

## 1903 Sierra Club Outing

The Sierra Club Bulletin outlined the plans for the 1903 trip to Kern Canyon. It described the canyon and the high peaks with considerable hyperbole.

“Any person possessed of ordinary health and strength, who is an average walker can make this trip. However, invalids and those in poor health should not attempt it, for, on account of the nature and difficulty of preparation for so extensive an outing, the particular care and attention such persons require cannot be given. Though the Club will do everything in its power to make everyone comfortable, yet of necessity, each will be required to look out for himself. Accordingly, all those who participate in the outing should satisfy themselves as to their physical qualifications.

“The distance covered each day will be accommodated to those who tramp on foot, and any ordinary walker will find it easy to keep up with the party. No day’s journey will much exceed ten miles, and will often be less; so when it is considered that the walking will be through the shade of beautiful forests and that everyone will have the entire day to cover the distance, it will readily be seen why walking is so desirable.

“A few saddle horses may be available for members of the second division, but it is to be distinctly understood that the Club takes no responsibility in furnishing these. The experience of the Committee in the past with regard to furnishing saddle animals has been very unsatisfactory, and the expense, trouble and annoyance connected therewith have caused them to take this stand. The pack-train and the accommodation of walkers is the first and main consideration. It should be understood, however, that the Committee has no objection to having members of the party procure saddle animals from Broder & Hopping, Kaweah, Cal. (Three Rivers)

“The tramping suit can be of any stout material—denim, corduroy or khaki. One suit will be sufficient for the entire trip, and to reduce the amount of baggage it is suggested that extra and unnecessary clothing be left at home.

today William Colby, Joseph Le Conte (the younger), Edward Parsons and Frederick Badé were first among that group. Will Colby's forty-nine years in a dominant role make him the obvious "Mr Sierra Club."

In 1901, the Sierra Club had inaugurated its first annual expedition to Yosemite Valley and Tuolumne Meadows. Ninety-six men and women hiked on foot, and their dunnage was hauled in freight wagons.

In 1902, 200 members went to the Kings River and Mount Brewer. At the close of that trip, President John Muir and a small group continued on to the Kern Canyon. According to the Sierra Club Bulletin of June 1903, "they all found the Kern Canyon's scenery to far surpass that of the Kings River in grandeur and picturesque beauty"

The 1903 trip, in addition to their two previous trips, established an attitude and policy toward the favored places of the Sierra that would have profound influence in the future.

Emboldened and instructed by two successful trips, the leaders outlined a larger, more challenging plan for 1903. It called for elaborate preparations which are of historic interest. A primary destination, Mount Whitney, was described in a Sierra Club Bulletin: "Barring Mt. McKinley, recently discovered in Alaska, Mt. Whitney is the highest mountain in the United States, and is 14,496 ft. in height. It is a mountain which presents no extraordinary difficulties in climbing and will doubtless be ascended by a large number of the party. From the head of Kern Canyon, near Mt. Whitney, some of the finest peaks in all the High Sierra can be readily reached. Mt. Williamson (14,488 ft.) and Mt. Tyndall (14,100 ft.) will attract the more adventuresome mountaineers. The Kaweah peaks are also near at hand."

It is significant that they bypassed Sequoia Park and went directly to the high country—Whitney Bench. The seven-day outing from the base camp to Mount Whitney and the upper Kern Canyon assumed the nature of a pilgrimage.

I include a detailed account of the "invasion" of the Sierra Club because it related to Mineral King, but more, because it is the living record of an excursion

*History does not repeat itself. It changes by the year, by the day, and beyond recall.* (Anonymous)

It is particularly urged that in obtaining their outfits the members of the Club patronize those who have advertised in the 1903 Bulletins of the Sierra Club, and when so purchasing that they should mention the fact that they are connected with the Club, and thus aid the Publication Committee in enlarging the scope and influence of the Bulletin

The following articles may be obtained of firms named who advertise in this year's Sierra Club Bulletin

Alpenstocks Goggles Fishing Tackle,  
Men's Leggings Best ever Devised  
S J DEAN, 1502 Market Street.

Khaki Clothing Outing Suits, Shirts, etc.  
THE HASTINGS CO, Cor Sutter and  
Montgomery Sts.

Shoes for Mountaineering sold from stock or  
made to measure for men and women  
WALK OVER SHOE CO 924 Market  
St., S F ; 111 S. Spring St. Los Angeles.

Groceries, Delicacies, Condensed Foods,  
Evaporated Foods for Camping  
GOLDBERG BOWEN & CO

Tents to Rent and For Sale  
Dunnage Bags \$1.00 each correct design  
NEVILLE & CO., 33 California St.

Fishing Tackle Outing Goods and  
Complete Camping Outfits,  
CLABROUGH GOLCHER & CO,  
538 Market St.

Cameras, Photo Supplies and Developing,  
R. A. LEET, 512 13th St., Oakland.

Requisites in Toilet Cases and Medical  
Outfits for Outings,  
WAKELEE & CO., Bush and Montgom-  
ery Sts.; Polk and Sutter Sts.

Fishing Tackle, Outing Outfits, Sleeping  
Bags, Kodaks Photographic Supplies,  
Mountaineering Clothing, Shoes, etc.,  
TUFTS LYONS ARMS CO.,  
132 & 134 S. Spring St., Los Angeles, Cal.

Photo Supplies and Developing  
Air Mattresses and Pillows, Small Tents,  
Knapsacks, Fine-Mesh Mosquito Nets,  
Fishing Tackle, Snow Glasses,  
Special Footwear, General Camping Equip-  
ments and Outing Clothing,  
SKINNER & CO., 801 Market St.

Stage Line to Millwood, Gen. Grant Forest,  
King's River, HOUSE & GALLAGHER,  
Sanger Cal.

Stage Line to Giant Forest, Kern River,  
BRODER & HOPPING,  
Kaweah, Cal.

*Suggested shopping list for the 1903 trip.*

# Visalia Daily Times

VISALIA, CALIFORNIA, WEDNESDAY EVENING, JULY 15, 1903.

## THE SIERRA CLUB.

Its Jaunt From the Sea Level  
to Kern Canyon.

DISTINGUISHED MEMBER OF THE  
CLUB DESCRIBES THE TRIP.

Rev. J. K. McLean Tells of Mountain  
Climbing in a Letter to the  
Oakland Enquirer.

The following account of the trip of the Sierra Club made this season to Kern River Canyon and Mt. Whitney was written by the Rev. J. K. McLean, D. D., for the Oakland Enquirer and was published in that journal on the 11th instant.

"On the 8 p. m. boat from San Francisco, of June 25th, crossed a motley crew some sixty-five strong; which was augmented at Sixteenth street, Oakland, by five and twenty more, and later in the night by nearly as many from Los Angeles and the South, one hundred and ten in all, members of the Sierra Club, men and women, with their friends.

### TOO NUMEROUS TO MENTION.

These conjoined to create a general jumble; composed of queer raiment, unusual hats, outlandish shoes, suitcases, bundles and bags, knapsacks and kodaks, alpenstocks, tackle and

other impediments, too numerous to mention—among which, however, was a noticeable absence of firearms. To all this add vociferous exclamations of pleasure and surprise, greetings and goodbyes—for at Sixteenth street o'clock, after a ride of twenty miles. But preceding lunch came in a most welcome surprise in the shape of a huge tank of ice-cold well compounded lemonade, together with baskets of apricots and peaches, and the compliments of the Visalia board of trade and Britten Bros., local storekeepers. Over this treat the company, one and all, did its best, inasmuch as it felt this to be the last chance for luxury like this. The lunch provided in the open air was also highly appreciated.

### ON TO MINERAL KING.

An afternoon ride of thirteen miles now followed. But it was an arduous one, for the animals at least, being nearly all the way a steep up-hill. On and out, to left, to right, and back again, but ever upward, winds the grade conceived by the Mount Whitney Mining Company, but long ago abandoned by them inasmuch as the mining venture proved a failure and now kept open principally by a lumber interest which has for some years been gnawing at the hearts of a sequoia grove well on the way to Mineral King. The road is by no means a bad one. The earth, most of the way, is composed of disintegrated granite. Some rocks, but no more than enough to healthfully emphasize to the general excellence, considering the region it penetrates, of the road in general. The afternoon's ride dis-

**THE OLD RELIABLE**

**ROYAL**  
  
**BAKING  
POWDER**  
Absolutely Pure

**THERE IS NO SUBSTITUTE**

closes little timber and what there is, is of an inferior quality. Scrub oak and other scrubs, all testifying to the prevailing lack of moisture. As the afternoon wanes on, however, attention is drawn away from the stories, conundrums and hilarious diversion of the well-assorted load of passengers to occasional rivulets and watering places, situated usually in more or less deeply cut gorges, and to continually increasing growths of shrubbery, among which are now and then handsome flowering specimens,

Women should have one durable waist for tramping and one to wear around camp. The skirts should be short, not many inches below the knee, and under them should be worn shorter dark-colored bloomers. The underclothing should be such as one would wear in average winter weather, i. e., of medium weight, and one change should be taken.

“One of the Chinamen provided by the management will probably be able to do washing at reasonable rates for those who may desire it while at camp.

“For those who desire to climb mountains colored glasses or goggles will be essential. Women should also carry heavy veils to protect the face from snow burn. A bathing suit will be useful at the river and lake.”

(That open-ended gathering of mixed company, including single ladies, was not specified as unusual in the reports but it must have been revolutionary at the time. Seventeen years before acquiring the vote, women were advancing toward equal footing in mountain hiking, and it still continues.)

“It will add largely to the enjoyment of the trip if those who possess musical instruments would take them along. The evening campfire will be one of the attractions of the trip. Around it the members of the party will gather to listen to lectures, stories, talks, music, singing, and to recount the experiences of the day and plan for the morrow.

“We will have many noted men of science with us, and interesting and instructive talks will be given. All who have attended previous Outings will recall this delightful feature.

“Opportunity will be afforded those who desire it to return from the Kern Canyon via Giant Forest.

#### ESTIMATED COST OF TRIP

For Four Weeks from San Francisco

Outing deposit	\$30.00
Railroad and stage fare . .	17.55
Sleeper, both ways	3.00
Meals in route, going and returning	2.60
Total	\$53 15

“Those returning via Giant Forest will add to this estimate one dollar extra for packing, which amount will be payable at that time to Broder & Hopping;

and those intending to remain five weeks will add five dollars, payable with their Outing deposit.”

Three Rivers packers Broder and Hopping’s effort to accommodate the club was probably a masterpiece of improvisation in a task they were completely unequal to. But they had started preparation a month in advance, both at Three Rivers and at Camp Olney, and the club was divided into two groups. Although there were times when sleepers did not find their bedrolls and times of food shortage, it seems clear that good will prevailed as a rule.

The trip was documented with wit and insight by the Reverend J. C. McLean, writing for the *Oakland Enquirer* and the *Visalia Daily Times*.

The *Visalia Daily Times* printed four articles during and after the trip, including a letter from Colby inviting others to visit their encampment. Editor George Stewart was one who visited and addressed the club.

E. J. Parsons, photographer, formerly from the Moyamas Outing Club in Portland, was another who documented the trip; also Dr. W. F. Badé from the Appalachian Mountain Club, naturalist and future Sierra Club president. (An invitation had been extended to the Appalachian Mountain Club and the Moyamas Club.) The accounts of these people, and McLean, are interwoven below to complete the account of the 1903 Sierra Club outing.

McLean. “On the 8 p. m. boat from San Francisco, on June 25th, crossed a motley crew some sixty-five strong; which was augmented in the night by nearly as many from Los Angeles and the South, one hundred and ten in all, members of the Sierra Club, men and women, with their friends.

“These conjoined to create a general jumble, composed of queer raiment, unusual hats, outlandish shoes, suitcases and bundles and bags, knapsacks and kodaks, alpenstocks, tackle and impediments, too numerous to mention—among which was a noticeable absence of firearms.

“This was the outset of the first division of the Sierra Club’s expedition for 1903, to be followed by a second division four days later on. A special train of three Pullmans was filled, low and high, to which was added at Goshen Junction in the night, a fourth.”

(At Visalia, the end of the railroad, they had an early breakfast and set out.)

Badé: "From an eagle's outlook [Dr Badé used this metaphor shortly before the first airplane flight] on Friday morning, June 26th, there stretched a country-road, forty-five miles in length, winding across the comparatively level floor of the San Joaquin Valley from Visalia to the foothills of the Sierra Nevada and up through them, twenty miles more, to Mineral King; Broder and Hopping's ten four- and six-horse stages, chased by clouds of dust, passing at regular intervals—the convoy of the advance party of the Sierra Club and its outfit, billowy fields of golden grain seeking the horizon, and along the edges, drawn by procession of thirty or forty mules and horses, great combination machines that threw off sack instead of sheaves; and in the purple distance still more purple spots that marked flourishing acres of citrus culture. In passing through them the cheering stage occupants were gleefully pelted from the orchards with the golden fruit."

McLean. "By our itinerary, lunch was called for at Three Rivers at 12:00 o'clock, after a ride of twenty miles. But preceding lunch came in a most welcome surprise in the shape of a huge tank of ice-cold well compounded lemonade, together with baskets of apricots and peaches, and the compliments of the Visalia Board of Trade and Britten Bros. local storekeepers. Over this treat, the company, one and all, did its best, inasmuch as it felt this to be the last chance for luxury like this. The lunch provided in the open air was also highly appreciated [The Britten hospitality remains intact to the present time, as my riding club can witness.]

"An afternoon ride of thirteen miles now followed. But it was an arduous one, for the animals at least, being nearly all the way a steep up-hill. On and out, to the left, to right, and back again, but ever upward, winds the grade conceived by the Mt. Whitney Mining Company, but long ago abandoned by them inasmuch as the mining venture proved a failure and now kept open principally by a lumber interest which has for some years been gnawing at the hearts of the Sequoia grove well on the way to Mineral King. The road is by no means a bad one. The earth, most of the way, is composed of disintegrated granite. Some rocks, but no more than enough to healthfully emphasize to the general excellence, considering the region it penetrated, of the road in general.



*Sierra Club lunch in the shade at Britten Bros. Store in 1903 It was too shady to show part of the group in the photo. The old store still exists, far removed from the present business district. (PARSONS)*

“Only a fifteen mile ride now remains to Mineral King, the extreme limit of wagon locomotion. Some of us could have wished it more. The roads were good, the forest encompassed us nearly the whole way; clear, cold, sweet brooks were frequent, numbers of sequoias, some of them magnificent, appealed for our admiration and got it; over the stumps and broken fragments of others of this noble race we could but lament and remonstrate. The cutting down of a sequoia of six feet and upwards in diameter should be classed as murder in the first degree.

“Owing to the sharpness of many points of the ups and downs of the forenoons pull, owing too, to the poor condition of some of the animals, gathered as they had to be under a demand altogether unusual, and to the long drive—only a few of them having been changed all the way from Visalia—there was





*Arrival at Mineral King* (PARSONS)

great irregularity in rate of travel. The foremost stages accomplished the drive to Mineral King before noon, some staunch walkers had arrived earlier still, and the rest kept stringing along until 5 o'clock and later, the baggage wagons getting in only a little before nightfall itself."

Badé: "We had reached the terminus of the stage-road in the little village of Mineral King. The discovery of gold in the mountains above the town gave considerable importance to it during the seventies. Now, both in appearance and in population, it is but an echo of former days. Even the soaring eagle must strain his eyes to see the few houses that huddle along the East Fork.

"But there is reason to be thankful that the hand of man has not seriously marred the pristine beauty of this lovely alpine valley. Ages ago glaciers carved it out of solid granite. In winter avalanches cut wide paths down the precipitous slopes. In summer they are festooned with waterfalls. Far into July great snow-patches whiten the flanks of the warding mountains and water marvelous flower-beds below. Where trees have been able to maintain a footing against the pressure of winter snows extensive forests of mountain pine shimmer through the haze. Four miles above us eastward, between Mt. Florence

and Mt. Vandever, loomed the snowy pass of Farewell Gap. It is the gateway to the southern Sierra.”

The 1902 Sierra Club Bulletin described Farewell Gap:

“It is nearly perfect in line, the color of its rocks, and fortunately, in its name. Through it will pass the long cavalcades of the Sierra Club, as many have done before; it is the great thoroughfare of the Southern Sierra.”

McLean. “On the morrow at break of dawn we and our pack-animals, in single file, took the winding trail that leads to the saddle of the pass,—10,400 feet above the level of the Pacific. Since the altitude of Mineral King is about 7,700, this involved a climb of nearly three thousand feet. All our days in the High Sierra were ‘strung on sunbeam threads,’ but this morning of our ascent to Farewell Gap was first among peers, so beautiful that the most generous adjective would only belittle it. Sunday morning,—and we stood at the portals of one of the grandest natural cathedrals on the Pacific Slope.

“By 9 o’clock the snow had softened, making the footing very insecure. One of the animals, overcome by exhaustion and the effects of the altitude, fell dead in his tracks. Once or twice unwary riders were thrown headlong from their plunging horses and had to be extricated from the snow-banks into which they dived head first. These as well as some other incidents of the ascent furnished a deal of good-natured merriment. Occasionally some floundering mule loosened from his pack a dunnage-bag which usually responded immediately to the pull of gravity. Then one or two packers would slide after it down the steep snowy slope, berating the situation with a volubility that would have amazed a steamboat captain.

“It was past midday when the last of our party of one hundred and ten reached the top of the pass, and every one felt that the ascent was an achievement, whatever else might be in store. Our packtrain, though composed mostly of sure-footed mules accustomed to mountain-climbing, had experienced some difficulty in getting over the snow-fields.

“In the case of one or two of the party the effects of the altitude manifested themselves in accelerated heart-action to such a degree that it was deemed wise for them to proceed only after long pauses. But finally all gained the top of the



*Resting at Farewell Gap.*

pass in safety Ten thousand four hundred feet above the level of the Pacific! Treble the figure and you have not yet measured the altitude of the mountaineer's feelings as he stands for the first time on the cornice of the great snowwall that spans the mouth of Farewell Gap. Along the line of the descent, eastward, lay the valley of the Little Kern.

"The proximity of some meadow large enough to provide fodder for the pack-animals usually determines the choice of a camping site. Bullion Flat was made to fill the requirements, although some thought it rattled. Ere the alpenglow began to glorify the heights our Chinese cooks, under the direction of Mr Miller, chief of the commissariat, had made toothsome provision for ravenous appetites.

"If anything can bring completer satisfaction amid such conditions than good food and pure water, it is the deathlike slumber that enfolds the tired mountaineer before he is done wondering at the unearthly brilliance of the stars that watch over his bed on the blooming heath. Doubtless it was after his experience in the California mountains that Robert Louis Stevenson wrote,

‘Life is far better than people dream who fall asleep among the chimney stacks and telegraph wire.’”

Badé: “Then, the last day’s push, was no light one. It led us out of the canyon of the Little Kern, by Coyote Pass, into that of the Kern proper, whose walls are to give us shelter for the next four weeks. The Pass named is about the height of Farewell. But to a few of us it seemed about twice as high. The trail crosses the divide at Coyote Pass. Here a titanic art gallery of nature’s own making contains a varied assortment of fantastic sculptures. Sun, wind, frost and rain have carved the coarse granite into chimerical forms that excite and haunt the imagination. [With the exception of Dr Badé’s description, the Coyote Pass rock formations are unheralded, they are a small version of Chiricahua National Monument in Arizona.]

“Since leaving the art gallery we had descended nearly a mile by vertical measurement, and still we were more than six thousand feet above sea level.

“In honor of Mr Warren Olney, mayor of Oakland and one of the founders of the Sierra Club, our mountain home was named ‘Camp Olney’ Coyote Creek, a cold, pure, alder-scented mountain stream, unfatigued by two wild leaps over the canyon walls, raced through the middle of our camp and joined the brimming Kern a few hundred yards below ”

Camp Olney, a part of old Lewis Camp on the west bank of the Kern River, was near the present day ranger station. The Indian mortars indicate that it was a favored place in an earlier time. The pioneer resort, Lewis Camp, was at that time the property owned by John Lewis of Fort Independence. No doubt he helped the club choose the site and prepare it for their use. Its desirability led the park service to buy that part on the west side of the river from Jules Conterno in 1928, two years after the upper canyon had been transferred into the park. A \$1,000 contribution from the Sierra Club helped with the purchase.

A mile up the river was the horse crossing, and a temporary foot bridge had been built by the packers. The Golden Trout Creek trail (previously called Volcano Creek) climbed the eastern escarpment of the canyon there on the north side of the creek. Above the waterfalls the trail crossed the creek to the location of the present trail, at an elevation of 8,000 feet.



*Preceding page. Camp Olney 1903 This picture tries to capture the image of a movement. It was made clear that the outings were more than a pleasure trip. Years later Will Colby likened himself to Moses—leading his people to the promised land—under a higher mandate. From Camp Olney, on the west bank of the Kern River, the campers could explore in any direction. Above, the same scene, present time. Coyote Pass trail center* (COURTESY OF SIERRA CLUB, COLBY LIBRARY) (LE CONTE PHOTO)

Parsons. “One of the motives of the Club’s officers in selecting the Kern Canyon for last summer’s outing was the desire to give mountain-climbers a chance to make the ascent of Mt. Whitney. The second party had arrived at the camp soon after the first, swelling its population to over two hundred. Many had come expressly to join in the dash to the top of the United States.

“After several days of preparation, the main party of Sierrans started for Mt. Whitney, leaving the camp by the Kern on July 9th. Our trail led along the courses of Volcano Creek, in which abound the golden trout found nowhere else in the world. That our progress might be a feature of the trip, we took it



*Temporary footbridge at Horse Crossing above Lewis Camp.*

slowly, allowing three days for the forty miles to Whitney's base. We camped at night in beautiful meadows and daily crossed ridges from which wide-spread views of the distant Sierra delighted us. Each afternoon the anglers brought in great catches, and the second evening we had for dinner over six hundred trout. The third afternoon we reached Crabtree Meadows, where we camped on Whitney Creek in sight of the delectable mountain.

"Some started at midnight for the climb, but the main party set out at 4 a. m., after a good breakfast. The long line in single file strung along the trail, and repartee and badinage enlivened the tramp. The morning was invigoratingly cool, and as we progressed to higher elevations the coloring and detail of distant ranges, as well as the nearer lake, ridge, cliff, and crag, came out into distinct view until sunlight burst forth on the far Kaweahs and the Sawtooth group to the westward.

"The ascent, while toilsome, was not dangerous nor difficult, and we made frequent short halts to enjoy the magnificent alpine scenery. By 8.45 we stood on the top of the highest mountain summit in the United States proper. The

others kept coming up, until, numbering one hundred and three, it was the largest party ever assembled at one time on a California mountain-top. We looked out over the great valley to the eastward and the Inyo Range beyond, and plainly distinguished Lone Pine and the meandering green lines of the river and irrigating systems nearly eleven thousand feet below us. To the southward we saw the end of the Sierra where it breaks off into foot-hills and the lower ridges, to the westward in the clear morning light the Kaweahs and the Sawtooth Range, serrated and snow-flecked. But it was to the northward the grandest view lay,—peak after peak and crag after crag, the highest Sierra in all their nobility and grandeur. Near, and perhaps most striking of all, was Mt. Williamson, its almost perpendicular side ridged and fluted in rich dark reds and browns, its summit dentated, and apparently defying all attempts at climbing.”

Badé: “Considering the size of the party and the height of the mountains (14,496 ft.), July 12th deserves to be remembered in connection with one of the most remarkable achievements in the history of mountaineering. Thanks to the clearness of the atmosphere, the view from the top, especially in the early morning, was several degrees beyond the reach of superlatives.”

The group allowed seven days for the outing to Mount Whitney and the upper Kern Canyon. Three-fifths of the members, including first time mountaineers, as well as seasoned alpinists, had made it to the top before there was a trail. Leaving Mount Whitney they descended to the upper Kern River by the new Wallace Creek Trail which had been sponsored the previous season by the Visalia Board of Trade.

Back at Camp Olney most were content to enjoy the swimming and fishing at the lakes and the gentle hiking of the canyon. The seasoned mountaineers though, continued to explore the challenging peaks. Keeping the activities in tune with the pre-arranged schedule must have been gratifying to Will Colby. Eventually they all returned to Mineral King, and from there a few went to Giant Forest.

Badé: “But who can forget the amphitheater where nightly the monster camp-fire blazed, where transfigured by the ruddy glow a great semi-circle of

expectant faces banked the darkness in the shadow of the pines; where addresses, instructive and entertaining, on a wide variety of topics, were delivered by Dr G K. Gilbert, of the U S. Geological Survey, Professors Lawson and J N Le Conte, of the University of California, Prof A. G McAdie, of the Weather Bureau, the officers of the Club, and a number of others, both men and women, who contributed to these camp-fire entertainments. Sunday services were conducted by President J K. McLean, of Pacific Theological Seminary, and by the Rev S C. Patterson.

“Last of all came the Giant Forest, with its fragrant carpet of lupines, its tuneful streams, and indescribable majesty of sequoia colonades that seemed to pillar the skies. It was fitting that our summer in Arcady should end there in Brodder and Hopping’s delightful ‘Camp Sierra.’

“Big Trees, the number of which the heights range from two hundred to four hundred feet greatly exceeds three thousand. By government measure the

### Report of the Outing Committee

A side-trip to the summit of Mt. Whitney (14,496 ft.) was made by two parties of forty and one hundred and three persons, respectively. One hundred and thirty-nine of this number reached the top of the highest mountain in the United States, certainly a circumstance to be chronicled in the annals of mountain-climbing. Seventeen of the harder mountaineers, including four women (who had shed their skirts and improvised their costumes as a safety measure), later climbed Mt. Williamson which presented greater difficulties to the climber.

It is fortunate that, though such a large party took so many side-trips over rough and mountainous country, no accident of a serious nature occurred to mar the success of the trip.

We are indebted to the Mt. Whitney Club, the Visalia Board of Trade, and the Supervisors of Tulare County for the very material aid rendered in preparing the way for the Club

Wm. E. Colby, Chairman  
J N Le Conte,  
E. T Parsons,  
Outing Committee



General Sherman is 370 feet high and over 34 feet in diameter [This description is excessive. The Sequoia trees' true height is exceeded by as much as 100 feet. Badé was giving the height of Coastal Sequoias.]

"Imperceptibly the days sped, and still we lingered among these trees, many of which were saplings when the Pyramids were new. But far away, in teeming cities on the coast, duties were calling. One night, under the great trees they were pledged to protect, the Sierrans gathered once more around the last of many campfires to say reluctant goodbyes. There ended the trail and our hardy pastimes in the Sierra Nevada."

The outing programs changed theory into reality. The club's venture into the wilds was a brave adventure. Those members were not pioneers, they were urbane, middle class people from a generally sheltered existence, but their leaders saw, correctly, that this was the way to the future, to an intimate knowledge of the land they chose to represent, and to the assurance to speak with authority.

Will Colby was the force behind those trips. With the encouragement of John Muir, he assumed their organization and direction, a position he would occupy for an amazing twenty-nine years. He was the club's perennial executive secretary, and among his credits was his success in getting a good Sierra cup. Muir's role in the outing program was not great, but Colby, in retrospect, stated that he would not have led the controversial program without the encouragement and support of Muir.

The idea of going from the coast directly to Mount Whitney is one of high adventure, but in their case, with Muir and Le Conte, it was transcendent. From Whitney, they had a clear view of both the present and the future. Whatever their perceptions at the time, it was a rendezvous with destiny. We have only to look at what has happened in the eighty-two years since: Although it had no native Sequoia groves, the upper Kern watershed has added to Sequoia National in 1926, doubling the size of the park; in 1940, Kings Canyon National Park was designated, again doubling the size of the contiguous park area, in the 1970s, vast wilderness areas were formed surrounding the parks and in 1984 they were enlarged, in 1978 Mineral King Valley was removed from

the domain of the forest service and given to Sequoia Park. Those advances were all made in response to leadership of environmentalists and their organizations—anticipating the future, making the contacts that made legislative action possible—and foremost was the Sierra Club, having staked its claim so dramatically at the turn of the century

After 1903 the annual trips continued elsewhere; then in 1908 the Sierra Club was back at the Mineral King base for Muir's last high country outing. As he hiked over Farewell Gap and down to the village at age seventy, the most famous mountaineer ended his active career

(Alice Crowley told her children of camping with John Muir. They met in the Kern Canyon and Muir joined her and her father for the evening campfire. They arrived at a first-name basis with each other, and she got to hear Muir's stories.)

In 1912 the club returned to Kern Canyon, but the route was to Springville by train, then overland by way of Camp Nelson and Fish Creek Ridge. This was for the express purpose of avoiding Coyote Pass.

On the first evening at Camp Nelson, a letter was read from their absent leader, John Muir. After touring the mountains, the group ended its outing at the railroad in Owens Valley (Cottonwood Creek).

Those large expeditions were eventually abandoned, to be replaced by small groups, in order to lessen the impact on the environment of wilderness areas and to allow a more intimate encounter with nature.