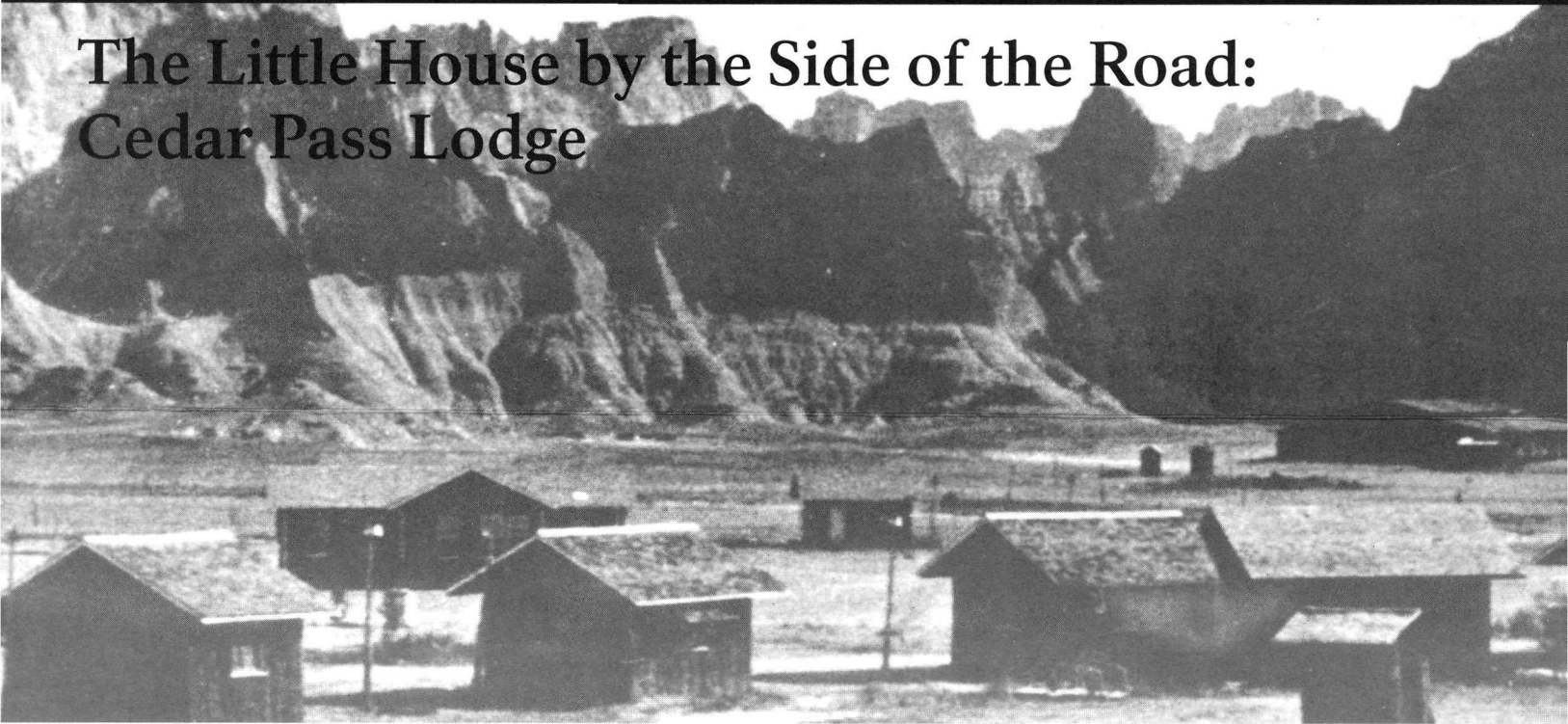


Badlands

Badlands National Park
South Dakota



The Little House by the Side of the Road: Cedar Pass Lodge



Up early mornings to serve breakfast, kept the dining room clean, served lunch and dinner. We had some time off to shower and get ready for dinner. It was very hot - no air conditioning in those days. We worked seven days a week with no time off, no entertainment, no transportation, and no place to go. We didn't have a radio. I don't remember any telephone. I used to send notes to Wall with the boy that drove the bread delivery truck.

- from *My Summer at Cedar Pass 1935* by Mary (Allburn) Aggergaard

Y'All Come



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The story of Cedar Pass Lodge begins in the mid-1920s when Ben H. Millard became fascinated with the colorful, rugged terrain of the South Dakota Badlands. In 1927, Millard and his family homesteaded a plot of land at the foot of Cedar Pass. The following year, Millard and his sister, Mrs. Clara Jennings, opened Cedar Pass Camp to provide refreshments and services to the growing number of sightseers braving the dusty, undeveloped roads.

Recognizing the potential value of the area as a public recreational and scientific reserve, Senator Peter Norbeck had been working for many years to establish a national park or monument in the Badlands. Ben Millard joined Norbeck in his fight. Working with other local proponents, Norbeck and Millard succeeded in gaining congressional authorization for Badlands National Monument in 1929.

In the 1930s, through the hard work of the Millards and their employees, Cedar Pass Camp and Tavern grew into an important oasis for Badlands travelers. Cabins, a café, a grocery and a filling station provided needed services. Ben Millard gave nightly lectures on the geology of the Badlands, initiating the tradition of education programs during the summer months. A large dance hall attracted local folks, tourists, and people from as far away as Rapid City for entertainment by such local performers as Lawrence Welk.

Helping Our Heritage: A Donation of Park Headquarters



Ben Millard

From 1941 through 1955, the Millard family donated three parcels of land to the Monument including land for the National Park Headquarters and Visitor Center at Cedar Pass. This land enabled the relocation of the northeast entrance to its present route past the Window area as well as the land for the construction of Cedar Pass Campground. By the 1950s, hundreds of thousands of people were visiting Badlands National Monument each year, not only enjoying its scenery and wildlife, but also learning about geological and paleontological resources, and human history.

Ben Millard died in 1956 at Cedar Pass Lodge. On June 28, 1957, the prominent ridge above Cedar Pass was named “Millard Ridge” in honor of the man who had done so much to shape the future of the Badlands.

In 1964, the National Park Service purchased the lodge from the Millards and began contracting its operation to concessioners. Today, Cedar Pass Lodge continues the tradition of service to park visitors established by the Millards in 1928. It has remained a place to spend an hour or a night, pausing in one’s travels to relax and enjoy the Badlands. As you explore this ancient landscape, remember that all of its features - animals, plants, rocks and fossils - must remain for those who follow you. Leave this place as you have found it - perhaps even as Ben Millard and Peter Norbeck encountered years ago.

As I look back now at that summer 53 years ago - what a different world it was. I remember the Badlands before the road was built through them. The one cent stamp, the one dollar cabins. My one regret is I did not keep in touch with some of the people that worked there that summer. We worked hard, but had good times too. We laughed at tourists’ silly questions, but met so many very nice people. One I remember so well. Such a nice couple. I waited on them at dinnertime and again at breakfast . . . I fixed their thermos bottle before they left. When I cleared their table, they had left me a “one dollar” tip. I was so happy because most tips in those days were nickels. So ended my summer at Cedar Pass.

- Mary Aggergaard, 1988

Ben Millard and His Little House
by the Side of the Road

