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## “More Sublime than any Cathedral”

### Yosemite’s 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrated in State Library Exhibit

SACRAMENTO – The Yosemite Grant Act of 1864 was the first time in history a large tract of wilderness was preserved for public enjoyment.

A special exhibit commemorating the landmark legislation sesquicentennial tells the storied history of Yosemite through the State Library’s collection of drawings, photographs, guidebooks and journals dating from the early 1800s to contemporary times.

“It’s astonishing that during the height of the Civil War, President Lincoln saw the wisdom in safeguarding Yosemite and the Mariposa Big Tree Grove from commercial exploitation,” remarked Gary Kurutz, exhibit curator and Principal Librarian Emeritus of Special Collections.

Besides being the foundation of the national park system, the Yosemite Grant—carried by [California Senator John Conness](#)—marks the beginning of California’s park system, which is also celebrating its [150<sup>th</sup> anniversary](#) this year.

The materials on display are drawn entirely from the State Library’s California History collection. Highlights include an original 1856 drawing by [Thomas Ayers](#), the first artist to portray the valley. There’s also the first guidebook to Yosemite, published in 1868, and rare photographs of conservationists [John Muir](#) and [Galen Clark](#), the first guardians of Yosemite.

Original photographs by [Ansel Adams](#) of majestic Yosemite peaks are also on view, along with recently-acquired landscapes by Sacramento photographer Earl Payne and stunning photos of death-defying tourists at Overhanging Rock.

The exhibit is on the first and second floor galleries of the library building at 900 N Street in Sacramento and is open 8 to 5, Monday through Friday.

Exhibit images, courtesy of California State Library: “Yosemite Valley” by C. Clarke, 1873; “Three Thousand Foot Tango - Yosemite Valley” by Harold C. Wurts, c1916; “Yosemite” by Jo Mora, 1931.

\*“More sublime than any cathedral” – from [Two Weeks in the Yosemite](#) by Rev. James Monroe Buckley, 1883.

**About the California State Library:** Founded in 1850, the California State Library is the central reference and research library for the Governor’s office, Legislature, state employees, and the general public. The State Library leads and promotes innovative library services by providing and managing state and federal funding programs to ensure all Californians have access via their libraries to information and educational resources. For more information, visit [www.library.ca.gov](http://www.library.ca.gov)

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