

LLA S3: THE UNTOLD HISTORY BEHIND THE FANTASY.**Episodes _____ Corresponding Subtext****1 | Yosemite****NATURE FANTASY**

Native Yosemite
 "Let the Fire Fall"
 Stoneman Riot

2 | Beach Culture**FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH**

Tiki Bars
 Surfing
 Muscle Beach
 Flip Flops / Beach Boys (?)

3 | Desert Fantasy**ESCAPE FROM THE CITY**

Creating the Salton Sea
 Saving the Desert
 Palm Springs Dreams

4 | Ghost Towns**AMERICAN DREAMERS**

Bodie: Arrested Decay
 Llano del Rio
 Zzyzx

5 | Fantasy Land**VIRTUAL REALITY**

Disneyland
 Free standing movie sets
 Japanese Deer Park

6 | Venice of America**ESCAPE FROM AMERICA!!**

Venice of America
 The Beats
 Touch of Evil / Oil Wells

Recurring elements**LOCATION****QUESTION****CONVERSATION****SOURCE**

Story Treatment

3 | YOSEMITE Nature Fantasy

COLD OPEN:

Beauty shots of YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK.

We travel a scenic highway high in the mountains of the Sierra National Forest until we come upon the Wawona Tunnel on State Highway 41... as we emerge from the tunnel we come upon this iconic sight...



VO Nathan:

Welcome to Yosemite. Millions of people visit the national park every year and spend their time in just 5.9 square miles in the valley... but most of the park... some 95% is designated wilderness. What is the real Yosemite?

Is it the fantasy land that the majority of people visit or is it the natural wilderness that makes up the majority of the park? What is the nature of nature?

Fade to:

LOST LA TITLE SEQUENCE

VO for S3 now ends on: "...the Untold History behind the Fantasy".



Episode 1 opens with an excerpt of something like this footage from the 1930s.

<https://archive.org/details/0936LetsSeeYosemite>



Which fades into:

Nathan meeting veteran Yosemite Ranger Dean Shenk in Yosemite who's served the park for more than 40 years since the Stoneman Meadow Riots.

<https://www.facebook.com/YosemiteNPS/posts/1453778464670431>



In CONVERSATION Nathan and the Ranger discuss nature, both its reality and the human fantasy that emerged with modern civilization ... no matter how much our attitudes have changed... in the beginning and continuing today... it's always been about the land... **Native Yosemite.**

Cut to:

We ascend to Tenaya Lake and meet ... A DESCENDENT of the Ahwahneechee people. SHE tells us about the land of her people and shares one of the many creation stories of Yosemite and El Capitan, the valley's most prominent mountain. It is often told involving young bear cubs, but the following version tells of two young boys tired from a day's swimming and playing in the Merced River.

<http://www.intimeandplace.org/Yosemite/reading/miwokcreationlegend.html>



The DESCENDENT:

Expands on the cultural significance of the lake. And how they called it Pyweak which meant 'shining rocks.'

We fade to the replica Indian Village behind the Yosemite Museum...

<https://www.nps.gov/yose/learn/historyculture/indian-village-of-the-ahwahnee.htm>



We tour the village while the Descendent:

Provides a brief historical background of the life of the Ahwahneechee before the encroachment of civilization.

We intercut with the replica village and archival images that tell the story... and return to Tenaya Lake.



VO Nathan:

But the Ahwahneechee did not remain the only ones to discover this land.

Enter LEE STETSON, an actor and John Muir scholar. He is NOT dressed as Muir but as himself. <http://www.johnmuirlive.com>

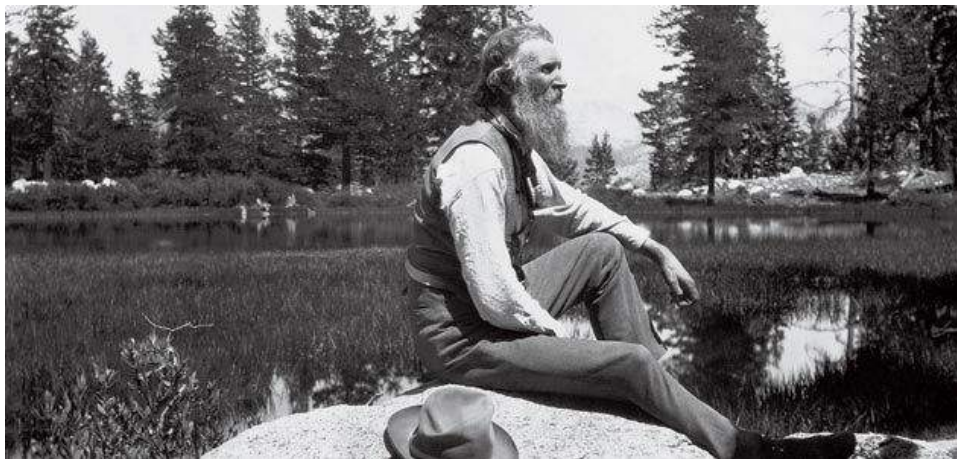


We speak with Lee and find out why he decided to literally dedicate his life to becoming John Muir. What is it for him and Muir that make places like Tenaya Lake and Yosemite so special? What were Muir's views on the wilderness? Did they change over time? What was Muir's role in the creation of the National Park?

Throughout his interview, Lee casually quotes from John Muir's writings:

VO John Muir:

This is my old haunt where I first began my studies. I camped on this very spot. No foot seems to have neared it.



We intercut with historical images of John Muir in Yosemite and his sketches of the lake and Lee continues...

VO John Muir:

The lake was named for one of the chiefs of the Yosemite tribe. Old Tenaya is said to have been a good Indian to his tribe...

The Descendent:

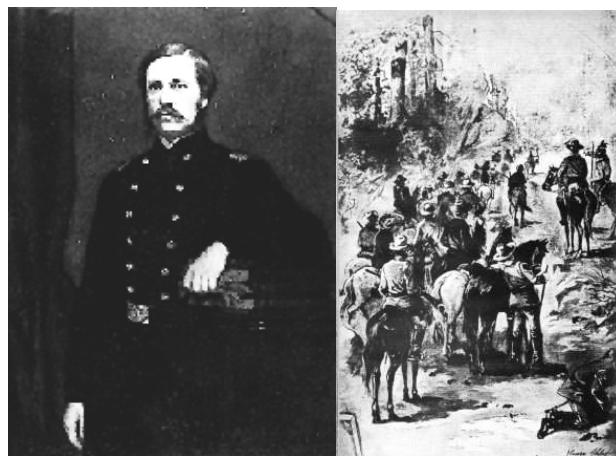
He was much more than a good Indian, he was our leader.

VO Nathan:

While Tenaya was beloved by his tribe, there were others who saw him as the enemy.



We zoom in on the Merced River in muted colors indicating the past... intercutting with archival images of gold miners in early Yosemite and to images of soldiers including MAJOR SAVAGE.



We hear from writer and Yosemite historian REBECCA SOLNIT:



She recounts the story of the Mariposa Battalion self-styled 'Indian Fighters' and how they came to target the Ahwahneechee, a band of Mikow-speaking Native Americans known to others as the Yosemite led by Tenaya. We learn how and why Major Savage lead a scorched-earth campaign against Tenaya's people, burning their structures and acorn caches of food.

We behold again the magnificent view of Yosemite Valley in breathtaking color that millions of visitors enjoy today.



The Descendent:
Continues to narrate the story from the perspective of the Ahwahneechee.

Rebecca Solnit:

In pursuit of Tenaya, Savage and his men happen upon a this incredible view – but to the men of the Mariposa Battalion, it's hardly worth a mention. All Savage cares about is smoking out Tenaya.

We fade to an image of Chief Tenaya... then fade to Tenaya Lake...

The Descendent now takes over the story:

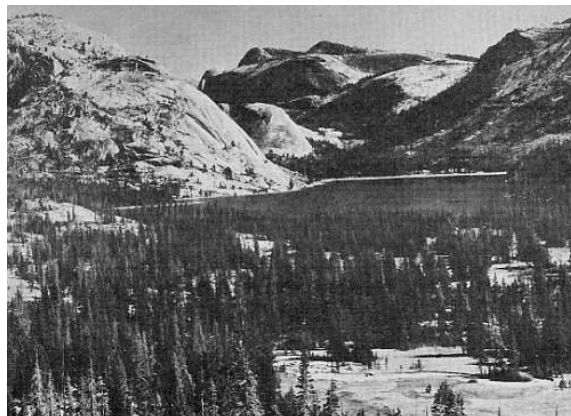
Chief Tenaya escaped the clutches of Savage but was finally captured where we now stand.



Archival images along with a slow-moving camera take in the pristine beauty of the lake to illustrate the following...

The Descendent:

When the soldiers told the Chief that they had given his name to the lake in his honor, Tenaya replied that the lake already has a name. "We call it Pweak," the high-country lake. Naming a lake after him was no equivalent for the loss of our native land.



We fade up again on the shores of Tenaya Lake...

The Descendent:

This is what became of her people.

Rebecca Solnit:

With the eviction of the Ahwahneechee, Yosemite became scenery to consume and conserve. Muir's assumption that Yosemite is pure, pristine wilderness is reflected in most artistic representations of Tenaya Lake and the rest of Yosemite.

We fade to a montage of famous paintings by artists such as Albert Bierstadt and Chiura Obata and photographers like Carleton Watkins and Ansel Adams, who minimize or obliterate the human presence in the landscape... the montage fades back to the lake where the Descendent stands staring out to where her people once lived... She turns and walks away... slowly disappearing from view.



Nathan and the Ranger continue their CONVERSATION which includes the idea that no matter what the fantasy... someone has always been a steward of this land... in the past it was the native people... today it might be the rangers.



The CONVERSATION ends with a reference to the meadow riots of 1970.

We cut to 16mm film from David Vassar, Yosemite and State Parks filmmaker, who accidentally was at the meadows over the 1970 4th of July weekend during the riots with a USC student film crew: **Stoneman Meadow Riot.**

David Vassar:

Tells the story as he remembers it, possibly in conversation with Ranger Shenk who was also there.

Legend has it that the Berkeley Barb took out a full-page ad telling people to come July 4th weekend but it's not true. I looked and could never find it. It was more likely an article comparing Yosemite to Woodstock.

The meadow was filled with over 150 young people. The Curry Company may have called the Rangers because Midwesterners complained about the long-haired hippies.

30 to 40 Rangers were called in, many on horseback. They chased the kids out of the meadow to Upper River Camp along the Merced. Kids in trees threw stones from the river at the rangers and later returned to the meadow, rolling tourists cars. The Rangers closed the park and arrested the rioters.



I was also arrested, beat up, and spent part of the night in the Yosemite jail. The next morning the Park Service returned my camera and by some miracle, the film was still in it. As it turned out, we had the only footage. Clips from our film made the CBS Evening News.

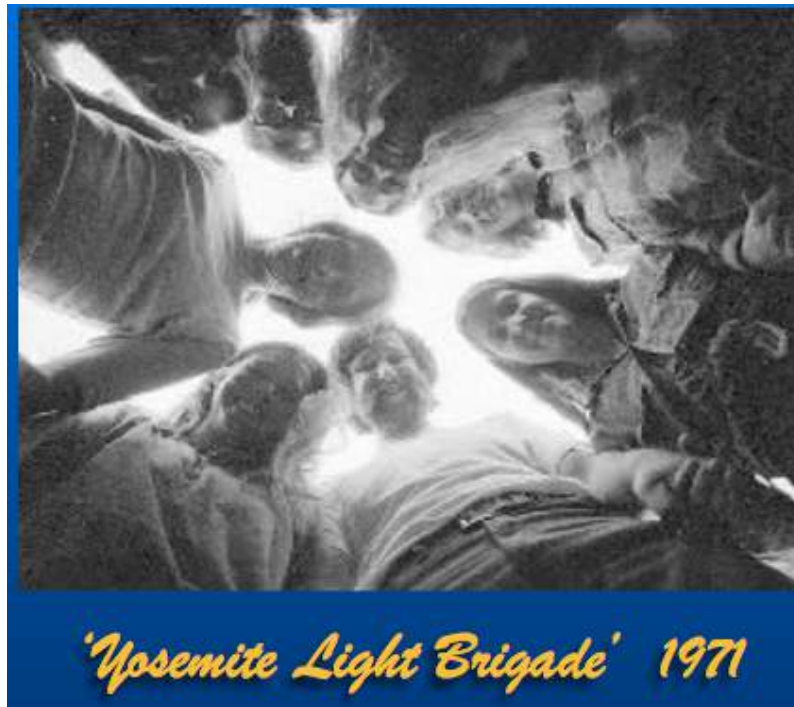
David Vassar:

The media storm sparked Congressional hearings. Congress ordered the National Park Service to train and deploy a professional police force and to actively engage young visitors.



David Vassar:

Soon after, I was invited to screen the film for the Director of the National Park Service, George Hartzog. Visibly shaken by what he saw, he asked if I would be willing to come back to Yosemite in the summer to create evening programs for young visitors.



I couldn't believe it. I was going to be paid to work in Yosemite. The "Yosemite Light Brigade" presented our own alternative to the classic National Park campfire program.

Ranger Shenk:

That was the turnaround, the beginning of the new National Park Service.



Nathan and the Ranger's CONVERSATION continues with the discussion of Yosemite as a tourist attraction which hit its artificial peak with the **Firefall**.



Cut to:

Nathan stands in Yosemite Valley. He holds up a postcard of the Firefall and looks up at Glacier Point.



Nathan:

This is where it all happened.

We intercut with archive images and video of the firefall as well as footage of Glacier Point and the valley below as Nathan continues...

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EhsGw3tYMog>

Nathan VO:

For generations of park visitors, watching the nightly stream of red-hot embers cascading from Glacier Point toward the valley floor, 3,254 feet below – the famous Firefall– defined a tourist trip to Yosemite National Park as much as seeing its more natural features.



Nathan VO:

The tradition begins as a Fourth of July spectacular staged in 1871 or 1872 by James McCauley, proprietor of the Mountain House hotel atop Glacier Point and owner of the Four Mile Trail that linked the point to the valley floor. As the story goes, when his guests requested a fireworks show, McCauley offered an even more elaborate spectacle.

It became a nightly spectacle in the early 1900s under the direction of David Curry. Curry apparently had few reservations about manipulating Yosemite Valley's landscape to boost business at Camp Curry; he once proposed a golf course on the valley floor and, higher up, a series of dams and reservoirs that would make Yosemite Valley's waterfalls flow year-round.

Nathan VO:

Curry embellished upon McCauley's show. He contributed his own booming voice, each night before bellowing the command: "Let the fire fall!" The shouted dialogue continued even after Curry's untimely death in 1915, becoming part of an elaborate ritual that incorporated an "Indian Love Call," sung as the embers fell.

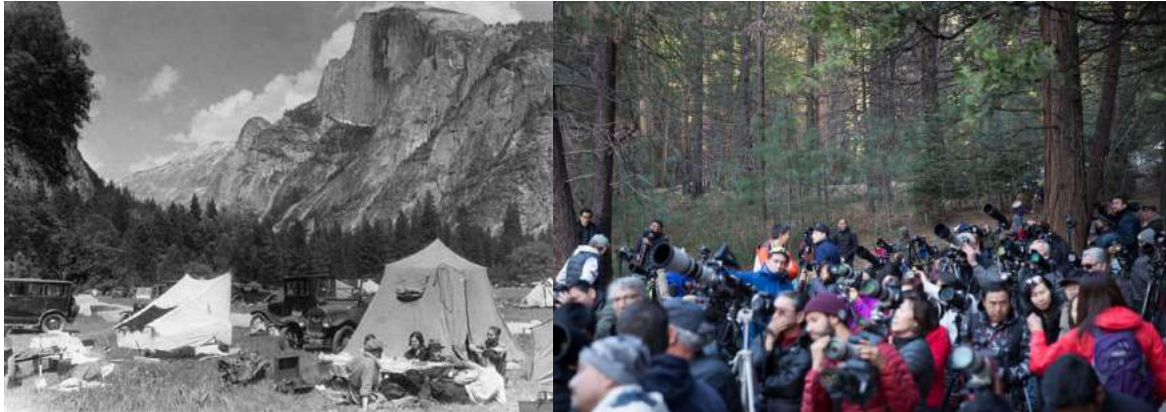


Nathan VO:

Eventually, changing attitudes about nature and the national parks caught up with the Firefall. Park managers thought the Firefall was something better fit for an amusement park than for a national park.

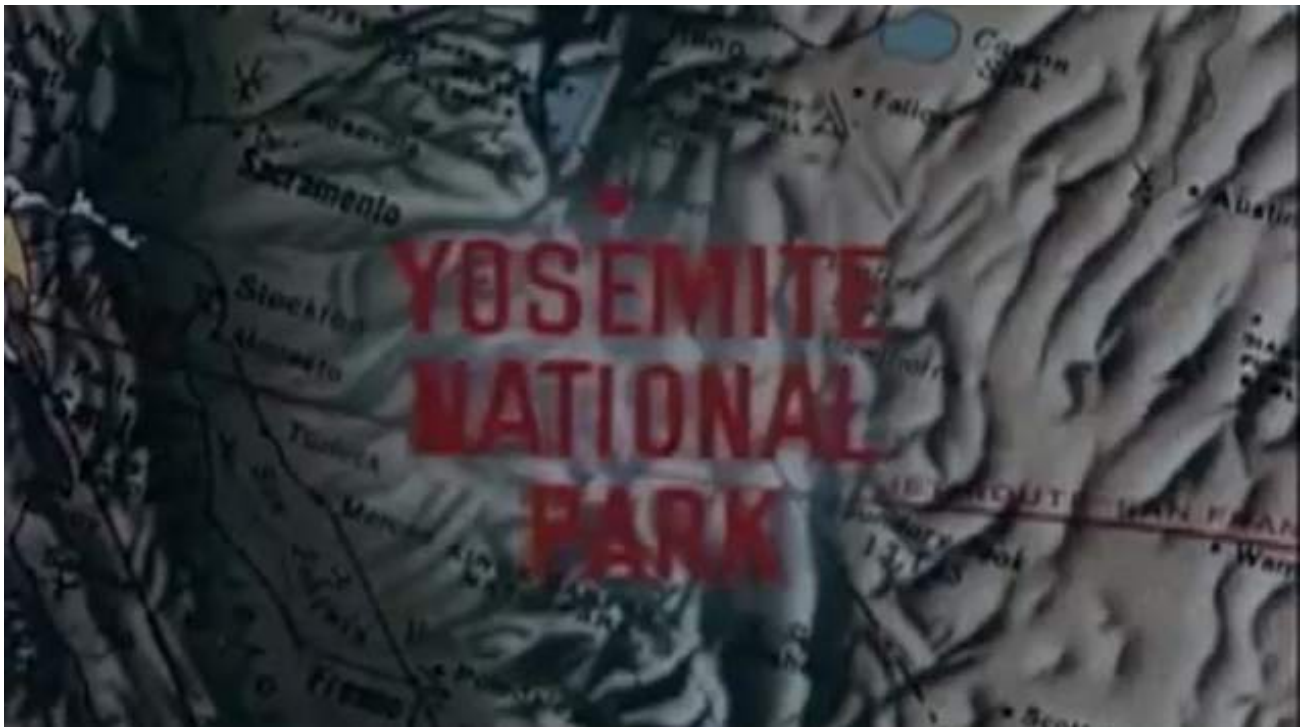
After one final performance on Jan. 25, 1968 – performed without any public notice that it would be the last, to avoid a flood of nostalgic visitors – the Firefall was extinguished forever.

But that would not mark the end of the commercialization of Yosemite.



Our discussion of the Firefall leads us into the larger exploration of Yosemite as tourist destination and amusement park...

1960s American Airlines Tourist Ad: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k6N5NcXQ_II



We travel the valley and make note of the Starbucks that recently opened...



We enter into a discussion with Rebecca Solnit and other locals to learn their views of the commercialization of Yosemite. We might meet with someone at the park involved in concessions to hear their views as well.

Along the way we'll discover that commercialization of National Parks was present from the very beginning. In fact, the first Director of the National Park Service once said, "Scenery is a hollow enjoyment to the tourist who sets out in the morning after an indigestible breakfast and a fitful nights sleep on an impossible bed."

Our story ends... on a hopeful note that a new firefall has replaced the old one... this one happens only once a year and is a **natural** occurrence.



Nathan VO:

Nathan ends the episode with a few words about the nature of nature, including his thoughts that our concept of 'natural scenery' is artificial itself, entangled with cultural traditions like Romanticism, landscape painting and photography.



Fade to black.