

Congratulations!



You've found the geocache along the historic Colony Mill Road, known today as North Fork Drive! This scenic road along the foothills of the Sierra Nevada mountain range was created by the Kaweah Cooperative Colony (or simply the Kaweah Colony), a socialist group who settled in the Three Rivers area over 150 years ago. The Kaweah Colony had land claims in the Giant Forest area and decided to build a sawmill to harvest the giant Sequoia trees. The road was only completed to their mill site, about 18 miles away and 8.7 miles below the Giant Forest. It had an 8% grade which was meant for eventual rail service, though it never came to be.

In 1890, President Benjamin Harrison created Sequoia National Park – our nation's second national park – to protect the local giant Sequoia groves from further logging. The surrounding land became protected government land, annexing all forest land being worked by the Kaweah Colony along with any possible Sequoia groves they were milling. Their livelihoods and homes suddenly stripped from them, the Kaweah Colony shut down operations in 1892.



In 1900, the Colony Mill Road was selected to become the main road into Sequoia National Park, and construction began to extend it. This construction was extremely slow, and only 5 miles was completed from 1900-1902. In 1903, Captain Charles Young and the Buffalo Soldiers of the 9th Cavalry Regiment came to Sequoia to serve a summer there. In under three months, the Buffalo Soldiers finished the remaining five miles of the road, and then further extended it

several miles to the base of Moro Rock, a popular vista in Sequoia National Park.

Over the years as automobile traffic became commonplace, the Generals Highway was built to accommodate vehicles and large portions of Colony Mill Road became abandoned. The Crystal Cave Road in Sequoia National Park is part of the Colony Mill Road and is where it would have met with what was once known as the Middle Fork Road. Much of what was once the Colony Mill road exists in Three Rivers today as North Fork Drive or Mountain Road 357 and 18 miles of it can still be driven! Another part of the road extension created by the Army is now maintained as the Colony Mill Trail. If you'd like to hike this trail, please feel free to take an information sheet found in this geocache!