



*Tourists' Rest built by Ruby and Minnie Syrett at Bryce Canyon in 1920.
Photograph courtesy of the Colorado Heritage Center.*

The Modern Discovery, Popularization, and Early Development of Bryce Canyon, Utah

BY NICK SCRATTISH

ON OCTOBER 20–21, 1776, A SPANISH ENTRADA under the direction of the Franciscan friars Silvestre Vélez de Escalante and Francisco Atanasio Domínguez crossed the northwestern Arizona plateau — somewhat south-

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west of Bryce Canyon. The "Santa Gertrudis" camp on the night of October 20 was on one of the western branches of Kanab Creek, about ten miles southwest of Pipe Spring. A night later the "Santa Barbara" camp was made in Kimball Valley near Johnson Creek, some eight miles southeast of Fredonia. At the time, the friars' immediate aim was to search for a westward river crossing. Their long-range goal was to establish a connecting route between the missions of New Mexico and California.¹ Given the entrada's path, it is probable the Pink Cliffs of the Paunsaugunt Plateau were visible on the skyline to the northeast.

Fifty years later, in 1826, Jedediah Smith rediscovered the Sevier and Virgin, the westernmost rivers in Utah's high plateau country. Smith was the first American to travel through Utah to Spanish California. Four years later another American frontiersman named George Yount passed northwest of Bryce Canyon through the present sites of Circleville, Panguitch, and Cedar City. He, too, was en route to California. In 1844, after a reconnaissance of the Great Basin, Capt. John C. Frémont followed the Old Spanish Trail northward, past the present sites of Cedar City, Parowan, and Circleville. Frémont retraced his steps nine years later en route to California. Mormon scouts, sent by the church to find favorable agricultural and grazing lands in southern Utah, first visited the Sevier River near Panguitch in 1852.² This party probably had a good view of the Sunset Cliffs on the west edge of the Paunsaugunt Plateau.

A party of Indian fighters, under the command of Capt. James Andrus, was sent out from St. George in 1866 to pursue marauding Navajos. These men crossed the upper Paria Valley and were likely the first Caucasians to view the eastern escarpment of the Paunsaugunt. The plateau's southern end was first visited in 1872 by Maj. John Wesley Powell, a geographer working for the U.S. Geological Survey. On this trip Powell's efforts appear to have been confined to the area above Alton and the Kanab Creek drainage. Scarcely a year later, Alvin Thompson and Frederick S. Dellenbaugh, subordinates under Powell, traversed the bases of the Paunsaugunt and Aquarius plateaus. They probably followed a route previously established by the noted Mormon missionary Jacob

¹ Regional Archaeologist (memorandum) to Superintendent, Bryce Canyon National Park/Zion National Park, November 29, 1951, History Files, Zion National Park. This memorandum includes a trenchant discussion of H. E. Bolton's definitive book on the Escalante expedition, *Pageant in the Wilderness: The Story of the Escalante Expedition to the Interior Basin, 1776*, (*Utah Historical Quarterly* 18 [1950]).

² Bryce Canyon National Park Master Plan, chap. 1 ("Basic Information, The Land"), pp. 19-20, History Files, Bryce Canyon National Park.

Hamblin. Later, Thompson and Dellenbaugh climbed into Bryce Canyon from the south, near Rainbow Point.³

This tentative probe into the future national park set the stage for a quick succession of visits by Edwin E. Howell, Grove Karl Gilbert, and Lt. William L. Marshall — all members of the mid-1870s Wheeler Survey. Howell intensively studied the exposure of the Wasatch formation at Table Cliffs. Gilbert's surveys centered on the Paunsaugunt Plateau and Paria Valley; his 1872 notebook records a splendid sight:

Up the Sevier (East Fork) a few miles and then to the left a few miles more until we came suddenly on the grandest of views. We stand on a cliff 1,000 feet high, the "Summit of the Rim." Just before starting down the slope, we caught a glimpse of a perfect wilderness of red pinnacles, the stunningest thing out of a picture.⁴

The Wheeler Survey was accompanied by an artist, John E. Weyss, whose pencil drawing of erosional remnants is the first known illustration of what is now Bryce Canyon National Park.⁵

During the clement months of 1875–77, Capt. Clarence E. Dutton and his colleagues gathered material for two definitive studies of the high plateau region, published in 1880 and 1882.⁶ The later study was titled *Tertiary History of the Grand Cañon District with Atlas* and included a plate captioned, "The Pink Cliffs (Eocene) upon the southern end of the Paunsaugunt Plateau." This heliotype plate was drawn from a photograph by William H. Holmes and appears to show a section of the rim above Willis Creek.

On November 18, 1876, one of the most poetic descriptions of Bryce Canyon was written by T. C. Bailey, U.S. deputy surveyor, during a few moments of feverish inspiration. At the time, Bailey was surveying a guide meridian and found his way onto what is now known as Sunset Point.

Immediately east and south of the last corner set, the surface breaks off almost perpendicularly to a depth of several hundred feet — seems indeed as though the bottom had dropped out and left rocks standing in all shapes and forms as lone sentinels over the grotesque and picturesque scenes. There are thousands of red, white, purple, and vermilion colored

³ Ibid.

⁴ Cited by Herbert E. Gregory, "A Geologic and Geographical Sketch of Bryce Canyon National Park," *Zion-Bryce Museum Bulletin* 4 (1940): 11.

⁵ George M. Wheeler, *Report on United States Geographical Surveys West of the One Hundredth Meridian* (Washington, D.C., 1875–89).

⁶ The earlier study is titled *Geology of the High Plateaus of Utah with Atlas*. Both of Dutton's studies were published by the Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C.

rocks, of all sizes, resembling sentinels on the walls of castles, monks and priests in their robes, attendants, cathedrals and congregations. There are deep caverns and rooms resembling ruins of prisons, castles, churches with their guarded walls, battlements, spires, and steeples, niches and recesses, presenting the wildest and most wonderful scene that the eye of man ever beheld, in fact, it is one of the wonders of the world.⁷

Actually, neither Mormon reconnaissance during the 1850s nor the federal surveys of the mid-1870s served to direct much public attention to the Bryce region. In 1874 the Mormons did begin a settlement near the eastern edge of the future national park, but this did nothing to popularize Bryce Canyon's uniqueness. To a great extent Bryce's obscurity until the second decade of the twentieth century can be attributed to its distance from railways and sizeable towns. Rough wagon roads existed to the general vicinity of the Paunsaugunt rim but required a trek through rocky Sevier or Red Canyon and then a continuation onto the spongy table of the Paunsaugunt itself. For several months of the year heavy snowdrifts precluded any approach by wagon.

On December 24, 1874, the David O. Littlefield and Orley D. Bliss⁸ families laid out farms in the upper Paria Valley, near the junction of the Paria River and Henrieville Creek. These hardy souls were joined by eight additional families the following year. The settlement's proximity to the Pink Cliffs prompted the name Clifton (Cliff town). Ebenezer Bryce and his family, who came to Clifton in 1875 or 1876, became disenchanted with the settlement and moved upstream to Henderson Valley (New Clifton). Between 1878 and 1880, with the aid of Daniel Goulding and others, Bryce began and completed an irrigation ditch seven miles long from Paria Creek to make possible the raising of crops and stock. Bryce was also instrumental in building a road to make nearby timber and firewood more accessible. Local people began to use the road and customarily called the amphitheater in which the road terminated

⁷ Bailey's description is often erroneously cited as the earliest known of Bryce Canyon. Actually, this distinction rightfully belongs to Grove Karl Gilbert, based on the excerpt used above from his 1872 notebook. The source for Bailey's description can be traced to the files of the Public Survey Office in Salt Lake City. In the mid-1930s the district cadastral engineer in Salt Lake, G. D. D. Kirkpatrick, found the description and sent it to the Zion/Bryce superintendent, P. P. Patraw. Zion/Bryce Memorandum for the Press, October 1935, Accession 52-A-100, Container 746149-50, File 500, Records of the National Park Service, Record Group 79, Denver Federal Records Center.

⁸ Bliss reputedly has the distinction of being the first person to cross the Paunsaugunt Plateau in a wagon. He traversed the rough area, near the present highway that enters Tropic from the north, in 1875. Bliss needed the help of "a good cow mule" to lower his wagon into the valley. Writer's Program, Works Progress Administration, *Utah: A Guide to the State* (New York: Hastings House, 1941), p. 459.

"Bryce's Canyon." Ebenezer Bryce had originally moved into the upper Paria Valley on account of his wife's fragile health. Apparently, the climate was not benign enough. In 1880 the Bryce family left New Clifton for Arizona.⁹

Clifton was abandoned in 1877; the majority of its settlers relocated to a site about a mile upstream, which they named Cannonville. Three families from Clifton established themselves on the present site of Henrieville, approximately five miles east of Cannonville. Three miles southwest of Cannonville a few families began a settlement on Yellow Creek which they called Georgetown — later transformed into a single ranch. Of all these settlements Cannonville became the most successful and remained so until the late 1880s.

In 1889 a shortage of water for irrigation and the consequent limitation of arable land in the upper Paria Valley gave rise to a scheme for diverting water from the East Fork of the Sevier River over the east rim of the plateau and 1,500 feet down into the valley. The proposed ditch may have originally been envisioned by Ebenezer Bryce shortly before his departure for Arizona. Locally financed by the Cannonville and East Fork Irrigation Company, work was begun on May 15, 1890. Confidence in the project was shown by James Ahlstrom and C. W. Snyder who started to build houses on land to which the ditch would supply water. During the summer of 1891 local enthusiasm grew, and a townsite was laid out, named Tropic to reflect the summer climate. Residents completed the Tropic Canal on May 23, 1891.¹⁰ The canal not only ensured the village of Tropic's future but made it the most important settlement east of the future park. Nevertheless, settlers sometimes remained indifferent to the nearby scenic grandeur:

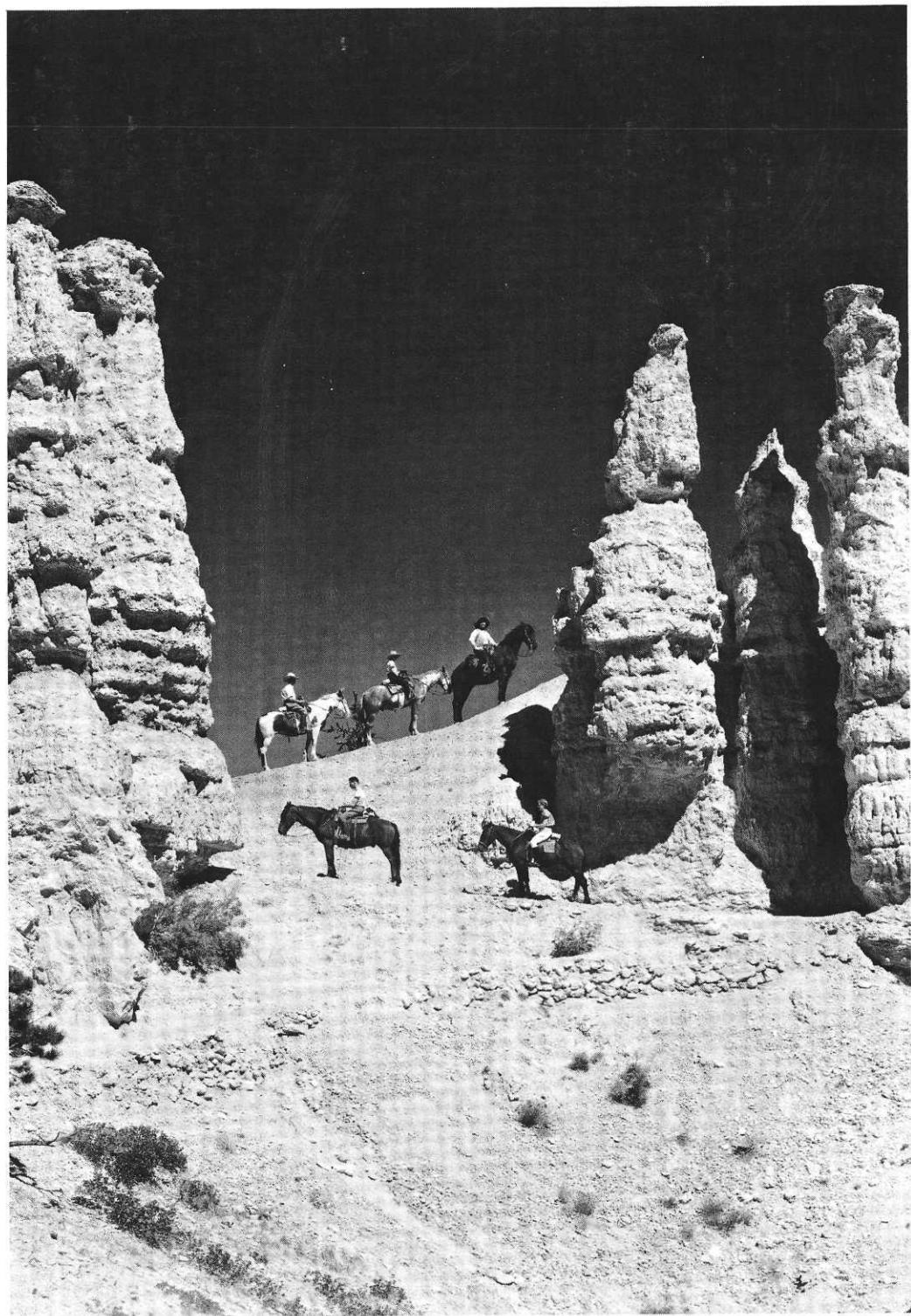
"No, sir; I never had paid much attention to it"; he frankly confessed.
"It is pretty common to us folks."

"I was born right over behind that cliff in the fields of the town of Tropic — you can see them from here, only three or four miles away. I have trailed stock through here every summer since I could ride a horse, but I have never been off the trail this far in my life until I saw you fellows just now."

"Yes, it is kind of interesting; rough country for critters off the trail, though, down in there; they used to call it Bryce's Canyon when 'Bill' Bryce

⁹ Elnora A. Bryce, "Biography of Ebenezer Bryce," Bryce History Files.

¹⁰ Two unpublished essays detail the construction of Tropic ditch and the early days of Tropic and environs: A. J. Hanson, "The Village of Tropic," and Ole Ahlstrom, "The Early Days of Tropic." Both essays were collected and edited by park service ranger Maurice Cope in September 1935. Bryce History Files.



*Viewing Bryce Canyon's red pinnacles from horseback.
USHS collections.*

ran stock up here, before the government took the pasture over. Mother was born a little further down on the Paria, but she never was here until last summer."¹¹

Twentieth-century observers of Bryce Canyon have often expressed mild disapprobation that Mormon settlers in the vicinity were so little impressed with the natural wonder only a stone's throw from their back yards. In fairness to these settlers, it is, perhaps, more just to empathize with the spirit of different times — to perceive the situation as they perceived it. Pioneers in the Bryce region were an industrious group whose struggles against the harsh realities of everyday life left little energy for an appreciation of magnificent scenery. Their descendants best express what was probably the real relationship between the people and their environment:

Our grandparents were thrilled with its [Bryce Canyon's] beauty and often referred to it as beautiful "Potato Valley Mountains." Many of us remember them telling us about this canyon as well as of Cedar Breaks. But they could do little about it. They were too busy trying to make a livelihood for their families. There were no roads, just poor trails, their wagons and wagon wheels were worn out, their horses or ox teams were poor and unable to make any trips, save for the bare necessities.¹²

After lying virtually unnoticed for forty years, Bryce Canyon began to attract a great deal of attention beginning in the late 1910s. The nearness of other scenic areas, particularly Zion and the Grand Canyon's North Rim, probably spurred this interest. The potential for economic development in southern Utah, by tying into a tourist loop all the scenic attractions, had much to do with Bryce Canyon's subsequent fame. Secondarily, a sprinkling of settlements east and northwest of Bryce Canyon brought with them an uneven but tangible improvement in the area's roads. Inadvertent explorers of these lesser-known byways, such as salesmen, were destined to drive some of the first automobiles into Tropic and Cannonville. Their accounts of the area encouraged visits by others.

Nevertheless, it is not to these anonymous businessmen that the origins of the popularization of Bryce Canyon can be traced but rather to a U.S. Forest Service supervisor named J. W. Humphrey who later viewed his role "in introducing Bryce Canyon to the world [as] the

¹¹ Cited from J. Cecil Alter's "The Temple of the Gods," *Improvement Era* 22 (1919): 395.

¹² Ida Chidester and Eleanor Bruhn, *Golden Nuggets of Pioneer Days: A History of Garfield County* (Panguitch, Ut.: Garfield County Chapter of the Daughters of Utah Pioneers, 1949), p. 291.

greatest accomplishment of [his] life."¹³ On July 1, 1915, Humphrey was transferred from Moab, Utah, to Panguitch — then headquarters for the old Sevier Forest. He could not take over the management of the forest until early August, so he used the interim to familiarize himself with the area. During one of his forays into the East Fork Range, Humphrey was prompted by the Forest Service ranger of the East Fork Division, Elias Smith, to visit the eastern escarpment of the Paunsaugunt Plateau. Humphrey showed little interest in the suggestion, but Smith insisted. When Humphrey came onto the rim, just south of where Bryce Lodge stands, he was stunned:

You can perhaps imagine my surprise at the indescribable beauty that greeted us, and it was sundown before I could be dragged from the canyon view. You may be sure that I went back the next morning to see the canyon once more, and to plan in my mind how this attraction could be made accessible to the public.¹⁴

A firsthand account implies that Mark Anderson, foreman of the Forest Service grazing crew, was selected by Humphrey to publicize the "find." Anderson avers that immediately after viewing Bryce Canyon for the first time, in the spring of 1916, he rode into Panguitch and sent a telegram by way of Marysvale to the district forester in Ogden. In it Anderson requested that regional Forest Service photographer George Goshen be sent down to Bryce Canyon with movie and still cameras to take pictures of the grazing crew at work near the plateau rim. Goshen, escorted by ranger Wallace Riddle, arrived in Panguitch the following evening with his equipment and all the next day took pictures which Anderson captioned. The movie and a number of still pictures were sent to Washington, D.C., and shown to Forest Service officials. According to Anderson, these pictures, or copies of them, were also made available to Union Pacific Railroad officials in Omaha.¹⁵

Another member of the Forest Service crew, Arthur W. Stevens, wrote a short, illustrated article late in 1916 for *Outdoor Life*, an early Union Pacific publication.¹⁶ At about the same time Humphrey dictated an article, published under the name J. J. Drew,¹⁷ for the *Red Book*, a

¹³ Ibid., p. 293.

¹⁴ J. W. Humphrey, "Notes, Comments, and Letters," taped at Bryce, September 1959. The transcription was revised by Humphrey and was entered into the Bryce History Files in January 1960.

¹⁵ Mark Anderson, "Autobiography," Uinta National Forest Correspondence, September 2, 1946, Microfilm A-622, Utah State Historical Society Library, Salt Lake City.

¹⁶ Humphrey, "Notes, Comments, and Letters."

¹⁷ "As J. J. Drew was clerk (of the railroad) his name appeared as its (the article's) writer." Ibid.

periodical issued by the Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad. These were the first descriptive articles of Bryce Canyon to be published.

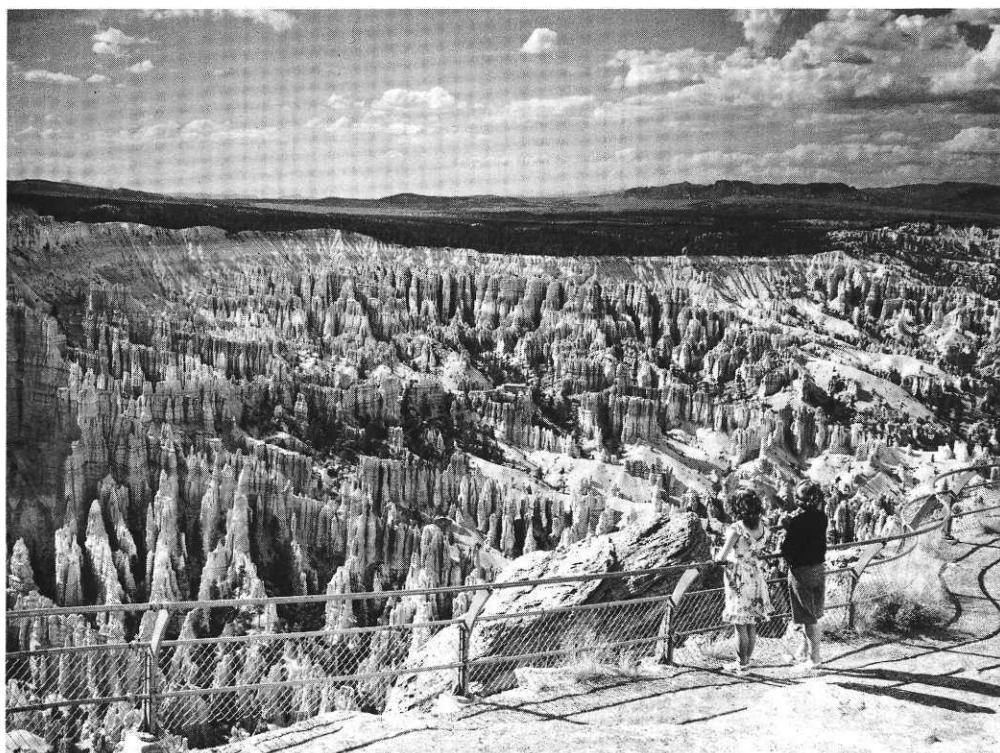
Late in the spring or early summer of 1916, Humphrey, with the support of Anderson and James T. Jardine — then in charge of National Forest Service studies — secured an appropriation of \$50. The money was used to build rough bridges across the East Fork of the Sevier River and the Tropic Canal. Dead timber was also cleared out of Dave's Hollow. Homesteaders did most of the road work; the Forest Service furnished the necessary materials for the bridges. The finished product provided a dry-weather road that made the plateau rim near the present lodge accessible to automobile traffic. When the road between Panguitch and Tropic was later altered, Humphrey was granted an additional appropriation of \$150 to connect the rim road to it.¹⁸

The year 1917 saw Bryce Canyon really opened to the world. While on a business trip to Cedar City, Humphrey met a photographer named Adams who had heard of the canyon. Humphrey agreed to take him up to the rim if Adams could get over to Panguitch. The trip was made, and in Humphrey's words, Adams "secured some of the best pictures taken up to that time . . . and these he placed on sale [as postcards], and they added to the advertisement of Bryce Canyon." Later in the year Humphrey also showed Marcus Jones, a botanist-photographer, and J. Cecil Alter the wonders of Bryce. Alter, the U.S. Department of Agriculture meteorologist in Salt Lake City, wrote an article on Bryce published in the March 1919 issue of the *Improvement Era*. Another 1917 visitor to the area was C. B. Hawley, a director of the Utah State Automobile Association, who made the trip to Bryce Canyon and reported his "find" to officers of the association in Salt Lake City. F. C. Schramm, another director of the association, was sent out shortly afterward to confirm Hawley's description. Schramm's report was even more flattering than Hawley's had been. Hawley, Schramm, and State Sen. William Seegmiller of Kanab then encouraged Oliver J. Grimes, photographer for the *Salt Lake Tribune*, to visit Bryce Canyon.¹⁹

Grimes's visit to the canyon is notable for several reasons. His full-page article on Bryce, titled "Utah's New Wonderland," appeared in the Sunday magazine section of the *Salt Lake Tribune* on August 25, 1918. Profusely illustrated, it was probably read by more people than anything

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Curt B. Howley, "'Discoverer' of Bryce Canyon," *Utah Magazine*, May 1936, pp. 11, 38. Howley's contention that Hawley "discovered" Bryce Canyon in 1917 is untenable.



A view from Bryce Point reveals multicolored formations that vary in hue with variations in light. Union Pacific photograph, USHS collections.

on Bryce to that time. Grimes convincingly put forward the case that Bryce Canyon was open to automobile traffic, and he furnished explicit directions from Panguitch to the plateau rim:

0.0 miles — Leave Panguitch on the Kanab road 7.3 — Road forks, turn left and cross [the Sevier] river; go through Red Canyon and some sand and washes and, at 18.2 — Road forks at corral on right; turn right and, at 20.0 — Gate — Go through it; (I didn't and got lost). 24.8 — Bryce's canyon.

Grimes later became secretary to Gov. Simon Bamberger (1917–21). The governor himself was no supporter of scenic attractions.²⁰ Grimes, however, found it within his power to help influence the legislature. His unceasing efforts, abetted by an article on Bryce in the October 5, 1918, issue of the *Scientific American*, seemingly persuaded the Utah State Legislature to act. On March 13, 1919, a joint memorial on Bryce was passed:

²⁰ Bamberger is reputed to have once said, "I will build no roads to rocks!"

On the public domain with the boundaries of the Sevier National Forest, in the Pink Mountain region, near Tropic, Garfield County, Utah, there is a canyon popularly referred to as "Bryce's Canyon" which has become famed for its wonderful natural beauty. Inasmuch as the State and Federal Governments have indicated a desire that the natural attractions of our State and our Country be protected and preserved for the enjoyment of posterity, therefore, your memorialists respectfully urge that the Congress of the United States set aside for the use and enjoyment of the people a suitable area embracing "Bryce's Canyon" as a national monument under the name of the "Temple of the Gods National Monument."

General recognition of Bryce Canyon as an area of national park caliber dates from this time.

When the Forest Service made the first attempt to publicize Bryce Canyon in the spring of 1916, Reuben ("Ruby") Carlson Syrett and his wife Clara Armeda ("Minnie") were living in Panguitch. The Syretts had been scouting the area to start a ranch. Six weeks after the birth of their first daughter on March 15, 1916, the Syretts decided to homestead a quarter-section near Bryce Canyon. Their choice of land, approximately three and one-half miles north of Sunset Point, proved fortunate. Apparently, the Syretts lived at the Bryce ranch for six weeks before a Tropic rancher, Claude Sudweeks, introduced them to the rim: "They were speechless, just stood and looked. When they could talk, they could only whisper."²¹

Late in the summer of 1916 the Syretts began inviting their friends in Panguitch to see the canyon, a simple but effective way for them to advertise the locale's scenic qualities. Most people in Panguitch thought the Syretts were foolish to homestead in such a lonely place, but Ruby and Minnie tenaciously held onto their homestead claim and even began to purchase additional land near the homestead. Because of the severe winters, the Syretts spent some time during 1916–19 in Escalante, about thirty miles east of Cannonville, where Ruby helped his brother run a flour mill. Agricultural pursuits in Tropic also occupied the family.

By 1919 word had spread to Salt Lake City that Bryce Canyon was eminently worth visiting. One Sunday in the spring or summer of 1919 a sizeable group from the capital made the trip. To accommodate these people the Syretts erected a tent near Sunset Point and served a noon meal. Later in the day Ruby returned to the Bryce ranch for five

²¹ I have taken information regarding the Syrett family from the anonymous "Biography of Reuben (Ruby) Carlson Syrett and Clara Armeda (Minnie) Excell Syrett." The typed original of this biography was loaned to the Bryce History Files by LeGrande Farnsworth in February 1962.

or six beds, which he set up under the pine trees near the plateau rim. The Syretts cooked an evening meal and breakfast the following morning. Before noon on that Monday more people arrived. Whether by design or chance the Syretts began accommodating tourists. They remained near Sunset Point until the fall of that year.

During the spring of 1920 the Syretts decided to build a permanent lodge on the southeast quarter of the southeast quarter of Section 36 of Township 36 South, Range 4 West, Salt Lake Base and Meridian. This section had been set aside by the state as a school section, so before Ruby started construction he obtained verbal permission from the State Land Board.²² The lodge, soon named Tourists' Rest, was made of sawed logs and measured thirty feet by seventy-one feet. It contained a large dining room with a fireplace, a kitchen, a storeroom, and several bedrooms. In keeping with the Syretts' informal nature, the lodge's double front doors served as a guest register. Visitors thoroughly enjoyed carving their names onto the doors. Later that spring Ruby built eight or ten cabins near the lodge as well as an open-air dance platform measuring thirty-five feet by seventy-six feet. This modest complex accommodated tourists from all over the world, and the Syretts profited from it until they sold it to a subsidiary of the Union Pacific in September 1923.²³

The Union Pacific became interested in the Syretts' Tourists' Rest mainly because it was located on Section 36. This section appeared to Union Pacific executives — and rightly so — as the key to the canyon's future development. Clearly, Ruby Syrett had no legal claim to the land on which his complex was built. Only the state of Utah could relinquish title to all or part of Section 36. This situation resulted in six months of intensive negotiation between the Union Pacific and state of Utah. On September 10, 1923, the two parties reached a compromise solution.

The state granted the Union Pacific, in the name of its subsidiary, the Utah Parks Company, a lease on 618.39 acres of the section, beginning on January 1, 1923, and running for twenty-five years, at \$2.00 per acre per year. An option for an extension of twenty-five years was written into the lease. An 18.39-acre parcel in the southeast quarter of the southeast quarter was deeded back to the state "for the support of

²² The State Land Board normally did not work this way. Written permission was granted or a negative reply was sent to the applicant. Numerous documents in "Land Board, State Administration Correspondence," File SE-24 00.4 SU-TAI 1896-1923, Utah State Archives, Salt Lake City, prove that Syrett never had any kind of legal claim to the land on which the Tourists' Rest complex was built.

²³ "Bill of Sale," dated September 25, 1923, Box 1324, Union Pacific Corporate Archives, Omaha.

the common schools of the grantee.”²⁴ The 21.61-acre parcel within the section sold to the railroad cost \$540.25,²⁵ that is, \$25.00 per acre.

Both parties could be justifiably satisfied with the settlement. For its part, the Union Pacific now commanded the situation at Bryce Canyon. An outlay of several hundred dollars was indeed a modest price to pay for this first-rate opportunity. The annual lease fee was negligible. On the other hand, the state could claim that its negotiations served the long-term welfare of Utah's citizens. The numerous conditions attached to the settlement make it clear that the railroad did plenty of compromising. The Union Pacific was required to furnish ample space (as much as forty acres) for public camping and to relinquish a right-of-way for a public road to the campground. No timber could be cut on leased land without the state's permission. The state retained all mineral rights on the 21.61-acre parcel it sold to the railroad.²⁶

A more informal condition imposed by the state obligated the Union Pacific to reach “an amicable settlement with R. Syrett.”²⁷ The UP viewed this as a necessity anyway, since Syrett had filed on the closest water supply to the southeast corner of Section 36. It was also apparent to the railroad's executives that Syrett was well regarded in the towns near Bryce Canyon. It would make no sense to incur Syrett's enmity and risk poisoning relations with the local populace. Accordingly, the railroad opened negotiations with Syrett during the first week of June 1923. However, it was not until late September that a series of offers and counteroffers resulted in the Union Pacific's willingness to pay Syrett \$10,000 for his property and water rights. By then the company was under pressure. State Land Commissioner John T. Oldroyd, backed by state law, was withholding patent to land the railroad had purchased until the company either settled with Syrett or deposited an amount with the commission equal to the value of Syrett's improvements as assessed by the state. The railroad could have resorted to the latter method of settlement, but it would have taken time and, more important, would not have solved the water rights question.²⁸ The Union Pacific's presi-

²⁴ “Deed from the State of Utah covering lands at Bryce Canyon,” Box 3649, UP Archives.

²⁵ “Patent from the State of Utah covering lands at Bryce Canyon,” No. 13696, Box 3649, UP Archives.

²⁶ “Lease from the State of Utah covering lands at Bryce Canyon,” Articles III and IV, pp. 3-4, Box 3649, UP Archives.

²⁷ President Gray (telegram) to Lovett, September 27, 1923, Box 1324, UP Archives.

²⁸ Smith (telegram) to Gray and Adams, September 16, 1923, and Gray (telegram) to Lovett, September 17, 1923, Box 1324, UP Archives. Syrett, too, may have pressed to conclude an agreement. He was in debt for improvements to Tourists' Rest, and it may be that the Panguitch bank wanted the debt liquidated.



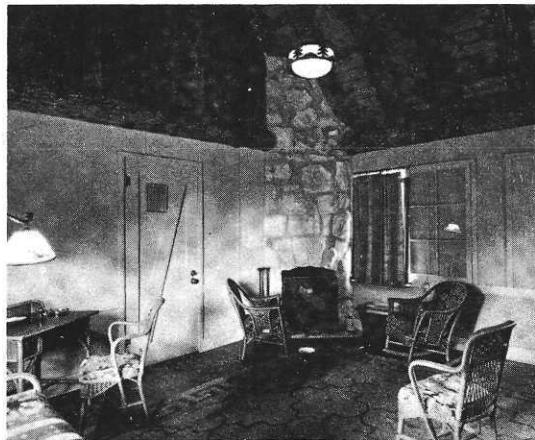
Bryce Canyon Lodge, completed ca. May 1925 by the Union Pacific, accommodated visitors transported by Intelligence Tours, among others.
USHS collections.

dent also had information from an unnamed source that the National Park Service had attempted to discourage Utah Gov. Charles R. Mabey from facilitating the sale to the UP of any state-owned property at Bryce Canyon. The railroad's president inferred from this that the National Park Service assumed Section 36 at Bryce might someday be incorporated into a national park.²⁹

Command of Section 36 did permit the Union Pacific to begin construction on its Bryce Canyon Lodge complex during 1924. The lodge was probably completed in May 1925. Wings and a rock façade in 1926, and the addition of a recreation hall in 1927, gave the lodge its final configuration. By September 1927 five deluxe cabins and no fewer than sixty-seven standard and economy cabins were clustered about the lodge.

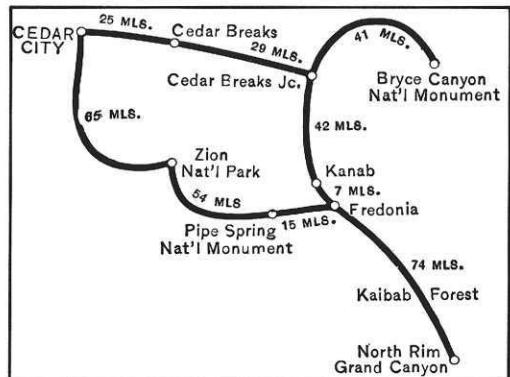
Tracing the rapid evolution of Bryce Canyon into national monument and then national park status is beyond the scope of this article. Suffice it to say that in July 1927 discussions took place at the Canyon Hotel in Yellowstone National Park between President Carl R. Gray

²⁹ Gray to Lovett, September 27, 1923.



*Interior of a deluxe room at Bryce Canyon, 1928.
From a Union Pacific pamphlet advertising the accommodations at Bryce, Zion, and Grand Canyon.*

In 1928 Union Pacific advertised a five-day all-expense tour out of Cedar City to Zion, Grand Canyon, Bryce, and Cedar Breaks for \$89.50.



of the Union Pacific and field director Horace Albright of the National Park Service on the means by which Bryce Canyon could achieve national park status.³⁰ Basically, what came out of these discussions was a quid pro quo proposal by Gray. The Union Pacific wanted construction of the Zion-Mount Carmel road and tunnel to link more effectively Zion National Park with the North Rim of the Grand Canyon, Bryce Canyon, and Cedar Breaks. The railroad particularly wanted the National Park Service to guarantee that that section of the road within Zion National Park would be completed within two years of an agreement. In return, the UP was willing to deed the 21.61 acre parcel it owned at Bryce Canyon to the federal government. Both parties agreed to these conditions, paving the way for the birth of Bryce Canyon National Park in September 1928.

³⁰ H. M. Albright, "Memorandum for the Files," July 9, 1927, Bryce Canyon Public Utility Operators, Utah Parks Company, Contracts, Box 209, Records of the National Park Service, Record Group 79, National Archives, Washington, D.C.