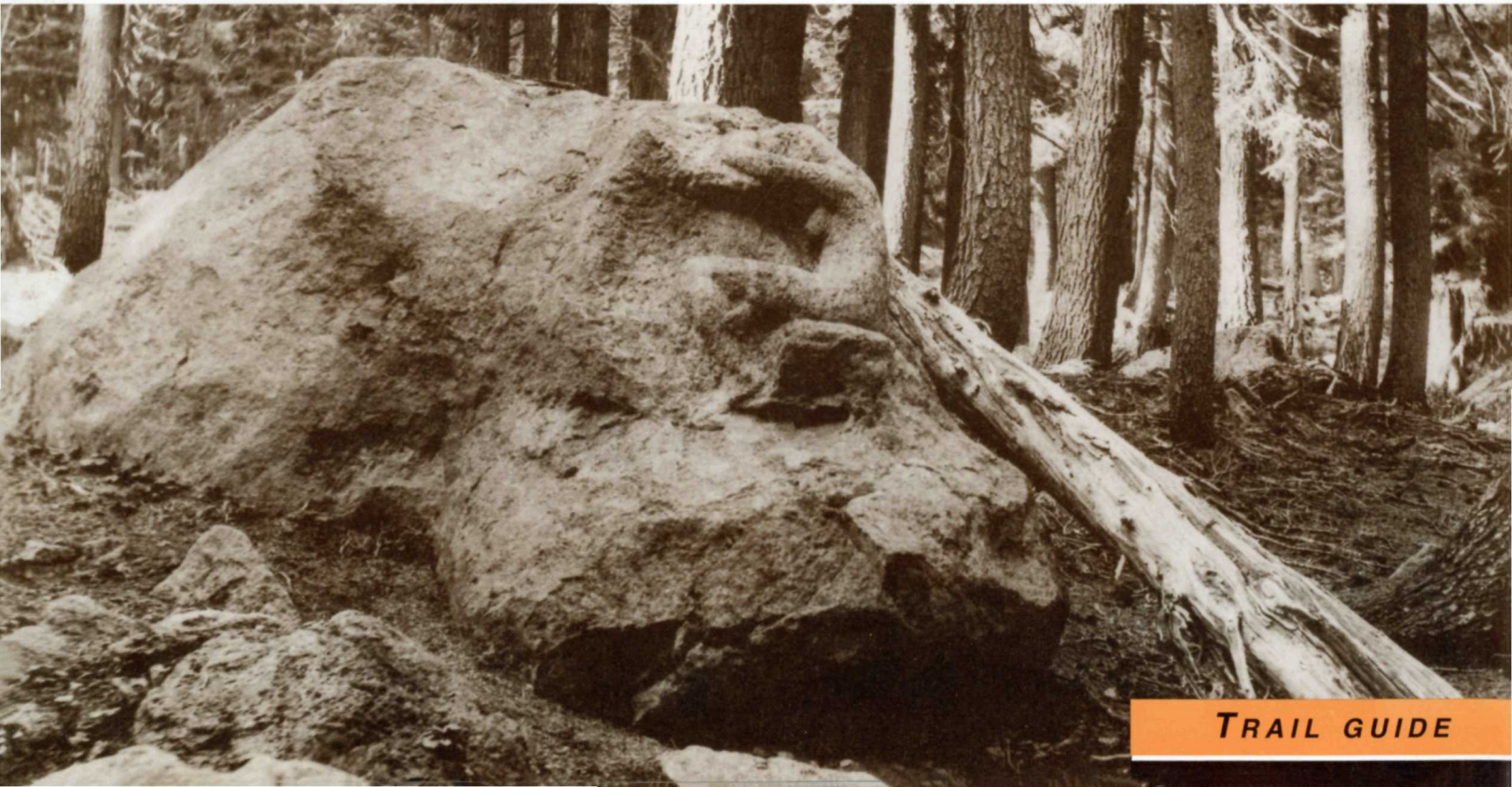
CRATER LAKE NATIONAL PARK

Lady of the Woods Loop



TRAIL GUIDE

Welcome

This short walk provides a glimpse at the stone structures and associated landscape features at Park Headquarters. They are part of a comprehensive program that flowered under National Park Service supervision between 1926 and 1941. Landscape architects of the time took a lead role in designing with nature, aiming to make developments like Park Headquarters complement the beauty and variety found in Crater Lake National Park.

TRAIL ROUTE–A half mile loop, gaining 120 feet in elevation. Walking time is roughly 30 minutes. You will pass through a residential area for park employees, **so please respect their privacy and stay on the trail.**

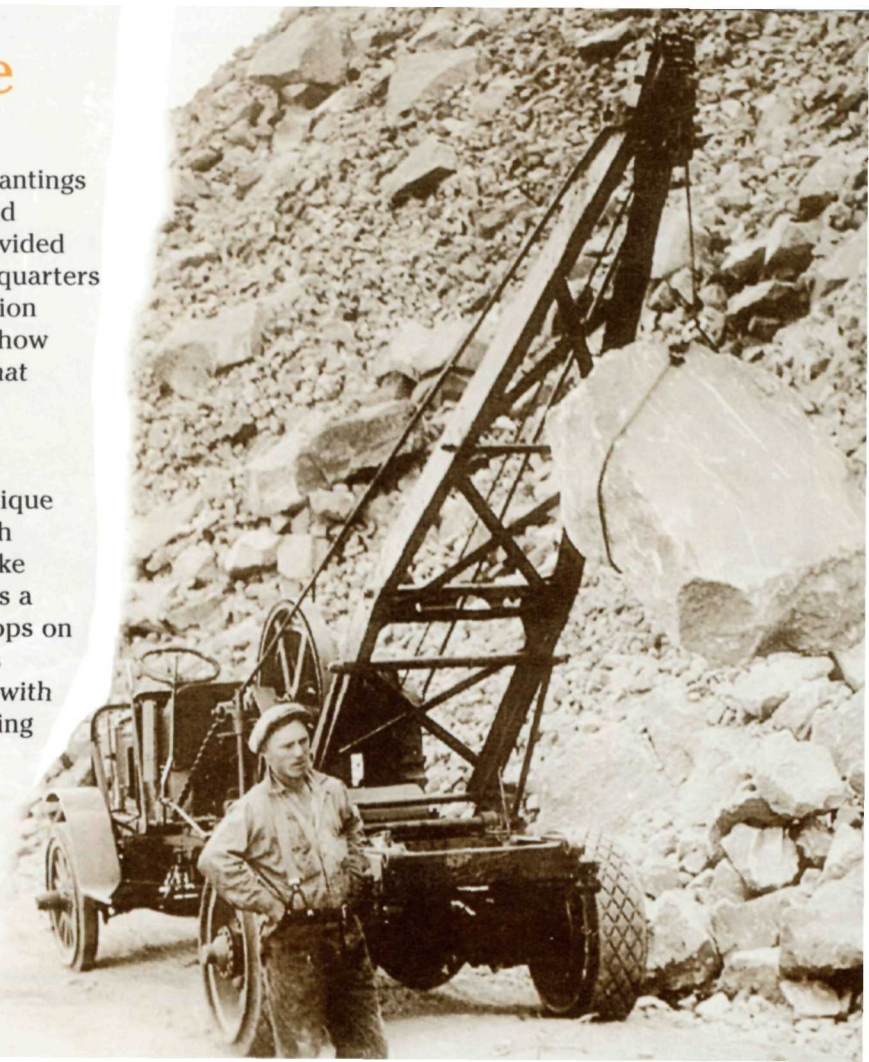
Rangers and their patrol vehicles at Park Headquarters, 1941.

Designing with Nature

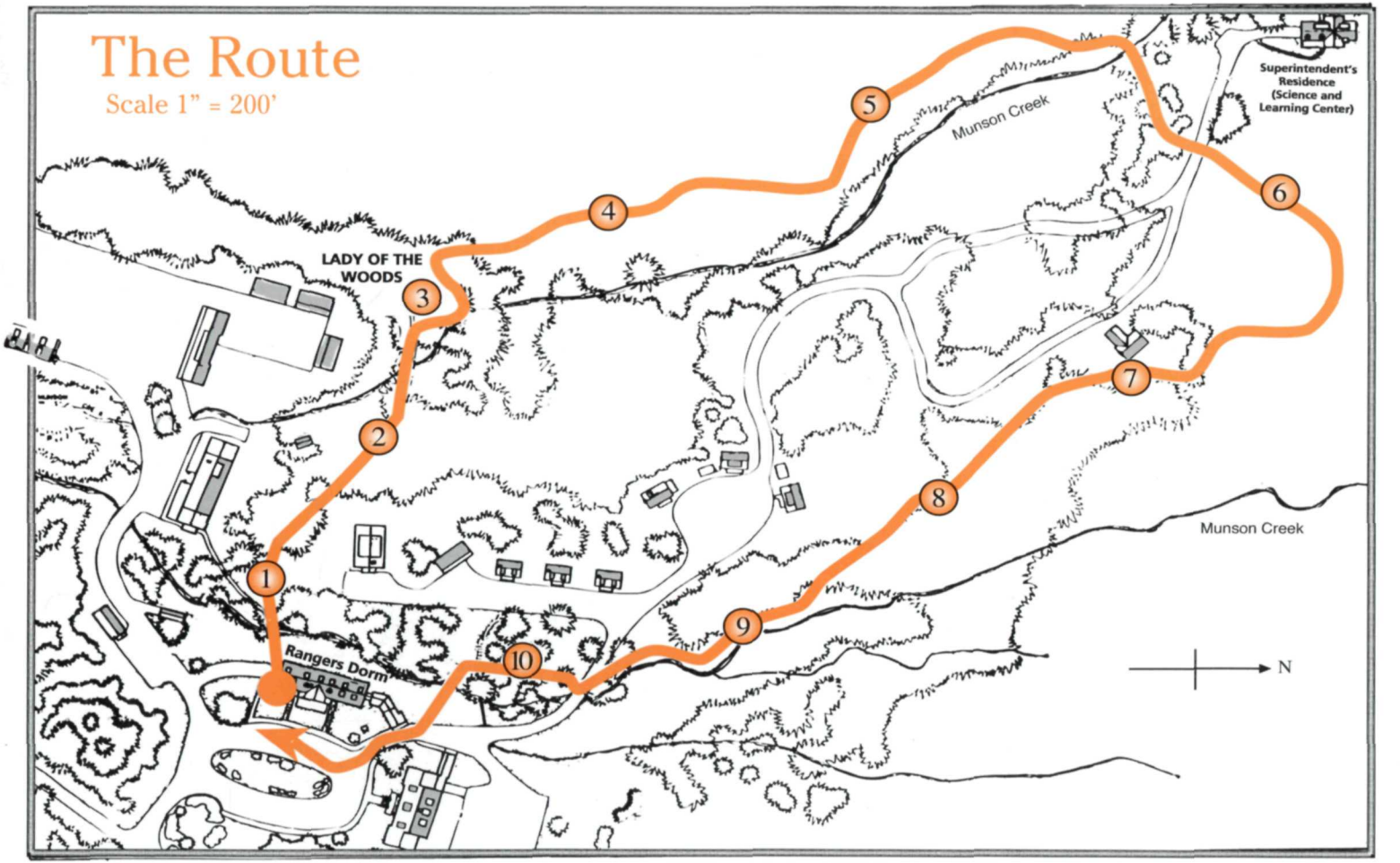
Around you is a historic landscape consisting of plantings and designed features such as roads, walkways, and buildings. A National Park Service master plan provided direction for the layout, specifying how Park Headquarters related to other parts of the park in terms of function and design. This development is an expression of how landscape architects presented nature, in a way that allowed rugged vistas and an old-growth forest to shape the way people experience the site.

What is often called "rustic architecture" is not unique to the United States, nor to the first half of the 20th century. It may have reached its zenith in places like Crater Lake National Park during the 1930s, but has a pedigree stretching back several centuries. The stops on the trail are located in order to highlight principles underpinning rustic architecture so that designing with nature should be less mysterious and more intriguing by the time you finish the loop.

Turn the page to start your tour!



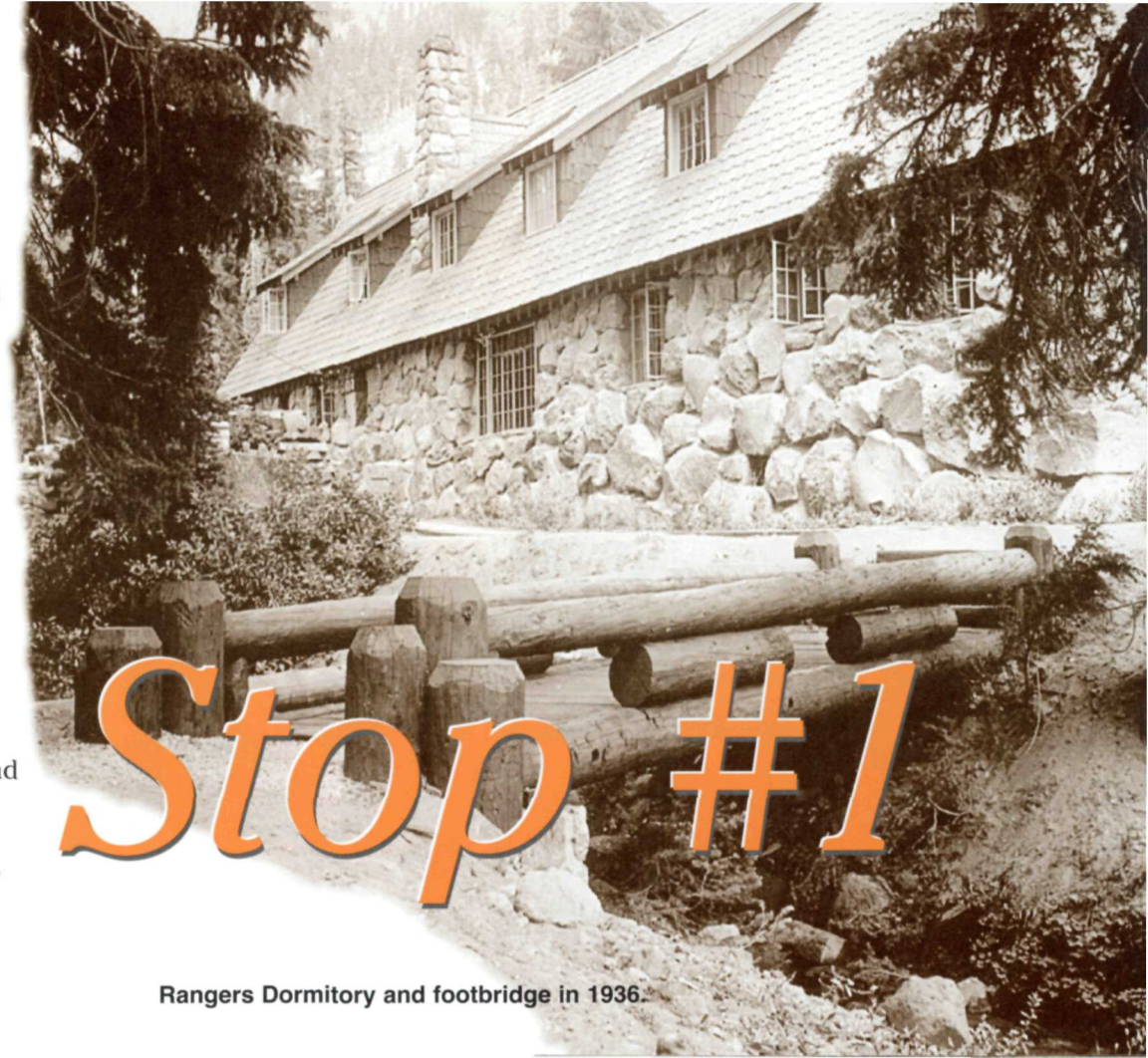
Quarrying stone at the Watchman in 1931.


The Route
Scale 1" = 200'
LADY OF THE WOODS
Rangers Dorm
Munson Creek
Superintendent's Residence (Science and Learning Center)
Munson Creek
N
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10

INCORPORATE NATIVE MATERIALS

The National Park Service designed and built the **Rangers Dormitory (1932),** though it is now a visitor contact station and offices. Materials such as logs or stone allow buildings to reflect the character of their setting, thereby contributing to the unity of a landscape. Volcanic boulders in the walls of structures also provide visual continuity among park buildings commonly seen by visitors.

Shrubs, most often mountain ash, were placed around the building to ease the transition between ground and structure. Other plantings brought order and variety to the open area between the parking lot and Ranger Dormitory. Crews arranged trees, shrubs, sedges, and wildflowers to lessen the intrusion of roads and structures on a high mountain valley.



Stop #1

Rangers Dormitory and footbridge in 1936.

GROUP BY FUNCTION

Specific uses controlled the siting, size, and appearance of each building at Park Headquarters. All of the structures belonged to one of three functional groupings (administrative, maintenance, or residential) according to an overall site plan that fit each piece into the designed landscape. Planners placed the three groupings adjacent to each other, with the administrative area being the structural and symbolic center of the headquarters complex.

In front of you are several structures in the maintenance area. The **Mess Hall** (1929, additions 1934) at left was intended as a dining hall and dormitory for single employees, whereas the **Meat House** (1929) allowed cooks to store food in a shaded place protected from bears. Further right are **Lumber Sheds** (1934), and the **Warehouse** (1926, additions 1934). A portion of the **Machine Shop** (1932) can be seen in the distance.

Stop #2

Top: The Fire Hall (1931), one of several buildings that once stood near the Machine Shop. Bottom: Employees at front of Mess Hall in 1941.

PROVIDE A FOCUS

The **Lady of the Woods** is an unfinished sculpture carved in 1917. For two weeks its creator, a medical doctor named Earl Russell Bush, worked only from inspiration. Afterwards, he described the figure as "my offering to the forest, my interpretation of its awful stillness and repose, its beauty, fascination, and unseen life..."

Promoters soon made the Lady of the Woods into a visitor attraction, so the National Park Service responded by building a trail to the sculpture in 1924. Two years later, the NPS formulated a plan to transform the log structures and unpaved roads Bush had known into a development better integrated with its surroundings. The area had undergone a complete metamorphosis by 1940, with the stone figure being virtually the only survivor from an earlier era.

Stop #3

Park Headquarters in 1917.

Bush posed with the carving on a visit to the park in 1954.

Stop #4

Shade and shadow on the Chief Ranger's Residence

PLAN THE VIEWS

All of the buildings erected between 1930 and 1941 have sides that appear different from each other, a characteristic reflecting natural variety. In front of you, for example, are two **Employee Residences** designed by landscape architect Francis Lange (inset) in 1931. The houses seem completely dissimilar buildings from this angle even though they have identical floor plans.

Designing a building is only one aspect of planning how people were to see the headquarters development. The landscape architects wanted to have a secluded residential area, so they sited it in an old-growth forest dominated by mountain hemlock. This permits only filtered views from most vantage points, and therefore provides privacy for the residents.

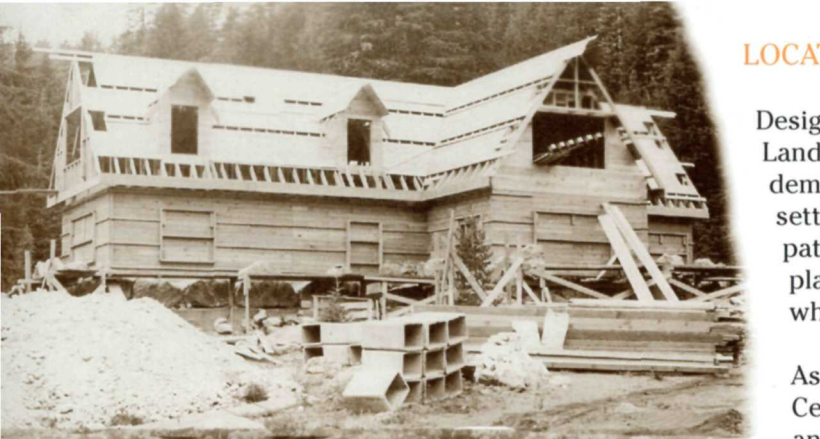
FOLLOW THE CONTOURS

You have followed Munson Creek to climb about 100 feet in elevation since leaving the Lady of the Woods. This drainage originates from a spring located just below the Cascade Divide, and is among several headwater branches feeding the creek on its way to the Klamath River. A road built in 1931 mimics the stream by winding its way through the forest. It connects the plaza where this walk began with the upper end of the residential area.

Curves in roads or trails can make a place seem larger than it really is and, when compared to a straight line, allow for a variety of views. The play of light and shadow is also greater, adding to the feeling of seclusion. By taking the line of less resistance, a curved road also has fewer construction scars associated with it and appears to fit more naturally in the landscape.

Stop #5

Road leading to the Superintendent's Residence, Crater Lake Science and Learning Center



LOCATION DICTATES SCALE

Designated by the Secretary of the Interior as a National Historic Landmark in 1987, the **Superintendent's Residence** (1933) demonstrates how to fit a large structure into a truly awesome setting. Its exterior walls are striking due to the size, color, and pattern of the boulders used. Crews hoisted each stone into place under the direction of B.J. "Joe" Mancini, a master mason who brought about the best rockwork in the park.

As the centerpiece for Crater Lake's Science and Learning Center, this structure is the largest residence in Munson Valley and differs from other quarters with its open views to the east. Few human intrusions on the scene are evident, an indication of the status afforded the occupants of this structure. Its location atop the residential area reinforced the superintendent's position among National Park Service employees.

Stop #6

Above: Exterior framing preceded stone masonry in building the Superintendent's Residence, 1931. Below: The building after rehabilitation, 2007.

IMITATE NATURAL FORMS

Before you is the **Naturalist's Residence** (1932), so called because it housed the Chief Park Naturalist who also served as assistant superintendent in the early 1930s. Boulders on the chimney and walls make the structure seem to grow from the ground, yet do not overwhelm the composition. Board and batten siding on the second story further enhance its appearance, as does a main entry that opens to the forest.

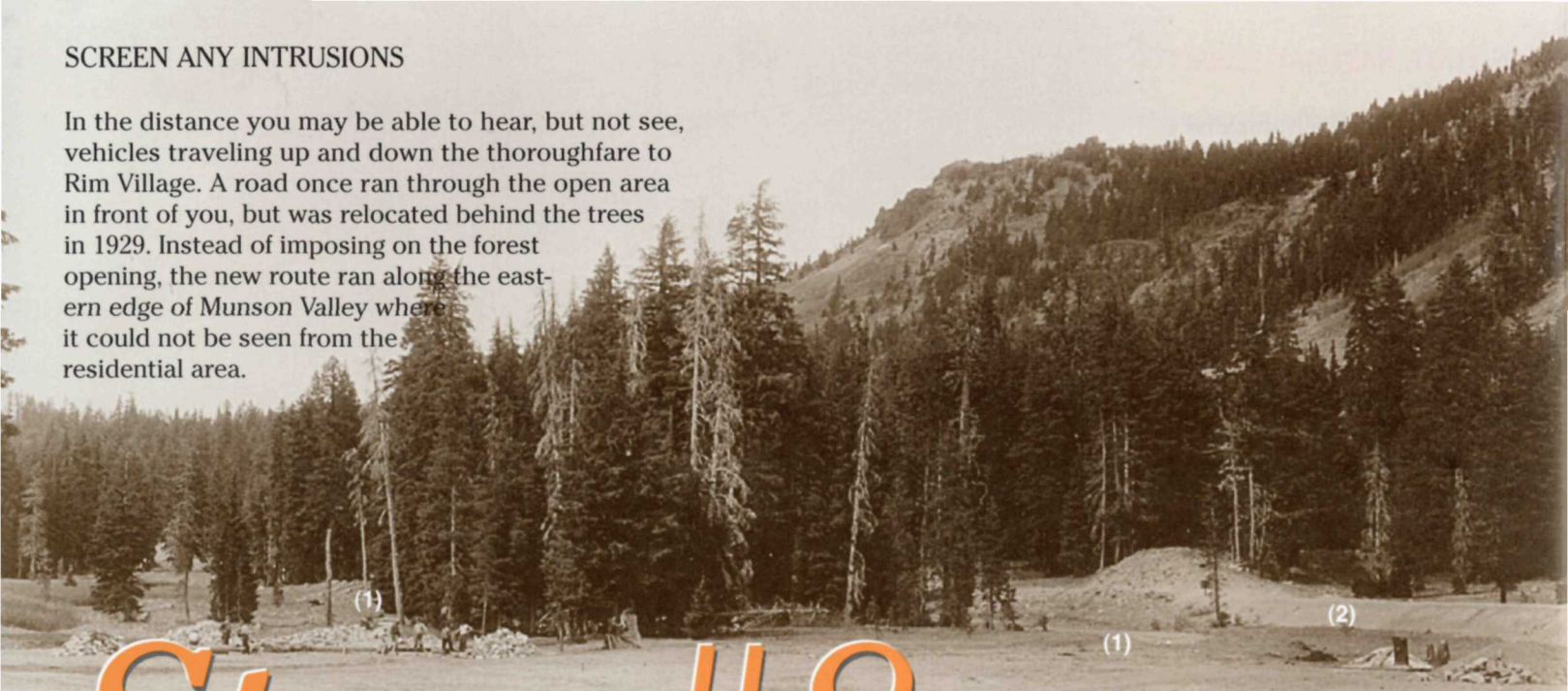
All park buildings were painted brown in the 1930s and had green stain on the roofing shingles. These colors helped further blend buildings with their surroundings. This structure currently serves as housing for visiting researchers using the Crater Lake Science and Learning Center.

Stop #7

Civilian Conservation Corps enrollees landscaping the Naturalist's Residence in 1934.

SCREEN ANY INTRUSIONS

In the distance you may be able to hear, but not see, vehicles traveling up and down the thoroughfare to Rim Village. A road once ran through the open area in front of you, but was relocated behind the trees in 1929. Instead of imposing on the forest opening, the new route ran along the eastern edge of Munson Valley where it could not be seen from the residential area.



Stop #8

The old road alignment can be seen at left (1) of the new one (2) in 1934.

With the road effectively screened by true fir, mountain hemlock, and lodgepole pine, this opening is dominated by willows and sedges. The willows are indicative of the wetland associated with yet another headwater branch of Munson Creek. Numerous wildflowers add splashes of color to the meadow during July and August, a time when its bloom is one of the park's finest. *Wetlands are fragile, so please remain on the trail.*

Planners designed Park Headquarters for summer occupancy. Winter conditions change the landscape.

GIVE ARRANGEMENTS BALANCE

Two distinctly different groupings can be seen amid the trees. Both respond to the general topography of their respective sites. The cottages on the left are placed along a relatively wide terrace, whereas the cluster in front of you is gently curved to face a small plaza.

Stop #9

The three **Employee Residences** on the terrace were built in consecutive years (1927, 1928, and 1929) and form a line, one seemingly broken by the **Garage** and **Woodshed** (1933) being placed at a slight angle. Details in each structure are symmetrical and complement the linear pattern. The irregular cluster, by contrast, features the two houses seen from stop #4 (center and right), along with an **Employee Residence** (1930) to the left of them. Their placement and details are asymmetrical, but designers still achieved a balanced appearance.

DISTANCE CHANGES EFFECT

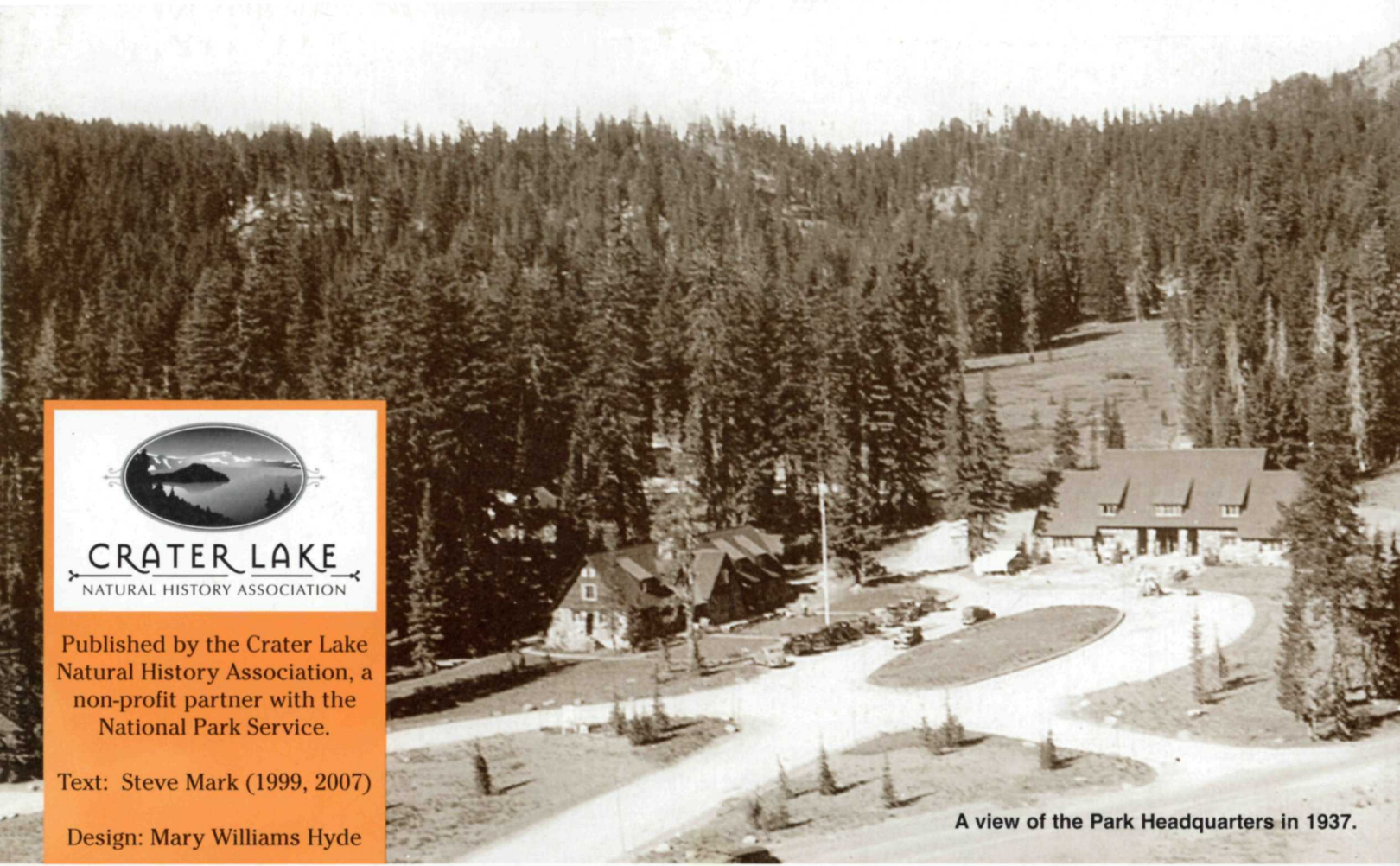
Administration Building parking areas in 1937.

Landscape architects positioned the **Administration Building** (1936) so that the two parking areas did not dominate the scene. An elliptical island in the entry plaza eases congestion by forcing traffic in one direction, but also brings variety to an open space. Although the buildings fronting this plaza are relatively large, the ridgeline extending from Garfield Peak easily subordinates them.

Stop #10

Natural features are so central and overwhelming in this national park that many visitors do not notice how rustic architecture shapes what they see at places like Park Headquarters. As you explore the park, examine the functions associated with each development and consider what reflects design with nature. Try comparing how function and aesthetics are brought together at different sites around the rim, or in other park areas. What challenges did designers face in each setting?

National Park Service landscape architects also designed small scale features like this foot-bridge built at Park Headquarters in 1939.



CRATER LAKE
NATURAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION

Published by the Crater Lake Natural History Association, a non-profit partner with the National Park Service.

Text: Steve Mark (1999, 2007)

Design: Mary Williams Hyde

A view of the Park Headquarters in 1937.