

A historical black and white photograph of a village scene. In the foreground, a large tent is pitched on the right, with a vintage car parked nearby. A person is visible near the car. To the left, another vintage car is parked. In the background, several wooden buildings are visible, and a large tree stands on the left. The scene is set in a natural, wooded area.

WALKING TOUR of RIM VILLAGE

Historic District at
Crater Lake National Park

OVERVIEW OF WALKING TOUR

This booklet takes you to eight stops in Rim Village, the center of vehicular circulation in Crater Lake National Park. Each stop illuminates how art and architecture can shape the perception of Rim Village and the lake beyond it. The walk begins at the Kiser Studio, where a loop proceeds on paved paths to focal points in a historic district designed to permit a number of different uses, but keeps opportunities for contemplation at the forefront. Along the way, it is worth questioning what is “natural,” or instead part of planned design, and whether a line between them really exists on the landscape.



*Rim Village, 1920s, NPS
Cover Photo Courtesy of Old Oregon*

TOUR MAP



Points of Interest

- | | | | |
|---|-----------------------|---|------------------------|
| 1 | Kiser Studio | 5 | Rim Campground |
| 2 | Sinnott Memorial | 6 | Crater Lake Lodge |
| 3 | Community House | 7 | Promenade |
| 4 | Plaza Comfort Station | 8 | Mather Observation Bay |

THE IMPORTANCE of ART and ARCHITECTURE

Since the establishment of the first national park at Yellowstone in 1872, art and architecture have provided a vital link between visitors and their natural or sublime surroundings. Artists often take on the role of helping to interpret and present aspects of nature that can be difficult for people to comprehend or capture by themselves. At Crater Lake, artists can play an important role in helping visitors understand and interact with their environment. The Kiser Studio, Sinnott Memorial, and the Mather Observation Bay are places where art attempts to enhance different aspects of nature.

Architects and landscape designers also play a critical role in shaping how Rim Village is experienced. Notice how they carefully selected natural materials and then used buildings with intervening spaces to create a cohesive and balanced expression of naturalistic design. Stops at the Plaza Comfort Station, Community House, and the Promenade represent focal points in how “rustic architecture” becomes a part of the landscape.



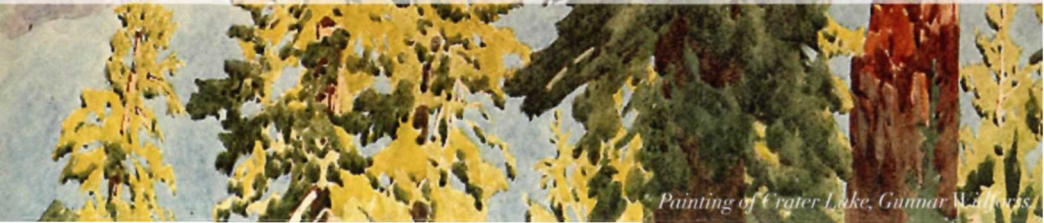


“Photographs may be made to express the elements of beauty, power, rhythm, life. The camera, however, merely serves as a means to capture and preserve what is first seen through the human eye.”

--Text in the Photograph Alcove in the Sinnott Memorial, 1937

“In any area which the preservation of the beauty of Nature is a primary purpose, every modification of the natural landscape... is an intrusion. A basic objective of those who are entrusted with the development of such areas is... to hold these intrusions to a minimum and so to design them that, besides being attractive to look upon, they appear to belong to and be a part of their settings.”

--Arno B. Cammerer, Director, National Park Service, 1935



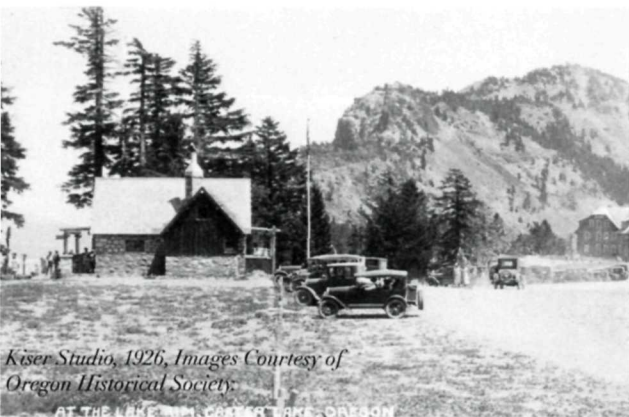
Painting of Crater Lake, Gannar Willers

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KISER STUDIO

Visitors to Crater Lake sought photographs to capture views and memories of the park even before its establishment in 1902. In 1921, Fred Kiser built his studio to serve as a branch of his Scenic America Company headquartered in Portland. Much of his business turned on hand colored photographs (made to resemble paintings) intended as souvenirs.

The Kiser Studio is intended to serve as a portal to Victor Rock, the park's most popular viewpoint. Kiser's business failed by 1929, so that the National Park Service gained ownership of the building three years later and has operated it as a visitor center since that time.



Kiser Studio, 1926, Images Courtesy of Oregon Historical Society.

**SEE AMERICA FIRST
KISER**

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PICTURES

ON SALE HERE

*"The SCENIC Art Line of the West,
Always known as being the Best."*

Woodward
Litho Co., Portland, Ore.

Official Photographer
Crater Lake National Park

and Colored Photographs and Enlargements
Supplies and Lenses (Kiser)
Made to Order
Gifts to Oregon and Washington Souvenir

Official Photographer
Crater Lake National Park
and
Gardner National Park

The Sinnott Memorial was conceptualized as a “trailside museum” by the late 1920s to interpret Crater Lake’s geological story and its beauty for visitors. Its form and function is drawn from structures in other national parks: Yavapai Station in Grand Canyon National Park and Glacier Point Overlook at Yosemite. An open parapet for interpretation and viewing the lake adjoins a museum originally intended for art exhibits.

Opened in 1931, the Sinnott Memorial put the ideas of John C. Merriam into motion. As a leading advocate for helping visitors to national parks learn about their surroundings, Merriam stressed the goal of inspiration. The building displayed a number of photographs and paintings when it opened in 1938, and the current exhibits carry on this tradition.

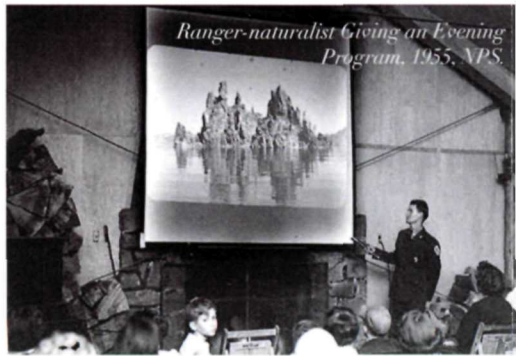


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COMMUNITY HOUSE

The National Park Service built this structure in 1924, and it quickly became a center for visitor services provided by the agency. The Community House promoted evening entertainment: music, stories, and interpretive programs by ranger-naturalists—but it also served as the locus for an informal museum featuring plant exhibits.

Many of the services were eventually relocated to other buildings, though occasional evening programs and other educational activities are still offered here. Constructed for only a few hundred dollars, the Community House is not an elaborate expression of rustic architecture, but is instead an appendage of the Rim Campground, now a picnic area.



The Plaza Comfort Station's design and construction is part of a larger plan to create a model village on the rim under the direction of architects and landscape architects, who also supervised projects of a job training program called the Civilian Conservation Corps. This building, finished in 1937, is the first one at Crater Lake where CCC crews worked on both the masonry and carpentry.

“Did you know? The Civilian Conservation Corps was created through the Emergency Conservation Work Act of 1933, and originally conceived as a program for young men whose prospects were limited by the Great Depression. Recruited by the Army and supervised by a host agency such as the National Park Service, CCC crews often demonstrated their ability to execute complex projects requiring craftsmanship and technical skills.”



Plaza Comfort Station, 1937, NPS.



CCC Crew in Rim Village, NPS.

5

RIM CAMPGROUND



After suffering for years from overuse and poor planning, Rim Campground was revamped by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) in the early 1930s. Landscape architects took advantage of the man-power offered by the CCC and turned the tired and damaged hemlock forest into a beautiful campground that blended non-obtrusive man-made features with the natural surroundings.

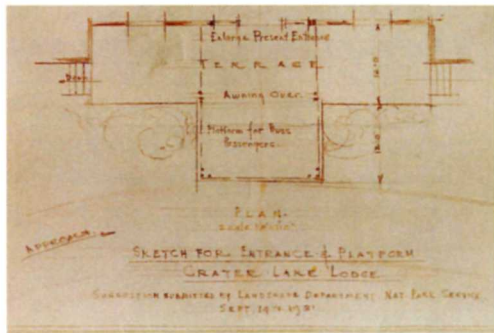
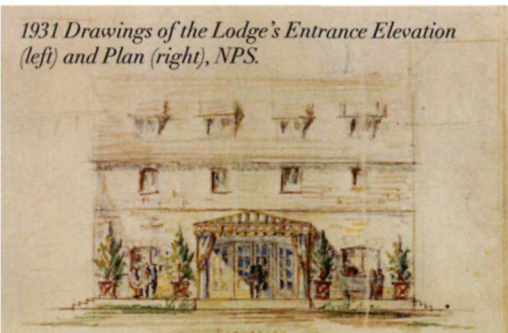


In the late 1950s, Rim Campground went through a reconstruction period that “modernized” the site. Developments included re-grading campsites and providing streamlined wood, metal, and concrete furnishings that replaced the rustic wood and stone furnishing from the 1930s. The modernization of the sites is what remains in place today, and since 1975 the site has been used as a picnic area.

After it opened in 1909, the lodge suffered from poor financing and construction, problems that remained unsolved, even with the addition of two annexes in the early 1920s. Other additions included a terrace on the lake side in 1929, and during the period of CCC projects, a more formal main entry along with landscaping around the hotel to soften its appearance.

The National Park Service acquired the Crater Lake Lodge in 1967, but a cloud of uncertainty hung over the building. From 1989 to 1994, the NPS extensively rehabilitated the hotel, reconfiguring its interior and rebuilding much of the exterior. Although most materials date only from the 1990s, the current lodge mimics the original structure—with its essence characterized by stone masonry on the ground floor and wood frame construction above.

1931 Drawings of the Lodge's Entrance Elevation (left) and Plan (right), NPS.



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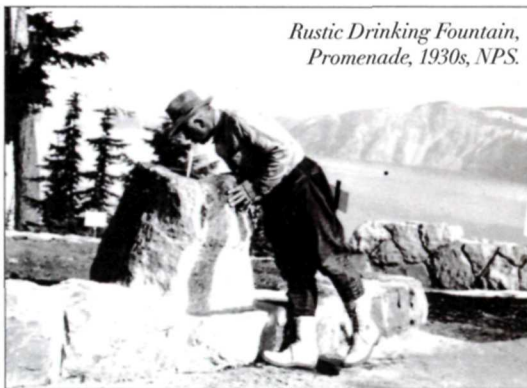
PROMENADE

The promenade reflects the intent of NPS landscape architects to resolve challenges with circulation at Rim Village. In using a walkway to unify the site, designers worked to establish a clear means to create a pedestrian-only zone along the rim edge. The main path and its feeders created a walkway separated from vehicles, while allowing plantings a chance to grow and appear as part of the natural landscape.

One notable feature of the design of the promenade is the inclusion of subtle, Rustic-style features for visitor uses. For instance, drinking fountains shaped from native boulders were included in the promenade's design. Can you spot the one that remains on the promenade today? (Hint: It's nearby – adjacent to Kiser Studio)



*Construction of
Promenade, 1930s,
NPS.*



*Rustic Drinking Fountain,
Promenade, 1930s, NPS.*



Mather Plaque, NPS.

This “bay” along the promenade marks the final stop on this walking tour that highlights a district listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1997. The low-relief bronze sculpture of Stephen T. Mather, the first director of the National Park Service, serves as a reminder that national parks like Crater Lake are part of a larger system.

As director from 1917 to 1929, Mather dedicated his efforts to promoting the parks. He also emphasized their interpretation as critical to the evolving cultural, natural, and historical heritage of the United States. A limited number of plaques were produced upon his death in 1930 as a way to celebrate Mather’s achievements, but also to underline how national parks continue to require conservation awareness and support.

CONCLUSION

Art and architecture not only capture and compliment the beauty that pervades Crater Lake, but invite visitors to question and discover their own understanding of the natural surroundings. The effectiveness of art and architecture hinge on their presentation, where elements are combined in such a way to render what the eye sees as harmonious. Yet the spectacle of Crater Lake is a product of uncertainty, where Merriam thought beauty arose from cataclysm. In this way Rim Village acts as a foreground in a vast scene not duplicated anywhere else. Each part of this landscape has a story to impart – if visitors can give them some time for contemplation.



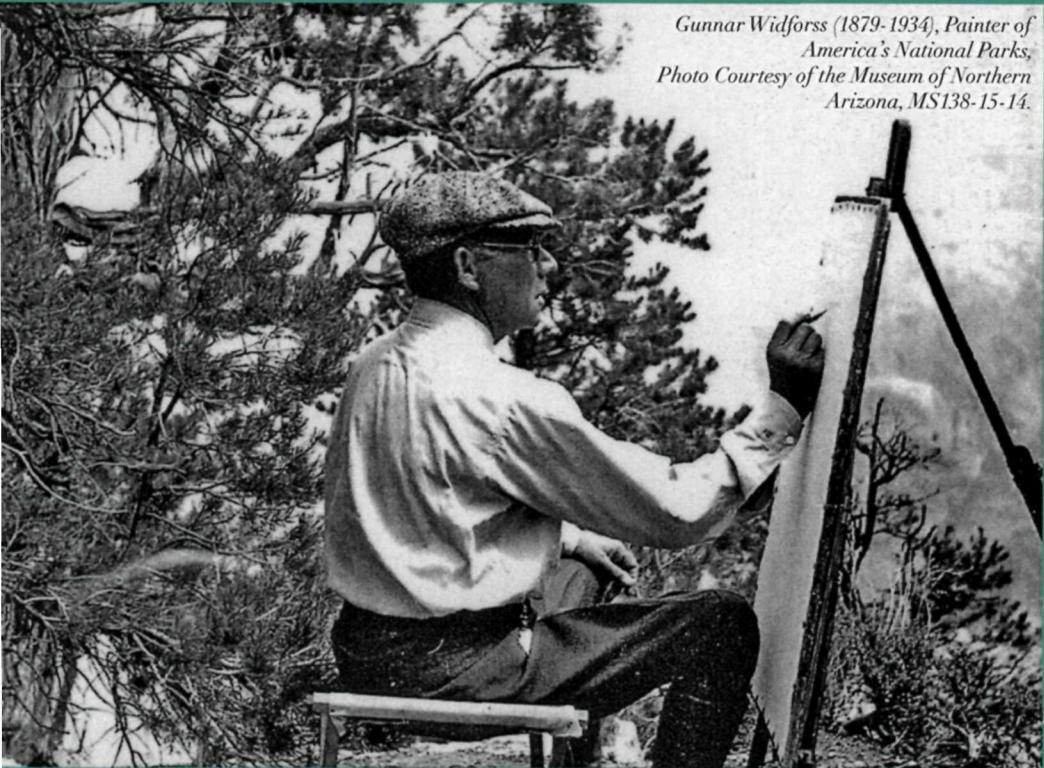
“Such a great spectacle might stir the soul, perhaps give life where the soul has not been born.”

--John C. Merriam, To the Committee on Study of Crater Lake, 1931



*Hikers on Garfield Peak, 1903. Garfield Peak is visible from
Rim Village, and includes a 1.7 mile trail to the summit.
Photo courtesy of Old Oregon.*

*Gunnar Widforss (1879-1934), Painter of
America's National Parks,
Photo Courtesy of the Museum of Northern
Arizona, MS138-15-14.*



Text and design: Rawson Baylor-Pino, Greg Hartell Internship in Historic Preservation, 2016
Editor: Stephen R. Mark, Historian, Crater Lake National Park
Published by the Crater Lake Natural History Association, a non-profit partner of the
National Park Service.