

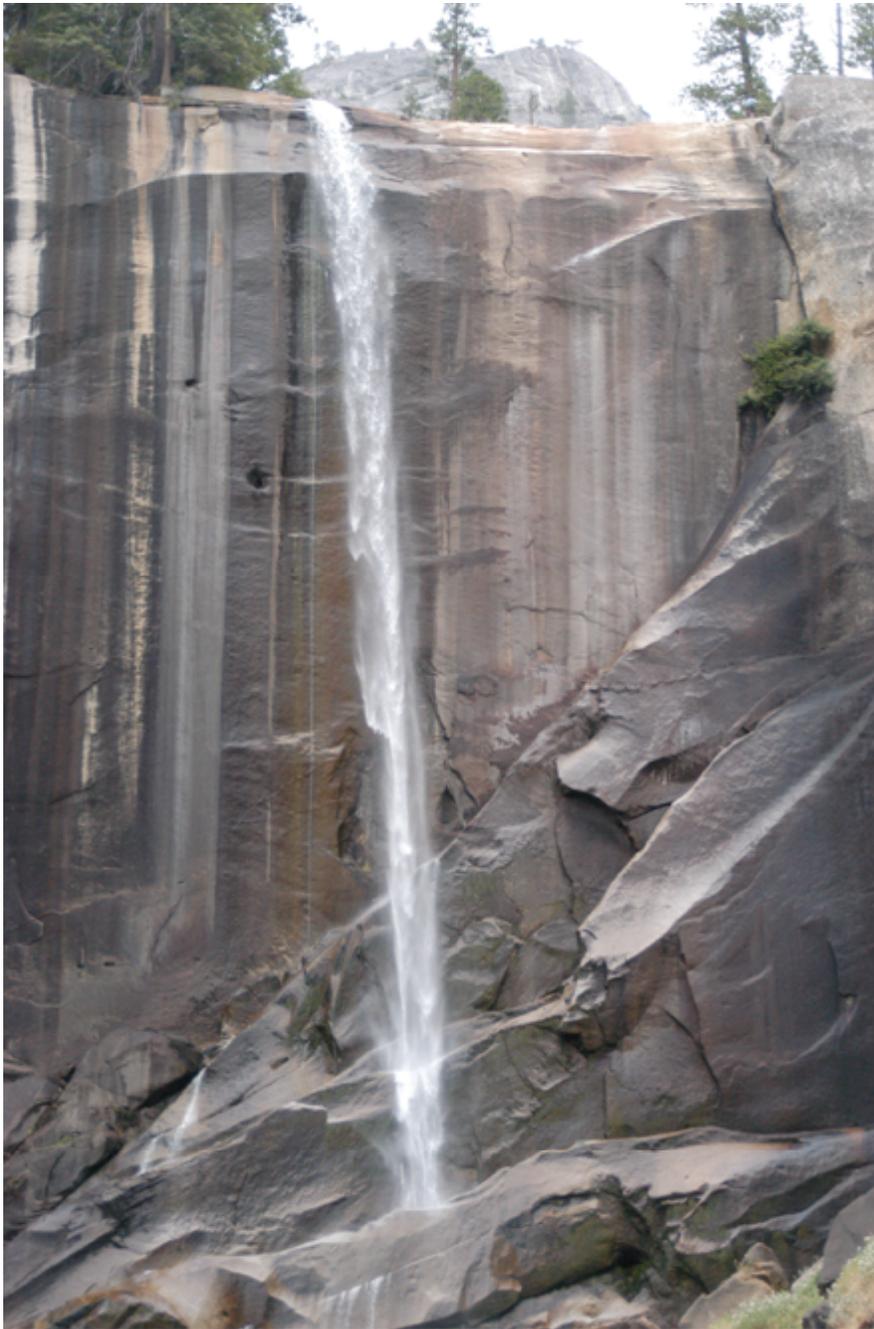
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I went to Yosemite backcountry with **Clark Quinn** last weekend (September, 2004) for a couple of days. We did not stay out longer because of snow and rain. Yosemite is no fun in snow and rain, unless you have skis, which we did not. Here's a narration for each of the pictures.



Nevada falls – almost dry because it's the end of the summer. 2,000 ft above the valley floor. When carrying a pack, 2,000 ft seems like "forever." We started hiking around 8:30 after getting up early to get wilderness permits, and had reached the top of the falls by noon. That's only about 3 miles of hiking for all that vertical rise. The rest of the day we covered around 10 more miles.



Many of the trails in Yosemite National Park were constructed by the US cavalry in the late 1800s so they could patrol the Indian country in the Sierras. These "paving blocks" were intricately laid down to provide firm footing for horses. Today most of the traffic (but not all) on these trails is on foot.



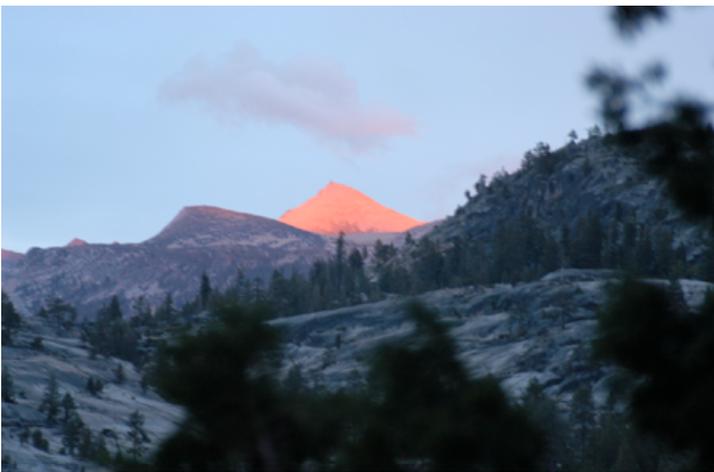
The trail takes us "behind" Half Dome and up the side of the cliff. We pass any number of these sheer faces as we ascend to the top of the falls.



The trail thru *Little Yosemite Valley* is well maintained. It handles all the day-hikers who are headed for the top of Half Dome, as well as hikers like us headed for wilderness areas.



Redwood trees in *Little Yosemite Valley* which is a bit like the real Yosemite Valley, but up higher. These trees are big, but not like the giant redwoods found elsewhere in the park. They are really incredibly red.



At sunset, there's a condition called *alpenglow* caused when the sunlight comes straight in from the horizon and hits the tips of the highest peaks, turning them pink. This photo gives you an idea just how pink. Pretty pink. You can see bare rock areas at the bottoms of these peaks – the next morning these were covered with snow. The forecast was for rain tonight – and yes it did rain. And it was pretty cold. We were equipped for the cold weather, but rain is always a problem because you can't fold up a wet tent and carry it with you for very many days without everything becoming wet.



So it rained a bit overnight, and in the morning (7am) we look upward and see more heavy rain clouds, and snow on the mountains a few miles away. This is the first significant snow of the season (mid September) and is a bit early.



Generally, even if it's only around 30° I'll wear shorts when hiking. This morning it was 35° and I'll tell you it was cold. We started in long pants, which is no fun for hiking, put on sweatshirts, and eventually down parkas. It was too cold to be comfortable, especially since weather forecasts said it would snow more tonight. So we reversed direction and headed for Yosemite Valley again.



When it rains, frequently the clouds hug the cliffs of Yosemite Valley causing the conditions you see in this photo. As we returned to the valley, descending down the steep trails, we were greeted by this phenomenon.



This is the south wall of Yosemite Valley, which we descended (on a trail, of course), in the rain and clouds. By the time we took this photo we were on the valley floor, and it was a pretty steady drizzle. We were both glad we were not out in the wilderness areas – it's just not as much fun out there in the rain!



These twisted, and frequently burned, trunks are all that remain of some of the oldest trees in the park. This picture shows Mt. Hoffman in the background, and was taken on our August trip to May Lake.



This picture was taken in August and shows Cathedral Peak on the left.

Jim