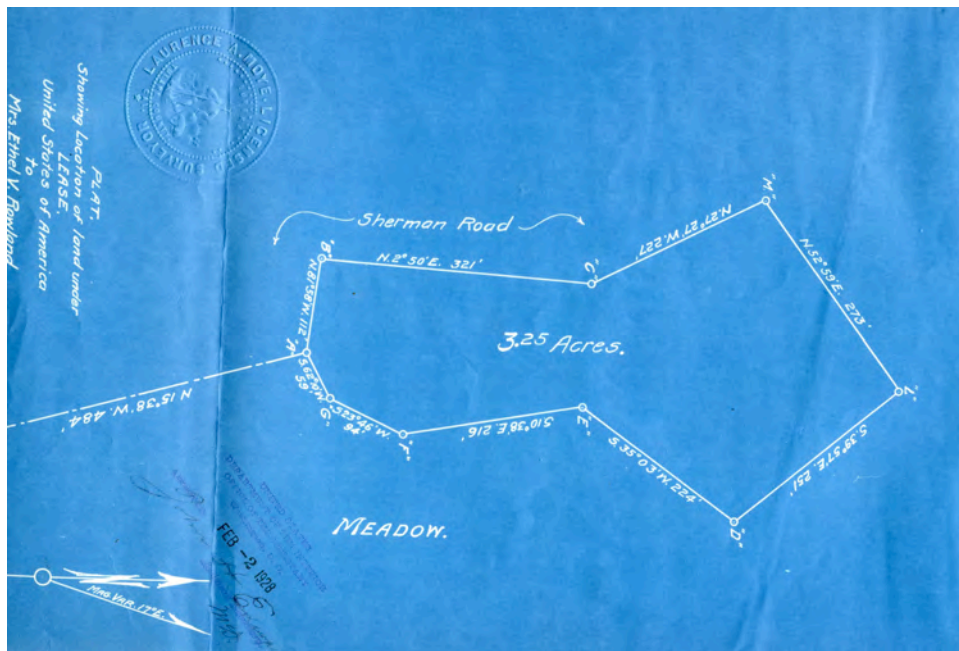




## FINDING AID

# PRIVATE LAND RECORDS 1903-1953 (bulk dates: 1914-1941)

Prepared by Beth McDonald



National Park Service

Catalog Number: SEKI 22572

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## ***HISTORY***

Sequoia National Park, founded in 1890, was the second national park to be established by the federal government. General Grant National Park, the third national park, was created later that same year. The original boundaries of the parks encompassed 252 square miles and included a large portion of the Giant Forest area. In 1926, Congress expanded the boundaries of Sequoia National Park by an additional 352 square miles, stretching east to Mount Whitney to encompass both the Kaweah River and Kern River watersheds for a total park area of 604 square miles. Though the federal government was the primary landowner of the areas added to the park, small pockets of privately owned land remained scattered across the area. These private inholdings were largely meadows sold to individuals under the Swamp Lands Act of 1850. Many of them were situated in and around the very sequoia groves the park had been established to protect. From the beginning of the parks' history, their superintendents were dedicated to eliminate private lands within the parks' boundaries either through purchase or donation.

The establishment of the National Park Service (NPS) in 1916 made the process of appropriating funds for these purchases easier, but park superintendents, particularly Colonel John R. White, relied heavily on contributions and other aid from outside conservationists and park proponents. Between 1916 and 1926, all of the remaining private areas in Giant Forest, as well as popular modern areas such as Lodgepole, were purchased or donated and made part of the park. During this time, superintendents and NPS officials also sought to purchase lands and meadows that lay outside Sequoia National Park, but within the area of a proposed park expansion, such as Redwood and Wet Meadows.

Despite these efforts, a handful of private inholdings remained. A notable example of this is Wilsonia Village in Grant Grove, which still exists as a private community within the park. Wilsonia has a complex and not always amiable relationship with Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks involving agreements over road use, law enforcement, preservation of NPS buildings within Wilsonia, and similar matters.

The files within this collection predate the NPS-19 Records Disposition Schedule and are organized by a numeric code that uses decimals and dashes to separate major categories and file types. All files in this collection are marked with the 610 numeric code indicating the Private Holdings category. As this file code system was superseded in 1953 by the NPS-19 schedule, the system has been noted and disposed of. Files within this collection have been arranged alphabetically by folder name and then chronologically within folder groups of the same name.

## ***SCOPE AND CONTENT***

### PRIVATE LAND RECORDS 1903-1953 1903-1953 (bulk dates: 1914-1941)

*CATALOG NUMBER* SEKI 22572

*VOLUME* 1 LF

*DESCRIPTION* This collection consists of park records detailing the acquisition and administration of privately held land within the boundaries of Sequoia National Park as well as private land that extended the boundaries of the park.

The collection contains correspondence, memoranda, reports, deeds, and contracts relating to privately held land purchased by Sequoia National Park. Additional correspondence and records document the leasing of park land to private individuals. Each folder consists of records relating to an area of land and the individuals owning and/or leasing that land. The folders are labeled according to their original file name; significant locations and additional names have been called out here.

1. Phil Davis - The Trauger Place (Mineral King)
2. W. F. Dean - Marble Fork Canyon
3. E.C. Farnsworth, John F. Jordan, and Ethel V. Rowland - Round Meadow
4. The Gibson Tract - between Little Baldy and Muir Grove; Louis Titus, J.F. and Bessie Gibson
5. Grunsky Holdings - Alta Meadow; C.E. Grunsky, B. Grant and Kate G. Taylor
6. Kaweah Molybdenum Mines Co. - Tamarack Lake area
7. The Martin Tract -Marble Fork Bridge area; Frances and Urilda Martin
8. The Mitchell Tract - Lodgepole, Tokopah Falls and Atwell Mill areas
9. Isham D. Mullenix - Mineral King; A. J. Atwell
10. Redwood Meadow and Wet Meadow - Stephen T. Mather, The Sierra Club
11. A. J. Wilkin - Marble Fork Canyon

12. Chester Wright - Milk Ranch (Mineral King), Southern California Edison

Additionally, there are several folders relating to a dispute between the residents of Wilsonia Village and the Wilsonia Lodge over a liquor license issued to the lodge.

This collection also includes the following notable individuals: Robert Woods Bliss, American diplomat and philanthropist; William F. Dean; Judge Walter Fry; Aurelia S. Harwood, conservationist and first female president of the Sierra Club; Stephen T. Mather, the first director of NPS; George W. Stewart, the "Father of Sequoia National Park"; Daniel Tobin, assistant superintendent; Colonel John R. White, superintendent; and Colonel Charles Young, superintendent.

*ORGANIZATION*

Arranged alphabetically by folder name and then chronologically within folder groups of the same name.

*PROVENANCE*

This collection was originally generated as part of the administration files for the Sequoia National Park, General Grant National Park, and Kings Canyon National Park between the years of 1903 and 1953, with the bulk consisting of records from 1914 to 1941. Through normal procedures, these documents were transferred to the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) storage facility in San Francisco at periodic intervals. When the San Francisco facility moved to San Bruno, California, the files were relocated to that facility. In 2013, these files were withdrawn from the San Bruno facility and returned to the Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks archives.

*RESTRICTIONS*

NO

***FILE UNIT DESCRIPTIONS***

- Box 1**
- 001. 165.263 [610] Private Holdings: Phil Davis, 1928**
  - 002. 610-03.22 Private Holdings: W. F. Dean, 1910-1928**
  - 003. 610-03.13 Private Holdings: Farnsworth/Jordan/Rowland, 1906-1937**
  - 004. 610-03.26 Private Holdings: Gibson Tract, 1914-1939**
  - 005. 610-03.15 Private Holdings: Grunsky Holdings, 1924-1930**
  - 006. 610-03.5 Private Holdings: Kaweah Molybdenum Mines Co., 1921-1943**
  - 007. 610-03.25 Private Holdings: Martin Tract, 1903-1941**
  - 008. 610-03.3 Private Holdings: Mitchell Tract, 1914-1941**
  - 009. 610-03.23 Private Holdings: I.D. Mullenix, 1910-1915**
  - 010. 610-03.27 Private Holdings: Redwood and Wet Meadows, 1932-1937**
  - 011. 610-03.24 Private Holdings: A.J. Wilkin, 1917**
  - 012. 610-03.29.1 Private Holdings: Wilsonia Liquor Dispute, 1940-1948**
  - 013. 610-03.29.1 Private Holdings: Wilsonia Liquor Dispute, 1949**
  - 014. 610-03.29.1 Private Holdings: Wilsonia Liquor Dispute, 1950-1951**
  - 015. 610-03.29.1 Private Holdings: Wilsonia Liquor Dispute, 1952**
  - 016. 610-03.29.1 Private Holdings: Wilsonia Liquor Dispute, 1952**
  - 017. 610-03.29.1 Private Holdings: Wilsonia Liquor Dispute, 1952**
  - 018. 610-03.29.1 Private Holdings: Wilsonia Liquor Dispute, 1953**
  - 019. 610-04.1 Private Holdings: Chester Wright, 1924-1943**