Ages ago, Mount Mazama was probably a 12,000-foot volcano in the Cascade Range. Successive flows of molten rock, eruptions of ash, cinder, and pumice gave the mountain its present form. Howel Williams, in Crater Lake, The Story of Its Origin, described the tremendous explosion that created the crater. Lava in the form of a frothy super-heated pumice was blown out in great quantities, and fine dust was carried hundreds of miles to the north and east by the prevailing winds. Other, but smaller, eruptions spewed out lava in a series of glowing avalanches, cracks opened beneath the volcano, and several cubic miles of molten rock drained away. These ejections and drainings left a vast cavity beneath the cone which now could not support its own weight and collapsed into the void. Thus was Mount Mazama destroyed 6,000 years ago.

After destruction, additional volcanic activity within the caldera produced the Cinder cone known as Wizard Island. Over the centuries the great caldera has accumulated water from rain and snow; today evaporation and seepage are balanced with precipitation, and the water level remains fairly constant.

The lake was discovered on June 12, 1853, by John Wesley Hillman, a young prospector and member of a party in search of a rumored "Lost Cabin Mine." He named it Deep Blue Lake. Sixteen years later, visitors from Jacksonville, Oregon, gave the lake its present name.

Only six lakes in the world are deeper than Crater Lake. In the Western Hemisphere, only Great Slave Lake in Canada is deeper—by 83 feet. A sonic depth finder has measured the greatest depth of Crater Lake at 1,932 feet.

HOW TO REACH THE PARK

The south and west entrance roads are open all year. The north entrance road and Rim Drive are closed from approximately mid-October to early July, depending on snow conditions.

From mid-June to mid-September, buses of Crater Lake Lodge are operated daily from Klamath Falls to Crater Lake. Klamath Falls and Medford have airline and transcontinental bus service, and Klamath Falls is served by railroad.

CAMPING AND LODGING

Mazama Campground, near the Annie Spring entrance, is open from mid-June to the end of September, also depending on snow conditions. Trailers and motor homes can be accommodated, but there are no utility connections. A sanitary dumping station is available. Entrance and campground fees are collected from mid-June through Labor Day, until such time as weather permits. Lodge and cabin rentals can be obtained from mid-June to mid-September. For information and reservations, write to Crater Lake Lodge, Inc., Crater Lake, OR 97604. Other accommodations are available near the park.
HOW TO SEE THE PARK

The most popular lake overlook is the Rim Village area. A park ranger is on duty in the Visitor Center along the rim wall; here you can buy literature concerning the park.

In front of and below the Visitor Center, on the caldera wall, is the Sinnott Memorial Overlook building, with a broad terrace presenting a magnificent panorama. Here, talks explaining the origin of Crater Lake are presented throughout the day in summer.

Two nearby trails afford breathtaking vistas from precipitous vantage points: 1.7-mile Garfield Peak Trail runs east along the rim wall beginning behind the lodge and ending at the peak 1,900 feet above the lake; 1.5-mile Discovery Point Trail begins at the opposite end of Rim Village and leads to the point where prospector John Wesley Hillman discovered the lake in 1853. This is an easy walk to the Discovery Point Rim Drive turnout.

Rim Drive, a 33-mile route circling the caldera's edge, offers excellent observation points. Picnic areas along the way are available for short stops. Fires are prohibited. This drive is one-way clockwise beyond Cleetwood Cove parking area.

The Watchman, the first prominent peak along the Rim Drive beyond Discovery Point, looms 1,800 feet above the lake. An 0.8-mile trail from the parking area leads to the summit and a fire lookout station. Exhibit signs at the lookout base locate notable park features. There are exceptional views in all directions, including 14,000-foot Mount Shasta, about 100 miles away.

Neighboring Hillman Peak, named for the discoverer of the lake, at 8,156 feet is the highest point along the rim.

At North Junction the north entrance road joins Rim Drive. The area was devastated by glowing avalanches of frothy pumice that spewed from the volcano and only now is gradually being reclaimed by lodgepole pines.

Prominent along the rim at this point is Llao Rock, a massive flow of obsidian-like diapest that fills an earlier glacial valley.

Cleetwood Trail descends the northern rim wall to Cleetwood Cove, the only access to the water. The 1.1-mile trail usually requires one-half hour to go down and three-quarters of an hour to return. Launch trips around the lake and to Wizard Island, which rises to 760 feet above the water, begin here.

Cloudcap, reached by a short spur road from Rim Drive, offers an exhilarating panorama of the Crater Lake scene. To the east is two-peaked Mount Scott, at 8,326 feet the highest point in the park. A 2.5-mile trail climbs to the old lookout.

The unique Pinnacles are easily viewed at the end of a 7-mile branch road. They are striking spires of pumice and welded tuff rising 200 feet out of the Wheeler Creek canyon. Halfway to the Pinnacles is Lost Creek Campground. The Grayback Motor Nature Road begins in Lost Creek Campground.

A short trail at Sun Notch provides the best view of the unique rock remnant called Phantom Ship, which seemingly sails Crater Lake's blue waters.

At the Rim Drive and south entrance road junction near park headquarters is Castle Crest Wildflower Garden and nature trail.

Three trails are easily accessible along the south entrance road: Godfrey Glen Trail, midway between Mazama Campground and park headquarters, skirts the edge of Munson Creek Canyon; Annie Creek Canyon Trail loops 1.5 miles into Annie Creek Canyon near Mazama Campground; and The Pacific Crest Trail runs the entire north-south length of the park.

SERVICES

Food and supplies. The dining room at Crater Lake Lodge is open from mid-June to mid-September. In summer the cafeteria serves meals daily. On weekends and holidays in winter it is operated as a coffee shop, serving light refreshments. Some groceries can be purchased at Rim Village.

Mail. In summer, a branch post office operates in the administration building at park headquarters. Visitors not staying at the lodge or in cabins in Rim Village should have their mail addressed to General Delivery, Crater Lake, OR 97604.

Tours. Several times each day, launches at Cleetwood Cove make trips to Wizard Island and around the lake. Bus trips around Rim Drive begin at the lodge. There are no winter tours.

Gasoline. A gasoline station is open in summer near park headquarters. No storage, towing, or repair facilities are available within the park. Gasoline is not sold in the park during the winter.