

SEEING . . .



GENERAL GRANT GROVE

General Grant Grove once was a part of the most extensive of all giant sequoia forests. Of the original forest, little more than this 4-square-mile area was saved from lumbering when Congress set it aside as a national park in 1890. Discovered in 1862 by Joseph Hardin Thomas, the General Grant Tree, from which the grove takes its name, was named in 1867 by Mrs. Lucretia P. Baker. For 50 years General Grant Grove was known as General Grant National Park. When Kings Canyon National Park was established in 1940 it became part of that park. The Redwood Mountain Grove area, containing a magnificent sequoia forest, was added a short time later. Today, the centrally located General Grant Grove serves as an excellent base point for drives into Kings Canyon, along the Generals Highway to Giant Forest, or for trail trips into the high mountain wilderness of Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks.

ABOUT THE GIANT SEQUOIAS

The giant sequoias are so well proportioned, and display such symmetry and balance, that often it is difficult to appreciate their true size. Actual measurements, the experience of walking around one, or of standing in a fire-hollowed trunk soon convince one that they truly deserve to be called "the largest of living things." Members of a genus that in the geologic past populated much of the northern hemisphere, this species now is found in separated groves only along the western slope of the Sierra Nevada. Another species, the coast redwood, grows near the coast of central and northern California.

After you have studied these trees for size, after you have meditated on their great age, after you have enjoyed their beauty of color and form, other features of these trees will be noticed. Perhaps the following will answer some of the questions that will occur to you:

A Mixed Forest—The sugar pine and ponderosa pine are especially noteworthy in the forests of General Grant Grove. White fir and incense-cedar also will be observed in association with the giant sequoia.

Seeds and Cones—The ovoid, thick-scaled, rather small cone produces many seeds. Find one that has been cut down by squirrels and see if you can shake out some seeds.

Young Sequoias—The seeds germinate only in exposed mineral soil in open places, not in the shaded forest. Look for young trees near General Grant Tree, along the highway, and in General Grant Village.

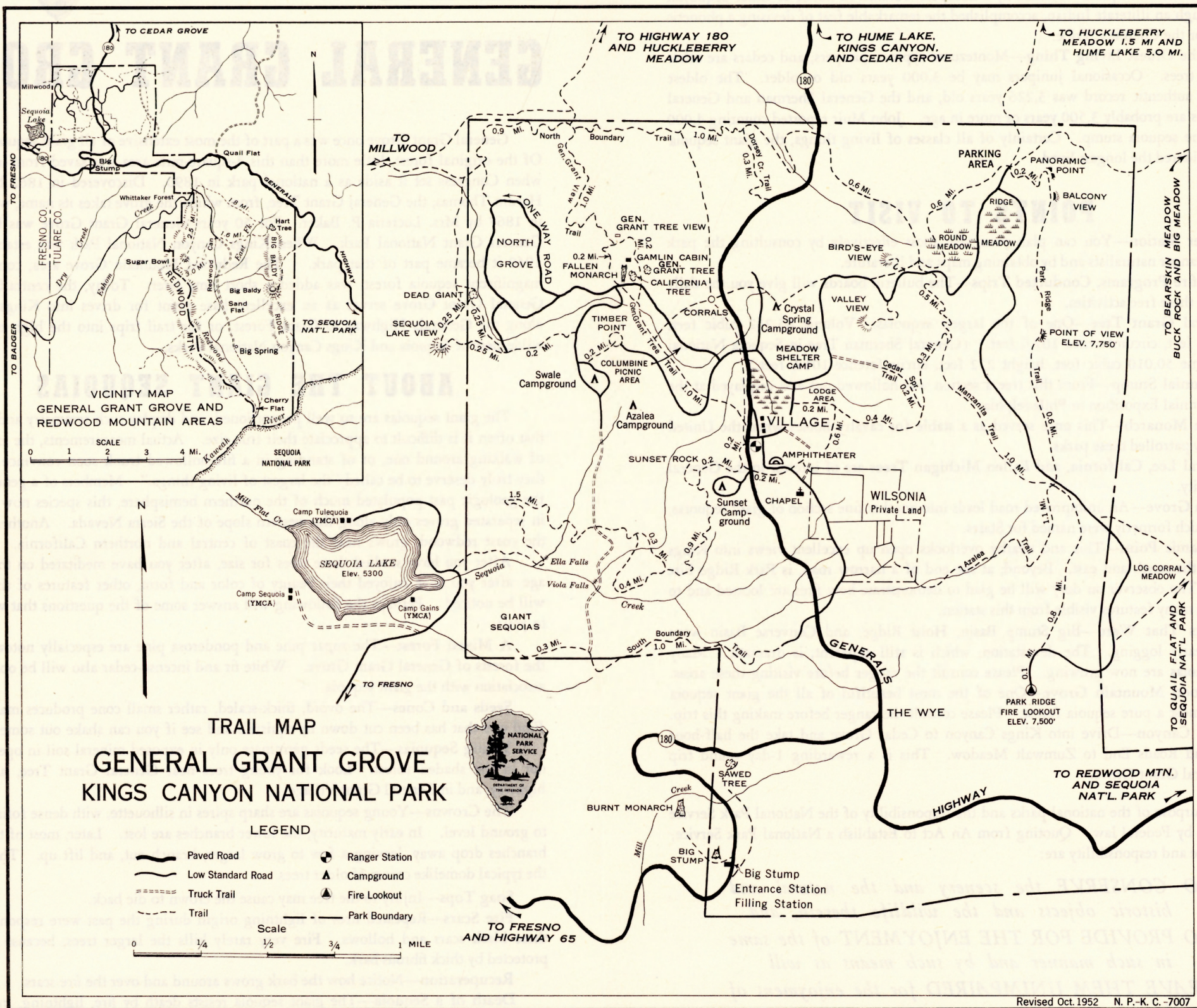
The Crowns—Young sequoias are sharp spires in silhouette, with dense foliage down to ground level. In early maturity, the lower branches are lost. Later, most of the upper branches drop away, leaving a few to grow larger, branch out, and lift up. These form the typical domelike crown of older trees.

Snag Tops—Injury to the tree may cause the crown to die back.

Fire Scars—Repeated fires of lightning origin during the past were responsible for these black scars and hollows. Fire very rarely kills the larger trees, because they are protected by thick fibrous bark.

Recuperation—Notice how the bark grows around and over the fire scars.

Death of a Sequoia—The giant sequoia resists death by fire, lightning, insects, or disease. It dies, as a general rule, only when it loses balance, because of softening of the earth or erosion, and crashes to the ground.



Redwoods and Sequoias—Giant sequoia is the common name of *Sequoia gigantea*. It may also be called big tree or Sierra redwood. *Sequoia sempervirens* of the coast is called the coast redwood. They are two different species of sequoia.

The Name of Sequoia—Named by a European botanist in honor of Chief Sequoyah who, although an illiterate Indian, accomplished the remarkable feat of devising a phonetic alphabet for the Cherokee Tribe.

Is It the Oldest Living Thing—Montezuma cypress, junipers, and cedars are other long-lived trees. Occasional junipers may be 3,000 years old or older. The oldest sequoia on authentic record was 3,226 years old, and the General Sherman and General Grant Trees are probably 3,500 years or more in age. John Muir reported counting 4,000 rings on one sequoia stump. Certainly of all classes of living things, the giant sequoia can be considered the longest lived.

POINTS TO VISIT

Ranger Station—You can plan your visit most effectively by consulting the park rangers or ranger naturalists and by obtaining maps and literature.

Campfire Programs, Conducted Trips—The bulletin boards will give you the daily schedule of these free activities.

General Grant Tree—One of the largest sequoias. Volume 45,232 cubic feet, height 267 feet, circumference 107.6 feet. (General Sherman Tree in Sequoia National Park, volume 50,010 cubic feet, height 272 feet, circumference 101.6 feet.)

Centennial Stump—From this tree a section was hollowed out and displayed at the 1876 Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia.

Fallen Monarch—This once served as a stable for cavalry horses when the United States Army patrolled these parks.

General Lee, California, and Fallen Michigan Trees are of interest in the General Grant vicinity.

North Grove—An unimproved road leads into another fine section of giant sequoias, many of which formerly were named for States.

Panoramic Point—This and nearby overlooks open up excellent views into Kings Canyon to the north and east. Beyond, at the end of a narrow road, is Park Ridge Fire Lookout. The observer on duty will be glad to demonstrate how fires are located and to identify the many features visible from this station.

Forests That Were—Big Stump Basin, Hoist Ridge, and Converse Basin were scenes of early logging. The devastation, which is still apparent, is dramatic. Many young sequoias are now growing. Please consult the ranger before visiting these areas.

Redwood Mountain Grove—One of the most beautiful of all the giant sequoia groves—almost a pure sequoia forest. Please consult the ranger before making this trip.

Kings Canyon—Drive into Kings Canyon to Cedar Grove and take the half-hour walk beyond Roads End to Zumwalt Meadow. This is a rewarding 1-day round trip from General Grant Grove.

The purpose of the national parks and the responsibility of the National Park Service are defined by Federal law. Quoting from An Act to Establish a National Park Service, that purpose and responsibility are:

*TO CONSERVE the scenery and the natural and
historic objects and the wildlife therein, and
TO PROVIDE FOR THE ENJOYMENT of the same
in such manner and by such means as will
LEAVE THEM UNIMPAIRED for the enjoyment of
future generations.*