abe McGinnis. Among other items, dated 1869, was a notation "Peter Harmon, \$22.50; candy, 25 cents; tools, \$17; pork, \$3.50; sundries, \$17." I asked my wife's sister Kate (first white child born in Mineral King 64 years ago) what ~~sundries~~ meant and she said 'twas for tobacco, etc., for the miners. Then I went to the office of Recorder Ira Chrisman and inspected old ~~miners~~ descriptions of claims; then I hied myself to the mountains where my story started.

Abizona Charlie told us when he was up at the Rodeo, shortly before he died, that before he went to Alaska, he was prospecting with Abe McGinnis and found a rich lode at the base of a great cliff and they buried their tools there and left because of the winter storms coming on but he never came back--although Abe mined there many years afterward. Jeff Davis said the road was put in there about 1879. It was a toll road and I find the report of Alfred Musgraves to ~~that~~ that effect ~~that~~ filed with John Knox May 12, 1879.

A W.H. Mills was road master of District Number 5. I find that for a toll road J.W. Crowsley applied for a franchise from Clotfelter's ranch to the Mineral King mining district, this being duly sworn to and published by M.C. Butz in the Tulare Weekly Times, published in Visalia, January 17, 1879. The toll was to be: one man, 50 cents; wagon and one span of animals, \$2; pack animals, 25 cents each; loose horses, 10 cents each; sheep, hog or goat, 8 cents each; buggy drawn by horse, \$1.50, and trail wagons, \$ 50 ce nts each.

m ore

ad three mineral king by connelly

The toll road was a great help to Mineral King as the first comers crossed over into the basin from the upper Kern with great hardship. The road we pleasure-seekers now use primarily was for that great mining district, an area covering 10 square miles, which was incorporated, made and enforced its own laws and had its own recorder and seal, the seal now being in the office of the County Recorder Ira (Jack) Chrisman.

The law had teeth in it--here is a resolution copied from the minutes of June 8, 1875:

"Be it resolved, that we, the miners of Mineral King district, use all fair means to protect ourselves ~~by the power vested in us as American citizens and miners of Mineral King.~~ in our just rights, before resorting to compulsory measures; that if fair means fail us in our God-given rights, we will protect ourselves by the power vested in us as American citizens and miners of Mineral King."

They did just that, I have been informed!

Here is a description of a mine location:

"We discovered a hole in a rock in which a bear had made his nest--we named it Nig's house--we named the lode we discovered The White Chief, 1500 feet in length, 600 feet in width, boundary lines commence at center of west entrance to Nig's house, west 300 feet to rock near northeast corner, then south a few degrees, then along ore vein 1500 feet to monument which is supposed to be near our southwest corner....further, notice our claim is measured with a rope as near as we could measure without a compass, etc."

The claim was signed by S. Belden and J.S. Crabtree.

more

ad four mineral king by connelly

This back country of ours surely is filled with the history of the joys and sorrows and romances of sturdy men and women.

One day, in back of my homestead on Section 20, I stumbled onto an old rock bulwark, just above Stone Corral in back of the Lige Perkins place where Sontag and Evans, the outlaws, had a fortified lookout.

I don't take to mining--just enjoy snooping around old ghost towns and lost mines--but, I'm telling you--"Thar's gold in them thar hills," and some day, this will be the greatest mining district in America.