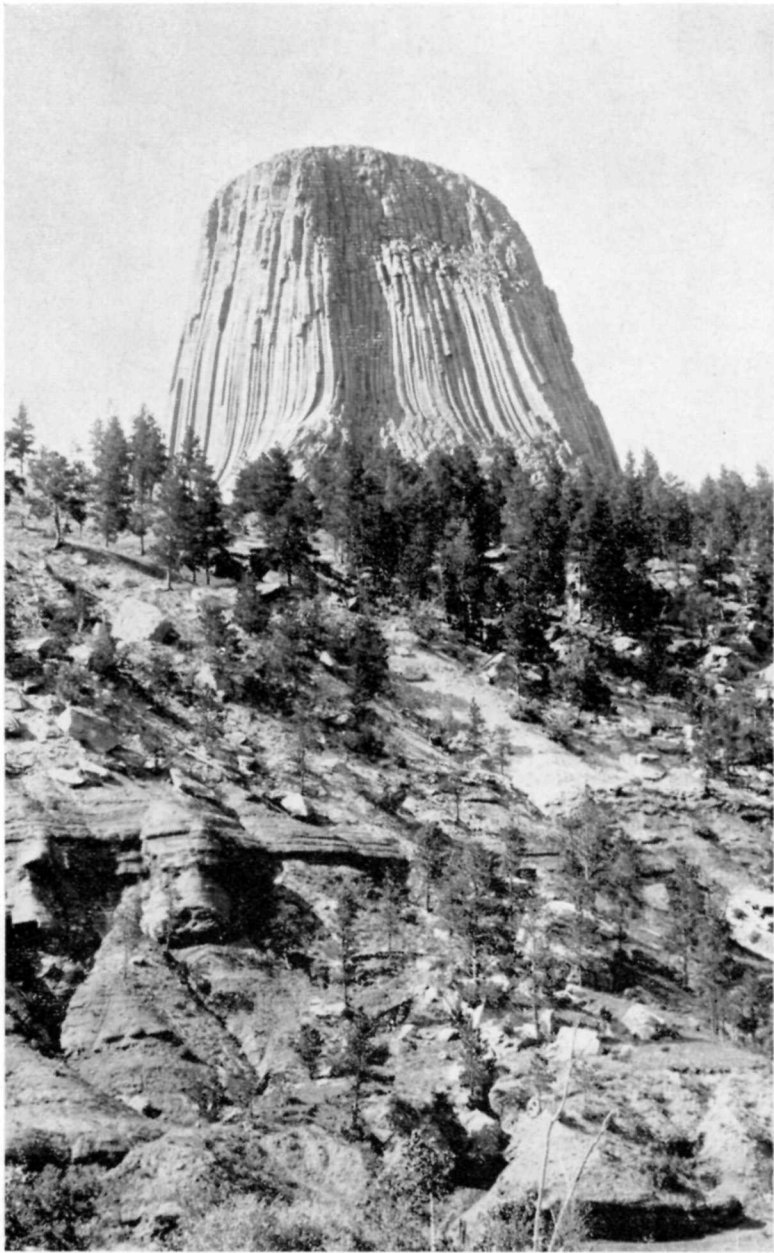


**DEVILS TOWER**  
**NATIONAL MONUMENT**

*A History*

*This booklet is published by the BLACK HILLS AREAS ASSOCIATION, a non-profit organization dedicated to help preserve the features of outstanding national interest in the Black Hills region. The association is pledged to aid in the interpretation of the human history and natural history of these areas, that the American traveler might better enjoy and appreciate more of his natural and historical heritage.*

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Mateo Tepee or Devils Tower, Crook County, Wyoming. *Stimson photo, Wyoming State Archives and Historical Department.*



# *Devils Tower*

## *National Monument—A History*

By

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The year 1956 marks the 50th Anniversary of the establishment of Devils Tower National Monument, the first of our national monuments. The same year is likewise the Golden Anniversary of the enactment of the Antiquities Act which authorized the President, by proclamation, to set aside "historical landmarks, historic and prehistoric structures, and other objects of historic or scientific interest that are upon lands owned or controlled by the United States as National Monuments."<sup>1</sup> Under this law and subsequent authorizations, 84 national monuments have now been established.

All who have seen the gigantic stump-like formation, known as Devils Tower, rising some 1,200 feet above the Belle Fourche River, will understand why it inspired the imagination of the Indians. They called it *Mateo Tepee*, meaning Grizzly Bear Lodge, and had several legends regarding its origin. According to the Kiowas, who at one time are reputed to have lived in the region, their tribe once camped on a stream where there were many bears. One day seven little girls were playing at a distance from the village and were chased by some bears. The girls ran toward the village and when the bears were about to catch them, they jumped to a low rock about three feet in height. One of them prayed to the rock, "Rock, take pity on us—Rock, save us." The rock heard them and began to elongate itself upwards, pushing the children higher and higher out of reach of the bears. When the bears jumped at them they scratched the rock, broke their claws and fell back upon the ground. The rock continued to push the children upward into the sky while the bears jumped at them. The children are still in the sky, seven little stars in a group (the pleiades). According to the legend, the marks of the bears' claws may be seen on the side of the rock.<sup>2</sup>

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\* In preparing this article, the writer wishes to acknowledge the assistance given him by Mr. Newell F. Joyner, former Custodian of Devils Tower National Monument. Mr. Joyner, while stationed at the Tower, collected considerable material for a history of the area which was freely used by the author.

The Cheyenne version of the origin of the Tower is somewhat different. According to their legend, there were seven brothers. When the wife of the oldest brother went out to fix the smoke wings of her tipi, a big bear carried her away to his cave. Her husband mourned her loss deeply and would go out and cry defiantly to the bear. The youngest of the brothers was a medicine man and had great powers. He told the oldest one to go out and make a bow and four blunt arrows. Two arrows were to be painted red and set with eagle feathers; the other two were to be painted black and set with buzzard feathers. The youngest brother then took the bow and small arrows, told the older brothers to fill their quivers with arrows and they all went out after the big bear. At the entrance of the cave, the younger brother told the others to sit down and wait. He then turned himself into a gopher and dug a big hole in the bear's den. When he crawled in he found the bear lying with his head on the woman's lap. He then put the bear to sleep and changed himself back into an Indian. He then had the woman crawl back to the entrance where the six brothers were waiting. Then the hole closed up. After the Indians hurried away, the bear awoke. He started after them taking all the bears of which he was the leader.

The Indians finally came to the place where Devils Tower now stands. The youngest boy always carried a small rock in his hand. He told his six brothers and the woman to close their eyes. He sang a song. When he had finished the rock had grown. He sang four times and when he had finished singing the rock was just as high as it is today. When the bears reached the Tower, the brothers killed all of the bears except the leader, who kept jumping against the rock. His claws made the marks that are on the rock today. The youngest brother then shot two black arrows and a red arrow without effect. His last arrow killed the bear. The youngest brother then made a noise like a bald eagle. Four eagles came. They took hold of the eagles' legs and were carried to the ground.<sup>3</sup>

The Tower also was an object of curiosity to the early white explorers. Although early fur traders and others probably saw the gigantic formation at a distance, none ever mentioned it in their journals. Lt. G. K. Warren's Expedition of 1855 passed through the Black Hills en route from Fort Laramie to Fort Pierre but probably never was within sight of it.<sup>4</sup> In 1857, Warren, accompanied by Dr. F. V. Hayden and others, started from Fort Laramie to explore the Black Hills and then returned to the Missouri *via* the Niobrara River. At Inyan Kara, they met a large party of Sioux who threatened to attack if they attempted to advance farther. While here, Warren reported seeing the "Bear's Lodge" and "Little Missouri Buttes" to the north through a powerful spy-glass. It is not known if he was referring to the Bear Lodge Mountains or to the Tower itself. The explorers

retraced their route 40 miles and took another route eastward instead of the one originally planned.<sup>5</sup> When Capt. W. F. Reynolds' Yellowstone Expedition passed through the Black Hills region two years later, J. T. Hutton, topographer, and the Sioux interpreter, Zephyr Recontre, on July 20 reached the Tower and returned to the Expedition's camp on the Little Missouri River.<sup>6</sup> Neither Warren nor Reynolds, however, left descriptions of the formation.

It remained for the U. S. Geological Survey party, who made a reconnaissance of the Black Hills in 1875, to call attention to the uniqueness of the Tower. Col. Richard I. Dodge, commander of the military escort, described it in the following year as "one of the most remarkable peaks in this or any country."<sup>7</sup> Henry Newton (1845-1877), geological assistant to the expedition, wrote:

. . . Its [the Tower's] remarkable structure, its symmetry, and its prominence made it an unfailing object of wonder. . . . It is a great remarkable obelisk of trachyte, with a columnar structure, giving it a vertically striated appearance, and it rises 625 feet almost perpendicular, from its base. Its summit is so entirely inaccessible that the energetic explorer, to whom the ascent of an ordinarily difficult crag is but a pleasant pastime, standing at its base could only look upward in despair of ever planting his feet on the top. . . .<sup>8</sup>

Colonel Dodge is generally credited with giving the formation its present name. In his book, entitled *The Black Hills*, published in 1876, he called it "Devils Tower," explaining "The Indians call this shaft The Bad God's Tower, a name adopted with proper modification, by our surveyors."<sup>9</sup> Newton, whose published work on the survey appeared in 1880, explained that the name Bear Lodge (Mateo Teepee) "appears on the earliest map of the region, and though more recently it is said to be known among the Indians as 'the bad god's tower,' or in better English, 'the devil's tower,' the former name, well applied, is still retained."<sup>10</sup> However, since that time, the name Devils Tower has been generally used. Geologists, on the other hand, have in some instances continued to use the original name.<sup>11</sup>

Over the years there have been changing theories concerning the origin of Devils Tower. The latest belief, based upon the most extensive geological field work yet done, probably will be supported by further study.

Briefly stated, about 60 million years ago when the Rocky Mountains were formed, there was similar upheaval which produced the Black Hills and associated mountains. Great masses of very hot, plastic material from within welled up into the earth's crust. In some instances it reached the surface to produce lava flows or spectacular explosive volcanoes which spread layers of ash many feet thick over a vast part of the Great Plains.

In the Devils Tower vicinity, this slowly upsurging, heated earth

substance spent its force before reaching the surface, cooling and becoming solid within the upper layers of the earth. During this process probably a very large mass of it, many miles across, moved within a few thousand feet of the surface. Before it cooled, fingers or branches of pasty-textured material moved upward along lines of weakness in the rock layers near the surface of the earth. Some of these pinched out, while others formed local masses of varying size and shape. Devils Tower and the nearby Missouri Buttes, as we know them today, represent some of these offshoot bodies which solidified in pretty much their present size and form at depths of possibly one to two thousand feet beneath the surface. The phonolite porphyry, as the rock of Devils Tower and the Missouri Buttes is known, is very hard.

During subsequent tens of millions of years, erosion has stripped away the softer rock layers in which these masses formed, leaving them standing as dominant landmarks. The process continues today as the Belle Fourche and Little Missouri Rivers and their tributary streams, aided by freezing, thawing rain drops, and the other processes that break down the rock, continue to alter the face of the earth in this region.

Within less than a decade after the U. S. Geological Survey party passed through the region, the first settlers were to enter the western end of the Black Hills in which the Tower is located. The Treaty of 1868 guaranteed this region to the Indians. In 1874, in violation of this treaty, Gen. George A. Custer led a reconnaissance expedition into the Black Hills. As the result of his reports of the discovery of gold in paying quantities in the Hills, miners invaded the region. While the Government attempted to negotiate with the Indians to purchase the Hills, the Army endeavored to keep out the intruders. When the negotiations broke down in 1875, the troops were withdrawn and miners and settlers poured into the region. Towns such as Custer City and Deadwood sprung up over night. Many of the Indians, as a result, became convinced that they would lose their reservations in the Dakotas, Wyoming and Montana and joined the hostiles. By early 1876 the Government found a full-scale Indian war on its hands. Following the Battle of the Little Bighorn in June, the Army pursued the hostile groups relentlessly. In the fall of that year the Indians were compelled to cede the Black Hills and most of their lands in Wyoming to the whites. For several years, however, small marauding groups continued to wander through the region.

By the end of the decade, the vicinity around Devils Tower was comparatively safe for settlers. In the early 1880's the first of these came into the Belle Fourche Valley in the vicinity of Hulett. With the exception of such outfits as the Camp Stool and the D (Driscoll), most of these settlers were small-scale farmers and ranchers from the mid-western states. In the vicinity of Moor-

croft and the Tower, on the other hand, most of the land was occupied by large-scale outfits, such as the 101. From 1889 to 1892, the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad extended its line from the South Dakota State Line through Newcastle, Moorcroft and thence to Sheridan.<sup>12</sup> From several points along this line, the Tower may be seen in the distance. It is not unreasonable to conjecture, therefore, that the railroad may have had some influence in the movement to give the area national protection.

Fortunately, the Government took early action to prevent the Tower from passing into the hands of individuals who might wish to exploit the scenic wonder for private gain. In February 1890, Charles Graham filed a preemption application for the lands on which the Tower is situated. In August of the same year, the General Land Office issued an order to reject all applications on these lands. This order forestalled other attempts to acquire the Tower for speculative purposes.<sup>13</sup>

Meanwhile, support grew for the idea of preserving the Tower as a national or state park. In February 1892, Senator Francis E. Warren (1844-1929) of Wyoming wrote the Commissioner of the General Land Office asking him for assistance in preventing the spoliation of Devils Tower and the Little Missouri Buttes, located several miles to the northeast.<sup>14</sup> Several weeks later, the Land Office issued an order setting aside, under the Forest Reserve Act of March 3, 1891, some 60.5 square miles, which included both the Tower and the Little Missouri Buttes, as a temporary forest reserve. This reserve was reduced in June 1892 to 18.75 square miles and the unreserved portion in 1898 was restored to settlement.

In the same year, Senator Warren introduced a bill (S. 3364) in the United States Senate for the establishment of "Devils Tower National Park." Acting on the advice of the General Land Office, the Senator requested in his proposal that 18.75 square miles or 11,974.24 acres, which include both Devils Tower and the Little Missouri Buttes, be set aside for the park. The bill, which was introduced on July 1, 1892, was read twice by its title and referred to the Committee on Territories. It appears that Congress took no further action on the proposal.<sup>15</sup>

It was not until fourteen years later that Devils Tower became a national monument. Although the proposal to make the area a national park apparently did not receive much public support, the proponents were sufficiently influential to keep it in timber reserve status. Following the passage of the Antiquities Act in June 1906, Frank W. Mondell (1860-1939), Representative-at-Large from Wyoming and resident of Newcastle, lent his support to the plan to have the area preserved as a national monument. Mondell was a member and later chairman of the important House Committee on Public Lands.<sup>17</sup> It was apparently as the result of his





influence, more than that of any other individual, that President Theodore Roosevelt, on September 24, 1906, proclaimed Devils Tower as a national monument. Upon the recommendation of the Commissioner of the General Land Office, the acreage set aside was only 1,152.91 acres, believed by him to "be sufficiently large to provide for the proper care and management of the monument" under the terms of the Antiquities Act. The Little Missouri Buttes were not included in the monument area. The remainder of the reserve was opened to settlement in 1908.<sup>18</sup>

The question whether President Theodore Roosevelt ever visited Devils Tower is a matter of conjecture. Some elderly residents of the region claim that he visited the place on one of his hunting trips through the Black Hills; others, that he dedicated the monument when it was established. The writer has been unable to find any contemporary letters or newspaper accounts which show that he visited the Tower at any time.<sup>19</sup> On April 25, 1903, while on an extended tour through the West, Roosevelt made train stops at Gillette, Moorcroft and Sundance, Wyoming; and at Edgemont and Ardmore, South Dakota.<sup>20</sup> It is highly probable that he saw the Tower at a distance at that time. The several Wyoming newspapers published in September 1906, which were consulted by the writer, made no mention whatever of the Tower receiving national monument status.

Although it was difficult to reach, the Tower early became a favorite camping and picnicking spot for people living in the vicinity. One of the inviting features was the large spring of pure cold water located near its base. It was some distance from a railroad so it could be reached only over unimproved roads or trails by horseback, wagon or buckboard. One long-time resident of Hulett, some ten miles distant from the monument by present paved highway, informed the writer that in the 1890's, it was necessary to ford the Belle Fourche River seven times to get to the Tower. Many of the people in the vicinity went to the Tower once or twice a year and spent one or two nights there. The Fourth of July observances for the community were sometimes held there and people often came from considerable distance to these events.<sup>21</sup>

The best-known early event was the 4th of July celebration held at the Tower in 1893. According to the handbill circulated for the occasion,<sup>22</sup> the principal speakers were N. K. Griggs<sup>23</sup> of Beatrice, Nebraska, and Col. William R. Steele<sup>24</sup> of Deadwood, South Dakota. The handbill announced "There will be plenty to Eat and Drink on the Grounds;" "Lots of Hay and Grain for Horses;" and, "Dancing Day and Night." It also stated "Perfect order will be maintained." The feature attraction, however, of the day was to be the first climbing of the Tower by William Rogers, a local rancher.<sup>25</sup> The event was apparently given wide publicity.

Rogers made elaborate preparations for the big event. With the assistance of Willard Ripley, another local rancher, he prepared a 350-foot ladder to the summit of the Tower. This was accomplished by driving pegs, cut from native oak, ash and willow, 24 to 30 inches in length and sharpened on one end, into a continuous vertical crack found between the two columns on the southeast side of the giant formation. The pegs were then braced and secured to each other by a continuous wooden strip to which the outer end of each peg was fastened. Before making the exhibition ascent, the men took a 12-foot flagpole to the top and planted it into the ground. The building of the ladder by Rogers and Ripley was an undertaking perhaps more hazardous than the climbing of the Tower itself.<sup>26</sup>

People came for a distance from 100 to 125 miles to witness the first formal ascent of the Tower. The more conservative estimates are that about 1,000 people came by horseback, wagon and buckboard to see the spectacular feat. For many of them it was a trip requiring several days of tedious travel over rough and dusty trails. Rogers began his ascent following proper ceremonies which included an invocation. After climbing for about an hour, he reached the top. Amid much cheering from the many open-mouthed spectators some 865 feet below, he unfurled an American flag, which had been specially made for the occasion, from the flagpole. Devils Tower had at last been conquered in the full view of an assembled throng. During the afternoon, a gust of wind tore the flag loose and it drifted down to the base of the Tower. Here the promoters tore it up and sold the pieces for souvenirs.<sup>27</sup>

Others were soon to climb the Tower by Rogers' ladder. On July 4, 1895, Mrs. Rogers duplicated her husband's climb two years earlier and became the first woman to reach the summit. It is estimated that 25 people later made the ascent of the Tower by Rogers' ladder. The last to reach the top by this means was "Babe" White, "the Human Fly," in 1927. Much of the ladder has since been destroyed. However, a portion of it may still be seen on the southwest side of the Tower.<sup>28</sup> A viewing device on the Tower trail assists the visitor to locate the remnants of the ladder.

Almost a quarter of a century was to pass after Devils Tower was given national recognition before a full-time National Park Service employee was to be stationed at the monument. Consequently, there is little information about the area for the period from 1906 to 1930. When the monument was established, the Commissioner of the General Land Office directed the Special Agent of the district in which the area was located and the local Land Office to act as custodians of the newly-created area. They were to prevent vandalism, removal of objects and all unauthorized occupation or settlement of lands on the monument. Mr. E. O.

Fuller, of Laramie, served with the Sundance office of that agency as special investigator from 1908 to 1919. He informed the writer that, among his various duties, he was charged with the responsibility of looking after the Tower. Mr. Fuller related to the writer that on one occasion a Wyoming newspaper carried an article indicating that souvenir hunters were damaging the Tower by chipping it. The story soon reached the East, and within a short time one New York and several Washington, D. C., papers were carrying alarming stories that the giant formation was being undermined and seriously threatened. The fear was voiced that, if measures were not taken immediately to prevent it, the famous landmark would soon be destroyed. As a result of this publicity, the Commissioner of the General Land Office sent out instructions to place warning signs on the monument asking people not to molest the Tower. It was Mr. Fuller's responsibility to post these signs on the area. He visited the place from time to time to prevent people from destroying trees and damaging the natural features of the area.<sup>30</sup>

Meanwhile, Congressman Mondell made persistent efforts to interest the Federal Government in developing the monument as a tourist attraction. In February 1910, he introduced a bill (H.R. 21897) providing for an appropriation to build an iron stairway from the foot to the summit of Devils Tower. The proposal was referred to the Committee on Appropriations<sup>31</sup> and apparently never reported out. In 1911 and 1913 Mondell re-introduced identical bills (H.R. 8792 and H.R. 88) to the earlier one in the 62nd and 63rd Congresses and they too died in the committee.<sup>31</sup> In 1915 and 1917, he introduced bills (H.R. 165 and 60) to provide for the building of roads at the monument "and for other purposes." These met the same fate as the earlier bills. Mondell, however, continued to urge the Secretary of Interior and the Director of the National Park Service to build a bridge across the Belle Fourche River, east of the monument, and construct a suitable access road to the area.<sup>32</sup>

With the popularizing of the automobile, the need for visitor's facilities on the area increased. In 1916, the National Park Service was organized and the monument was placed under its jurisdiction. Prior to 1917, Congress made no general appropriations for the protection and maintenance of the national monuments. Until the 1930's the amounts allotted for this purpose continued to be very small.<sup>33</sup> Various groups continued to urge for a satisfactory access road to the area and for a bridge across the Belle Fourche River near the monument. Early in 1915, Mondell transmitted a request to the Secretary of the Interior from the three legislators from Crook County asking Congress for funds to build a road to the tower.<sup>34</sup> At a picnic held at the monument on July 4, 1916, which was attended by some 500 people, a petition was drafted and signed by 153 persons and sent to Congressman

Mondell. The petitioners complained that they had been compelled to walk a mile and a half that day over a trail which was "washed out and filled with logs" in order to reach the Tower. They asked Congress for an appropriation of \$20,000 to convert the giant formation into a public resort and to build a bridge across the Belle Fourche.<sup>35</sup> Pressure from the various groups through Congressman Mondell was soon to bring some results. In 1917 the National Park Service, with the assistance of Crook County, built a 12 to 16-foot road three miles in length and with a grade of eight percent leading to the giant formation.<sup>36</sup> In the following year, this road was improved so that it could be reached more easily by automobile.<sup>37</sup> The spring at the base of the Tower was also made more serviceable.<sup>38</sup>

It was some time, however, before pressure was sufficiently strong to compel the Federal Government to build a bridge across the Belle Fourche near the monument. For many years, it had been necessary for those entering the area from the east to ford the river. During the summer months, the river was subject to sudden and unpredictable rises which frequently made it impossible for people visiting the area to return to the east bank until the waters subsided. In many instances, those so stranded were compelled to camp out one, and in some cases, several nights. Pressure from local people and travel organizations to build the bridge continued to be strong throughout the early 1920's. In 1923 a petition, containing seven pages of signatures of people from Wyoming and South Dakota, was submitted to the Secretary of the Interior asking that the Belle Fourche near the monument be bridged. Both Senators Warren and John B. Kendrick lent their support to the movement. It was not until 1928 that the bridge was built.<sup>39</sup>

During the 1920's, the National Park Service was able to provide only the most minimum accommodations for visitors at Devils Tower. Some work continued to be done in maintaining the roads. In 1921 John M. Thorn, County Commissioner of Crook County, of Hulett, was appointed custodian at an annual salary of \$12 a year.<sup>40</sup> Thorn served primarily as foreman of maintenance work and performed the minimum paper work necessary in preparing payrolls and making purchases. In 1922 the Service built a log shelter to protect the visitors from inclement weather, cleaned the spring next to the Tower and improved the road within the monument boundaries. However, in spite of the improvements the Government was able to make, the maintenance at the monument must have been very inadequate. Trespassing stock continued to graze on the area and occupy the log shelter erected for visitors. The Secretary of Custer Battlefield Highway Association complained to the Director in 1929 that the road to the Tower the previous year "was a disgrace, many people turned



back because of the terrible road conditions." He also pointed out that the area needed a full-time custodian.<sup>11</sup>

Despite the hardships in reaching the Tower and the lack of accommodations after reaching there, visitation to the area continued to rise during the 1920's. "The monument is receiving an increasing number of visitors who like to camp on the ground," reported the Director in 1922.<sup>12</sup> From 1921 to 1930 the estimated number of visitors rose from 7,000 to 14,720, the average being 9,100.<sup>13</sup> After 1925 a register was kept at Grenier's Store which was located near the east entrance to the monument.

During this period the National Park Service was under continued pressure to authorize concessions at the Tower. Numerous applications were made by individuals and companies to erect restaurants, gasoline stations, hotels and recreational facilities there. The Service consistently maintained that such developments of a permanent character should be made outside the monument boundaries and not within the area itself.<sup>14</sup>

It has only been since 1930 that Devils Tower National Monument has become a national tourist attraction. This has been the result of several factors. During the latter part of the 1920's, the Custer Battlefield Highway (U. S. Highway 14) was built between Spearfish, South Dakota, and Gillette, Wyoming, and came within only seven miles of the Tower. The State also built improved roads into Sundance from U. S. Highways 85 and 16. A paved highway was also constructed from U. S. Highway 14 to Alva making the area from the south entirely accessible by paved roads. Local and state Chambers of Commerce, travel associations, newspapers and periodicals gave the Tower wide publicity as one of the natural "wonders of the world."<sup>15</sup>

The decade of the 1930's was one of extensive development for the monument. Although the Nation was in the throes of the Great Depression, considerable sums of money as well as manpower were made available for public works through the various relief agencies. Working under the supervision of the National Park Service, these agencies, particularly the Civilian Conservation Corps, inaugurated an extensive development program at the monument. From 1935-1938 a CCC camp was located there. Practically all of the improvements on the area at the present time are the results of their efforts. New roads were built, modern water and electrical systems installed, footpaths were laid out, picnic areas were established with tables and comfortable benches, and trailer and overnight camping areas were provided the visitors. Residences for employees, workshops and machine shops were erected. In 1938 a museum of sturdy log construction was completed.

The result of the improved roads and visitor facilities at the monument is reflected in travel records. During the ten-year period from 1931 to 1941, in spite of the Great Depression, the

number of visitors practically tripled. In 1931 the count was 11,000; in 1936, 26,503; in 1941, 32,951.

In the early 1930's, the first full-time custodian was stationed at the monument. This was George C. Crowe, who previously had been a Ranger-Naturalist at Yosemite National Park in California. Crowe served from April or May 1931 until March 1932 when he was transferred to Yellowstone National Park as Assistant Park Naturalist. Newell F. Joyner, who earlier had seen service at Yellowstone as Ranger and Naturalist, succeeded Crowe as Custodian.<sup>46</sup> Joyner served in this capacity for 15 years.

The big annual event each year at the monument, the Pioneers' Picnic, had its origin at this time. Although old-timers frequently met at the Tower prior to that time, it was not until 1932 that they formally organized. In that year, the Northern Black Hills Pioneer Association came into being. Its membership was limited to people who had resided in that section for at least 35 years. On one day each year, usually in June, this organization sponsors a program which features speakers, music, and sometimes contests.<sup>47</sup>

In the late 1930's, professional mountain climbers gave their attention to Devils Tower. Although the summit of the giant

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR.  
GENERAL LAND OFFICE.

DEVILS TOWER  
NATIONAL MONUMENT,  
WYOMING.

**WARNING.**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that any person or persons who injure or destroy or, without specific authority from the Secretary of the Interior, excavate or appropriate any historic or prehistoric ruin, monument, object of antiquity, or of scientific interest, for the protection of which this reservation was created, will be subject to arrest and punishment under the provisions of the acts of Congress approved February 6, 1905, and June 8, 1906

APPLICATIONS FOR PERMITS under the provisions of section 3 of the act of June 8 1906, from reputable museums, universities, colleges, or other recognized scientific institutions or their duly authorized agents will be considered by the Secretary of the Interior

FRED DENNETT,

Commissioner.

Approved, November 6, 1906.

JAMES RUDOLPH GARFIELD,  
Secretary of the Interior.



Poster issued by the General Land Office warning visitors not to vandalize Devils Tower. Courtesy E. O. Fuller, Laramie, Wyoming.

Indian legend depicting the origin of Devils Tower. Courtesy National Park Service.

formation had by then been reached a number of times by means of the ladder which Rogers had built in 1893, no one had reached the top without this device. With the consent of the National Park Service, three mountain climbers, all members of the American Alpine Club of New York City, led by Fritz Wiessner, in 1937 made the first ascent of the Tower solely by rock-climbing techniques. They reached the top in four hours and forty-six minutes. This party made many scientific observations and brought down samples of the rock as well as vegetation found there. Eleven years later 16 members of the Iowa Mountain Climbers Club, after reaching the summit, hoisted bedding and food and spent the night. To date (November 1955), there have been 173 recorded individual ascents of the formation by skilled climbers.<sup>15</sup> Practically all of these were made on the southeast side of the Tower by three different climbing routes. In 1955 James McCarthy and John Rupley made the first ascent on the west side.

In the fall of 1941 the Tower made the headlines of the Nation's leading newspapers. This was brought about through the foolhardy stunt of a professional parachutist named George Hopkins. Without the consent or knowledge of National Park Service officials, Hopkins, who held a number of United States and world's records for spectacular jumps, on October 1 parachuted from an airplane to the top of the Tower. His plan was to make his descent by means of a one-half inch 1,000-foot rope which was dropped from the plane. Unfortunately, this rope landed on the side of the Tower and Hopkins was unable to get it. The Park Service was confronted with a serious problem, and newspapers throughout the country made the most of the predicament. Telegrams and letters offering advice on how to rescue Hopkins came from all over the United States. Meanwhile, food and blankets were dropped to him while Service officials considered how to get the man down from the giant formation.

After weighing carefully various methods, the Service, on October 3, decided to accept the offer of Jack Durrance, a student at Dartmouth College, skier and mountain climber who had led the second mountain-climbing ascent of the Tower in 1938, to lead the rescue party. More food, water, and blankets were dropped to Hopkins and assurances were given him that help was coming. Advice and offers of assistance continued. The Good-year Company offered to loan the use of a blimp to effect the rescue. The Navy offered the use of a helicopter. Bad weather, meanwhile, grounded Durrance's plane, so the mountain climber had to travel to Denver by train. On October 5, Durrance and his party arrived at the monument. Working closely with Service officials, they laid out a safe climbing route for rescue operations. On the following day, Durrance led seven other climbers to the summit of the tower where they found Hopkins who, in spite of

his ordeal, was in excellent physical condition and in good spirits. The descent was made with little difficulty. The stranded stunt man and the rescue operations which received wide publicity attracted many spectators from all parts of the Nation. During the six-day period, some 7,000 visitors came to the monument to see him and witness rescue operations."

Within a few months following the Hopkins episode, the United States entered World War II. Travel to the National Park Service areas, except by members of the Armed Forces, was not encouraged. Personnel, as well as appropriations, needed to maintain the areas, were reduced to a minimum. Gas and tire rationing, together with reduced vacation time resulting from the War effort, was soon to be reflected in reduced travel figures. In 1942 the visitors at the monument numbered 20,874; in 1943, 5,114; 1944, 6,024; 1945, 7,315.

In 1947 Raymond W. McIntyre, the present incumbent, succeeded Joyner as Superintendent of the monument. McIntyre, a native of North Dakota, was Park Ranger at Glacier National Park immediately prior to entering on duty at the Tower. He had previously served in the capacity of Ranger at Mount McKinley National Park in Alaska and a Ranger with the U. S. Forest Service.

Increased visitation following World War II has brought new problems to the National Park Service in the administration of the monument. From 1946 visitor totals jumped from 35,551 to an all-time high of 100,919 in 1954. This great increase in visitor use of the area has brought about a critical need for additional facilities. These include improved and enlarged camping facilities, additional housing for monument personnel, more trails, additional water and sewer developments and more interpretive facilities.

The problem at Devils Tower National Monument is not unique. The increased travel to all of the National Park Service areas since World War II has brought about similar needs elsewhere for expanded facilities and services. Assuming that this travel will continue to increase in the next decade as it has in the past, the Director in 1955 launched "MISSION 66." By this program, a long-range planning project for the National Park Service was begun to meet the needs of the Nation in the year 1966, the Golden Anniversary of that agency. The purpose of this program is "to make an intensive study of the problems of protection, public use, interpretation, development, staffing, legislation, financing, and all other phases of park operation, and to produce a comprehensive and integrated program of use and protection that is in harmony with the obligations of the National Park Service under the Act of 1916," under which the organization was established.

## CHRONOLOGY OF DEVILS TOWER NATIONAL MONUMENT

- 1859 —Members of Capt. W. F. Reynolds' Yellowstone Expedition visit Bear Lodge (Devils Tower).
- 1875 —U. S. Geological Survey visits formation. Name changed from Bear Lodge to Devils Tower.
- 1892 —Area established as forest reserve. Senator Warren introduces bill to establish Devils Tower National Park.
- 1893 —William Rogers and Willard Ripley make first ascent of Tower by ladder.
- 1906 —President Theodore Roosevelt establishes Devils Tower as the first national monument.
- 1930 —First full-time custodian appointed for monument.
- 1933-1941—Area developed by Civilian Conservation Corps and other agencies, in cooperation with the National Park Service.
- 1937 —Fritz Wiessner and party first ascend Tower by mountain-climbing techniques.
- 1954 —Monument visitation passes 100,000 mark.
- 1956 —Golden Anniversary of Devils Tower National Monument observed.

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1. *U. S. Statutes at Large*, XXIV: 225; The Antiquities Act, which was enacted by the 59th Congress and approved June 8, 1906, was sponsored primarily by various archeological, historical and scientific societies of the United States. A similar measure was introduced in the 58th Congress. The chief objective of the Act was to preserve the many historic and prehistoric Indian ruins which were then on the huge public domain of the Southwest and also to save objects of scientific interest. See *House Report No. 2224*, 59th Congress, 1st Sess.; *Senate Report No. 3797*, 59th Cong., 1st Sess.

2. *Sundance Times*, Nov. 10, 1927; Reprinted from *Denver Rocky Mountain News*, July 24, 1927.

3. *Souvenir Program, Northern Black Hills Pioneer Association* (n.p., 1938).

4. *Sen. Ex. Doc. No. 76*, 34th Cong., 1st Sess., 1-79.

5. *House Ex. Doc. No. 2*, 35th Cong., 2nd Sess., 628-643.

6. *Report on the Exploration of the Yellowstone River Commanded by Bvt. Brig. Gen. W. F. Reynolds* (Washington, 1868), 33.

7. Richard I. Dodge, *The Black Hills* (New York, 1876), 95.

8. Henry Newton, E.M., and Walter P. Jenny, E. M., *Report on the Geology and Resources of the Black Hills* (Washington, 1880), 200-201.

9. Dodge, *loc. cit.*

10. Newton and Jenny, *loc. cit.*

11. Thomas A. Jaggard, "The Laccoliths of the Black Hills," *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Interior, 1900*. Thirty-first Annual Report of the Geological Survey, Part III (Washington, 1901), 251-266.

12. Mrs. Grace Bush, Mrs. Ett Butts, Mr. Roy Bush, Mr. Frank Proctor, Mr. Pat Murphy, Mrs. Goldie Hardy, all of Hulett, Wyo., interviews by



Ray H. Mattison Aug. 8 and 9, 1955; Mr. Victor French, Mrs. Alfred Nielson, both of Alva, Wyoming, interviews by Ray H. Mattison Aug. 8, 1955; Thomas M. Davis, "Lines West!—The Story of George W. Holdrege," *Nebraska History*, Vol. XXXI (Sept., 1950), 210-212.

13. Louis A. Groff, Commissioner, General Land Office, hereafter indicated as GLO, Letter to Register and Receiver, Buffalo, Wyoming, Aug. 11, 1890; Thomas H. Carter, Commissioner, GLO, to the Secretary of the Interior, Feb. 16, 1892; C. C. Moore, Commissioner, GLO, to Mr. Dick Stone, July 16, 1932.

14. Senator Francis E. Warren, Letter to Carter, Jan. 30, 1892, National Archives, hereafter indicated as NA.

15. Carter to the Secretary of the Interior, Feb. 16, 1892; Carter to Register and Receiver, GLO, Sundance, Wyo., March 5, 1892; N. J. O'Brien, Special Agent, to Commissioner, GLO, June 13, 1892; Binger Hermann, Commissioner, GLO, to the Secretary of the Interior, April 4, 1898; Secretary of the Interior to Commissioner, GLO, April 16, 1898, NA.

16. *Congressional Record*, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., Vol. XXIII, Part 6, 5700; Commissioner, General Land Office, to the Secretary of the Interior, Sept. 1906, NA.

17. Mondell served as Representative-at-Large from Wyoming from 1895-1897 and 1899 to 1923. He was the majority floor leader in the 66th and 67th Congresses. According to his son William, the elder Mondell was always interested in the Tower and at one time was the author of an article about it, which the present writer has been unable to locate. He first visited the Tower in 1888 while looking for coal. Representative Mondell made his first political speech in a schoolhouse near the Tower in 1890 when he was running for the office of State Senator. William Mondell, interview by Ray H. Mattison, Aug. 12, 1955.

18. Commissioner, General Land Office, to the Secretary of the Interior, Sept. 1906, NA. Assistant Commissioner, GLO, to Register and Receiver, Sundance, Wyo., Feb. 28, 1908.

19. Elting E. Morison, Ed., *The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt* (Cambridge, 1951-1954). 8 vols. *Passim*. In these volumes, the editor has compiled a fairly complete chronology giving a day-by-day summary of Roosevelt's activities from Aug. 1898 until he left the Presidency in March 1909. There are several gaps in this chronology in the last few years of his life. However, it does not indicate that Roosevelt ever visited the Tower. In answer to an inquiry by the writer if Roosevelt dedicated the Tower, Mr. Morison, on Feb. 14, 1955, replied:

According to the chronology, ". . . Theodore Roosevelt was in Oyster Bay, New York, on September 24, 1906, so it would have been impossible for him to have dedicated the monument on that day.

There is no record that he went West at all during the next two years, so I think it unlikely that he ever did actually dedicate it."

20. Morison, *op. cit.*, IV: 1,354; VIII: 1,471. This chronology does not indicate that Roosevelt was in Wyoming between April 1903 and August 1910.

21. Mrs. Grace Bush, Mrs. Ett Butts, Mr. Frank Proctor, Mr. Victor French, Mrs. Alfred Nielson, Mrs. Goldie Hardy, interview.

22. See copy of handbill in *The Sundance* (Wyoming) *Times*, Feb. 17, 1954.

23. N. K. Griggs was a prominent Nebraska lawyer. He was a member of the Nebraska Constitutional Convention in 1871 and member of the State Senate, of which he was President, from 1873 to 1877. A. T. Andreas, *History of Nebraska* (Chicago, 1882), 899.

24. William R. Steele (1842-1901), following the Civil War in which he served in the Union Army, went to Wyoming. He practiced law and was a member of the Legislative Council in 1871. He was a territorial Delegate to Congress from 1873 to 1877. In 1901, he died in Deadwood,

South Dakota. *South Dakota Historical Collections* (Pierre, 1922), XI: 466.

25. See copy of handbill in *Sundance Times*, Feb. 17, 1954.

26. Memorandum for the Historical Files by Mr. Newell Joyner, Custodian, Devils Tower National Monument, DT; *Sundance Times*, Nov. 10, 1927, reprinted from *Denver Rocky Mountain News*, July 24, 1927.

27. Joyner, *loc. cit.*; *Sundance Times*, March 3, 1955; Mrs. Orpha May Dow, Mrs. Ethel Kinney, Newcastle, Wyoming, interviews by Ray H. Mattison, Aug. 5, 1955; Mrs. Ett Butts, Mr. Roy Bush, Mr. Frank Proctor, Mr. Victor French, Mrs. Alfred Nielson, interviews.

28. Joyner, *loc. cit.*

29. Commissioner, GLO, to Secretary of Interior, Sept. 1906, NA; Mr. E. O. Fuller, interview by Ray H. Mattison, Aug. 18, 1955; Fuller to Mr. Raymond McIntyre, Superintendent, Devils Tower National Monument, Aug. 13, 1949, DT.

30. *Congressional Record*, 61st Cong., 2nd Sess., 2481

31. *Congressional Record*, 62nd Cong., 1st Sess., 1023; 63rd Cong., 1st Sess., 81.

32. *Congressional Record*, 64th Cong., 1st Sess., Vol. LIII, Part I, 17; *Congressional Record*, 65th Cong., 1st Sess., Vol. LV, Part I, 123; Dick Stone to the Director, NPS, July 10, 1922; F. W. Mondell to Director, NPS, May 17, April 4, 7, 1917; Aug. 5, 8, Oct. 17, 19, 1919; James J. Cotter to Mondell, Sept. 1, 1916; Mondell to the Secretary of the Interior, July 12, 1916, NA.

33. *Annual Reports of the Director, National Park Service*, hereafter abbreviated NPS, 1929, 59. During the 14-year period from 1917 to 1930, inclusive, the appropriations for the protection of national monuments varied from \$3,500 in 1917 to \$46,000 in 1930, the average being \$19,248. In 1928, the amount allotted for Devils Tower National Monument was only \$162; for 1929, \$312. Arno Cammerer, Assistant Director, NPS, to John M. Thorn, May 1, 1928, NA.

34. Mondell to the Secretary of the Interior, Feb. 24, 1915, NA.

35. A. W. Storm, W. A. Ripley and C. C. Storm, letter to Mondell, July 6, 1916, together with petition, NA.

36. *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Interior, 1917*, I: 873.

37. *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Interior, 1918*, I: 898; Nils Nilson to Director, Sept. 26, 1918; Director to Mondell, Oct. 2, 1918, NA.

38. *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Interior, 1919*, I: 1038.

39. Senator John B. Kendrick to Director, NPS, March 22, 1921; Feb. 24, Oct. 24, 1922; May 9, 1924; Warren to the Secretary of the Interior, Nov. 19, 1924; Petition to Secretary of the Interior, Dec. 12, 1923; Cammerer to W. D. Fisher, Jan. 4, 1924; Dick Stone to Director, Aug. 22, July 24, 1922; A. E. Demaray, NPS, to Stone, Aug. 11, 1932; Stone to Cammerer, June 10, 1929; *Sundance Times*, Feb. 11, 1932.

40. *Annual Report of the Director, NPS, 1921*, 119-120.

41. *Annual Report of the Director, NPS, 1922*, 70; Stone to the Director, July 24, 1922; W. D. Fisher to Horace M. Albright, Director, NPS, March 15, 26, 1929; Stone to Acting Director, NPS, Apr. 12, 1924.

42. *Annual Report of the Director, NPS, 1922*, 157-158.

43. *Annual Report of the Director, NPS, 1926*, 71; 1929, 51.

44. Devils Tower Tours (General), NA.

45. See Devils Tower: Publicity & Statistics Files, NA.

46. Joyner to Superintendent Rogers, Apr. 22, 1944, DT.

47. *Souvenir Program, Seventh Annual Picnic Northern Black Hills Pioneer Association*, June 19, 1938.

48. In the present-day climbing of a precipice, the members of a party are roped together as a safety precaution. For this purpose, nylon rope, having a tensile strength of 4,000 pounds, is generally used. The regular equipment used is the piton, carabinger or snaplink, and piton hammer.

Only one member climbs at a time while the others in the party wait and pay out the climber's line or take up the slack. When the first has reached a secure position, another moves up, each one in turn making his advance. This process is known as "belaying" the climber. Except in case of "tension climbing," when the surface of a wall is such that no footing is available for regular climbing or if it becomes necessary to climb over a bulge in the wall, a climber does not depend upon the rope for climbing, but only as a safety measure in the event of a fall. Belaying is also used in making the descent. The climbers sometime descend by means of sliding down the rope, known as "rappelling," secured from above.

49. Joyner, *Memorandum to the Director*, Oct. 10, 1941, DT.

