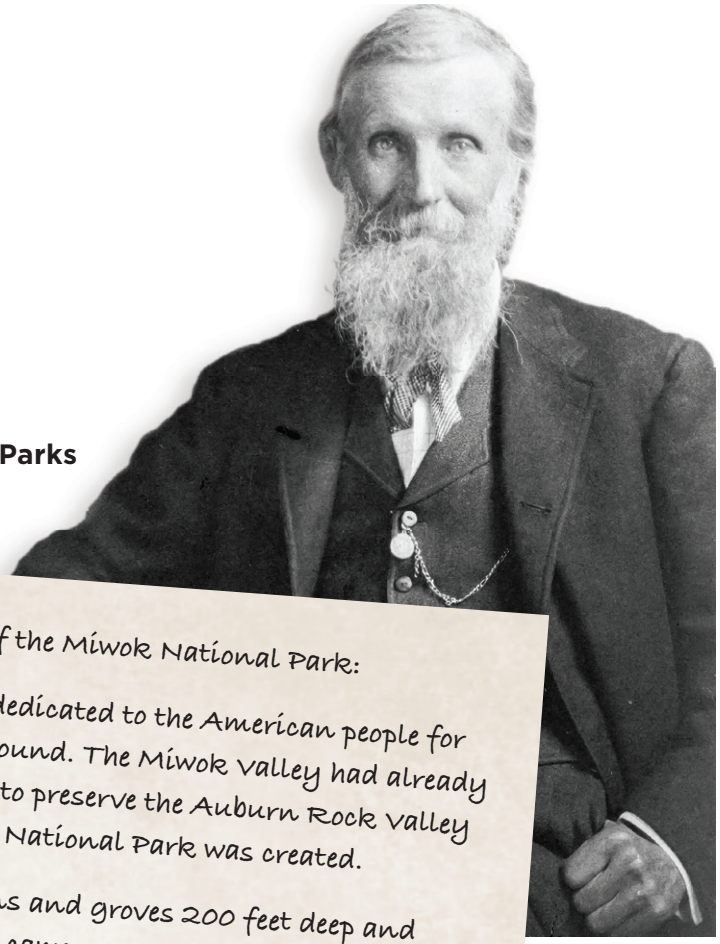
Virtual VOTE!

IN THEIR OWN WORDS | GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS AND EXPERTS

John Muir

President of the Society for the Preservation of National Parks



To the American people, fellow owners of the Miwok National Park:

In 1890 Congress, with wise foresight, dedicated to the American people for all time this great health-giving playground. The Miwok Valley had already been made a park, and it was primarily to preserve the Auburn Rock Valley from destruction that the greater Miwok National Park was created.

Shelbyville schemes to flood these gardens and groves 200 feet deep and to wipe out all the extensive and available camp grounds. The city is again asking Congress for this priceless wonderland which belongs to all the American people. The city has been persistently working in Washington for months, with unlimited financial backing at its command and is now striving to rush this bill through at scandalous speed, without allowing time for the people, the owners of the park, to be heard in its defense. It is vital that every person, no matter how little weight he thinks his request may have, should write to his Member of Congress and to the President asking that the wise forethought and labor of years may not be undone and urge that the administration shall not create the dangerous precedent of destroying and turning to commercial uses the parks dedicated to the people.

John Muir

President of the Society for the Preservation of National Parks

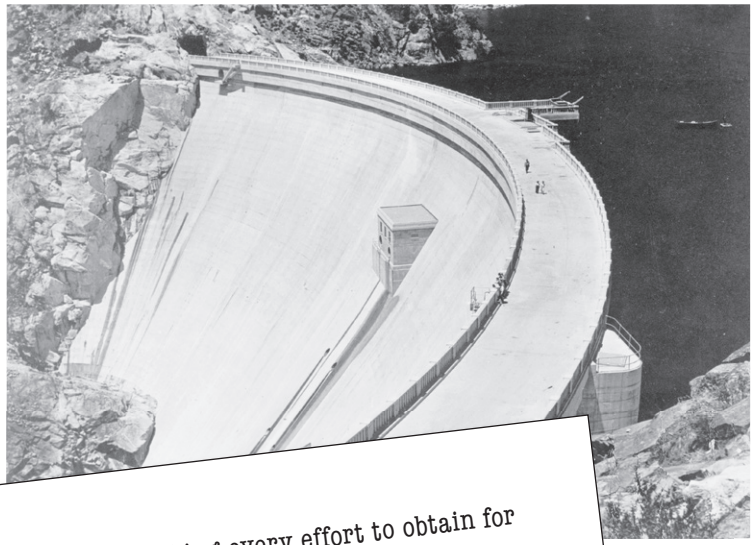
Excerpted from actual letter. Edited for content and length.

SOURCE: U.S. Congress. Congressional Record. 63rd Cong., 1st sess., 1913. Vol. 50, (November 13, 1913) pgs. 5903-04
https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/GPO-CRECB-1913-pt6-v50/pdf/GPO-CRECB-1913-pt6-v50-40-1.pdf

U.S. CAPITOL
visitor center

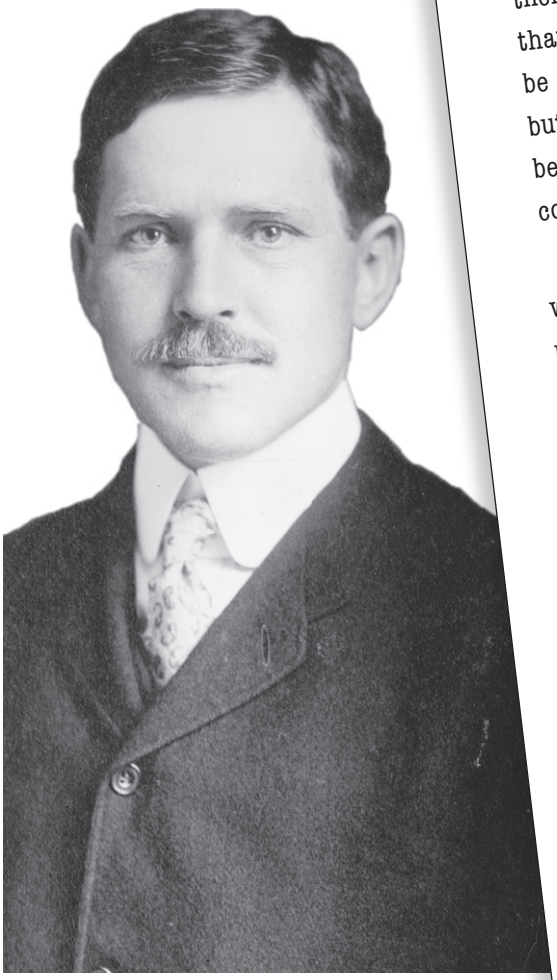
Virtual VOTE!

IN THEIR OWN WORDS | GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS AND EXPERTS



James R. Garfield

Secretary of the Interior



The city of Shelbyville had been making every effort to obtain for its citizens, and the citizens in the immediate surrounding vicinity there, the best, purest, and largest water supply. I take the view that, so far as the Federal Government was authorized, it should be of help to the citizens of any of these cities, not only Shelbyville, but elsewhere, to enable them to obtain that kind of a water supply, believing that the domestic use is the highest use to which water could be put.

I fully appreciated that feeling on the part of those gentlemen who oppose building the dam, and fully appreciated the obligation upon me to preserve these tracts of land. On the other hand, in weighing the two sides of this question, I felt that there could be no doubt but that it should be resolved in favor of the citizens of Shelbyville, because this use of the valley would not destroy it as one of the most beautiful spots in the region. It would simply change the floor of the valley from a meadow to a beautiful lake. After the most careful conference with the representatives of the irrigation districts and a final and unanimous agreement by all that we had protected fully the rights of these various interested parties I believe this plan has most carefully safeguarded the interests of the public in the issuing of this permit. The city of Shelbyville obtains this right subject to very carefully drawn provisions.

James R. Garfield

Secretary of the Interior

Excerpted from actual letter. Edited for content and length.

SOURCE: "San Francisco and the Hetch Hetchy reservoir. Hearing held before the committee on the Public Lands of the House of Representatives, December 16, 1908, on House Joint Resolution 184 - Part IV. STATEMENT OF HON. JAMES R. GARFIELD, SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR." *Museum of the City of San Francisco* **http://www.sfmuseum.org/hetch/hetchy4.html**

U.S. CAPITOL
visitor center

Virtual VOTE!

IN THEIR OWN WORDS | GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS AND EXPERTS

Theodore Roosevelt

President of the United States of America

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

I will do everything in my power to protect not only the Miwok, which we have already protected, but other similar great natural beauties of this country; but you must remember that it is out of the question permanently to protect them unless we have a certain degree of friendliness toward them on the part of the people of the State in which they are situated; if they are used to interfere with the permanent material development of the State instead of helping the permanent material development, the result will be bad. I would not have any difficulty at all if, as you say, nine-tenths of the citizens took ground against the Auburn Rock project; but so far everyone has been for it and I have been in the disagreeable position of seeming to interfere with the development of the State for the sake of keeping a valley, which apparently hardly anyone wanted to have kept, under national control.

Theodore Roosevelt

President of the United States of America

Excerpted from actual letter. Edited for content and length.

SOURCE: Correspondence from Theodore Roosevelt to John Muir, September 16, 1907, Collection: John Muir Correspondence, Holt-Atherton Special Collections – University of the Pacific Library, Stockton, California. **https://oac.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/kt4r29r64h/?order=2&brand=oac4**

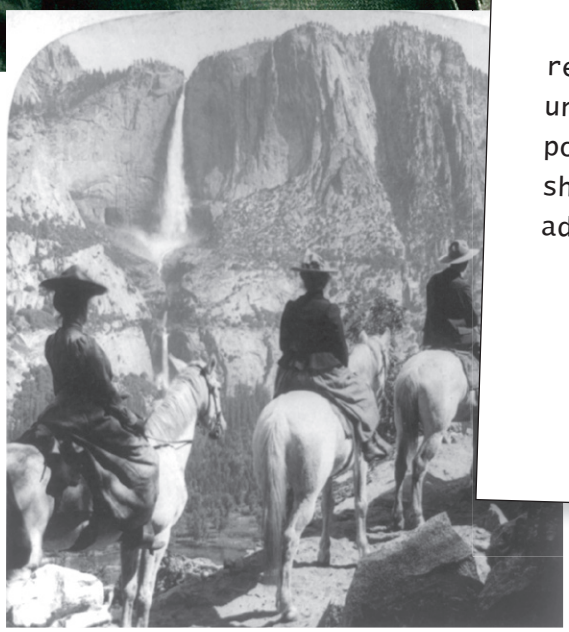
U.S. CAPITOL visitor center

Virtual VOTE!

IN THEIR OWN WORDS | GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS AND EXPERTS

Hiram M. Chittenden

U.S. Army Corp of Engineers



While we agree that Auburn Rock Valley is a sufficient source of water for Shelbyville, the Advisory Board of Army Engineers is of the opinion that there are several alternative sources of water that could be obtained and used by the city of Shelbyville. From any one of these sources the water is sufficient in quantity and is, or can be made, suitable in quality, while the engineering difficulties are not insurmountable. The determining factor is principally one of cost.

The plans and data submitted at the hearing, before the Secretary of the Interior, thoroughly demonstrate that the McCloud River is just as practicable and more economical a source of supply for the city of Shelbyville than the Auburn Rock source.

The city of Shelbyville presented unfavorable reports on the McCloud River, and it is further unfavorably commented on by dwelling upon the possibility of infection of the water. Proper policing should present no great capacity of difficulties, and additional protection will be given by the proposed.

Brigadier General Hiram M. Chittenden

U.S. Army Corp of Engineers, retired

Excerpted from actual letter. Edited for content and length.

SOURCE: U.S. Congress. Congressional Record. 63rd Cong., 2nd sess., 1913. Vol. 51, (December 5, 1913) pgs. 269, 270-271
https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/GPO-CRECB-1914-pt1-v51/pdf/GPO-CRECB-1914-pt1-v51-5-1.pdf

U.S. CAPITOL
visitor center

Virtual VOTE!

IN THEIR OWN WORDS | GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS AND EXPERTS

John R. Freeman

Chief Engineer for the city of Shelbyville

It would be difficult to conceive of a more perfect gathering ground, or one better adopted to produce water of greater purity. To utilize this source of water supply, it is proposed to build a large reservoir in the Auburn Rock Valley, to hold back the flood flows and make them available throughout the dry portions of the year.

The quality of the present supply to Shelbyville comes from ground water constituting nearly half of the entire supply, and being purified by natural filtration. The surface sources are given exceptional care at the gathering grounds. The bugs and algae from the surface waters are carefully strained out through cotton cloth. The present quality of the water is, I believe, thoroughly wholesome and safe from the sanitary point of view.

The alternatively proposed McCloud river water is somewhat milky in appearance and has a slight earthy flavor. In a glass it seemed perfectly clear, however the height of the river varies from day to day even in the dry seasons. A river of such will be muddy and discolored during the rainy seasons. It cannot be assumed that this water would at all times be fit for delivery direct to the consumer. Any McCloud River project should make some provision for adequate storage before use or filtration.

John R. Freeman

Chief Engineer for the city of Shelbyville

Excerpted from actual letter. Edited for content and length.

SOURCE: Freeman, John R. *On the proposed use of a portion of the Hetch Hetchy, Eleanor and Cherry valleys within and near to the boundaries of the Stanislaus U.S. national forest reserve and the Yosemite national park as reservoirs for impounding Tuolumne river flood waters and appurtenant works for the water supply of San Francisco, California, and neighboring cities.: A report to James Rolph, Jr., mayor of San Francisco, and Percy V. Long, city attorney* (San Francisco CA : Pub. by authority of the Board of supervisors, 1912), Pgs. 53, 61, 334, 70. **https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uiug.30112077192083&view=1up&seq=7**

U.S. CAPITOL visitor center

Virtual VOTE!

IN THEIR OWN WORDS | CITIZENS AND VOTERS

Swedish Societies of Shelbyville

SWEDISH WOMEN, 19TH CENTURY, NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

The undersigned organizations, composed of Swedish residents of the city of Shelbyville, appeals to you as a Member of Congress to lend your active support to the bill granting Shelbyville necessary water rights in the Auburn Rock Valley. It is absolutely essential to the future welfare of the city that the bill be passed.

Our need is imperative. No sound arguments have been advanced against devoting this water supply to its highest possible use, to provide the people of a large city with a pure and adequate supply of water, and to insure the city against any possible recurrence of a water shortage which now threatens.

Auburn Rock Valley is the only adequate available water supply to which Shelbyville can turn. Suggested alternative supplies are either inadequate or involve an expenditure of money which the city cannot at this time meet, due to the heavy financial burden the city is now bearing as a result of restoring public buildings and public works destroyed in the fire of 1906.

The construction of the proposed dam will not mar the beauty of the valley, but will rather enhance it by placing there a beautiful lake and building roads which will make accessible a region now visited only by a few hardy camping parties.

We earnestly request you to help us.

We the undersigned Members of the Swedish Societies of Shelbyville

Excerpted from actual letter. Edited for content and length.

SOURCE: Petition from San Francisco Swedish Clubs Supporting the Raker Bill, December, 1913; Petitions and Related Documents That Were Presented, Read, or Tabled (SEN 63A-K8); Records of the U.S. Senate, Record Group 46; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.; NAID 7268081 **https://www.archives.gov/legislative/features/hetch-hetchy/swedish.html**

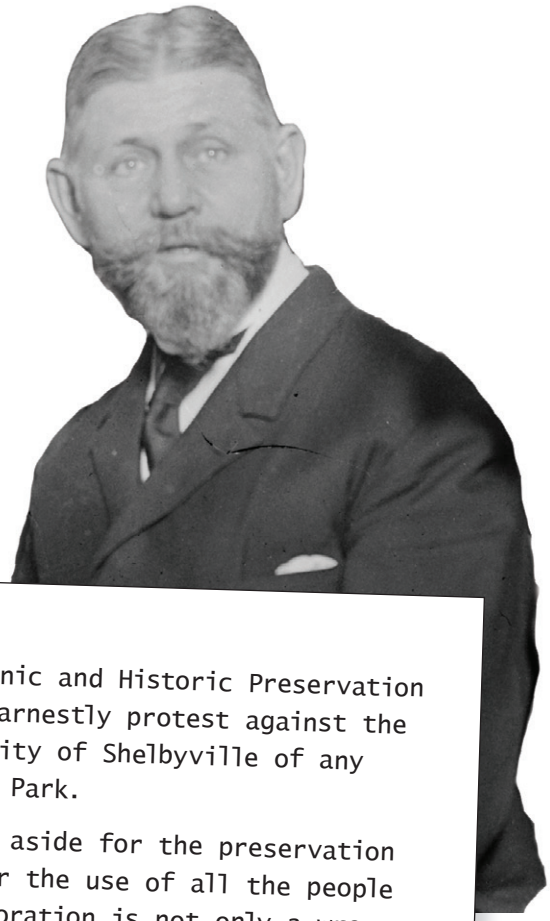
U.S. CAPITOL visitor center

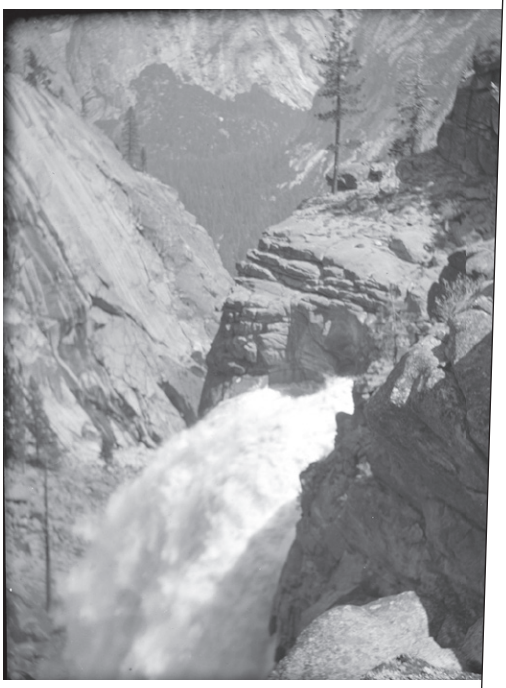
Virtual VOTE!

IN THEIR OWN WORDS | CITIZENS AND VOTERS

George F. Kunz

President of the American Scenic and Historic Preservation Society





On behalf of the American Scenic and Historic Preservation Society we respectfully and earnestly protest against the granting by Congress to the city of Shelbyville of any portion of the Miwok National Park.

This wonderful region was set aside for the preservation of great natural monuments for the use of all the people and to give it away to a corporation is not only a wrong to the rest of the nation, but would mark a return to the commercial treatment of public lands. We believe that on a full consideration of the question not only the state but the whole country would vote against the project.

The effort to show that the Auburn Rock Valley is the only abundant source of good water for the city has failed. Official representatives of Shelbyville confessed before the Senate Public Lands Committee that the city could get such a supply along the other mountain valleys if it would pay for it. No demonstration has been made that this cannot be done.

We beg of your committee not to be misled by the magnitude of the scheme or the vigorous persistence of its advocates. No real emergency exists that should require the furtherance of the bill at the present session.

Yours very truly,

George F. Kunz

President of the American Scenic and Historic Preservation Society

Excerpted from actual letter. Edited for content and length.

SOURCE: Petition from the American Scenic and Historic Preservation Society Against the Raker Bill, June 25, 1913; Committee on Public Lands; Petitions and Memorials (SEN 63A-F26); Records of the U.S. Senate, Record Group 46; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.; NAID 7268069 **https://www.archives.gov/legislative/features/hetch-hetchy/scenic.html**

U.S. CAPITOL visitor center

Virtual VOTE!

IN THEIR OWN WORDS | CITIZENS AND VOTERS

Edith Webster

Secretary Hypatia Women's Club Shelbyville

Unidentified Woman, ca. early 1900s, Library of Congress

Dear Member of Congress:

The Hypatia Women's Club of Shelbyville request that the federal government allow Shelbyville to take water from Auburn Rock Valley.

Shelbyville has no other available supply of pure water that is sufficient. The Miwok Park is an immense tract, while the Auburn Rock Valley, is a very small space not over a mile wide and not more than three or four miles long. It is often flooded for long periods during storms and high water. Making it a permanent reservoir rather beautifies than injures this piece of land. This valley is so minute a portion amid vast domain of almost inaccessible mountains, lakes, and streams at a very high altitude and largely a region of perpetual snow. It is not, or never will be visited by large number of people at any one time. This vast supply of pure water is running away to the ocean while Shelbyville is suffering for a supply of pure water.

The individuals who adore every bush or tree that has ever become a familiar object and who would sacrifice the right and needs of a great city for pure water to a more aesthetic desire to permit the slightest modification of scene, is irrational and unjust.

After complete campaigns in Shelbyville, the vote for such a water supply was substantially unanimous.

Respectfully submitted by

Edith Webster

Secretary Hypatia Women's Club Shelbyville

Excerpted from actual letter. Edited for content and length.

SOURCE: Petition from the Hypatia Women's Club of San Francisco Supporting Granting San Francisco Water Rights to Lake Eleanor and Hetch Hetchy, February 2, 1910; Committee on the Conservation of Natural Resources Petitions and Memorials (SEN 61A-J13) Records of the U.S. Senate, Record Group 46; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.; NAID 7268040
https://www.archives.gov/legislative/features/hetch-hetchy/hypatia.html

U.S. CAPITOL visitor center

Virtual VOTE!

IN THEIR OWN WORDS | CITIZENS AND VOTERS

Anne F. Howard

Secretary of the Graffort Club of Portsmouth, New Hampshire

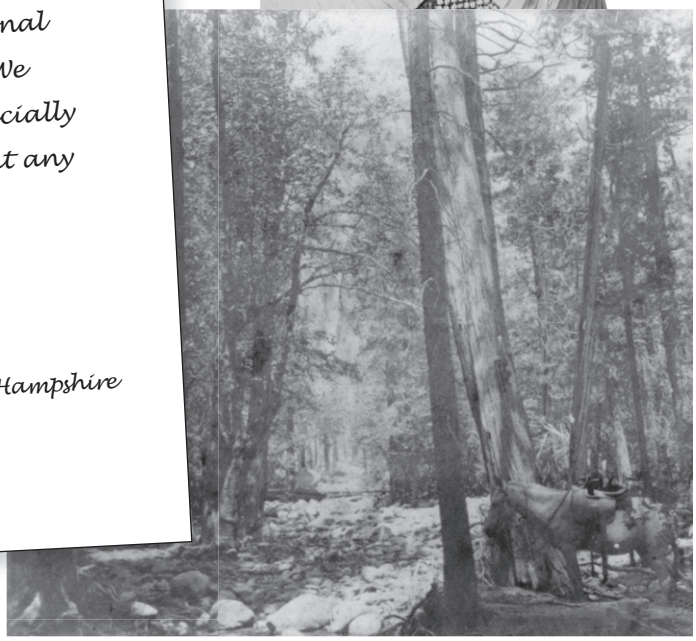
The Auburn Rock Valley is one of the grandest and most important features of the great Miwok National Park belonging to the ninety millions of people composing the American public. This valley is threatened with destruction by those seeking water for Shelbyville and the use of the park by the public would thereby be seriously restricted. The precedent thus established would destroy the integrity of our whole national park system. The need for great public playgrounds is becoming vastly greater instead of diminishing. Eminent engineers report that this proposed invasion of a national wonderland is wholly unnecessary and that Shelbyville can get an abundance of pure water elsewhere. We are earnestly opposed to such a needless local use of a priceless national possession in which the entire citizenship is interested. We petition and urge all Senator and Representatives, especially those composing the Public Lands Committees, to defeat any bill which proposes to confirm any such invasion.

Very Respectfully,

Anne F. Howard

Secretary of the Graffort Club of Portsmouth, New Hampshire

Unidentified Woman, ca. early 1900s, Library of Congress



Excerpted from actual letter. Edited for content and length.

SOURCE: Resolution from the Graffort Club of Portsmouth, New Hampshire Against Granting San Francisco the Hetch Hetchy Valley, February 4, 1910; Committee on the Conservation of Natural Resources; Petitions and Memorials (SEN 61A-J13); Records of the U.S. Senate, Record Group 46; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.; NAID 7268048
https://www.archives.gov/legislative/features/hetch-hetchy/graffort.html

U.S. CAPITOL visitor center

Virtual VOTE!

IN THEIR OWN WORDS | CITIZENS AND VOTERS

Captain Willis E. Gallatin, Jr.

Engine Co., Nº 39

We, the undersigned officers of the Shelbyville Fire Department Widows and Orphans and Mutual Aid Associations, most earnestly ask for your vote and support in favor of giving our beloved city of Shelbyville the right to use the much needed water supply, and the only adequate one to meet its present as well as it future needs.

Members of Congress, we ask your favorable vote on this bill as a matter of justice, humanity and fair play, as the present supply is absolutely inadequate to meet even the present demands. We pray you therefore grant us the use of the waters of the Auburn Rock Valley.

Respectfully Submitted,

Captain Willis E. Gallatin, Jr.

Engine Co., Nº 39

Excerpted from actual letter. Edited for content and length.

SOURCE: Petition from the Widows and Orphans and Mutual Aid Associations, Inc. of the San Francisco Fire Department Supporting the Raker Bill, November 24, 1913; Petitions and Related Documents That Were Presented, Read, or Tabled (SEN 63A-K8); Records of the U.S Senate, Record Group 46; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.; NAID 7268071
https://www.archives.gov/legislative/features/hetch-hetchy/widows.html

U.S. CAPITOL
visitor center

Virtual VOTE!

IN THEIR OWN WORDS | CITIZENS AND VOTERS

Mrs. George W. Perkins

President of the Massachusetts State Federation of Women's Clubs

Unidentified Woman, ca. early 1900s, Library of Congress

The Auburn Rock Valley contains some of this country's most wonderful scenery and most stimulating resources: this valley belongs to all the people and it is not, as has been asserted, "an inaccessible region of barren granite of no possible use to humanity except through the production of water and power". It is on the contrary visited each summer by large parties of women as well as men who find health and inspiration as campers upon its fertile floor of matchless beauty. Better transportation facilities with hotels and permeant camps which might readily be supplied by the Federal Government would give to far larger numbers the benefit of this sublime recreation ground; with a growing population and the areas for public playgrounds diminishing the need for them is increasing; this proposed action by Shelbyville would afford a precedent for handing over any or all of our National Parks and other public lands to private interests; this action has been pronounced by eminent engineers as wholly unnecessary since Shelbyville has other sources of abundant water supply, some even more available than Auburn Rock Valley.

We petition the President and urge our Members of Congress to defeat any bill which has for its object any such invasion of the Auburn Rock Valley or the cession of any public land whatsoever to any private or corporate enterprise unless such enterprise be shown without question by competent and impartial judges to be absolutely necessary to the public welfare.

Signed,

Mrs. George W. Perkins

President of the Massachusetts State Federation of Women's Clubs

Excerpted from actual letter. Edited for content and length.

SOURCE: Resolution by the Massachusetts State Federation of Women's Clubs Against the Raker Bill, November 25, 1913; Petitions and Related Documents That Were Presented, Read, or Tabled (SEN 63A-K8); Records of the U.S. Senate, Record Group 46; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.; NAID 7268076 **https://www.archives.gov/legislative/features/hetch-hetchy/massachusetts.html**

U.S. CAPITOL visitor center