

A History of National Park Service Interpretation
at Grand Canyon National Park

by

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ABSTRACT

The Grand Canyon is one of the most well-recognized natural features in the world, but it is also a cultural landscape. The way that the interpretation of this natural and cultural landscape has changed over time reveals a great deal about what values Americans place on scenic areas (especially national parks), how they want to experience them, what stories they want to be told there, and what cultural values were important in America at the time. This dissertation traces how the interpretation of Grand Canyon has changed over time from its earliest history until the present day, particularly focusing on National Park Service (NPS) interpretation of the site. It argues that the process involved in developing NPS interpretation at Grand Canyon National Park involved give and take between the local and national levels of the NPS, but also relied heavily on public engagement and interests. It also explores two sub themes, examining the degree to which Native American perspectives have been incorporated into Grand Canyon National Park interpretation, and how important individual personalities have been in shaping interpretation at the Park. Ultimately, the dissertation reveals that interpretation was a complex act, based upon dynamic interrelationships between author and audience, between professional objectives and public and private pressures, and between what messages the NPS wanted to convey and what visitors told the NPS they wanted to hear.

To my Mom, Dad, and husband, whose love for the past
sparked and sustained my own, and to my soon-to-arrive baby,
who has inspired me to dream about the future

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Most people who visit it think of the Grand Canyon as a great natural wonder, a place where scientists learn about the history of the earth or a place for urbanites to escape from the pressures of city life and reconnect with the wilderness. Many marvel at the geological story told in the many layers of rock that form the Canyon walls; enjoy meandering through the fragrant ponderosa pines and catching glimpses of squirrel or deer or elk; and gaze admiringly as a sunset or sunrise fills the horizon with color and transforms the Grand Canyon. Some may take the time to visit the ancient Puebloan ruins at Tusayan, or peruse the history exhibit at Bright Angel Lodge. Few would consider the Grand Canyon as a dynamic battleground of politics and ideas, as a crucible where American culture and heritage is created and tested and displayed. Yet, in looking at the history of the Interpretive Division of Grand Canyon National Park, it quickly becomes apparent that this is one of the more significant stories left to be told about the Canyon.

Even as the Canyon has influenced people's perceptions of nature and the ways in which they adapt to it, people have molded the Canyon to fit cultural needs as well. As Stephen Pyne points out, "This landscape has been shaped by ideas, words, images, and experiences...the processes at work involved geopolitical upheavals and the swell of empires, the flow of art, literature, science, and philosophy, the chisel of mind against matter. These determined the shape of

Canyon meaning.”¹ In other words, the scenery of the Canyon has a meaning, and this meaning primarily depends on the cultural lens through which it is viewed. Hundreds of people can stand at Mather Point to view the Canyon, and each person will have a different perception and experience there because of their socioeconomic, religious, educational, racial, gender, national, or other background. While this may seem like a prosaic observation, this diversity of approaches to and understandings of the Grand Canyon has for almost a century created challenges and opportunities for the National Park Service Division of Interpretation at Grand Canyon National Park.

National Park Service (NPS) units are typically understood as either natural or cultural sites. One NPS site that is usually thought of as a “natural” site is Grand Canyon National Park (GCNP). Even as water, wind, and erosion have carved the Canyon, however, different human cultures have given it meaning based on their own unique world view, making the Canyon a cultural landscape on one of the grandest scales imaginable. As Kenneth Shields states, “The canyon is not now, nor ever was, as silent, unmoving, and still as it appears from its rim” and though layers of human history are overlooked, humans have never been passive in relation to the Canyon.² Because there are so many different cultures associated with the Canyon, and because cultures change over time, interpretation

¹ Stephen J. Pyne, *How the Canyon Became Grand* (New York: Viking, 1998), xii.

² Kenneth Shields, Jr., *The Grand Canyon: Native People and Early Visitors*, Images of America Series (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2000), 8.

of the Canyon's origin, purpose, and meaning have changed over time too. As a national park that welcomes millions of visitors from around the world, this interpretation has the capacity to reach a broader audience than that of most other cultural landscapes, and therefore different groups have long fought to get their interpretation of places, people and events heard by the public.

How has NPS interpretation at the Grand Canyon changed over time, and what have been the main factors driving these changes? In this study I argue that the process of developing NPS interpretation at Grand Canyon National Park involved give and take between the local and national levels of the NPS, but also relied heavily on public engagement and interests. Interpretation was therefore a complex act, based upon dynamic interrelationships between author and audience, between professional objectives and public and private pressures, and between what messages the NPS wanted to convey and what visitors told the NPS they wanted to hear.³ As the NPS matured, it became increasingly centralized as the regional and national offices tried to exert more influence over the types of interpretation, and particularly the messages told, at individual parks. However, primary sources such as oral history interviews, manuscripts, personal letters, handbooks, and other historical documents reveal that local superintendents and chief naturalists/interpreters exerted a significant influence over interpretation at Grand Canyon National Park, as did visitors and other members of the public who were interested in the site. In other words, interpretation was shaped almost as

³ For my definition of interpretation, and background information on the subject, see the appendix.

much from the bottom-up as from the top-down. Though local leaders were sometimes forced to abide by national NPS policies, they were not passive about their work and often initiated many programs that were never suggested at the national level. Furthermore, the writings, advocacy, and feedback of private citizens influenced the development of NPS ideas about what types of information, what messages, and what activities they desired in interpretation.

Two secondary questions guided my exploration of the history of interpretation at the Grand Canyon as well, and are incorporated in this dissertation as sub-themes that run throughout the chapters. The first is: to what degree have Native American perspectives been incorporated into interpretation at Grand Canyon National Park? Since the NPS and American public tend to categorize the Grand Canyon as a “natural” park, cultural interpretation of the area for years lagged behind, especially concerning Native Americans. As the earliest inhabitants of the land, local Native American tribes have developed a wealth of knowledge about the area and its natural and cultural history. As neighbors and as self-appointed cultural, natural, and spiritual guardians of the Park, they also have a tremendous stake in how nature and culture at the Grand Canyon is interpreted. Although early interpretation at the Park often told about ancient Native American cultures that inhabited the Canyon, it has been an ongoing struggle for local tribes to get the NPS to acknowledge their continuing presence on the land, and devote significant interpretive programming to their contemporary history and perspectives.

The second narrower question that appears as a sub-theme in this study is: how important have individual personalities been in shaping interpretation at Grand Canyon National Park? The work and policies of administrators such as Miner Tillotson, Edwin McKee, Harold C. Bryant, and Louis Schellbach prove that, at least early on, specific local personalities were important in shaping Grand Canyon National Park and its interpretive program. Their leadership determined what themes local natural and cultural interpreters emphasized and how they constructed and disseminated interpretive programming and materials. I also discuss interpretive proposals put forth by various public individuals as well, whether they were important advocates of national park like John C. Merriam or interested local citizens like Vernon Dolphin, and assess their impact on GCNP interpretation.

The Significance of Interpretation

Many scholars such as Alfred Runte and Joseph Sax have argued that national parks are cultural constructions that reflect cultural values. As cultural values have shifted over time, so have the ideas expressed about national parks. In turn, this has led to an evolution in the interpretation of national park sites. Particularly relevant to the case of the Grand Canyon is how the cultural understanding of nature has changed (or remained consistent) over time. Although primarily a natural landscape, the Grand Canyon also has an important human history whose interpretation has changed (though in some ways remained consistent) as well.

As Richard Grusin points out, national parks do not just preserve nature, they are also complex cultural representations and productions, and therefore have evolved in relation to and in response to societal changes over time.⁴ Interpretation evolves to reflect these cultural shifts and helps keep park interpretation relevant to the public of the time. Interpretation serves many legitimate functions at national parks, but it also can also be propagandistic and proselytizing, both consciously and subconsciously. Often the goal of interpretation is to alter attitudes and behaviors on topics ranging from the preservation of natural and cultural resources to support for NPS (or political or ethical) policies and the continued relevance of the agency, which some observers and scholars find distasteful, manipulative, and arrogant.⁵

As reflections of certain ideals and visions, Grusin argues that “parks themselves function as technologies of representation not unlike painting, photography, cartography, or landscape architecture.”⁶ He points out that a proliferation of sources attempt to make sense of the Grand Canyon as a place in particular, because it is so hard to comprehend. Consequently, interpreters often cultivate a sense that the Canyon eludes or transcends comprehension. And yet, as Grusin noted, the more it escapes comprehension, the more we try to comprehend

⁴ Richard Grusin, *Culture, Technology, and the Creation of America's National Parks* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 3-4.

⁵ Douglas M. Knudson, Ted T. Cable and Larry Beck, *Interpretation of Cultural and Natural Resources* (State College, PA: Venture Publishing, Inc., 1995), 6, 94.

⁶ Grusin, 10.

and tame it.⁷ Indeed, this lyrical quandary frustrated and inspired generations of interpreters at Grand Canyon National Park.

Interpretive staffs at GCNP from the time of its inception have struggled to make the Grand Canyon understandable to the public, which is becoming increasingly diverse as time goes by. NPS interpreters are hired to present the story of NPS sites to the public, but the stories told vary from person to person and park to park. Historians have described a culture of decentralized management, authority, and initiative within the NPS, which has made it possible for the American public as well as individual parks to help shape policy nationally and at their local NPS units.⁸ In some instances, top-down mandates from the federal branch of the National Park Service and its Interpretation Division, and even from administrators at Grand Canyon National Park, have restricted interpreters. At other times, interpreters have set their own priorities or responded to popular movements calling for new interpretations from the ground up, in part because Grand Canyon National Park carries weight as one of the most recognizable and most visited of American national parks—one of the National Park System’s “crown jewels” as it is often called.

This struggle within the Interpretation Division between top-down and bottom-up control has important implications in American history and culture. As

⁷ Ibid., 105, 160.

⁸ *National Parks for the 21st Century: Report and Recommendations to the Director of the National Park Service (The Vail Agenda)*, (Montpelier: Chelsea Green Publishing Company, 1993), 41.

Hal Rothman pointed out, the NPS has always worried that popular opinion might unduly influence NPS policies, but nevertheless park administrators have realized that their policies must remain relevant to public concerns and values to maintain support for the agency and its mission. According to Rothman, the NPS therefore interprets “the historic and cultural past in a manner that gave it meaning as American tastes changed” while at the same time making recreation and entertainment at its sites “acceptable up and down the social spectrum.”⁹

Evidence of this is obvious at the Grand Canyon. For example, in the early 20th century the majority of Canyon visitors consisted of well-heeled elites who perhaps enjoyed a mule ride into the Canyon or listened to tall tales spun by a grizzled miner followed by a lavish dinner at the El Tovar. Today, everyone from grungy campers to blue collar workers to middle class families, as well as international visitors, can be found in plentitude at the Canyon enjoying a variety of activities from strolling along the rim to white water rafting to participating in making Native American crafts or taking a helicopter ride over the Canyon.

As the manager of national historic sites, national battlefields, national monuments, national parks, and other areas deemed to be of national cultural, historical, or environmental significance, the National Park Service prides itself on being the keeper of American national culture and heritage. As Tonia Woods Horton states in her dissertation “Indian Lands, American Landscapes: Toward a

⁹ Hal K. Rothman, “Selling the Meaning of Place: Entrepreneurship, Tourism, and Community Transformation in the Twentieth-Century American West,” *The Pacific Historical Review* 65:4 (Nov 1996): 557.

Genealogy of Place in National Parks,” American national parks are meant to be cultural repositories. Consequently, politicians, administrators, and the public pressure the NPS to represent history and culture in particular ways that reflect their values and interests. The NPS must bend to these pressures while at the same time preserve and interpret parks in a just and evenhanded way.¹⁰ The history of the Interpretive Division of Grand Canyon National Park reflects these struggles to make the parks meaningful and relevant to American culture.

Outline of the Dissertation

The second chapter of this dissertation provides an overview of the earliest history of Grand Canyon interpretation, examining early Native American interpretations of the Canyon, as well as the descriptions and stories told by early Euro-American explorers and entrepreneurs. The following chapter addresses the beginnings of American governmental interpretation of the area by the United States Forest Service and the genesis of the NPS interpretive program at the Canyon in the decade after it became a national park in 1919.

Chapter four examines what I term the “golden age” of interpretation at the Grand Canyon, which took place during the Great Depression years. During this time Edwin McKee helped Grand Canyon National Park’s Naturalist Division become known as one of the premier interpretive groups in the country. However, with the advent of World War II, funding for the NPS decreased as did its priority within the federal government. Grand Canyon’s new Chief Naturalist Louis

¹⁰ Tonia Woods Horton, “Indian Lands, American Landscapes: Toward a Genealogy of Place in National Parks,” PhD diss., ASU, Dec 2003, 6, 25, 224.

Schellbach helped the park retain its stellar reputation for interpretation, but the golden years tarnished during WWII, and it took the rest of the decade to begin to recover, a theme explored in chapter five.

After Conrad Wirth became NPS director in 1952, he helped lift the agency, and interpretation, out of these doldrums. As shown in chapter six, Wirth's new initiatives shook up and energized the NPS, although Grand Canyon interpreters did not always agree with Wirth's philosophy or direction. These changes all laid the groundwork for "Mission 66," a sweeping NPS revitalization initiative. Chapter seven explores the varying effects of this agenda on Grand Canyon's interpretive facilities and programming. The eighth chapter assesses interpretation in the 1960s and 1970s at the Canyon in the aftermath of Mission 66, a time when funding for and interest in NPS interpretive efforts again declined. By the end of the 1970s, a growing cultural interest in racial and environmental issues led to new interpretation initiatives throughout the NPS, including at the Grand Canyon. These new programs attempted to serve the interests of the public yet stretched already-thin administrative resources almost to a breaking point.

The epilogue looks at current issues and questions about the future of interpretation in the NPS in general and the Grand Canyon in particular, while a brief conclusion summarizes the history of Grand Canyon interpretation. A review of the literature on the history of interpretation, the NPS, the Grand Canyon, and other relevant topics is included as an appendix at the end of the dissertation.

CHAPTER 2

THE ORIGINAL INTERPRETERS: NATIVE AMERICANS, MINERS, AND EARLY TOURISM OPERATORS

As geographer Barbara Morehouse illustrates in her book *A Place Called Grand Canyon: Contested Geographies*, what is today Grand Canyon National Park has long been a great meeting ground of several cultures, ancient and modern, and therefore has been the site of conflicts and contests among many different groups of people. Interpretation is a cultural activity, and with the variety of cultures represented at the Grand Canyon, there have been a variety of interpretations given. Although the federal government, primarily in the form of the National Park Service, has been the primary source and provider of interpretation for most of the Canyon's recorded history, it built upon a long and complex history of interpretive themes and methods shaped by many different cultures, interests, and motivations.

Interpretation at Grand Canyon before the National Park Service

Since NPS interpretation at Grand Canyon National Park adopted many of the ideas and services that prior inhabitants at the Canyon had developed, it is important to have an understanding of the history of the area and its interpretation before the arrival of the NPS. The earliest interpreters (in the sense that they educated visitors about their knowledge and understanding) of what is today Grand Canyon National Park were the Native American guides who led the first Europeans to the brink of the Canyon during the age of exploration. As Michael Anderson states, "Consideration of how native peoples approached the land

instructed the first European-American explorers and later pioneers on regional transportation routes and survival strategies.”¹¹

For example, Hopi guides led a Spanish party of conquistadores under Captain Garcia Lopez de Cardenas to the south rim of the Canyon in 1540. Although the guides must have known the location of trails into the Canyon, and though the Spanish attempted for three days to descend into it, the Hopi chose not to help the Spanish explorers find a way to the Colorado River, illustrating what may be the first recorded example of providing selective information about the Canyon. The scope of the Canyon was incomprehensible to the explorers; they estimated that the Colorado River was only a few feet wide, and saw no value in the landscape, with Cardenas not even mentioning the Canyon in his account of the expedition. Later another Spaniard, Father Francisco Garces, spent time among the Havasupai attempting to convert them, while in return the Indians attempted to impart their knowledge and legends about the Canyon to him.¹² In both of these instances, it is clear that the different perceptions and goals of the people arriving at the rim greatly affect how they understood and experienced the Canyon. Only by living in the Canyon or by having guides and interpreters who helped them understand it could these people gain a deeper appreciation for it.

¹¹ Michael F. Anderson, *Living at the Edge: Explorers, Exploiters and Settlers of the Grand Canyon Region* (Grand Canyon: Grand Canyon Association, 1998), 12-13.

¹² Robert C. Euler and Frank Tikalsky, eds, *The Grand Canyon: Intimate Views* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1992), 62.

Other exploratory groups that arrived after the United States gained control of the area in the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo also relied on Native Americans to explain the Canyon to them. Many Euro-Americans spent time in the region in the 19th century individually or as part of larger parties. The first official government expedition, led by Lieutenant Joseph Ives, utilized Hualapai guides, and some members of the party encountered Havasupai when they descended into Cataract Canyon.¹³ John Wesley Powell had contact with Paiutes on his expeditions down the Colorado River in 1869 and 1872, and recorded some of their stories. Prospectors who traveled through the area in the 1870s also interacted with local tribes, sometimes causing problems.¹⁴ Later settlers to the Canyon depended on Native American guidance to survive, since the local inhabitants led them to water sources and taught them how to build “check dams, water tanks, gardens, and camp structures” adapted to the local environment.¹⁵

Primary among these was William Wallace (W.W.) Bass. Born in Shelbyville, Indiana, in 1849, he came to Arizona at the age of 34 for health reasons and ended up settling toward the western end of the Grand Canyon’s south rim. Bass gained his knowledge of the Canyon mainly from local Havasupai Indians as well as his prospecting ventures that led him all across the gorge. Bass

¹³ Ibid., 65.

¹⁴ As J. Donald Hughes reveals, in 1878 Havasupai Indians who were so irritated with miners bothering them in their side canyon wrote to Governor John C. Fremont asking him to force white visitors to respect their rights. J. Donald Hughes, *The Story of Man at Grand Canyon* (Grand Canyon: Grand Canyon Natural History Association, 1967), 91.

¹⁵ Anderson, *Living at the Edge*, 13.

had heard rumors of a spring along the rim near where a Havasupai trail led out of what is today known as Havasu Canyon, but after repeated searches he never found it. Finally, a Havasupai friend named Thilwisa (known to Euro-Americans as “Captain Burro”) led him to the exact location of what Bass named “Mystic Spring,” a spot where water seemed to ooze out of solid rock in a way that to him seemed magical. This spring made it possible for Bass to settle on the site (known as Bass Camp) and to run a moderately successful mining and tourism operation. Bass also depended on his Havasupai friends to help him construct trails into the Grand Canyon to facilitate these business ventures and to give him fodder for the stories he told to his visitors.¹⁶

Bass was the first to guide tourists to visit Cataract Canyon (now known as Havasu Canyon), which the Havasupai tribe called home. According to Lisa Madsen’s master’s thesis, “Bass had read a rather romantic account of the Havasupai Indians which gave him the idea that they were a wonderful and peculiar people still retaining the characteristics of Indians of centuries gone by.”¹⁷ Bass developed friendships with several Havasupai, and employed many in his various businesses. This was a major selling point to some tourists; as Michael Anderson states, “Paying customers loved the trip as they had a chance to learn something of another culture ‘up close and personal’ while secure in the company

¹⁶ Hughes, 70.

¹⁷ “The Grand Canyon Tourist Business of the WW Bass Family,” Lauzon Family Collection, Cline Library, Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff (hereafter referred to as Cline Library, NAU).

of a man who held the Havasupais' respect."¹⁸ Over the years Bass came to see himself as a patron of the tribe, helping them start a school, get medicine, and even representing the tribe's interests to Congress in Washington, D.C.¹⁹

Since every tribe had its own story of the Canyon's creation or role in their culture, sometimes with varying accounts within the tribes, their stories must have been quite interesting and diverse. However, starting in the late 19th century Euro-Americans largely controlled what stories were remembered and what names were given to places at the Grand Canyon, and they therefore determined how much or how little of this Native American history penetrated the mainstream of American culture. For example, Euro-Americans were determined to name all of the features they encountered at the Canyon. The names that geologists such as Clarence Dutton and Francois Matthes chose to give them reflected their Western bias. They named some in the typical way—after certain people, descriptions, or incidents that occurred at the site, such as Powell Plateau or Ribbon Falls. However, many explorers saw the landscape features as exotic and gave them names that they thought were equally exotic. For this reason Grand Canyon place names, such as Wotan's Throne and Vishnu Temple, recall Greek, Norse, Hindu,

¹⁸ Michael F. Anderson, *Living at the Edge: Explorers, Exploiters and Settlers of the Grand Canyon Region* (Grand Canyon: Grand Canyon Association, 1998), 45.

¹⁹ Hughes, 73.

Egyptian and other ancient mythologies. Today, of 230 place names at the Grand Canyon, only 25 are Native American.²⁰

Still, Native Americans retain the names of features and sites with significance to their own cultures in their own language, and sometimes share them with Euro-Americans. For instance, the physical feature on the floor of the Grand Canyon where many Hopi believe their people entered into this world is known as the *Sipapuni* to both Euro-Americans and Hopi. However, sites known to Euro-Americans as Navajo Mountain and the San Francisco Peaks are known to Hopi as *Tokonave* and *Neuvatikyaovi* respectively.²¹ Furthermore, each local tribe has its own name for the Colorado River: the Havasupai call it *Hakatai*, the Navajo call it *Pocketto*, and to the Paiutes it is *Pahaweap* meaning water deep down in the earth, while the Yuma refer to it by the name for red, *Hahweal*, as do the Pimas, who call it *Buqui Auimuti*. Of course, Europeans and Euro-Americans

²⁰ Of these, 8 are Havasupai, 13 are Paiute, and 4 are Hopi. Robert Keller and Michael Turek, *American Indians and National Parks* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1998), 133.

²¹ For an in-depth examination of the cultural geography and differences among Euro-American and Native American names of sites in the Canyon, see T.J. Ferguson et al, *Öngtupqa niqw Pisisvayu (Salt Canyon and the Colorado River); the Hopi People and the Grand Canyon. Final ethnohistoric report for the Hopi Glen Canyon Environmental Studies Project* (Hopi Cultural Preservation Office, 1998); Alexa Roberts, Richard M. Begay, Klara B. Kelley, Alfred W. Yazzie, and John R. Thomas, *Bits'íís Ninéézi (The River of Neverending Life); Navajo history and cultural resources of the Grand Canyon and the Colorado River* (Window Rock, AZ: Navajo Nation Historic Preservation Department, 1995); and Richard W. Stoffle, David B. Halmo, Michael Evans, and Diane Austin, *Piapaxa 'Uipi (Big River Canyon)* (Tucson: Bureau of Applied Research in Anthropology, University of Arizona, 1994).

called it by many different names over the years before the American government officially christened it the Colorado River.²²

The first Euro-Americans to settle more permanently at the Grand Canyon in the 1880s were mostly miners hoping to strike it rich among the varied minerals that colored the Canyon walls. Despite the remote and “wild” character of the land (or perhaps because of it) the first tourists were not far behind, which means that tourists began making the long trek to Grand Canyon decades before the area became a National Park. The first regular tourist stagecoaches started in 1884, running from the railroad stop at Peach Springs, Arizona, across Hualapai land to the Canyon.²³ Rumors of the extraordinary scenery drew these early tourists, but also a sense of adventure and sometimes a desire to learn more about the Native Americans living in the area. Though later NPS interpretations of Grand Canyon history purposefully or unintentionally obscured the Native American historical and contemporary presence at the Canyon, the earliest settlers and visitors would have been very aware of it since they had likely grown up reading newspaper accounts of Indian wars and treaties, or romantic or thrilling stories of abductions and massacres in the West.

Early travel writers discussing the Grand Canyon, such as George Wharton James, included information about the Havasupai in popular guidebooks. James wrote two such books for the Grand Canyon, one appearing in 1900 and

²² Hughes, 26-27.

²³ Ibid., 68-69.

the other in 1910, which included descriptions of where tourists could see local Native Americans or spots associated with their cultures. Both books were reprinted many times over the years. An excerpt from his 1910 book, *The Grand Canyon of Arizona: How to See It*, illustrates how Euro-Americans envisioned Native American culture at the time, and how they interpreted it:

If you are not too squeamish to see aboriginal man in his primitive dirt, study him in his home. Try to learn to look at things from his standpoint. If possible, witness one of his dances--a religious ceremony--and arrange to enter his primitive toholwoh or sweat-house, where he will give you a most effective and powerful Russo-Turkish bath...Listen to the stories, the legends, the myths about the stone figures your eye cannot fail to see soon after you reach the village, which command the widest part of the Canyon, where the Indians live, and which are called by them Hue-pu keh-eh and Hue-gli-i-wa. Get one of the story-tellers to recite to you the deeds of Tochopa, their good god, and Hokomata, their bad god, and ask them for the wonder fully fascinating legend of the mother of their tribe--the daughter of Tochopa, from whom the whole human race descended. Ask one of the old men to tell you the stories of some of their conflicts with the Apaches, and why Tochopa placed the Hue-gli-i-wa in so prominent and salient a position. If you desire something of a different nature, engage some of the younger men to get up a horse race. The wise and judicious expenditure of a few dollars will generally produce the desired effect.²⁴

James's writing shows how Euro Americans tended to see Native Americans as tourist attractions in themselves, ready and willing to have their cultures probed and exploited for visitors' enjoyment. Because of guides like his, many early visitors purposely made side trips to witness local Native American cultural events and to purchase their handmade arts and crafts.²⁵ For instance,

²⁴ George Wharton James, *The Grand Canyon of Arizona: How to See It* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1910), 55-56.

G.L. Rose, who traveled to the Canyon sometime in 1901 or earlier by team and wagon, described going to Walpai (on the present-day Hualapai Reservation) to witness a dance and finding an assemblage of white people there, buying trinkets and taking snapshots, likely without giving any consideration to what the Native Americans thought of their intrusions.²⁶

Interpretation Becomes a Business

Tourism at the Canyon at this time was unrestricted and unregulated. Whereas today most guests tend to cluster around the amenities offered at Grand Canyon Village on the South Rim, in the early days visitors had the option of choosing from a variety of guides located in a variety of areas along the Canyon. Because of the long and difficult trek to the Canyon, tourists also wanted to stay for an extended period once they arrived.²⁷ Furthermore, visitors had no interest in simply being carted to the rim and dumped on the side of the road; they sought someone who could explain or make sense of the Canyon, to tell them about its unique features—to interpret it for them so they could try to understand it. Early Euro-American settlers at the Canyon, eager to make a profit, were happy to oblige. Of course, most of them incorporated tall tales into their orations on the minerals and animals and plants of Grand Canyon, so that visitors often had a

²⁵ Hughes, 92.

²⁶ G.L. Rose, “A Summer Trip Among the Strange People and Strange Places of Our Great American Desert in Arizona,” 3 October 1901, FM MSM-9, Arizona Historical Foundation, Arizona State University Library, Tempe (hereafter referred to as Arizona Historical Foundation, ASU).

²⁷ Anderson, *Living at the Edge*, 45.

hard time distinguishing fact from fiction. Though different in many ways, these early guided tours were the predecessors of more formal NPS interpretation.

Perhaps most important in this early phase of interpretation were the prospectors who had ventured to the Canyon, eyes shining with the prospect of striking it rich through mineral wealth. However, as most prospectors came to realize, mining at the Canyon was ultimately unprofitable. Instead, many prospectors turned their sights to a much more lucrative resource that they could mine at the Canyon: tourists. In some ways miners were natural and highly effective interpreters. Prospectors needed at least a passing knowledge of geology and geography to have some inkling of where to best look for veins of mineral deposits. Some of them, especially Bass, had even cultivated ties with local Native American inhabitants, whether to gain tips on how to survive in the unusual environment, to inquire about potential mining sites, to ensure that they would be considered friends in case of hostilities, or simply to satiate their curiosity about the people. Unfortunately, since interpretation was almost exclusively an oral activity at this point, the stories and information that these early guides passed on to their audience are largely lost to time, with a few memorable exceptions.

John Hance, who apparently gave himself the title “captain” despite having no verified military service, is supposedly the first Euro-American to settle in the area. He arrived at the Canyon in 1883 as a prospector but soon turned to making a living running a hotel and telling tall tales about the Canyon until his death in 1919. He, along with Pete Berry, built a trail and guest ranch in 1897

near Grandview Point. Hance later sold out his interests and went to work for the Santa Fe Railway, at which point author Joseph Wood Krutch argued Hance “declined into a professional ‘character’” used only “to furnish atmosphere.”²⁸ However, as Hance later said, he knew that someone was going to tell stories to people for money, so he figured it might as well be him, and he might as well make them good.²⁹

Hance’s storytelling about the Canyon was legendary, and illustrates the important place of interpretation at the Canyon. As early visitor Chester P. Dorland wrote in Hance’s guest book (which was later published), “To see the canyon only, and not to see Captain John Hance, is to miss half the show.”³⁰ Another early Canyon resident and man of all trades, Buckey O’Neill, supposedly stated “God made the Canyon, John Hance the trails. Without the other, neither would be complete.”³¹

Hance’s tall tales often involved stories of his own superhuman strength and endurance in events that took place at the Canyon. One favorite story of Hance’s involved a prop: a pair of snowshoes. On days when heavy fog rolled

²⁸ Joseph Wood Krutch, *Grand Canyon: Today and All Its Yesterdays* (New York: William Sloane Associates, 1958), 51.

²⁹ Lon Garrison, “John Hance: Guide, Trail Builder, Miner and Windjammer of the Grand Canyon” *Arizona Highways* 25:6 (June 1949): 4-5; Anderson, *Living at the Edge*, 62.

³⁰ Frank C. Lockwood, *Pioneer Portraits: Selected Vignettes* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1968), 191.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 62.

into the Canyon, he would bring a pair of snowshoes from his cabin and proclaim to his visitors that it was a great time to walk across the Canyon. Hance would recall to his visitors one such trip that he had made before when he tarried on the other side too long; as Hance told it, “The fog went out and left me on the other side without food or drink. I had been marooned three or four days when it returned, though not so thick as before. I had grown very light by this time and got across all right, though the fog was so thin in spots that several times I thought I was going to hit the bottom.” The normally quick-on-his-feet Hance was outdone on at least one occasion, however. After telling a group of visitors one of his favorite stories, a long and detailed account of how he himself had dug the Grand Canyon, a little girl piped up and asked, “where did you put all the dirt?” According to this version of the story, Hance was speechless for the first time in his life, and as the legend goes, his last words on his deathbed were, “where did I put all that dirt?”³²

Not all of Hance’s interpretations of the Canyon involved flights of fancy. Hance also relied on his background as a prospector to give visitors facts about the Canyon’s mineral deposits and other more serious subjects. As tourist Amelia Beard Hollenback wrote a journal documenting her trip to the Canyon in 1897, “When old John Hance starts to tell you the truth, he is very exact about it, and as all four of us were seeking exact information this evening, we learned many interesting facts about the mineral deposits of the Canon, and many other things

³² Ibid., 195, 198.

as well, for no one could be better informed about this wonderful region than he.”³³

Frank Lockwood pointed out in his series of sketches of early Arizona settlers that Hance’s success as an interpreter was no accident, and his stories were likely meticulously created and rehearsed no matter how offhandedly he told them. Lockwood argues “No doubt Hance carefully elaborated his best yarns before delivering them. He was as much an artist as the short-story writer, and his typical creations are miniature masterpieces. He had a natural knack for the business.”³⁴ Like later NPS interpreters, Hance’s presentations to the public were carefully crafted to capture attention and evoke a desired reaction in his audience. Hance’s tall tales undoubtedly provided what some might describe as a distinctively Western flavor to the early interpretation at the Canyon. In fact, many modern NPS interpretive rangers at GCNP today use his tall tales in their programs as a way to introduce visitors to themes such as Western history and Canyon culture; sometimes they will even dress up as Hance and impersonate him. However, dissimilar to NPS interpreters, it is unlikely that Hance had any deep motives or goals for his interpretation other than entertainment and earning a living. Meta narratives about broad themes such as the significance of the Canyon in natural or cultural history and its role in American identity were not at the

³³ Mary J. Straw Cook, *Immortal Summer: A Victorian Woman’s Travels in the Southwest* (Santa Fe: Museum of New Mexico Press, 2002), 46, 52-53, 63.

³⁴ Lockwood, 201.

forefront of visitors' or interpreters' minds at this point so much as immediate answers to immediate questions.

One of the few written records apart from Hance's tall tales that give a sense of what early visitors might have heard in terms of interpretation of the Grand Canyon comes from the writings of the aforementioned early miner, entrepreneur, and tour guide W.W. Bass. As mentioned before, Bass came to the western end of the Grand Canyon in the 1880s and developed a close relationship with the nearby Havasupai. Bass vigorously promoted the Canyon and his tourist business, even after the Santa Fe Railway in 1901 diverted traffic from him and threatened to sue him for trying to round up business among their passengers. In 1894 Bass and famous travel writer George Wharton James prepared lantern slides they took all over the country trying to drum up business, and ended up attracting famous people to camp at his site including Zane Grey and Thomas Moran.³⁵

Visitors recalling their experiences with Bass described moving amongst Havasupai tribal members and participating in dances, ceremonies or feasts. Therefore it seems likely that he, more than other tourism entrepreneurs at the time, would have shown his guests the Canyon from more of a Havasupai

³⁵ Anderson, *Living at the Edge*, 45. These early tours were not simply pleasure trips where visitors experienced all the comforts of home. Bass charged his guests \$15 for the 64-mile round trip from Ash Fork to his camp, but meals and beds cost 75 cents extra. Visitors often had to do chores as well. Women were expected to help with meals, while men often had to help gather animals in the morning. "The Grand Canyon Tourist Business of the WW Bass Family," Lauzon Family Collection, Cline Library, NAU.

perspective.³⁶ One can also get a sense of the stories Bass would have told about the Canyon from the poetry that he wrote. In 1909 he published a book of poems that he recited to visitors around campfires. Many of them obviously focus on the scenic grandeur of the Canyon, but others refer to the cultural landscape. One that describes the stagecoach trip from Williams to the Canyon includes a verse pointing out

At your feet a human dwelling—
See its crumbled walls today
Stone and mortar plainly telling
Of a race long passed away.
Who they were and what their calling,
Not even one is left to tell
Earthquake ravages appalling,
Seething death, their lot befell.”³⁷

The verse refers to the Native American presence, but even such a staunch friend of the Havasupai as Bass seems to fall back into standard Euro-American romanticized ideas of Native Americans as a vanished or vanishing race.³⁸ The

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ “Bass Poems,” Lauzon Family Collection, Cline Library, NAU.

³⁸ Ibid. However, another less quotable poem in the collection entitled “A Plea for the Indian” uses Darwinist ideas to argue that skin color should be ignored and all humans should be treated with respect and try to get along with each other, showing that Bass likely played up whichever theme seemed most likely to appeal to his current audience.

poem also indicates his belief that the Canyon was created by an earthquake that split the ground apart, which he steadfastly believed as fact and preached to visitors until his death. This belief in some ways parallels Native American stories of catastrophic events forming the Canyon, such as Hopi tales of a lightning bolt that struck the ground and formed the Canyon and Havasupai legends of Canyon walls that moved together and apart to crush people inside.³⁹ As George Wharton James described in his guidebook to the Grand Canyon, Bass rejected the scientifically-accepted theories of Powell and Dutton on how the Canyon was formed, instead pointing to the “hundreds of depressions, caves, and crevices” found along the Colorado River, which he insisted indicated “that the earth’s crust has been shattered and broken.”⁴⁰ On a business card from 1914, Bass advertised himself as an “independent guide” with over 25 years of experience at the Canyon, making sure to point out he had no connection with the Harvey Company or the Santa Fe Railway, and promising to illuminate his customers on “my theory of the creation of the canyon.”⁴¹

As more tourists flocked to the Grand Canyon at the turn of the 20th Century, more entrepreneurs arrived with new ideas about how to serve and profit

³⁹ “Edith Longhoma Oral History,” GRCA 70891, Grand Canyon National Park Museum Collections, Grand Canyon National Park, Arizona (hereafter referred to as Grand Canyon Museum Collections); Hughes, 11; Stephen Hirst, *I Am the Grand Canyon: The Story of the Havasupai People* (Grand Canyon: Grand Canyon Association, 2007).

⁴⁰ George Wharton James, *In and Around the Grand Canyon* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1907), 58.

⁴¹ “Bass Livery Tickets,” Lauzon Family Collection, Cline Library, NAU.

from these throngs of visitors. Among them were Ellsworth and Emery Kolb, the Babbitt Brothers, John Verkamp, and others. Some simply sold trinkets and curios to travelers, while others provided services designed to give visitors an experience at the Canyon that they would not forget. For example, Thomas and Elizabeth McKee ran the first real tourist facility at the North Rim, interpreting the Canyon to their guests by horseback, wagon, and later automobile. Unfortunately, there are no records of stories they might have told their guests. Other entrepreneurs in the early 20th century tried to promote the North Rim as a dude ranch/hunting safari area for the British aristocracy, leading cougar hunting parties and trying to develop other sport hunting activities.⁴²

The Kolb brothers were among the earliest entrepreneurs at the site of the modern Grand Canyon Village, and they had a lasting effect on the Canyon's interpretation. Ellsworth Kolb came to the South Rim in 1901, the same year that the Santa Fe Railway started its service to the Canyon, with his younger brother Emery following a year later. In 1902 they established a photographic studio in a small cave at the head of Bright Angel Trail. Two years later they began building a permanent structure clinging to the Canyon wall. From this prime location the brothers took pictures of tourists embarking on the famous mule rides down Bright Angel Trail, developing the film in time for tourists to pick them up on their way back out of the Canyon. This enterprise served as their studio's bread and butter. However, the brothers also took pictures of landscapes, Native

⁴² Anderson, *Living at the Edge*, 136, 138, 153, 155-156.

Americans, and Canyon residents, producing some of the first images of the inner canyon that were widely circulated to the public. Over the next several decades, the images the Kolbs produced in this studio became iconic, influencing thousands of people's perceptions of the Canyon. Their images helped promote the Canyon as a tourist destination as well as a national environmental treasure. For decades (and even today), the NPS relied heavily on their photographs to create interpretive exhibits and to understand early tourism at the Canyon.

In 1911-12, the brothers undertook a harrowing boat trip down the Colorado River, which they recorded with a movie camera. They took this film around the country to promote the Canyon and their business. Beginning in 1915 they showed the film daily at their studio on the South Rim, with Emery narrating. This became one of the first and longest running interpretive programs at the Grand Canyon. This film appealed to the sensibilities of an American public mesmerized by Western landscapes and culture, and attracted even more people to the Canyon. Emery continued taking pictures and showing this film until his death at age 95 in 1976.⁴³ Through their film, the Kolbs did much to interpret the Grand Canyon to visitors and a broader audience, and through their pictures they did much to help people preserve their memories of the Canyon and promote it to other potential clients.

⁴³ Today the film with Emery's recorded narration can be viewed online at Northern Arizona University's Cline Library website at <http://library.nau.edu/speccoll/exhibits/kolb/>.

The Kolbs influenced early perceptions of the Canyon's earliest inhabitants through their choice of photographic material. For example, when they visited the Havasupai reservation, they bribed "Captain Burro," W.W. Bass's old friend, to stand in nothing but a breechcloth near Bridal Veil Falls. However, the next day when the Kolbs wanted to photograph him again, "his typical Indian face, aged and wrinkled, was spoiled by a dirty and dilapidated costume of 'civilized clothes.'" A few years later, when he offered to let the Kolbs take his picture again, they once more "informed him that we did not care for an Indian in a white man's garb—that we wanted him in Indian clothes such as he used to wear long ago. He was on hand the next morning, ready for the picture. The clothes were hardly as elaborate as one might have expected, but he had a splendid physique, in spite of his great age."⁴⁴

Travel Writing: Interpreting the Canyon to the Public from a Distance

In the late 1800s and early 1900s travel writing developed as a popular literary genre, and writers searched for exciting new spots to describe to wealthy readers who had the resources to contemplate traveling to such destinations. One such off-the-beaten-track spot that soon became a must-see destination was the Grand Canyon. Well-known travel writers of the time such as Charles Dudley Warner and Harriet Monroe penned essays on their experiences at the Canyon. However, each interpreted the Canyon in a very different way. Warner noted both the natural and cultural aspects of the landscape. As Paul Schullery pointed out in

⁴⁴ Ellsworth and Emery Kolb, "Experiences in the Grand Canyon" *National Geographic Magazine* 26:2 (August 1914): 102.

his 1981 book *The Grand Canyon: Early Impressions*, “Warner’s passing references to Indians, cliff-dwellings, and cowboy outposts stir our imaginations and remind us that the geologic forces that shaped the canyon also shaped its inhabitants.”⁴⁵ Though well-versed in Dutton’s geologic history of the Canyon and saturated with John Hance’s stories about the area, Warner also exhibited an understanding of the Native American connection to the area, mentioning that “To the recent Indian, who roved along its brink or descended to its recesses, [the canyon] was not strange, because he had known no other than the plateau scenery.”⁴⁶

On the other hand, Monroe described it as a virtually untouched wilderness and argued that that should be preserved, perhaps even from people entirely, since she felt that humanity was only intruding there. She noted how many of her compatriots pled for modern improvements, including a railroad and summer hotel on the rim, as well as a tram or some other transportation system down to the bottom of the Canyon, to open it up for the world to share. However, Monroe “rose up and defended the wilderness...one of the glories of earth was still undesecrated by the chatter of facile tourists; that here we must still propitiate nature with sacrifices...”⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Paul Schullery, *The Grand Canyon: Early Impressions* (Boulder: Colorado Associated University Press, 1981), 33.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 42-43, 45.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 50-51.

Irvin Cobb, a humorist with the *Saturday Evening Post*, talked a bit about the interpretive services he encountered on his trip to the Canyon in his booklet “Roughing it Deluxe.” Along with his comical recollections, Cobb indicated that most Canyon guides at the time were cowboys looking to make a little money on the off-season, and were prone to telling tall tales along the lines of those recounted by John Hance.⁴⁸ Cobb described his first tour guide as a young man from Wyoming who came down each fall to the Canyon to serve as a seasonal guide. As Cobb told it, “when [the cowboy tour guide] gets so he just can’t stand associating with tourists any longer, he packs his warbags and journeys back to the Northern Range and enjoys the company of cows a spell. Cows are not exactly exciting, but they don’t ask fool questions.” However, tourists expecting a “real Wild West” experience could easily be disappointed. As Cobb recounted, a group of Easterners asked their hotel manager where they could see characters like they might find in Western novels or movies. The manager dutifully rounded up a group of trail guides, all real cowboys—a bunch of quiet, sunburned kids in overalls who looked like they could have been boys next door back home. The Easterners expressed their displeasure with this interpretation of Western life, so the manager quickly got an employee to go to the curio store next door, purchase and don a big hat, silver spurs, and leather chaps, jump on a pony, and come running across the lawn whooping and yelling, much to the delight of the

⁴⁸ Ibid., 154.

tourists.⁴⁹ This shows how concessionaires at the time were quick to shape their interpretations to meet visitor expectations and entertain them (and of course make the most profit from them), rather than provide interpretation that would educate the public or put the Canyon into any kind of scientific or historic perspective.

Another important visitor who interpreted the Grand Canyon for a popular audience was naturalist John Muir. His 1902 work “Our Grand Canyon” not surprisingly criticized the intrusion of tourists into the area, yet also seemed to believe that the Canyon was too vast and majestic to be overshadowed by these intrusions. It was something that had to be seen and experienced to be understood, yet he lamented that most tourists then, as today, seemed to hurry their time there. He urged visitors to not just enjoy the scenery, but “learn something about the plants and animals and the mighty flood roaring past.” Though he does not give suggestions on how they were supposed to learn such things, the National Park Service would later seize upon this idea and use Muir’s words as a mandate for their work in providing organized educational and interpretative activities at the Canyon.⁵⁰

Muir’s description of the Canyon exists somewhat in the middle along the continuum of those who see the Canyon as a human-filled landscape and those who see it as a wilderness. He clearly has a love for the plant and animal life of

⁴⁹ Ibid., 163-164. Cobb also comically recounts that at least one visitor was afraid of an Indian uprising and slept with a loaded revolver.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 84-85.

the area, yet he also mentions the Native American presence in passing. Muir notes that to many Easterners the landscape seems uninhabitable, but

“Nevertheless it is the home of a multitude of our fellow-mortals, men as well as animals and plants. Centuries ago it was inhabited by tribes of Indians, who, long before Columbus saw America, built thousands of stone houses in its crags, and large ones, some of them several stories high, with hundreds of rooms... Their cliff-dwellings, almost numberless, are still to be seen in the canon, scattered along both sides from top to bottom an throughout its entire length...”⁵¹

Unlike some other contemporary writers he also pointed out that there was still a modern Native American presence, stating that certain narrow garden terraces dating from ancient times “are still cultivated by Indians, descendants of cliff-dwellers.”⁵² Still, Muir’s work was mostly focused on educating the public about the extraordinary wonders of the natural world and to generate support for the preservation of the nation’s parks.

The Railroad and the Rise of Corporate Influence in Local Interpretation

For many years local entrepreneurs and miners worked hard to get a railroad to come to the Canyon, because of its obvious benefits of shipping supplies faster but also because they knew this would bring more tourists. Though they finally achieved their goal in 1901, when the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railway first reached the Canyon, it would have consequences that none of them had imagined. The hegemony of the railroad at the Canyon did not last long, however, since just one year later the arrival of the first automobile indicated that

⁵¹ Ibid., 86-87.

⁵² Ibid.

the nature of tourism at the Grand Canyon would soon change again. Still, though visitors in automobiles would have more flexibility on where they went, how long they stayed, and what types of services they employed, the railroads continued to play an important role in shaping how these travelers understood and experienced the Canyon.

Despite the early efforts of small local businessmen, it was the Santa Fe Railway and its subsidiary the Fred Harvey Company that did the most to shape early visitors' experience at the Grand Canyon. The opening in 1901 of a spur from the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railway from its main transcontinental line at Williams to the Grand Canyon was a major turning point in the history of the Grand Canyon and its interpretation. Suddenly, what had been a ramshackle tourism effort by a number of small operators suddenly became dominated by a streamlined, major corporation with lots of money for advertising and a reputation for luxury. Despite the hard work many local businessmen had put into getting the railroad to come to the Canyon, not long after it arrived it became ruthless in trying to eradicate these competitors. This was not only an attempt to establish economic hegemony, but also a power struggle over who would control the interpretation and public image of the Canyon.

These efforts to control the Canyon began before the Santa Fe Railway had even established a permanent presence at the rim. The company decided to end its spur at modern-day Grand Canyon Village so that it would not have to compete with the Grandview Hotel on the rim several miles to the east and instead could create their own tourism center. Visitors coming on the train with no other

source of transportation would have little choice but to rely on the facilities that the Railway furnished for them at the end of their line. And visitation itself would expand tremendously, from hundreds per year before the railroad to tens of thousands per year not long afterward.⁵³

At first, the Railway made pretences of support for local businesses. The Railway helped advertise W.W. Bass's guide services in pamphlets distributed along their route. They also helped him ship in supplies to build a hotel, and gave him a free pass to travel coast to coast to help drum up business for his tourism enterprise. Of course, the Railway would benefit from increased travel to the Canyon as well.⁵⁴ However, this relationship deteriorated over time, especially because the Railway would not allow him to solicit passengers at the Grand Canyon Village Depot itself, but also because the Railway was becoming an extremely profitable and successful (and therefore permanent) fixture at the Canyon, meaning it no longer relied on local goodwill or assistance for its survival. Bass took to traveling on the train between the Canyon and Williams, lecturing about the Canyon and reciting poetry that he had written about the Canyon in an effort to attract interest in his business, though the Railway

⁵³ For example, in 1899 the Canyon saw just 900 visitors, while 20 years later (the year it became a national park) over 44,000 people came to see the chasm. Charles Franklin Parker, "Host to the World," *Arizona Highways* 28:6 (June 1952): 13.

⁵⁴ "The Grand Canyon Tourist Business of the WW Bass Family," Lauzon Family Collection, Cline Library, NAU.

eventually protested this as well.⁵⁵ Bass eventually admitted defeat, abandoning his now out-of-the-way camp (about 30 miles west of what would become Grand Canyon Village) to move closer to the train tracks, though he still guided tourists on short rim drives to make ends meet. Like Bass, other smaller operators on the south rim could not compete, and one by one closed their doors to either move away or work for the Santa Fe Railway.

Another well-known attempt by the Railway to monopolize control over the interpretation and image of the Canyon involved the Kolb brothers. The Fred Harvey Company, feeling threatened by the Kolb brothers' popular photography business, attempted to run them out of the Canyon by building Lookout Studio on the rim, which tourists often confused with the nearby Kolb Studio, and by blocking tourist access to Kolb Studio with a mule corral. The Kolbs refused to give up their independence or go away, and remained a fixture on the rim of the Canyon for decades to come, continuing to take photographs and shape the public's image of the Canyon.

Understanding of the history of the two railroads that serviced the Grand Canyon (the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe on the South Rim and the Union Pacific on the North Rim) is important to understanding the history of interpretation at the Grand Canyon. As Al Richmond pointed out, each railroad "brought their particular brand of tourism, architecture, advertising, art, and culture. Each in its own way left its stamp on the canyon through promotion and

⁵⁵ Ibid.

development of tourism.”⁵⁶ In order to attract an elite clientele, the railroads and their subsidiaries spent a great deal of time and money producing brochures, pamphlets, and books promoting the wonders of the Southwest. They also came up with more creative means of exposure, such as the electric diorama of the Grand Canyon the Santa Fe Railway build in 1901 in a gallery at the Agriculture Building during the Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo, New York. A related brochure told about the Canyon, how to reach it, and what to do there.⁵⁷

Like many Western railroads, the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe emphasized the dramatic scenery of the area in its advertisements. As Barbara Morehouse argues, it was the railroad more than any other factor that changed how the spaces of Grand Canyon were defined, as they determined where the majority of the people would go and how their space would be used, but their advertisements and promotional campaigns had the additional effect of shaping how people envisioned the Canyon—thereby shaping their interpretation of what the Canyon was and why they should go there. The Santa Fe Railway in particular was also especially concerned with promoting cultural tourism to draw curious Easterners out to observe Native American people and villages.

⁵⁶ Al Richmond, “Rails at Both Rims,” in Michael F. Anderson, ed., *A Gathering of Grand Canyon Historians: Ideas, Arguments, and First-Person Accounts: Proceedings of the Inaugural Grand Canyon History Symposium, January 2002* (Grand Canyon: Grand Canyon Association, 2005), 15.

⁵⁷ Marta Weigle and Kathleen L. Howard, “‘To experience the real Grand Canyon’: Santa Fe/Harvey Panopticism, 1901-1935” in Marta Weigle and Barbara A. Babcock, eds, *The Great Southwest of the Fred Harvey Company and the Santa Fe Railway* (Phoenix: The Heard Museum, 1996), 13.

Even before the Santa Fe Railway officially reached Grand Canyon's South Rim, it started advertising it in national forums. Before and after they arrived, the railroads on both rims commissioned paintings and color photographs of the Canyon and hired writers to enumerate the Canyon's wonders. In 1892 the Santa Fe Railway made an agreement with famous artist Thomas Moran, who had produced some of the earliest drawings and paintings of places such as Yellowstone and Grand Canyon—images that later helped these places gain federal protection. Moran painted a picture entitled "The Grand Colorado" in exchange for free passage to the Canyon, and the Railway got to use the painting in travel publications while displaying the original in El Tovar. Moran continued to travel to the Canyon almost every year from then until his death in 1926, and the Railway bought many of his paintings and engravings from these trips, helping to popularize the Canyon.⁵⁸

In 1895, the Santa Fe Railway created an advertising department and hired artists to depict the scenery and Native Americans of the region. The publications and ads this department developed had a significant influence on the understanding and interpretation of nature and culture at the Grand Canyon. Their advertisements tended to emphasize three main themes: the luxury of the accommodations, the grandeur of the landscape, and the Native American cultures that were on display.

⁵⁸ Todd R. Berger, *It Happened at Grand Canyon* (Guilford, CT: Morris Book Publishing, LLC, 2007), 36-37.

The first two themes were often conflated to show that modern comforts were never far from the rugged and unusual landscapes nearby. For example, an advertisement for the San Francisco Railroad from the early 1900s shows how that company interpreted the Grand Canyon as a safe place and a hot spot for a young, wealthy generation. This advertisement depicts a “Gibson Girl” and dapper young man standing at the edge of the Canyon with binoculars, with the slogan “The California Limited – the train of luxury – takes you to the rim of this world-wonder.”⁵⁹ Another advertisement from the Santa Fe Railway in 1910 proclaims “A mile deep, miles wide, and painted like a sunset. That’s the Grand Canyon of Arizona,” and emphasizes the luxury of its trains (see Fig. 1). The dress of the female figure in the ad indicates that it is a place for those with substantial money to visit. These ads mention activities such as sitting and reading a book, looking out of a window to contemplate the beauty of the landscape, or doing stargazing at night—indicating that they believed their clientele were seeking a place for contemplation and relaxation on their vacations rather than a rip-roaring, constantly on-the-go experience.⁶⁰

The second theme, the depiction of Native American culture, contains a bit more complexity. As Victoria Dye shows in her book on railway promotion in the Southwest, many Euro-Americans at the turn of the century saw Native Americans as cultural artifacts or as timeless, unchanging civilizations of the

⁵⁹ Linda L. Stampoulos, *Visiting the Grand Canyon: Views of Early Tourism, Images of America Series* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2004), 30.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 57.

A mile deep, miles wide,
& painted like a sunset

That's the Grand Canyon
of Arizona

You can go there in a Pullman to the rim
at El Tovar, en route to Sunny California
on the train of luxury

The California Limited

For art booklets of the train
and trip address
W.J. Black, Pass Traffic Mgr.
A.T. & S.F. Ry. System
1060 Railway Exchange, Chicago

Santa Fe
All the way.

Fig. 1. This advertisement for the Santa Fe Railway suggests that the Grand Canyon is a vacation spot for well-heeled guests. Note the interpretive guide, who is apparently pointing out the features of the Canyon. Santa Fe Railway Collection, GRCA 09507, Grand Canyon National Park Museum Collections.

Southwest, and the Santa Fe Railway capitalized on this. However, they had only a superficial understanding of these cultures and did not pay attention to differences among tribes, often melding cultural symbols from many sources simply because they seemed attractive or appealing to Euro-American aesthetic tastes. As Dye argues, these brochures therefore preconditioned travelers to see Native Americans and the landscape in specific ways and tended to confirm stereotypes even as they sparked curiosity.⁶¹ For example, in a poster entitled “Titan of Chasms: The Grand Canyon of Arizona,” is a line drawing of two Native Americans wearing loincloths and holding what look like spears, one standing and one on his knees, peering across the Canyon. This image invokes traditional Euro-American ideas of Native Americans as primitive people, and implies that they were humbled by and perhaps even scared of the Canyon.⁶²

Both the Santa Fe Railway and its subsidiary, the Fred Harvey Company, commodified Native American culture to draw people to their sites in the West, and the images and ideas they helped create are important to understanding the history of NPS interpretation at Grand Canyon National Park. As Barnes stated, “There is no doubt that the Santa Fe Railway and Fred Harvey Company romanticized Native Americans and their culture in their marketing and advertising campaigns. By the early part of the 20th Century, the Santa Fe and

⁶¹ Victoria E. Dye, *All Aboard for Santa Fe: Railway Promotion of the Southwest, 1890s to 1930s* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2005), 24, 29.

⁶² Christine Barnes, *Hopi House: Celebrating 100 Years* (Bend, OR: W.W. West, Inc, 2005), 19.

other railways had changed the image of Indians, and that of the West's wilds as well, from a frightening aspect of American life to one of intrigue."⁶³ Marta Weigle and Barbara A. Babcock agree with this assessment in *The Great Southwest of the Fred Harvey Company and the Santa Fe Railway*. They argue that, through the artists and advertisers these companies hired, "Nature and natives were nostalgically appropriated in the name of nationalism."⁶⁴ For instance, a brochure advertising the new El Tovar hotel, completed in 1905, proudly touted it as "the latest triumph of the American invader," which implies not only humans invading the wilderness but also to Euro-Americans invading another peoples' land.⁶⁵ This appropriation of nature and culture would continue under the National Park Service as well.

A book of photography by Henry Peabody entitled *Glimpses of the Grand Canyon of Arizona*, published by the Fred Harvey Company in 1902, demonstrates both the natural and cultural themes the railway and concessionaire were trying to promote and interpret. This book helped introduce prospective sightseers to the region since it was still largely unvisited by the American public. In the introduction, Peabody describes the Canyon, along with Yellowstone and

⁶³ Ibid., 45.

⁶⁴ Weigle and Babcock, 3.

⁶⁵ W.H. Simpson, "El Tovar by Fred Harvey: A New Hotel at Grand Canyon of Arizona," EPH DG-10 El Tovar, Arizona Historical Foundation, ASU.

Yosemite, as one of the three great natural wonders of the West.⁶⁶ He includes observations on different interpretations of how the Canyon was formed, such as earlier views that the Canyon formed due to a violent convulsion or cracked open when the earth's crust cooled, as well as more modern theories of water erosion. The photographs included seem to be meant to show the vast scale of the Canyon compared to human forms, as well as the safety of the area with well-groomed trails and sturdy horses.⁶⁷

However, Peabody also demonstrated an awareness of local Native American groups and their relationship to the Canyon, and included significant interpretation of their cultural relationship to the natural landscape. For example, one of his recommended sites is Crematory Point where the Havasupai burned the bodies of their dead, and Cataract Canyon where the tribe's central village was located. The book contains several photos of Havasupai as well. Unlike many later authors and tour guides, Peabody believed that "As these Indians have always been intimately associated with the Grand Canyon, owned all the territory adjacent to its southern edge, and have woven its mysteries and marvels into the myths of their religion, no book on the Grand Canyon would be complete without

⁶⁶ At this time the Railway had not monopolized the sightseeing at the rim as it would later; the book mentions several different sites along the rim as important to visit not just the Bright Angel Trail where railroad visitors unloaded. Henry Peabody, *Glimpses of the Grand Canyon of Arizona* (Kansas City: Fred Harvey, 1902), 1.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

some reference to them.”⁶⁸ He also mentioned specific points where visitors could see cliff dwellings. This dual interest in promoting both natural and cultural resources remained a continuing theme in the history of the Railway and the Fred Harvey Company.

The appropriation, commodification, and interpretation of Native Americans was not limited to publications, but was also part of the personal services that the Railway and Fred Harvey Company offered. For instance, a brochure advertising the newly opened El Tovar hotel in 1905 reveals that the Fred Harvey Company wasted no time in using Native Americans as a tourist attraction. The company immediately began arranging camping trips to places such as Cataract Canyon, home of the Havasupai tribe, where W.W. Bass had long provided interpretive tours.⁶⁹

Most important in the Railway’s efforts to define and interpret Native Americans at the Grand Canyon was the Fred Harvey Company’s operation of Hopi House. The Company opened this site in 1905 next door to the El Tovar hotel as a place to sell Native American crafts as well as display their culture. Weigle and Babcock trace the idea for such a site to ethnographic demonstrations that had become popular at world’s fairs in the late 1880s. As the authors state, “In these human showcases, the companies staged authenticity by controlling the architectural setting, ‘live’ demonstrations and other expressive performances,

⁶⁸ Ibid., 3.

⁶⁹ Simpson, “El Tovar by Fred Harvey,” Arizona Historical Foundation, ASU.

museum and sales displays, publications, and virtually all associated exegesis.”⁷⁰

The Company was eager to have a few Hopi to come live at the house while they created their arts and crafts, especially once they discovered that Native American children were one of the top attractions for tourists, though they had a hard time convincing them to leave their homes and cultural connections on the reservation. Still, some such as Sam Pemauhye, sometimes called “Hopi Sam,” and Porter Timeche lived there for most of their lives, and have descendants who continued to work at the Canyon for the company and for the NPS.⁷¹

The Fred Harvey Company vigorously promoted the fact that visitors to Hopi House could enter the house and see “how these gentle folk live,” such as witnessing them making piki bread, putting up girls’ hair into whorls, building altars, and mending moccasins. The building also contained a collection of Native American blankets and baskets that had won a prize at the 1904 World’s Fair in St. Louis, along with the Fred Harvey Company’s archeological collection.⁷² The Company advertised that the “quaintly-garbed Indians” who lived at the house were all busy making pottery, spinning yarn and weaving, creating authentic objects that tourists could conveniently purchase. Unlike later promotional

⁷⁰ Weigle and Babcock, 12.

⁷¹ Kathleen L. Howard and Diana F. Pardue, *Inventing the Southwest: The Fred Harvey Company and Native American Art* (Flagstaff: Northland Publishing, 1996), 105, 110, 111, 113.

⁷² Barnes, 27.

material that called them the most civilized tribe, this brochure describes them as “the most primitive Indians in America.”⁷³

A pamphlet for Hopi House also pointed out that Navajo lived nearby in *hogans*, and that women wove blankets and men worked silver into jewelry that travelers again could conveniently buy. It even mentioned that visitors might catch a glimpse of Havasupai coming from Cataract Canyon to trade.⁷⁴ An oil painting done by Louis Akin in 1906 showed El Tovar and the Hopi House with Native Americans next to the pastel colors of the Canyon, a painting that the Fred Harvey Company used as a popular marketing piece. The Fred Harvey Company worked hard to ensure that visitors would always be able to see Native American craftsmen at work at all of their sites on the rim, because craft demonstrations had been proven to boost sales.⁷⁵

Despite using Native American imagery in their promotions, and apart from the few artists who worked at Hopi House, for many years the only type of work at the Park that was available to Native American men and women was manual labor. Many members of nearby tribes worked at the Canyon seasonally, including college students on summer break. As Louis Schellbach, who headed the Interpretation Division at Grand Canyon for nearly 20 years, stated, even by 1959 Native Americans worked at the Park “mostly as bellboys, maids, and

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 17.

⁷⁴ Simpson, “El Tovar by Fred Harvey,” Arizona Historical Foundation, ASU.

⁷⁵ Barnes, 17.

kitchen help. Guests at El Tovar Hotel gape at the Hopi bellboy in blue velveteen jacket and bright headband running a vacuum cleaner across the lobby carpet.”⁷⁶

A few held positions which allowed them to interpret their culture to visitors, such as “Hopi Sam” Pemauhye. He worked for the Railway for 10 years before working for the Fred Harvey Company as a porter and shoe shiner at Bright Angel Lodge. The company also paid him to tell stories to visitors at Lookout Studio and dance at Hopi House for years. He finally returned to his village on the Hopi Reservation around 1960 after 44 years of working for the Company.⁷⁷ Havasupai George Sinyella first worked at the Canyon by helping Bill Belknap take tourists into the Canyon on horses and mules for the Fred Harvey Company, though he served more as an animal wrangler than interpreter.⁷⁸ For the most part, though, Native Americans were hired for menial positions or as tourist attractions.

Even though privately owned and operated, when the National Park Service arrived at the Canyon in 1919 they considered Hopi House and its attractions as a significant aspect of the interpretive program available at Grand Canyon. The NPS wished to establish control over tourist facilities and

⁷⁶ National Geographic Society, *America’s Wonderlands: The Scenic National Parks and Monuments of the United States* (Washington, D.C.: The National Geographic Society, 1959), 172.

⁷⁷ Howard and Pardue, 105, 110, 111, 113.

⁷⁸ He later began working for the NPS as a maintenance and manual laborer at age 16 in 1932, making less than a dollar an hour. He would continue to work at the park for 50 years, but never in an educational or interpretive capacity. “George Sinyella Oral History,” GRCA 70892, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

interpretation, yet commercial developers who had been operating them for almost a quarter of a century had little intention of handing them over. The NPS had to carefully weigh what companies, structures, and tourist activities to promote and which to discourage, and Hopi House was at least one site that they found acceptable and valuable. However, the stories told by Hopi workers at the house did not represent the cultural heritage of the entire tribe. Each clan, society, village, and sometimes individual families have their own stories of their cultural heritage, and different stories are told depending on whether the listener is initiated into certain social or ritual groups. Also, men are taught separate stories from women, and each gender is responsible for maintaining different parts of the cultural heritage. Furthermore, most of the earliest workers at Hopi House came from closely related families from just three villages, meaning that their interpretations of the cultural significance of the Grand Canyon did not represent those of a significant proportion of the tribe.⁷⁹

The Railway and Fred Harvey Company continued to look for new services to provide to the thousands of tourists, including developing new forms of interpretation. Apart from just having John Hance tell tall tales to guests, they also employed “nature guides” who, as landscape historian Ethan Carr says, “added immeasurably to the experience of park scenery, flora, and fauna by providing tourists with enough information to add scientific and historical

⁷⁹ Ferguson et al., 71, 73.

dimensions to their appreciation of places.”⁸⁰ Unfortunately, records or transcripts of what these early nature guides discussed do not seem to exist. The development of this service can be directly attributed to the growing interest in nature walks, bird watching, and similar activities that became popular at the time and spurred the development of the NPS naturalist interpreter program itself.

The Fred Harvey Company also continued to experiment with new forms of publications to reach an even broader audience. For instance, in 1909 they published a booklet by Pulitzer Prize-winning political cartoonist John T. McCutcheon called *Doing the Grand Canyon*. As Schullery pointed out, “At that time, park literature, both educational and instructional, was more often than not produced by private enterprise... That a park concessioner published such a non-commercial booklet, at a time when practically everything printed by many parks was heavily promotional (with maps, rates, and train schedules attached) shows an unusual restraint.”⁸¹

In one part of this booklet, McCutcheon illustrated a mule ride to the bottom of the Canyon led by cowboy guides. He describes tourists as peppering these guides with questions, many of which might sound familiar to modern interpreters at the Grand Canyon, such as “Was anyone ever killed on this trail?” ‘How often do you shoe your mules?’ ‘Where do we have lunch?’ ‘How high is that cliff?’ ‘What makes the stone so red?’ “How old is the Canyon?’ ‘Who

⁸⁰ Ethan Carr, *Wilderness by Design: Landscape Architecture and the National Park Service* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), 142.

⁸¹ Schullery, *The Grand Canyon: Early Impressions*, 111.

discovered it?’ and ‘Isn’t it remarkable how much those mountains look like old ruins of castles?’”⁸² In response to this barrage, “The guide cheerfully gives the required information, whether he knows it or not. It doesn’t much matter, for the questioner has asked another before getting the last one answered.”⁸³ Again, as in the example of visitors who wanted to see “real” Wild West cowboys, it seems that the Fred Harvey Company was lackadaisical in their approach to interpretation, apparently giving their guides little if any training but instead encouraging them to entertain and satisfy their guests as best they individually could.

McCutcheon describes the descent as an adventure—albeit a safe adventure, for as he comments about souvenir photos taken along the trail, “you can show them how steep the trail was, and how daring you must necessarily have been to plunge down those ice-bound ledges. Usually, however, the presence in the photograph of some peaceful old lady detracts much from the heroism and daredevil character of your ride.”⁸⁴ The booklet still tended to portray visitors to the Canyon as more elite members of society based on the clothing depicted in the illustrations and the descriptions of their manners and behavior. This could have been both to reinforce the perception of elite readers that this was a spot worthy of their vacationing, but also as a way to enhance the satire of the booklet for readers

⁸² John T. McCutcheon, *Doing the Grand Canyon* (D. Appleton and Co., 1909), 13.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 12.

from other classes, thereby democratizing the interpretation of the Canyon and making it more relatable to more people.⁸⁵

Summary

A variety of people and cultures interpreted the Grand Canyon to visitors in the 19th and early 20th centuries, shaping how Americans, as well as people the world over, experienced the Grand Canyon. As the above examples of early interpretation of the Canyon by Native Americans, Euro-American entrepreneurs, and corporations show, interpretation did not begin with the National Park Service. Rather the agency took over, built upon, formalized, and standardized interpretation when they took control of Grand Canyon National Park in 1919. For the first decade it controlled the Canyon, the NPS continued to rely heavily on these resources, especially those the Railway and its subsidiaries had developed, to both guide and supplement its own interpretive programming. The next chapter explores the establishment of the Canyon as a national park and the earliest interpretive efforts of the Park Service.

⁸⁵ McCutcheon also specifically mentions that at dinner one could see “diners from every country in the world,” further making it sound exotic but also accessible. *Ibid.*, 17.

CHAPTER 3

A NEW MANDATE: THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TAKES CONTROL

Following the long residency of Native Americans and roughly a decade of occupation by miners and tourism entrepreneurs, what is today Grand Canyon National Park began as part of a national Forest Reserve in 1893. In 1906 President Theodore Roosevelt declared it a Game Preserve, and two years later it became a National Monument. Finally, in 1919 the Grand Canyon gained National Park status. These changes in designation affected how the government administered the Canyon and its resources. Though President Theodore Roosevelt justified designating the Canyon a National Monument in 1908 by citing its prehistoric archeological ruins and great scientific value, the Forest Service retained control and continued to administer it. When it converted to a National Park, the young National Park Service took control of the area, and its different management purpose and style soon became apparent, though this agency too focused on natural rather than cultural resources.

The Forest Service Steps In

Although the development of the Grand Canyon as a tourist destination occurred rather early in the history of Arizona, it was somewhat behind the times when considering other scenic public lands in the West. As Paul Schullery states, “The Grand Canyon was one of many natural wonders being discovered by a growing leisure class at the beginning of the twentieth century. It got a later start

than many of them, even those farther west.”⁸⁶ Yellowstone, the first national park, was set aside in 1872. Next were Sequoia and Yosemite National Parks in California in 1890. In fact, there were 12 national parks in place by the time the government transformed Grand Canyon National Monument into Grand Canyon National Park in 1919.⁸⁷

Though the area was set aside as a Forest Reserve in 1893, the Forest Service had little inclination to get involved in the tourism industry. In fact, while the Fred Harvey Company and the Santa Fe Railroad were trying to profit by selling to tourists Indian arts and crafts and “authentic” experiences of local Native American tribes, the Forest Service was trying to minimize the influence and presence of these corporations. In 1898 the Grand Canyon National Forest Supervisor wrote to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs pointing out the burgeoning popularity of tourism in the area. He argued that “it should be preserved for the everlasting pleasure and instruction of our intelligent citizens as well as those of foreign countries. Henceforth, I deem it just and necessary to keep the wild and unappreciable Indian from off the Reserve.”⁸⁸ Although the

⁸⁶ Paul Schullery, *The Grand Canyon: Early Impressions* (Boulder: Colorado Associated University Press, 1981), 2.

⁸⁷ The twelve in order of creation (with their modern names given) are: Yellowstone, Sequoia, Yosemite, Mount Rainier, Crater Lake, Wind Cave, Mesa Verde, Glacier, Rocky Mountain, Hawaii Volcanoes/Haleakala, Lassen Volcanic, and Denali National Parks. Arcadia was changed from National Monument to National Park status on the same date as Grand Canyon, February 26, 1919. The names and areas included in some of these parks have changed over time.

⁸⁸ Association on American Indian Affairs, *The Havasupai: Prisoners of the Grand Canyon* (New York: Association on American Indian Affairs, Inc, nd), 8.

federal government was trying to push them off the land they occupied for centuries and confine them to smaller and smaller areas, local Native American people refused to sever their ties with the Grand Canyon.

The first director of the Forest Service, Gifford Pinchot, believed that national forests should come under the guidelines of conservation ethics, in which resources were scientifically managed for efficient and sustainable production of natural resources like timber and forage, rather than under a hands-off policy in which resources were to be preserved in a natural state. Outdoor recreation and nature tourism were not yet understood to be important economic resources to Pinchot or most of the foresters trained to manage national forests. Serving as host to tourists was not one of the Forest Service's priorities. As historian Michael Anderson points out, the Forest Service simply saw tourism as one of the forest's many uses, and even if they had seen it as especially important, constraints such as limited budgets and inexperience with tourism held them back from concertedly developing the Canyon for this purpose. Furthermore, their jurisdiction over these enterprises would have been in question since most of the tourism activities were operated by individuals or companies who had laid private claims to the land under various homesteading and other laws. Instead, they simply watched as businessmen and corporations such as the Santa Fe Railway and Fred Harvey Company established buildings, developed excursions, and

provided direct visitor contact and interpretation using mule wranglers, tour guides, and Harvey Girls.⁸⁹

Grand Canyon archival collections indicate that as early as 1909, a year after the area was designated as a National Monument, the Forest Service was starting to recognize the significance of the tourism industry at the Canyon. W.R. Mattoon, a Forest Examiner with the USFS, in that year wrote “A Working Plan for Grand Canyon National Monument.” He started off by noting that “relatively little has been done to open up this ‘masterpiece of world’s sculpture’ to the public” and what had been done was the result of private entrepreneurs. Mattoon argued that the federal government needed to assert itself, since “The development of the Grand Canyon is a task too great in its proportions and a matter too world-wide in its significance and popular and scientific interest to be handed over to or attempted by private enterprises, whose interests are naturally for private gain rather than for the benefit of the public at large.”⁹⁰ However, there

⁸⁹ Michael F. Anderson, *Polishing the Jewel: An Administrative History of Grand Canyon National Park* (Grand Canyon: Grand Canyon Association, 2000), 8. Although Harvey Girls are traditionally remembered for their service in providing prompt, hot meals to travelers, they were also important early interpreters of local areas. As Victoria Dye points out, they were trained to give information about attractions, the history of the area, and sightseeing excursions. Since the girls had little to do with their spare time other than wander around the local area, they probably would have been able to tell visitors a great deal about the best viewpoints along the Rim or the best sites to spot wildlife. Victoria E. Dye, *All Aboard for Santa Fe: Railway Promotion of the Southwest, 1890s to 1930s* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2005), 35.

⁹⁰ W. R. Mattoon, “A Working Plan for Grand Canyon National Monument,” 28 June 1909, GRCA 58395, Grand Canyon Museum Collections. Mattoon was a Forest Examiner with the local U.S. Forest Service District.

were no further reports or directives from the Forest Service directly addressing this matter for almost another decade.

Things began to change when in 1915 the World's Fair was held in San Francisco. This event helped spark even greater interest in the Grand Canyon since many of the people traveling across the country to visit the fair decided to take the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railroad, and often opted to take a detour to the Canyon. Part of the reason for the increased interest in visiting the Canyon was because the Fred Harvey Company had an exhibit at the exposition titled "The Grand Canyon of Arizona" that covered about six acres and included an Indian village, exhibit building, and a Grand Canyon panorama.⁹¹ Inside the panorama visitors could get into an electric motor coach that moved on a special track and stopped at seven different stations, each one describing a different aspect of the Canyon such as the gorge, river, rock strata, and formations. The foreground was made entirely of material brought from the Canyon, including rocks, trees, and cacti. This exhibit also included cliff dwellings where visitors could climb up into small holes where Native Americans were making crafts, which could of course be purchased from the Fred Harvey Company.⁹²

⁹¹ The exhibit also included similar exhibits on the Panama Canal and Yellowstone National Park. "Grand Canyon: Replica, Panama Pacific International Exposition, San Francisco," DG-61, Arizona State University Archives and Special Collections, Tempe.

⁹² *Ibid.*; Kathleen L. Howard and Diana F. Pardue, *Inventing the Southwest: The Fred Harvey Company and Native American Art* (Flagstaff: Northland Publishing, 1996), 72.

With this sudden boom in visitation, the South Rim saw an explosion of entrepreneurs setting up shop. Though gradually the Forest Service began to see the need for planning the growth of what is today known as Grand Canyon Village as well as paths along the rim to see the scenery, it was faced with more immediate, critical problems affecting visitors such as a lack of water and poor sanitation. They envisioned creating some amenities for visitors, such as seats and shelters at the most popular viewing points, but seemed to have no plans for any interpretive materials to be placed there.⁹³ Still, it became increasingly hard to overlook the growing number of people visiting the region and their demands for more information about the Canyon. Travel writers and others with a fondness for the Canyon indicated that they feared over-commercialization of the place unless the Forest Service or some other governmental agency stepped in. For example, George Wharton James called for it to be made into a National Park, stating “I am especially anxious that the mural faces of the Grand Canyon shall not be desecrated by painted advertisements...it is not unreasonable to fear that unless some action is speedily taken the visitor may find, staring at him from the walls of the Canyon, a painted recommendation to use some special liver pad or try the only reliable catarrh cure.”⁹⁴

⁹³ Ethan Carr, *Wilderness by Design: Landscape Architecture and the National Park Service* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), 116.

⁹⁴ George Wharton James, *In and Around the Grand Canyon* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1907), 255.

In 1916 Don P. Johnston, a local Forest Service administrator, and Aldo Leopold, Forest Examiner, produced a document entitled “Grand Canyon Working Plan: Uses, Information, Recreational Development” that attempted to address these concerns, including regulating interpretation at the Canyon. According to the report, visitors were “being subjected to non-dependable services and discourteous treatment” by concessionaires, electric advertising signs marred views, hawkers for guide services pestered visitors, and gossip over local imbroglios soured their experiences.⁹⁵

Much of the Plan focused on regulating the location of tourist facilities, though some of the proposals focused on issues related to interpretation. For example, though the Forest Service was not allowed to set rates for guide services, they could issue regulations to reduce price gouging, and though they could not dictate the size or number of businesses they could regulate “the character of service.”⁹⁶ The Secretary of Agriculture approved the Plan in 1917. In a letter from that same year, the Acting Forester Albert F. Potter reported on their efforts to implement it, indicating that the Forest Service was trying to work out a system of administration at the Grand Canyon “which will make it of

⁹⁵ Rose Houk, “Grand Canyon Master Plan: Circa 1916” *Grand Canyon Guide* 4:2 (6-19 April 1980): 1.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 2.

greatest value to the visiting public and result in their securing a maximum of enjoyment from this greatest of all natural wonders.”⁹⁷

In the meantime the situation at the Canyon was growing even more chaotic. Potter noted that the Forest Service had encountered a lot of difficulties in handling tourist traffic in the Canyon, and had been “widely and publicly criticized for the unseemly conduct of liverymen and others along the rim of the canyon using megaphones and indulging in brawls and unsightly scrambles for tourist patronage, to the discomfort and disgust of the visiting public.”⁹⁸ Another forest ranger noted at the same time that visitors often had little understanding of natural or historical phenomena at the site, so “They sought and paid for guide service, often tipping informative guides handsomely. In the absence of organized professional interpretation, some of the wranglers, hotel employees, and drivers merely posed as interpreters, often improvising interesting tales and fascinating explanations that had little to do with reality” along the lines of John Hance’s tall tales.⁹⁹

To counter this, the Forest Service attempted to come up with administrative guidelines to protect the public from “solicitors, vendors of wares, or other people seeking to use for business purposes the attractive powers of this

⁹⁷ A.F. Potter to Senator Henry Ashurst, 28 June 1917, Lauzon Family Collection, Cline Library, NAU.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹⁹ Douglas M. Knudson, Ted T. Cable and Larry Beck, *Interpretation of Cultural and Natural Resources* (State College, PA: Venture Publishing, Inc., 1995), 132.

wonderful spectacle, and that they may, so long as they are upon National Forest land, walk along the rim of the canyon without being disturbed by brawls or disagreements and without being accosted by a liveryman or hack driver looking for a fare.”¹⁰⁰ Although these regulations likely helped improve tourists’ experience at the Canyon, Potter’s memo mentioned nothing about the Forest Service being interested in or attempting to control what type of information was being disseminated about the Canyon. The interpretation of the Canyon’s natural and cultural resources was left in the hands of relatively untrained, seasonal, commercial guides. As historian Michael Anderson put it, “the Fred Harvey cowboy guide cheerfully gave ‘the required information, whether he knows it or not.’”¹⁰¹ Although it is likely (considering the popularity of John Hance) that most of these transient interpreters relied on entertaining stories and tall tales to tell to their visitors, no records of the content of their lectures can be found and therefore the details and intended messages of their interpretation cannot be analyzed.

The Canyon Becomes a Park

By 1919 thousands of visitors had seen and experienced the Grand Canyon and had its cultural and natural history interpreted to them by dozens of guides in hundreds of different ways. However, in this year the history of the cultural landscape and its interpretation would change dramatically. After decades

¹⁰⁰ A.F. Potter to Senator Henry Ashurst, 28 June 1917, Lauzon Family Collection, Cline Library, NAU.

¹⁰¹ Michael F. Anderson, *Along the Rim: A Guide to Grand Canyon’s South Rim From Hermit’s Rest to Desert View* (Grand Canyon: Grand Canyon Association, 2001), 39.

of lobbying and several failed attempts, Congress finally transformed Grand Canyon into a National Park, putting it under the jurisdiction of the fledgling National Park Service. Created just three years before, the NPS generally believed in managing public lands under preservation principles rather than the conservation ideas of the Forest Service. Early NPS leaders also saw it as their duty to provide educational opportunities and services in these Parks, meaning they would take a much more hands-on role at the Grand Canyon than had the Forest Service.

Grand Canyon National Park was unique in that it was the only National Park to completely encircle a Native American tribal reservation. The organic act that created the Park included an amendment that explicitly allowed the Havasupai to use Park lands for “appropriate traditional” purposes, which was essential for their survival since their small reservation restricted them to living in a tributary canyon of the Grand Canyon.¹⁰² However, problems arose from the fact that the government defined what these “appropriate traditional” uses were, and they believed that using Park lands for hunting and residences were inappropriate activities, thereby restricting the Havasupai presence in the Park and the opportunities for them to come into contact with tourists and have the chance to interpret their own story and culture for them. Other Native American tribes in the region, such as the Navajo and Hopi (some of whom resided at the South

¹⁰² The act did not mention any other Native American groups in the region or grant any rights to them. Barbara J. Morehouse, *A Place Called Grand Canyon: Contested Geographies* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1996), 37, 45-46.

Rim), had no say in the significant changes happening at the Canyon, despite their historical ties and physical presence. In fact, in 1927 administrators considered including some Navajo Reservation land in the Park as part of an act that adjusted its boundaries, an issue about which they apparently never consulted the Navajo.¹⁰³

The organic act for the NPS mandated that it was to protect the resources within the boundaries of National Parks, but it was also supposed to provide for the “enjoyment” of the Parks. The first director of the NPS Stephen Mather, a former businessman, interpreted this phrase in more economic terms, seeing it as a mandate to build elegant tourist facilities and provide educational opportunities and services to visitors to help them better accept, appreciate, and perpetuate the Parks. His assistant director Horace Albright also worked to add educational programs and hire ranger-naturalists to interpret them to the public.¹⁰⁴ As Michael Anderson states, the NPS “considered education within their purview and an important park enhancement. Since assuming his directorship, Stephen Mather had been keenly interested in the parks as classrooms for the humanities and natural sciences and as laboratories for scientific investigations...taking an aggressive posture toward visitor education.”¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 46. Morehouse indicates that they decided not to take over this land because they feared resistance from the tribe, though there is no indication that they had any contact with them.

¹⁰⁴ Polly Welts Kaufman, *National Parks and the Woman's Voice* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996), xxxiv.

¹⁰⁵ Anderson, *Polishing the Jewel*, 33.

There were many impulses in American culture at the turn of the century that influenced how the public envisioned parks and their purpose. One important impulse was a growing wave of American nationalism, influenced by events such as the Spanish-American War and concepts such as social Darwinism, but also by popular movements such as “See America First.” The Great Northern Railway developed this advertising campaign in 1906 as a way to attract customers to its budding resorts in the intermountain West, though regional boosters and supporters of nature preservation alike soon appropriated it as a rallying cry for their own interests. For most of the 19th Century, part of the defining experience for the upper classes in American society was a tour of the great cathedrals, castles, and other ancient sites and historic monuments of Europe. The Railway countered this idea with the argument that Americans should turn their focus away from Europe and instead celebrate what no other country could boast: the spectacular scenery of the great *natural* monuments of the American West. This campaign coincided with trends in academic thought as well, expressed most clearly in historian Frederick Jackson Turner’s thesis “The Frontier in American History,” which celebrated a unique American culture of independence and optimism that Americans had cultivated through interacting with the great expanse of “unoccupied” land in the West. Partly in response to the economic downturn of the 1890s, and partly due to growing nationalist ideas, the See America First campaign was hugely successful. Trips to Europe were still

popular, but wealthy Americans began to flock in large numbers to the great western national parks.¹⁰⁶

These trends combined in such a way that the American public began to see national parks as one of the defining institutions of American culture. In their minds, the frontier and their relationship with it had made their civilization unique; yet they could be even more proud that they had not rapaciously ravaged this great bounty but instead had magnanimously given ownership of it to all Americans and graciously preserved it for future generations. No other country had done anything like this before—which further proved to them that America could be considered a city on a hill, a beacon to other civilizations hoping to improve the lives of their citizens and their standing in the world. The National Park Service became the guardians of this cultural heritage upon its creation in 1916, and therefore it is no surprise that its policies for the management of the units under its control, as well as their interpretation, reflected the idea that these sites were significant to understanding not just the natural history but also the *national* history of the United States.

The NPS not only absorbed many of these more established cultural ideas but was also part of a new cultural movement in American history sweeping the country: progressivism. The Progressive Era was a period marked by a wave of reform efforts that were loosely connected by ideals such as improved efficiency,

¹⁰⁶ For a comprehensive study of the See America First campaign and its impact on American tourism history, see Marguerite S. Shaffer, *See America First: Tourism and National Identity, 1880-1940* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2001).

more closely regulated industrialization, more democratic participation on governance, municipal reform, social and moral uplift, and a belief that scientific knowledge and expertise could help modernize the country and improve daily life. Some Progressive reformers believed that contact with nature could help naturally induce some of the reforms they desired. Local efforts at home to beautify cities and develop urban parks were reflected nationally with efforts to create more easily accessible national parks. Partly due to Turnerian ideas about the effect of the frontier on the American psyche, Progressives believed that contact with the natural world would help decrease crime, improve health, inculcate a desire for moral purity by bringing people closer to God through nature, and encourage better education by direct contact with subjects they were studying. Of course, Progressives also believed that the NPS could nudge such experiences along if they would develop an interpretive “curriculum” that would gently encourage these results. Mather, Albright, and many of the other early leaders of the NPS believed in these ideas, which greatly impacted the goals they developed for the interpretive programs at national parks.¹⁰⁷

However, in its early years, the young NPS was still in the process of defining its identity and the means to achieve its preservationist and educational

¹⁰⁷ For more information on ideas about nature and its social benefits during the Progressive Era, see Horace M. Albright, *The Birth of the National Park Service* (Salt Lake City: Howe Brothers, 1985); Samuel P. Hays, *Conservation and the Gospel of Efficiency: The Progressive Conservation Movement 1890-1920* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959); William Sontag, *National Park Service: The First 75 Years* (Philadelphia: Eastern National Park and Monument Association, 1991); and Lary Dilsaver, ed., *America's National Park System: The Critical Documents* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 1994).

missions. In these formative years, park administrators were not immune to schemes to exploit the resources of the Grand Canyon for less-than-noble purposes. In 1916, while the Canyon was still under Forest Service control, San Francisco engineer George K. Davol persuaded the Santa Fe Railroad to back the idea of creating a cableway across the Grand Canyon to take visitors from one rim to the other. When the Canyon became a National Park in 1919, he wrote to the NPS for a permit to start surveying sites for a cableway. The Secretary of the Interior was “heartily in favor of granting this permit” and Horace Albright and others were also enthusiastic about it because they saw no other way for people to easily cross the Canyon. However, when they wrote to NPS director Stephen Mather for his approval, Mather quickly shot down the idea. As author Robert Shankland said, “To Mather’s notion, the tying-up of the two rims of this sublime prodigy of nature with wire ropes would be nothing less than monstrous.” Davol was officially refused in 1920. Another attempt to resurrect the plan a few years later also failed.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁸ Robert Shankland, *Steve Mather of the National Parks* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1951), 207-208. Though a trans-canyon tramway was never built, in its constant efforts to provide tourists with new ways of experiencing the Canyon, the Santa Fe Railroad in 1925 installed a 6,300 foot cable tram from Pima Point to Hermit Camp, making it the only rim-to-inner canyon tram ever built in the Grand Canyon for tourism purposes. It was expensive and popular, but Hermit Camp closed in 1930 and the Fred Harvey Company burned it to the ground in 1936. The NPS had decided to redirect tourism to other areas closer to the Village, and the Fred Harvey Company therefore decided to turn their attention to their newer facility at Phantom Ranch. Michael F. Anderson, *Living at the Edge: Explorers, Exploiters and Settlers of the Grand Canyon Region* (Grand Canyon: Grand Canyon Association, 1998), 104.

The National Parks and Conservation Association, an organization that would play a significant role in the administration of education and interpretation in the National Parks, formed in the same year that the government established GCNP. Its first leader, Robert Sterling Yard, felt strongly that the organization should work to educate the public about National Parks, teaching them to appreciate the parks and learn what they could about science and history through park interpretation. He believed that the NPS at this time was insufficiently attentive to the educational potential of Parks, and speculated that Congress was not going to give the Parks sufficient money for education. He even had a hard time convincing Mather, who supported having educational interpretation in the Parks, that education was a priority, since he was absorbed in the details of organizing and running a new agency and creating new parks. Therefore, the National Parks and Conservation Association made it their mission “To interpret and popularize natural science by using the conspicuous scenery and the plant and animal exhibits of the national parks.” To achieve this goal, they provided funding that allowed the Parks to circulate lantern slides, send out lecturers, develop traveling exhibits, and create films and books.¹⁰⁹ Once the NPS was on more solid footing, Mather created an Education Division in 1925 and became a more active supporter of this function of Parks.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁹ John Miles, *Guardians of the Parks* (Washington, D.C.: Taylor and Francis, 1995), 24-25.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 105.

Under the NPS, regulations began to slowly change the tourist trade at the Canyon, and therefore interpretation, though largely at the expense of the small businessman. For example, the Bass family tourist business was active, though struggling, until the Canyon gained National Park status. NPS policies insisted that concessionaires bid on contracts to conduct business within the Park, which were written in a way to favor big business. Therefore, in 1920 the Fred Harvey Company was designated as the primary concessionaire for the south rim, making it hard for smaller entrepreneurs to compete. As Hal Rothman points out, most of the early entrepreneurs “were replaced by Harvey cars with uniformed drivers who offered the standardized service for which the company was famous.”¹¹¹ In 1923, Bass sold out his tourism outfit to the Santa Fe Railway, partly because he could no longer make a profit and partly because he was growing older. Other early tour guides and entrepreneurs around the Canyon did likewise, except for a few hardy souls like the Kolb brothers who fought tooth and nail to maintain their interests there.¹¹² By the middle of the 1920s, the NPS, Santa Fe Railroad, and Fred Harvey Company were the main purveyors of interpretive services at the Park. As Rothman states, the Canyon’s “sublime characteristics had been packaged and promoted for an upper- and upper-middle-class clientele that could

¹¹¹ Hal K. Rothman, “Selling the Meaning of Place: Entrepreneurship, Tourism, and Community Transformation in the Twentieth-Century American West” *The Pacific Historical Review* 65:4 (Nov 1996): 531.

¹¹² “The Grand Canyon Tourist Business of the WW Bass Family,” Lauzon Family Collection, Cline Library, NAU.

find all the amenities to which it was accustomed as well as enjoy an experience its members regarded as genuine.”¹¹³

Despite changes in management and business practices, this new designation as a national park did not necessarily mean that drastic changes in the message of interpretation immediately took place. Concessionaires who had spent years developing profitable businesses were not about to relinquish control to the NPS newcomers. Likewise, no matter how much they may have despised certain aspects of the concessionaires’ practices or interpretations, the NPS could not just ignore them and start from scratch. They had to decide which facilities, businesses, activities, and traditions they could live with, and which they would try to influence to change. Therefore, the concessionaires at the Park remained significant sources of information and interpretation for visitors to the Park for many years, and the NPS would often partner with them in its efforts to interpret the Park to the public. In fact, historian Michael Anderson sees this intimate relationship between the concessionaire and the NPS as one of the major themes in Grand Canyon’s administrative history.

While things may not have changed much at the ground level of NPS interpretation, at the national level Stephen Mather and Horace Albright became increasingly intent on advertising the Canyon “through public address, the print media, and associated business and civic boosters.” In order to retain the support of Congress, businessmen, and the public, the NPS had to prove the Parks had

¹¹³ Rothman, “Selling the Meaning of Place,” 531.

economic value, and as preserved landscapes this value could most easily come through tourism. According to Michael Anderson, these men saw visitors as consumers to be satisfied, and the landscape was the commodity to be sold, although only after being enhanced with “bucolic service villages, rustic architecture, scenic drives and trails, *educational programs*, and creature comforts [emphasis added].”¹¹⁴

Many early Park supporters had envisioned National Parks as serving an educational function, providing urban dwellers with a deeper understanding of and closer connection to nature, which they believed would uplift and reinvigorate them. Anderson points out that the early NPS directors at the national level focused most of their time and energy on marketing, working with the Government Printing Office to publish press releases, park bulletins, informational brochures, and guidebooks but also providing materials for lectures, slides, traveling art exhibits, and movies to public groups, in what could be considered the NPS’s earliest form of interpretative services (these will be analyzed in more detail later in the chapter). Therefore, the earliest decisions about how the National Park System and its units such as the Grand Canyon were interpreted to potential visitors and the messages they were meant to convey were made from a top-down perspective. At the same time, however, the form and degree of interpretation at the Park level seems to have been left largely to the discretion of the local administration.

¹¹⁴ Anderson, *Polishing the Jewel*, 12.

By the mid-1920s both Mather and Albright were intent on using Parks as educational tools. In 1929, Albright circulated a “General Plan of Administration for the Educational Division” of the NPS. When discussing the interpretation of natural features, Albright notes that Parks were set aside to protect great features, and “educational service to the public in the national parks is based primarily upon this major objective.” He noted that the primary function of the Educational Division, besides helping protect and better display natural features, was to get people to interact with them, since he felt this was the best way to make certain that parks were ensuring “the benefit and enjoyment of the people.” He goes on to explain that interpretation is a specialized field of education whose main objective was not primarily to raise the intellectual standard of visitors or to merely dispense facts. According to him, “Our function lies rather in the inspirational enthusiasm which we can develop among our visitors—an enthusiasm based upon a sympathetic interpretation of the main things that the parks represent, whether these be the wonder of animate things living in natural communities, or the story of creation as written in the rocks, or the history of forgotten races as recorded by their picturesque dwellings.”¹¹⁵

Despite not consulting Native Americans when creating Grand Canyon National Park, the National Park Service believed that they would be important to helping the NPS achieve their goal of generating tourist interest in the new Park. At the dedication ceremony for the Park, the NPS and Fred Harvey Company

¹¹⁵ Horace Albright, “General Plan of Administration for the Education Division,” 1929, GRCA 58733, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

decided to include a Hopi interpretation of the history of the Canyon. The Fred Harvey Company asked a man called “Hopi Joe” to speak for a few minutes in Hopi at the end of the ceremony with someone translating it to English for the hundreds of guests gathered at the Canyon. This interpretive event seems to have been highly orchestrated to portray the Hopi in a way that appealed to Euro-American culture and ideas about Native Americans at the time.¹¹⁶

The script for the ceremony instructed the narrator to explain, “The story and legends of the Grand Canyon and the Hopi Indians are so closely related that it seemed fitting for representatives of that race to participate in this dedication.” It mentioned that the Hopi consider the Canyon sacred, and compared their attachment to the place to the Jewish attachment to the river Jordan. In the Fred Harvey Company translation of Hopi Joe’s story, Hopi “wise men” predicted the coming of white men, or *Bah-ha-na*, “a race of men who would be the saviors of the tribe, who would come to rule over them justly and wisely and save them from the attacks and oppression of the wild Indians of the hills and plains.” The narrator concluded the speech by making a Biblical analogy stating that the Canyon was the Garden of Eden to the Hopi, and that they hoped that by becoming a National Park, the Grand Canyon would be placed “more directly under the wing of a paternal government...a wise and just government will rule wisely and justly over [their] people, that the American people may yet prove to

¹¹⁶ W. W. Peters to J. F. Huckel, Fred Harvey Collection, Cline Library, NAU.

be the real *Ba-ha-na* which have been a part of their prayer since time immemorial.”¹¹⁷

Following this speech, six other Hopi were to join Joe and chant a prayer to the Hopi *katsinas* as a sacred invocation. This was meant to be a carefully planned production, with the lights dimming dramatically to the sound of a drum as the Indians sang their prayer. After this, the Hopi were scheduled to provide entertainment around a small campfire in front of the hotel by dancing to “songs of war and of the hunt, which have come down through the centuries unchanged, and the same no doubt as witnessed by Del Tovar [*sic*] and his men when they discovered this Canyon four hundred years ago.”¹¹⁸ This ceremony was therefore meant to connect people not only to a long, supposedly unchanging, romanticized indigenous past (as the inaccurate and distorted interpretation of the *Ba-ha-na* story shows), but also to a longer romanticized (and false, since El Tovar never saw the Canyon) Euro-American past. The Hopi were supposed to perform three dances, with the Navajo dancing a fourth separate dance, all with a NPS narrator explaining their significance to the audience. However, despite their insistence that Native Americans participate in this ceremony, soon administrators at Grand Canyon National Park would decide that the Native American story was not significant enough to be included in their interpretive programming, which instead focused on the scientific importance of the Canyon.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

Not long after taking control of the Canyon, the NPS looked for new ways to enhance visitors' experiences. As their presence at the Grand Canyon grew more secure, the NPS began regulating concessionaires more, and began competing with them by building their own camps, trails, and educational programs. Right away the NPS Washington, D.C., office started producing publications that were meant to inform and attract potential visitors and to "sell" their vision of the Park as an educational, morally uplifting wilderness experience. The Government Printing Office published annual circulars from 1921 to 1941 that were particularly important in this endeavor. These circulars described the Park, what there was to do and see there, and the amenities and services available. Just as Fred Harvey and the Santa Fe Railroad had done, they often drew upon Native American imagery to make the Canyon seem even more exotic.¹¹⁹ Although they used this cultural imagery to attract interest, once visitors arrived at the Canyon almost all of the NPS-provided activities dealt with geology or natural science, with very little interpretation of human history or culture offered. This is particularly ironic considering that archeological resources played a major role in helping convert Grand Canyon from a National Forest to a National Monument, even being recognized in the Supreme Court case that upheld this new designation in 1908.¹²⁰

¹¹⁹ Anderson, *Polishing the Jewel*, 21.

¹²⁰ Morehouse, *A Place Called Grand Canyon*, 37.

For example, the first of the government-printed informational circulars on the front page showed a picture of the Canyon with what appears to be a Native American wearing traditional clothing sitting on a rock outcropping. The first interior page consists of two pictures—one of the Havasupai Reservation in Cataract Canyon with a caption that explains how the tribe considered the red sandstone pillars depicted as sacred, and one of a Havasupai woman grinding corn on a *metate* with a caption proclaiming that “These Indians are extremely primitive in their methods and manner of life.”¹²¹

Still, the authors believed that the primary importance of the park was its natural features. When describing the most distinctive characteristic of the Canyon on the next page, the circular states it is “The greatest example of erosion and the most sublime spectacle in the world.”¹²² This inaugural circular gave a general description of the Park, such as when it was created and what tourists could see there, and attempted to clear up misconceptions about the formation of the Canyon—refuting claims that it was formed by earthquakes or volcanoes, something that interpreters struggle to do even today. Lest people worry that the Park was some boring outdoor museum with nothing but lectures and educational programs, the circular pointed out that it was “a pleasure resort of the first order,” urging people to stay for a week or two, or three to four days at the very least.¹²³

¹²¹ *Rules and Regulations: Grand Canyon National Park, 1921* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1921), 1-2.

¹²² *Ibid.*

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 15, 17, 28.

This 1921 circular does a better job than many later materials in talking about the Native American and early Euro American presence at the Canyon, perhaps because they were not as far removed in time. Unlike later informational brochures, this circular pointed out that the Hopi had revealed the Canyon to Cardenas, and it gave a substantial human history of the region, pointing out that “For many years the Grand Canyon was known only to the Indians, Mormon herdsmen, and the trappers.”¹²⁴ “Must-see” sites include particular viewpoints, as well as Native American sites such as “Pictograph Rock” on a trail near El Tovar (likely the pictographs along today’s Bright Angel Trail) and Native American dwellings and fields at Indian Garden.¹²⁵

This circular also makes clear that at this time NPS administrators considered the Havasupai Reservation as almost a subsidiary of Grand Canyon National Park, even though it was legally managed by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (also in the Department of the Interior). Although Havasupai were rarely consulted or hired as interpreters at the Park itself, the NPS for a long time attempted to exert significant control over how the reservation and its natural and tourism resources were managed. The 1921 circular mentions that visitors could arrange camping trips to the Havasupai Reservation and waterfalls in Cataract Canyon, and has quite a long section giving the history of that canyon and its people. In fact, the map of the Park shows the Havasupai Reservation but does not

¹²⁴ Ibid., 14.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 17.

say much about visiting the Painted Desert or nearby Hopi or Navajo Reservations, references to nearby attractions that would be added over time. However, it does mention the Santa Fe Railway's Hopi House and a nearby "camp" of Navajo, and explains that Indian Garden was named because Havasupai cultivated crops there.¹²⁶

This circular goes into the greatest detail on the Hopi and Navajo, emphasizing characteristics the NPS believed would be most attractive to Euro-Americans. It describes the Hopi as "among the more primitive of our Indians," and praises them as "industrious, thrifty, orderly, and mirthful." It champions the idea that the Hopi had not changed much in the 350 years since their first contact with Europeans, praising them for maintaining their individuality and refusing to become wards of the government, probably because Euro-Americans at the time were enamored with the romanticized idea of noble Indians living simple lives. The circular was admiring of the Navajo for a similar reason as well, comparing them to the nomadic Bedouins and noting that "although 'civilized' they still cling to old customs and old religious forms" although it called their dance ceremonies "weird in the extreme."¹²⁷

Subsequent versions of the circular through the 1920s continued to utilize a combination of natural and cultural history and imagery when portraying the Grand Canyon to the public. The 1923 version in particular added much more

¹²⁶ Ibid., 10-11.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 38-39.

information about both topics. It included greatly expanded information on the story of science at the Canyon, particularly its origin and geologic history. It even incorporated a diagram of the different strata, describing how each was formed in different stages, which had not been used in tourist literature before. It also gave a great deal of information on early Euro-American history at the Canyon, including many minor characters not typically mentioned in Grand Canyon literature. Unlike the 1921 version, this one explained the names used on Grand Canyon maps, and even listed different birds seen at the Canyon. Similar to the previous circular, it gave information on camping trips to Havasu Canyon, describing the scenery and the people, and noted their importance in creating the paths that later became important modern Grand Canyon trails.¹²⁸

Beginnings of the Naturalist Division at Grand Canyon

At the local level, for the first few years after the transition to National Park status, the Fred Harvey Company and Santa Fe Railroad continued in their role as the major point of contact and source of information for visitors. They touted their knowledgeable guides who could lead visitors to the best sites and provide the best experience at the Canyon, though their interpretations tended to focus on entertainment rather than education.¹²⁹ For example, Ernest Dick, who

¹²⁸ In 1925 these circulars started advertising tours to sites on the Hopi and Navajo Reservations, led by the Fred Harvey Company. *Rules and Regulations: Grand Canyon National Park, 1923* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1923), 8, 18, 27, 55-56.

¹²⁹ "Stop Off and Visit Grand Canyon National Park" Chicago: Rand McNally and Co., April 1925, DG 56 Santa Fe Railroad, Arizona Collection, Arizona State University, Tempe (hereafter referred to as Arizona Collection, ASU).

visited the Grand Canyon in 1929 at age 9, vividly recalls the trip he took down to Indian Garden with a local man for a guide. Though he could not remember the specific stories nearly 50 years later, he recalled that, as a kid who was “interested in cowboys and wild West stuff I’d eat those old yarns up...He was telling about the years he spent in the West and they may have just been yarns, I have no way of knowing. But he was a good talker and he was a nice old man...”¹³⁰

The genesis of the modern NPS interpretation division and programming at Grand Canyon National Park began in 1922. In this year the Park opened an Information Room, funded by the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* following a tour they had sponsored to the Park, where the public could view photos, natural history exhibits, and a reference library.¹³¹ Though the Superintendent’s Annual Reports from 1920 always noted that data on flora and fauna, and information about other nearby NPS sites, were available at information desks, it was not until this point that the staff made a formal attempt to reach out to the visitor proactively.

Also at this time, Ranger I. I. Harrison started giving daily lectures with slides at El Tovar Hotel. This was partly done in cooperation with the Fred Harvey Company and Santa Fe Railroad as a way to advertise their services. Harrison would give an “oral description of the scenes displayed on the screen” in

¹³⁰ “Ernest Dick Oral History,” GRCA 40201, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

¹³¹ “Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1922,” GRCA 54706, Grand Canyon Museum Collections; C. Frank Brockman, “Park Naturalists and the Evolution of National Park Service Interpretation through World War II,” *Journal of Forest History* 22:1 (January 1978): 34.

a lecture that audiences apparently greatly enjoyed. Within two years, he had spoken before approximately 60,000 people.¹³² The Superintendent noted that through Harrison's effort, the NPS "has thus been able to make contacts of great value with Park visitors who otherwise would have been missed. The visitors themselves have been officially informed, by this means, on many points where previously much misinformation or many misconceptions were prevalent. Unquestionably, this illustrated description, as thus presented, has been of immense value to all."¹³³ Unfortunately, there are no extant copies of Harrison's lectures or records of what topics he discussed or information he conveyed.

The 1925 federal government circular was the first to give information on NPS-led interpretive activities, including the free nightly lecture with moving pictures and slides on the Canyon and surrounding country held in the music room of El Tovar.¹³⁴ In this circular all the photographs were provided by "El Tovar Studio," likely the precursor to the Fred Harvey Company's Outlook Studio that was built to compete with the Kolb Brothers' business. These photos included a view along Tonto Trail, El Tovar from the roof of Hopi House, and the Village of Moenkopi on the Hopi Reservation, but did not include any pictures of Native

¹³² "Interpreter's Manual: Grand Canyon National Park," 1973, Grand Canyon National Park Research Library.

¹³³ J. Donald Hughes, *The Story of Man at Grand Canyon* (Grand Canyon: Grand Canyon Natural History Association, 1967), 147; "Superintendent's Annual Report, 1923," GRCA 54706, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

¹³⁴ *Rules and Regulations: Grand Canyon National Park, 1925* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1925), 38.

Americans. This helps indicate again the significant partnership between the NPS and its concessionaires at the time, especially in how and what the park promoted. The circular also advertised summer auto trips that started at the Canyon and went to the nearby Navajo and Hopi reservations via the new Navahopi Road; these trips allowed visitors to observe children in government schools and see everyday life “almost untouched by white civilization,” except for all the gawking tourists of course.¹³⁵

Also in this year, GCNP Superintendent J.R. Eakin requested a ranger to be regularly stationed at the information desk at Park headquarters, hiring Glen Sturdevant to fill the role. Sturdevant was a graduate of the University of Arizona, where he majored in geology and paleontology.¹³⁶ Apparently on his own initiative, he began collecting natural history specimens, especially fossils, to build exhibits and other interpretive displays. A tour guide published by Rand McNally in that year advertised this information desk to visitors, noting that they could get NPS information on Grand Canyon flora and fauna there, as well as browse the library and enjoy the specimen collection there.¹³⁷ In his annual report

¹³⁵ Ibid., 52.

¹³⁶ Louis Schellbach, “Manuscript of Interpretive Data,” 14 October 1942, GRCA 58396, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

¹³⁷ “Trails and Automobile Drives, Grand Canyon National Park,” Chicago: Rand McNally and Co., 1925, DG-2 Grand Canyon: Trails and Auto Drives, Arizona State University Archives and Special Collections.

for 1925, the Superintendent promised that these types of programs would be expanded in the future.¹³⁸

In spring of 1926 Sturdevant's position changed to that of ranger-naturalist, and he was given one assistant to help him. That summer he began the first campfire lectures, a daily guided nature walk along the rim, and produced monthly "Nature Notes," which were short snippets of information about natural history research or popular knowledge relating to the Canyon.¹³⁹ Topics ranged from theories of how the Grand Canyon was carved, to why the Canyon sometimes appears to have a blue haze, to the evolutionary history of the Abert squirrel, and many others. These "Notes" were important because, as Susan Lamb of the Grand Canyon Natural History Association (GCNHA) would later say, "They identified the main themes that are still interpreted for Canyon visitors today."¹⁴⁰ Later, the GCNHA took over producing these "Notes," publishing them until 1935 and intermittently after that. Early interpretive staffers eagerly contributed articles about geology, trails, weather, birds, lizards, insects, plants,

¹³⁸ "Superintendent's Annual Report, 1925," GRCA 54706, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

¹³⁹ Todd R. Berger, *It Happened at Grand Canyon* (Guilford, CT: Morris Book Publishing, LLC, 2007), 10; "Plan, Interpretive Development Outline," GRCA 28818, Grand Canyon Museum Collections; Louis Schellbach, "Manuscript of Interpretive Data," 14 October 1942, GRCA 58396, Grand Canyon Museum Collections; "Superintendent's Annual Report, 1926," GRCA 54706, Grand Canyon Museum Collections. The Superintendent noted that these activities served over 6,000 visitors, and he hoped Congress would give more funds to the program.

¹⁴⁰ Susan Lamb, ed. *The Best of Grand Canyon Nature Notes, 1926-1935* (Grand Canyon: Grand Canyon Natural History Association, 1994), xi.

and management challenges. Some installments discussed human history, such as an article detailing the excavation of ancient ruins at Tusayan, the use of juniper and other plants among ancient and modern Native Americans, and an account of the explorations of the Coronado expedition.¹⁴¹

In an April 1926 article in *Nature Notes*, Scoyen wrote about the educational work of the NPS, one of the earliest statements by a Grand Canyon employee of the role of what would later be called interpretation at the Park. He noted that National Parks were often called outdoor museums, “where the wonders of the great American out-of-doors are preserved, not behind plate glass, but as geologists often say: ‘in place’ ...It is with the intention of having all people appreciate these facts, and to enable them to interpret the great lessons of nature and life, that the educational work in the National Park is undertaken.”¹⁴²

In 1927, Sturdevant became the first Park Naturalist at Grand Canyon, the term that today corresponds to the position of Chief of Interpretation. He also had two seasonal ranger-naturalists appointed to assist him, Stephen B. Jones and Earl W. Count. This staff gave nightly lectures on the origin of the Canyon during four summer months near the public campgrounds, with an average of 150 visitors each night. Though the text of these lectures does not remain, it is likely that they addressed themes that are found in *Nature Notes* publications from around the time, which mostly focused on discrediting theories that a cataclysmic event such as an earthquake or volcano created the Canyon and instead pushing the idea that

¹⁴¹ Ibid., xii.

¹⁴² Ibid., xv.

water and erosion were the major factors in carving the Canyon over millennia. They also tried to get geologists and other scientists visiting the Park to address the audience in special lectures. Sturdevant himself gave a daily nature walk on the rim and produced *Nature Notes*.¹⁴³ He continued working to build the interpretive foundation for the Park, in 1927 and 1928 leading extensive explorations in the field to gather material for interpretive programs.¹⁴⁴ However, naturalist and interpretation services seemed to be disorganized and intermittent at this point, and there was no regular schedule upon which visitors could rely.¹⁴⁵

Another significant event in Grand Canyon history that took place in 1927 was the appointment of Miner Tillotson as Superintendent of the Park; he remained in this position for the next 12 years.¹⁴⁶ This was a major turning point, since in the first eight years of its existence GCNP had already seen six different superintendents.¹⁴⁷ The stability that Tillotson brought allowed the NPS staff to

¹⁴³ “Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1927,” GRCA 54706, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

¹⁴⁴ Louis Schellbach, “Manuscript of Interpretive Data,” 14 October 1942, GRCA 58396, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

¹⁴⁵ Letter from unknown (presumed to be David White, National Academy of Sciences, Washington, D.C.) to John C. Merriam, 17 July 1929, GRCA 65071, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

¹⁴⁶ Tillotson left the Canyon in 1939, and a year later became the regional director of Region Three, serving in that capacity until his death in 1955. American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration, Cornelius Amory Pugsley Awards. Available online: <http://www.aapra.org/Pugsley/TillotsonMinor.html> Accessed 19 October 2010.

¹⁴⁷ Hughes, *The Story of Man at Grand Canyon*, 134.

finally settle down into a routine and begin to make progress on various programs they initiated. Tillotson had originally come to the Park in 1922 as an engineer, and this background showed in the priority he gave to building projects. In fact, Edwin McKee (who served as Park Naturalist under Tillotson) later expressed his belief that Tillotson would not have supported interpretation and education at the Park if NPS Director Horace Albright had not so strongly championed it.¹⁴⁸

Still, Tillotson did a great deal to publicize the nature of the Canyon by writing many articles and co-authoring the book *Grand Canyon Country* in 1929, which was reprinted for decades. This book gives insight into what the early park administration envisioned in terms of the messages that interpretive personnel should communicate about Grand Canyon National Park. Most of the book is devoted to information about the natural features and resources of the Canyon that were standard for the time, though it did include discussions of the Canyon's cultural history as well.

Tillotson's book began with a forward by Horace Albright, who was serving as the Director of the NPS at the time. Albright mourned that most visitors rushed through the Canyon and surrounding areas, which included "the Painted Desert, the land of the Navajos, and the pueblos of the Hopis, the ancient cliff dwellings, the petrified forests."¹⁴⁹ In turn, he hoped that Tillotson's book

¹⁴⁸ "Edwin McKee Oral History," GRCA 35718, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

¹⁴⁹ M.R. Tillotson and Frank J. Taylor, *Grand Canyon Country* (Stanford University, California: Stanford University Press, 1935), v.

would help convince people to linger in the region longer to more fully absorb its landscape and culture. Tillotson likewise believed that visitors should take time to fully explore the region, thereby gaining a more personal, tangible connection to it and, possibly, a desire to help maintain its status as a jewel of the National Park Service.

Whereas most guides and history books at that time (and often even today) began the story of the Canyon with the Spanish arrival at the rim in 1540, Tillotson incorporated Native Americans into the story of the Grand Canyon from the beginning, though he couched it in very Eurocentric terms. For instance, his book started with the Navajo story of how the Canyon was formed by a flood (of Biblical proportions, as Tillotson put it) that cut the chasm and turned Navajo ancestors into fish, which according to him is why today they do not eat fish. Although he did not mention the tribe, he also told the Paiute version of the Canyon's creation. Tillotson revealed his low opinion of these stories stating "these explanations of the Indian seem naïve and childish." Likewise, he argued, many Euro Americans misunderstood how the Canyon was formed as well, attributing it earthquakes and volcanoes. After profiling the quaint and the erroneous, Tillotson provided the scientific version of how the Canyon was created.¹⁵⁰ Unconcerned about the cognitive dissonance Tillotson stated that the Grand Canyon was the first modern National Park to be "discovered," yet

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 1-2.

afterwards told stories about Hopi and Havasupai who lived there for centuries.¹⁵¹

This traditional ethnocentric viewpoint portrayed Euro Americans as the discoverers, not the indigenous people, and implied that Native peoples were simply a feature of the place being discovered.

Tillotson included an entire chapter on local Native Americans and their customs, but seemed to envision them primarily as a curiosity to help sell the park to the public.¹⁵² For instance, he stated that “Indians of the Grand Canyon country are one of its most fascinating lures,” then discussed several ancient Native American sites around the Canyon.¹⁵³ Tillotson went on to describe three different local tribes, and though his descriptions seem simplistic and often cringe-inducing by modern standards, his comments on the Native American lifestyle and appearance reflected views typical of most Euro Americans at the time. For example, he stated that the Canyon region was “one of the very few areas in the United States where the ‘red’ man still lives in his native state, primitive but happy, contented, unchanged by the white man’s civilization.”¹⁵⁴ He also played into the romanticism that painted many Euro-Americans’ views of Native Americans by bringing up the idea of a vanished ancient civilizations. For example, when discussing the ruins that dotted the Canyon, Tillotson said “These

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 13.

¹⁵² Ibid., 40.

¹⁵³ Ibid., 27, 28.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 27.

cliff dwellers may have been the forerunners of the present-day Indians who thrive in the Grand Canyon country, or they may have been a lost race, who perished from the earth notwithstanding their ingenuity in sheltering and protecting themselves,” though he also noted that pottery and other artifacts resemble Hopi work.¹⁵⁵

Most of the book, however, focused on the scientific history of the Grand Canyon. Tillotson made sure to point readers to the services that the NPS provided to help them have a more fulfilling experience at the Canyon. He noted that in recent years the NPS had not been content with just answering visitors’ questions, but had begun to take the initiative to actively educate people. Ranger-naturalists were therefore “trained in the lore of the region” and conducted important interpretive activities such as lectures, auto caravans, and maintenance of Yavapai Observation Station.¹⁵⁶ The many re-printings of this book ensured that Tillotson’s interpretation of the Canyon’s history would influence visitors and Canyon enthusiasts for many years to come.

Yavapai Observation Station and Edwin McKee

Despite these efforts of individuals at the local level, outside national influences sparked the most dramatic changes in the early history of NPS interpretation at Grand Canyon National Park. The young NPS at this point still struggled to define its mission and message, and fought to get appropriations from

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 31-32.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 51.

Congress to fund them. Therefore, other interested parties attempted to step in and influence how educational activities at Grand Canyon would be initiated and implemented. For example, in 1924 Superintendent Eakin revealed that the Fred Harvey Company had proposed to lend them an “Indian Exhibit” valued at \$250,000 if the NPS would build a museum to house it at the Grand Canyon (which never happened).¹⁵⁷ Other less practical proposals were made as well, such as by a group that wanted to reconstruct a Mayan temple to study astrology, and a group from Paris that wanted to create an astronomical observatory at Comanche Point to take advantage of the dark skies at the Canyon.¹⁵⁸

In particular, John C. Merriam of the Carnegie Institute in Washington, D.C., was involved in many early interpretive projects at the Grand Canyon. As early as 1924 he wrote to Superintendent Eakin offering to help create an exhibit along Hermit Trail displaying a collection of fossils he had noticed while on a hike there. Merriam believed this site to be of great importance and that the setting would be unique, stating “I doubt whether any exhibit more impressive than this could be made anywhere in the world.”¹⁵⁹ He was a member of many

¹⁵⁷ J.R. Eakin to A.R. Crook, 6 September 1924, Box 101 Folder D6215: Museum and Exhibit Activities: Planning, Preparation, Maintenance, and Preservation 1924-29, RG 79: Records of the National Park Service, Grand Canyon National Park, Central Subject Files, 1919-1979, National Archives and Records Administration, Laguna Niguel, California, (hereafter referred to as NARA).

¹⁵⁸ Park officials seriously considered the latter proposal because of its potential scientific value, but ultimately chose to prioritize preserving the landscape. *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁹ John C. Merriam to J.R. Eakin, 1 August 1924, Box 101 Folder D6215: Museum and Exhibit Activities: Planning, Preparation, Maintenance, and Preservation 1924-29, NARA.

committees and advisory boards that debated and made recommendations on educational and interpretive activities in National Parks, such as the Committee for Guidance in Study of the Educational Problem of National Parks (which also included Harold Bryant, future Superintendent of GCNP). In 1929 this committee issued a report arguing that the most important aspect of National Parks were their inspirational and educational value, not in their potential for outdoor recreation.¹⁶⁰ It also stated that educational programs at individual Parks should be confined to the “essential features” special to that Park, and other messages should only be included as they supported the major theme.¹⁶¹

Among the many publications Merriam wrote, many focused on issues of interpretation at National Parks, particularly Grand Canyon. Merriam presciently predicted that interpretation at the Canyon would always face difficulties, stating that “it will always be difficult to find a naturalist staff competent to give information which will be scientifically and philosophically correct and at the same time intelligible to persons of average intelligence.”¹⁶² He noted that the educational program there was still in the early stages of developing its purpose,

¹⁶⁰ Harold C. Bryant et al, “Reports with Recommendations from the Committee for Guidance in Study of Educational Problems in the National Parks,” 1929, GRCA 57833, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² “Published Papers and Addresses of John Campbell Merriam,” 1938, GRCA 64672, Grand Canyon Museum Collections; “Reports of John C. Merriam on Studies of Educational Problems in National Parks,” GRCA 57833, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

programming, equipment, and personnel, and argued for an expansion of interpretation to include road signs, personnel presenting information at specific points, excursions done in cooperation with concessionaires, carefully planned talks at camp sites or auditoriums—all suggestions that would later be implemented.

Merriam espoused what would later be seen as standard interpretive philosophy by announcing his belief that educational and interpretive services at the Park should be designed to bring out personal initiative amongst visitors to learn more about the topic, rather than lecturing them in a standard academic format. However, he did not think that there needed to be any specific message about NPS values or emphasis on themes such as conservation. In decades to come, these latter types of themes would become increasingly important and join Mather's philosophy to also become standard in NPS interpretation. He argued that education in the Parks should not rely on an accumulation of facts, but should be stimulating and inspirational. At this time, this likely meant that they should invoke visitors to strive towards social improvement, such as working to beautify the areas where they lived, cultivate a sense of American nationalism, and evoke a desire for personal moral uplift, even appreciation for religious ideas such as the presence of a divine creator.¹⁶³

In 1927, Merriam took over as the new head of the National Parks and Conservation Association and established an Advisory Board on Educational and

¹⁶³ "Reports of John C. Merriam on Studies of Educational Problems in National Parks," GRCA 57833, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

Inspirational Uses of National Parks. This board was created to “identify broad principles that should guide educational and inspirational programs in the national parks, and to develop a demonstration project that would show how these principles could be applied.”¹⁶⁴ Yavapai Point Trailside Museum (soon renamed Yavapai Observation Station) at the Grand Canyon was the culmination of all of these partnerships and the premier project that the board undertook.

As Park Naturalist, Sturdevant served as the main NPS liaison on the project and helped oversee construction of the Station in 1928. This structure was the earliest centrally located NPS interpretive site at the Canyon, and is one of the oldest interpretive structures in the National Park system. Even today the station is considered the key site for interpretation of the scientific story of Grand Canyon. Following the success of Yavapai Observation Station as an experimental educational facility, the parties involved in its development went on to assist in developing museums in at least four other National Parks by the end of the 1920s.¹⁶⁵

The structure was originally conceived as a small trailside museum sponsored by the Laura Spellman Rockefeller Foundation, Carnegie Institute, and the American Museum Association (which had a Committee on Museums in National Parks), and was influenced by input from committees of the National Parks and Conservation Association. The site was budgeted to cost \$12,000, with

¹⁶⁴ Miles, 104.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

another \$1000 for exhibits. Though sometimes referred to as a museum, for many years GCNP superintendents and naturalists alike strongly resisted this designation and insisted that it be called an “observation station.” They did not want the site associated with dusty display cases packed with irrelevant trinkets and unnecessary texts.¹⁶⁶ Another consultant agreed that the facility would not be a museum and should not be advertised as one; instead, he argued that the NPS should be run as a business, and creating something attractive and interesting to tourists would help bring in visitors and increase profits.¹⁶⁷

From the beginning, this site was meant to interpret the scientific story of the Grand Canyon, and more specifically the geologic history. Human history had no place at all here. Some of the premier scientific minds in the nation were called upon to help advise the planners on exhibits, including men from the National Academy of Sciences, National Research Council, and Geological Society of America.¹⁶⁸ Representatives from these agencies concluded that the major

¹⁶⁶ Edwin McKee to Merle Stitt, 1978, Fred Harvey Company Collection, Cline Library, NAU.

¹⁶⁷ Letter from unknown (presumed to be David White, National Academy of Sciences, Washington, D.C.) to John C. Merriam, 17 July 1929, GRCA 65071, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

¹⁶⁸ J.R. Eakin to Frank Spencer, 2 December 1926, Box 89 Folder D3415: Museum Building File 1925-1949 [2/2], NARA; John Merriam to Stephen Mather, 5 May 1927, Box 89 Folder D3415: Museum Building File 1925-1949 [2/2], NARA; Edwin McKee to Merle Stitt, 1978, Fred Harvey Company Collection, Cline Library, NAU; Louis Schellbach, “Manuscript of Interpretive Data,” 14 October 1942, GRCA 58396, Grand Canyon Museum Collections. McKee lists out the specialists by their topic, including preeminent figures such as geologist N.H. Darton and F.E. Matthes, paleontologist Charles Gilmore,

interpretive program should stress “those features determined to be of greatest significance in the story” of how the Canyon was created and the communication of this geologic story to the public.¹⁶⁹ However, as always Merriam argued that the site should not just be used to saturate visitors with knowledge, but instead should encourage philosophical interpretation and spiritual appreciation of the Canyon.¹⁷⁰

After a great deal of study, the group determined that Yavapai Point was the best place to locate this structure because its view encompassed all the major features they wanted to interpret. Merriam became extremely personally invested in the project, working to collect specimens, getting friends who were specialists in various areas to check and recheck facts and interpretations presented there, and even donating his own money to help complete the exhibits when funds from the Rockefeller foundation ran out.¹⁷¹ Glen Sturdevant also worked with the National Academy of Sciences and American Association of Museums to develop a series of lectures to be given at the station on the Canyon’s geology, how it was created, and how it was continuing to change. When completed, the structure

astronomer Fred E. Wright, and geomorphologists and biologists including Harold Bryant, who would later become superintendent of the Park.

¹⁶⁹ Edwin McKee to Merle Stitt, 1978, Fred Harvey Company Collection, Cline Library, NAU.

¹⁷⁰ Ralph H. Lewis, *Museum Curatorship in the National Park Service, 1904-1982* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Curatorial Services Division, 1993), 41.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*

offered expansive views where NPS rangers could tell the scientific story of the Canyon. The building was constructed to blend into the surrounding environment, with walls of local rock and a wooden roof. Originally it was open to the weather on the side facing the Canyon, making visitors' connection with the Canyon more intimate, and had one room serving as an observation deck and another as an exhibit area.¹⁷²

Before the building was fully completed, however, Sturdevant tragically drowned along with ranger Fred Johnson while attempting to cross the Colorado River in February 1929. Although this could have seriously damaged an interpretive program that was still in its infancy, or left it vulnerable to domination by outside interests, it instead marked the beginning of a new era in interpretation at the park. This is because Edwin McKee, Sturdevant's replacement as Park Naturalist, would deftly guide the development of this department at the park, leaving an indelible imprint on the history of interpretation at the Grand Canyon.

Born in 1906, McKee as a youth joined a Boy Scout Troop led by Francois E. Matthes, who had made the first small-scale topographic sheets of the Grand Canyon in 1903. Later, Matthes helped arrange a summer internship for McKee with John C. Merriam in which he assisted scientists hands-on at the Canyon. This experience inspired him to enroll in Cornell University to study geology. McKee continued volunteering at the Canyon during the summers, and

¹⁷² Windows were installed in 1953 to help protect it from the elements and provide more comfort for visitors.

although he had not yet completed his degree, he was considered the logical choice to replace Sturdevant after his untimely death.¹⁷³ McKee would continue working at the Canyon as Park Naturalist until NPS employment policies forced him out of this position in 1941. At that time, in order to remain near the Canyon, he took a job as assistant director of research at the Museum of Northern Arizona. Later he joined the Department of Geology at the University of Arizona and became department chair there, eventually ending up as a research geologist for the U.S. Geological Survey. He wrote many essays and books focusing primarily on geology, though in 1975 he and his wife published a book on Havasupai basketry. McKee helped establish the Grand Canyon Natural History Association, later renamed the Grand Canyon Association, which today continues to assist with interpretive programs at the Park. He also wrote more *Nature Notes* than any other single person. The editor of a collection of these notes wrote that he was “an intensely observant man, a talented teacher and scholar who greeted every day with enthusiasm.”¹⁷⁴

McKee quickly became known among visitors and NPS personnel for his dynamic talks and passion for presenting the geologic history of the Canyon. He also often gave popular talks on subjects as diverse as paleontology, ornithology, botany, ethnology, archeology, and history. When McKee passed away in 1984

¹⁷³ McKee later completed his degree while employed with the park. Earle E. Spamer, “Rock Star: Grand Vision of Edwin D. McKee,” *GCA Today* (November 1999): 18-19.

¹⁷⁴ Lamb, xii.

his ashes were buried at Grand Canyon Cemetery. A small marker at his gravesite refers to him simply as “teacher,” a plain but fitting reminder of his role as an interpreter at Grand Canyon National Park.¹⁷⁵

McKee’s philosophy about his job matched the later philosophies of interpretation incorporated into the NPS’s organizational identity. As he later stated, “From the beginning, I had thought of my department as being education and research. Now I know that this wasn’t true in a lot of the parks at that time, most of them.”¹⁷⁶ Although his outlook was not shared by other parks at first, it later became standard throughout the NPS, showing the Grand Canyon’s importance in helping shape interpretation in the NPS. McKee credits the success of his approach to the fact that he and his staff were trained to do research and enjoyed doing original work, creating a personal tie to their work and enthusiasm they were eager to share with others, while other parks hired people from the outside to do it for them and had no sense of personal attachment to the data. His personal interests tended toward geology and natural history, which influenced the shape that interpretation would take at the Park under his leadership.¹⁷⁷

One of McKee’s first major responsibilities as Park Naturalist was overseeing completion of the first exhibits at Yavapai Observation Station. These included a relief model of the Grand Canyon (see Fig. 2.) that illustrated erosion,

¹⁷⁵ Spamer, 18-19.

¹⁷⁶ “Edwin McKee Oral History,” GRCA 35718, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*



Fig. 2. Edwin McKee interprets the Canyon to visitors at Yavapai Observation Station. Note the variety of interpretive devices, including the relief model of the Canyon and binoculars with interpretive labels; the glass cases visible beneath them contained exhibits. GRCA 05829, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.



Fig. 3. An interpretive ranger describes the geology of the Canyon using the famous rock column McKee developed. A similar interpretive device is used at Yavapai Observation Station even today. GRCA 05823, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

and a rock column that showed the sequence of rock strata with samples from each layer (see Fig. 3.).¹⁷⁸ This geological column was deemed “one of the most important single exhibits in the station...an indispensable aid to ranger-naturalists or other attendants telling the story of the sequence of the Grand Canyon formations.”¹⁷⁹ McKee also built a column with different fossils from every layer, which remained at the station until the 1970s. These columns were part of an interpretive concept McKee had developed to help people better understand and visualize geologic time by organizing it as if it was “pages and chapters in the history of the earth.”¹⁸⁰ In other words, the earth’s history was a huge book, different eras of history were chapters, and specific time periods within each era were like individual pages. Other displays used transparencies, lantern slides, and motion pictures to show specimens of flora and fauna common to the region and tell the story of how the Colorado River cut the Canyon.¹⁸¹

One of the most popular interpretive devices McKee conceptualized for the Station was a series of 15 binoculars and telescopes mounted on the parapet.

¹⁷⁸ Edwin McKee to Merle Stitt, 1978, Fred Harvey Company Collection, Cline Library, NAU.

¹⁷⁹ Ansel F. Hall to Dr. John C. Merriam, “Report on Development of Yavapai Station, June 1930-Jan 1931,” 24 February 1931, GRCA 58375, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

¹⁸⁰ Edwin McKee to Merle Stitt, 1978, Fred Harvey Company Collection, Cline Library, NAU.

¹⁸¹ Ansel F. Hall to Dr. John C. Merriam, “Report on Development of Yavapai Station, June 1930-Jan 1931,” 24 February 1931, GRCA 58375, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

Each view described a different interpretive theme, and when viewed in consecutive order, were meant to give a comprehensive, chronological story of the Canyon.¹⁸² The NPS purchased the binoculars from the War Department and received the telescopes on loan from them; these would remain in constant use for the next 15 years.¹⁸³ The first two illustrated how the Canyon was made, the next four placed this in the context of earth building, the following five described life through the ages, and the final set discussed how the Canyon affected modern plant and animal life (though it did not mention humans at all).¹⁸⁴

From the beginning, these interpretive displays were supplemented by personal interpretive services as well. In the first year it was in operation, a staff member would give one 20-minute talk at 1:30 each day when the Fred Harvey buses from their afternoon scenic tour stopped there, covering the creation of the Canyon and a brief overview of its major geologic features. When the NPS began offering auto caravans at the Canyon in 1930, this service was expanded to

¹⁸² Louis Schellbach to John R. Fitzsimmons, 26 November 1941, Box 114 Folder K1815: Naturalist and Educational Activities 1930-1945, NARA.

¹⁸³ Louis Schellbach to GCNP Superintendent, 14 September 1944, GRCA 65065, Grand Canyon Museum Collections; Ansel F. Hall to Dr. John C. Merriam, "Report on Development of Yavapai Station, June 1930-Jan 1931," 24 February 1931, GRCA 58375, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

¹⁸⁴ United States Department of the Interior, "NPS Educational Leaflet No. 1," April 1939, Box 101 Folder D6215: Museum and Exhibit Activities: Planning, Preparation, Maintenance, and Preservation 1934-39, NARA; Louis Schellbach to John R. Fitzsimmons, 26 November 1941, Box 114 Folder K1815: Naturalist and Educational Activities 1930-1945, NARA; Ansel F. Hall to Dr. John C. Merriam, "Report on Development of Yavapai Station, June 1930-Jan 1931," 24 February 1931, GRCA 58375, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

include a 40-minute lecture in the morning as well. The Yavapai talk was so popular, the staff was soon instructed to try to gather groups of visitors together as often as possible for informal lectures, and they quickly made plans to give a scheduled longer lecture six times a day for the 1931 season.¹⁸⁵ Visiting scientists also sometimes gave special lectures, and were so well-received the staff and advisors for the Station hoped to develop this aspect of the interpretive program more intensively in the future.¹⁸⁶ The emphasis on these programs was to give visitors a general understanding of how the Canyon was formed and how geology influenced its scenic majesty; neither the policies of the NPS nor its importance in protecting the site was mentioned, nor were rangers intent on deluging guests in information as if they were preparing to take an exam or become an expert on the subject. Interpretation was simply meant to introduce the public to the Canyon and help them better enjoy it through understanding its geologic history, significance, and allure.

Yavapai Observation Station, due in large part to the interpretive services it provided, soon became known to NPS personnel as “the key to the Grand Canyon.”¹⁸⁷ It became a model for interpretative structures used in other Parks,

¹⁸⁵ Ansel F. Hall to Dr. John C. Merriam, “Report on Development of Yavapai Station, June 1930-Jan 1931,” 24 February 1931, GRCA 58375, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

¹⁸⁷ Edwin McKee to Merle Stitt, 1978, Fred Harvey Company Collection, Cline Library, NAU; Louis Schellbach, “Manuscript of Interpretive Data,” 14 October 1942, GRCA 58396, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

such as the Sinnott Memorial Overlook at Crater Lake National Park, and its interpretive devices such as the binocular setup were mimicked at similar sites as far away as Nepal.¹⁸⁸ A generation later, Ronald F. Lee, Chief of Interpretation for the NPS in the 1950s, would call Yavapai Observation Station “a classic example of interpretive planning, a standard against which to measure future Park Service efforts.”¹⁸⁹ The success of Yavapai Observation Station, as well as similar sites built at Yellowstone and Yosemite National Parks around this time, made them models for future interpretive work, and helped the NPS get larger and more regular government appropriations to build and staff more interpretive facilities.¹⁹⁰

John C. Merriam continued to be involved in shaping the direction of interpretation at the Canyon even after Yavapai Observation Station was completed. He wrote up guidelines for the operation of the Station, including the importance of having a knowledgeable attendant stationed there to help enrich the visitor experience, although he suggested that the attendant should mostly try to let the Canyon tell its own story.¹⁹¹ To better anticipate visitor needs at the site,

¹⁸⁸ Louis Schellbach to Grand Canyon National Park Superintendent, 14 September 1944, GRCA 65065, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

¹⁸⁹ Quoted in Lewis, *Museum Curatorship in the National Park Service*, 40.

¹⁹⁰ “National Park Service Administrative Manual, Vol. 25: Information and Interpretation in the Field,” GRCA 55370, Grand Canyon National Park Museum Collections.

¹⁹¹ John C. Merriam, “Memorandum Regarding Use of Yavapai Station,” GRCA 65065, Grand Canyon National Park Museum Collections.

Merriam oversaw creation of a visitor survey. It concluded with a quiz which tested their knowledge of facts and figures about the Canyon—indicating that the goal of interpretation at the time was to inform people with the expectation that they retain specific knowledge about the area, a goal from which the NPS would later retreat.¹⁹²

In 1930 McKee submitted a statement of the many things his small division had accomplished in his first year as Park Naturalist. This report states that in 1929 (the first year such figures are available), the NPS allotment for interpretive programming at Grand Canyon was \$3,650, but McKee ended up spending just over \$4,540.¹⁹³ At this time the entire interpretive staff at the Canyon consisted of McKee plus five part-time ranger naturalists (including one woman, Pauline “Polly” Meade, who later married ranger Preston Patraw) and “museum attendant” Dean Tillotson, the superintendent’s son.¹⁹⁴ This small staff had to accommodate the various interpretive needs of 188,204 visitors who came to GCNP that year.¹⁹⁵ Most of the achievements McKee listed focused on his staff’s work at Yavapai Observation Station. McKee also oversaw the planting of a small botanical garden at the site to illustrate the life zones of the Grand

¹⁹² “[Visitor Survey],” GRCA 65065, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

¹⁹³ Louis Schellbach, “Manuscript of Interpretive Data,” 14 October 1942, GRCA 58396, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁹⁵ Anderson, *Polishing the Jewel*, 90.

Canyon, with ranger-naturalists transplanting plants all summer. Unfortunately, he reported, deer and other wildlife frequently ate and trampled the exhibit.¹⁹⁶

Though at this time Yavapai Observation Station was his main focus, Edwin McKee and his staff still made a concerted effort to develop other interpretive services. He and his staff gave lectures at Yavapai, the south rim campfire, and Grand Canyon Lodge daily. They conducted guided nature walks on both rims and gave special lectures for university groups or other societies. He also assigned a naturalist ranger to supervise the archeological excavation that was currently underway at what would later be named Tusayan Ruin.¹⁹⁷

McKee initiated several new interpretive services during his first year as Park Naturalist. He helped convince the management of the Grand Canyon Lodge on the North Rim to set aside a room as a museum, displaying exhibits on geology, biology, and archeology. He established a reference library at the Park Naturalist office and continued publishing items such as monthly *Nature Notes* that detailed scientific and popular interest items about the Park; a manual for Fred Harvey guides which gave them basic dependable information on local plants, animals, geology, and Indians; and various leaflets about natural history done by John Merriam. McKee also focused on seriously building the Park's natural history specimens and ethnographic artifacts.¹⁹⁸ Once the final exhibits

¹⁹⁶ Edwin McKee, "Statement of Naturalist Work at Grand Canyon," Box 114 Folder K1815: Naturalist and Educational Activities 1930-1945, NARA.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

were installed at Yavapai Observation Station, McKee worked to correlate all of the other exhibits and displays in the rest of the Park to match the main story told there.¹⁹⁹

McKee and his staff also felt free to experiment with different ideas and forms of interpretation, some of which drew the attention of the NPS's Washington Office. For example, interpretive programs at the Canyon were announced to the public by means of hand-lettered posters and placed on bulletin boards at various spots. The NPS Washington Office planned to observe the public's use of these types of announcements "as similar posters will probably stimulate the use of museums and observation stations in other parks."²⁰⁰ The staff also toyed with the idea of establishing exhibits at the points most visited by the public, such as the auto camp, administration building, and lobbies of El Tovar and Bright Angel Lodge—taking the interpretation to the visitor wherever they might be. These displays were intended to stimulate interest in and encourage visitors to come to Yavapai Observation Station and take advantage of the trips and lectures "offered under Government supervision."²⁰¹ The 1929 annual NPS circular for Grand Canyon National Park boasted to a national audience about this growing variety of interpretive activities available to Canyon

¹⁹⁹ Ansel F. Hall to Dr. John C. Merriam, "Report on Development of Yavapai Station, June 1930-Jan 1931," 24 February 1931, GRCA 58375, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

²⁰¹ Ibid.

visitors, for the first time mentioning that the NPS was offering nature guide and lecture services in addition to those of the concessionaires.²⁰²

Another innovation in interpretation that came to the Canyon during McKee's first year as Park Naturalist were auto caravans, which proved to be extremely popular. Merriam had invented the concept in 1929 at Yosemite and Mesa Verde National Parks and it quickly spread to other NPS sites, arriving at Grand Canyon in September 1930. It started as an experimental program "to determine its value in the park educational program, and secondly in order to increase the effectiveness of the park educational staff."²⁰³ Ranger Naturalists led daily walks each morning, but had an average attendance of just seven visitors, so the auto caravan was offered as an alternative. On the first day, 84 visitors eagerly lined up for the 25 mile drive east from El Tovar led by a Ranger Naturalist that stopped at Yavapai Observation Station, Grandview Point, the archeological ruins at Lipan Point (later known as Tusayan Ruin) and Desert View.²⁰⁴ This experiment demonstrated the potential of this form of interpretation, since "a single ranger-naturalist can in this manner thoroughly interpret the story of Grand Canyon to a large number of specially interested visitors."²⁰⁵ As the tourist season

²⁰² *Rules and Regulations: Grand Canyon National Park, 1929* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1929), 39.

²⁰³ Ansel F. Hall to Dr. John C. Merriam, "Report on Development of Yavapai Station, June 1930-Jan 1931," 24 February 1931, GRCA 58375, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

ended participation dwindled, and the caravans were discontinued until 1931, though their popularity ensured they would be offered for many years to come.

Two oral history interviews with Polly Meade Patraw provide valuable details about the early interpretive programming at GCNP as well as insights into gender roles in the NPS at the time. Patraw was the first woman naturalist at the Grand Canyon—and the last for many years. She first came to the Canyon as a botany student at the University of Chicago on a field trip in 1927. She had been friends with one of Stephen Mather’s children in high school, though it is unclear if this is what influenced her to pursue a job with the NPS. She only worked at the Park as a seasonal ranger for a year and a half until she married in 1931, at which time her husband encouraged her to give up her job.²⁰⁶ Patraw did all of the regular naturalist duties expected of all rangers: she led nature hikes, gave campfire lectures, and conducted the daily Yavapai Observation talk, even leading auto caravans sometimes. Still, she recalled that some of the men resented her being on the naturalist staff, and that she was sometimes teased by visitors.²⁰⁷

Patraw gave lectures on a wide variety of topics, including scientific themes as well as the human history of the Canyon, and demonstrations such as Native American uses for the yucca plant. However, this interpretive information was all secondhand; Patraw recalled that she “read about them, and talked about

²⁰⁶ “Polly and Preston Patraw Oral History,” GRCA 35737, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

it, but I didn't talk to the Indians. The Havasupai were sort of scorned there on the rim of the Canyon, you know. They were kind of scummy people, we looked down our noses to them."²⁰⁸ Patraw also indicated that at the time naturalists were given quite a bit of leeway in developing interpretive programs. She remembered that McKee did not give his employees much guidance in creating their programs, and did not correct them much either, so she just tried to prepare programs that were interesting to her and to give the audience what they wanted.²⁰⁹

At the same time Edwin McKee and his naturalist staff were experimenting with new interpretive techniques and building a larger interpretive program, they were also both supplementing and competing with businesses at the Park. In 1926, Charley Mayse of Williams, Arizona, began offering the first paid sightseeing flights over the Canyon; a few years later the NPS would sometimes assign naturalists to accompany these flights and provide interpretation to customers.²¹⁰ Naturalist Russell Grater in an oral history interview several years later mentioned that, in his opinion, the NPS had a good relationship with local

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

²⁰⁹ Ibid.

²¹⁰ Leland C. Albertson, Jr., "Kolb Airfield 1926," in Michael F. Anderson, ed., *A Gathering of Grand Canyon Historians: Ideas, Arguments, and First-Person Accounts: Proceedings of the Inaugural Grand Canyon History Symposium, January 2002* (Grand Canyon: Grand Canyon Association, 2005), 20.

businesses, including the Fred Harvey Company, in terms of their goals for what they wanted interpreted at the local level.²¹¹

These early interpretive programs at the Canyon were important services that the NPS provided to visitors, but they also benefited the NPS and became significant administrative tools. As Ethan Carr argues, early interpreters' efforts meant "the unique educational opportunities and scientific content of national parks were asserted more vigorously not only as reasons for park preservation, but also as criteria to guide future park planning and management."²¹² The interpreters, along with the programs and lectures and museums they created, helped visitors see new aspects of the Parks that they might otherwise have missed, deepening their appreciation for the parks and their desire to preserve them.

Despite the admirable efforts by McKee and his small staff, many people thought that more could be done to improve interpretation and the visitor experience at GCNP. John C. Merriam, deeply concerned about and invested in interpretation at the Canyon, wrote to NPS Director Horace Albright in March of 1930 about the problems he perceived at Grand Canyon National Park.²¹³

²¹¹ "Jean Tillotson Anderson Oral History," GRCA 36260, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

²¹² Carr, *Wilderness by Design*, 145.

²¹³ In an oral history interview, McKee described Albright as a strong supporter of the Merriam concept of interpretation and education in parks, and stated his belief that much of their work would not have been possible without Albright's support. "Edwin McKee Oral History," GRCA 35718, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

Merriam said he knew that it had been a struggle for the NPS to develop educational programs because they had no central educational office. However, he offered several suggestions on how to improve the situation at Grand Canyon, particularly at Yavapai Observation Station. He argued that this site demanded “a close correlation between the natural elements of the panorama seen from the Point and the arrangement of the materials to aid in their interpretation,” and he did not feel that McKee and his staff had achieved their potential yet.²¹⁴

McKee himself probably agreed with this assessment. In a memo written in the early days of Yavapai Observation Station, he noted that many people did not enter the building because they did not realize it was an observation station and museum, mistaking it for simply another curio shop. He also was frustrated that, although exhibits had already reduced complex geological ideas to what he thought were simple terms, it was still hard for people to understand them, and they did not read many labels. He recalled with dissatisfaction one visitor who walked around the station for three minutes looking at the exhibits, then proclaimed as he exited ““Wouldn’t this be interesting if a person could understand it?”” However, he estimated that 90% of the visitors who heard the lecture given at the station left with a clear understanding of the story of the

²¹⁴ John Merriam to Horace Albright, 10 March 1930, Box 114 Folder K1815: Naturalist and Educational Activities 1930-1945, NARA.

Canyon. McKee realized that he and his staff had to capture visitors' attention and arouse their interest, not simply provide facts to them.²¹⁵

McKee had many future plans for the Naturalist Division that he was eager to implement, including having ranger naturalists accompany concessionaire-run bus trips, scheduling auto caravans for the West Rim as well as East Rim, and cooperative training of NPS and concessionaire staff and seasonal workers.²¹⁶ However, at the end of 1930, McKee temporarily resigned his position for three months to attend classes at the University of Arizona. Clyde Searl was appointed as the acting Park Naturalist, with Polly Mead as his assistant, during this time. Over the next several years McKee would continue to take temporary leaves of absence while he pursued his bachelor's degree, though he remained one of the leading forces in shaping the early history of interpretation at Grand Canyon National Park.²¹⁷

Summary

In the early years of Grand Canyon National Park, the NPS had very clear goals for the Park. Like other NPS sites, park managers wanted it to be a recreation spot while providing an educational experience for visitors. They presented it as both a natural and cultural landscape by using promotional

²¹⁵ Edwin McKee, "Memo," GRCA 65065, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

²¹⁶ Ansel F. Hall to Dr. John C. Merriam, "Report on Development of Yavapai Station, June 1930-Jan 1931," 24 February 1931, GRCA 58375, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

²¹⁷ Louis Schellbach, "Manuscript of Interpretive Data," 14 October 1942, GRCA 58396, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

materials with Native Americans and scenic images. However, it was the local NPS staff that had a great deal of influence over the shape that the interpretation took. They decided how the recreational facilities would be developed, what shape the interpretive service would take, and what subjects they would emphasize in these educational programs.

At this time, the NPS Washington Office did not mandate that interpretation convey any particular messages, whether about the NPS or any other ideology or theme. Rangers were left to decide themselves what messages and content to emphasize. Their research was self-directed according to their personal interests, which shaped the direction that interpretation would take at the Park. Despite the federal NPS advertising the Grand Canyon at least in part as a cultural landscape, the majority of the interpretive programs ignored this dimension. Since the earliest interpreters were naturalists, their interests were mostly focused on the natural world, and they spent most of their time collecting insect, fossil, geological, animal, and other samples rather than cataloging cultural resources or conducting archeological research. As the Canyon's collections of these materials grew, it subtly (or perhaps not so subtly) shaped the emphasis of interpretive exhibits at the Park, since they could not display what they did not have. And, as the Park's reputation as a nature park grew, it attracted even more people with a strong background in natural sciences. This trend strengthened through the 1930s and 1940s.

CHAPTER 4

THE GOLDEN AGE: THE GREAT DEPRESSION

In the 1930s the National Park Service underwent major changes in its structure and scope of activities. Despite the Great Depression that indelibly marked the decade, it was actually a period of growth and expansion for the NPS. Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal programs such as the PWA and CCC helped develop the Parks in new ways, while his decision to give the NPS administrative control over all national heritage sites in 1935 added a new historical and cultural dimension to the national park system. As the NPS found its footing as an agency, growing more stable and secure in its continued existence, it expanded its purposes and identity as well as the services it provided. Though it grew stronger as a national organization, it still remained decentralized in some ways as in the area of education and interpretation.

The changing composition and mandate of the NPS affected the way that it envisioned interpretation, and allowed interpreters at the local level to branch out into new areas of study. However, this did not mean that the NPS mandated programs or forms of interpretation; instead, the agency still encouraged local interpretive staff to experiment in developing programs and themes that fit their particular park units. Although the social, political, and economic upheavals of the Great Depression indelibly affected Grand Canyon National Park, the story of interpretation at the Canyon in the 1930s was really the story of Edwin McKee. McKee continued to make great strides in laying the foundation of NPS interpretation at the Park that would guide it for many years. During this decade,

McKee and his staff strove to professionalize interpretation at the Canyon and assert more influence over the messages being conveyed and the means employed for interpretation. The park concessionaires also worked to develop new interpretive services at the Park, and though the GCNP interpretive staff tried to remain friendly toward them, the growing NPS assertiveness sometimes made this relationship strained.

This decade was the Golden Age of interpretation at Grand Canyon National Park for several reasons. Edwin McKee's leadership was key; his enthusiasm, skill, expertise, and connections made him one of the most beloved, successful, and admired naturalists in NPS history. The staff was able to respond quickly and intelligently to local interpretive needs and implement interpretive strategies that were meaningful to them without much oversight or bureaucracy. They also enjoyed the benefits of having federal government and NPS officials who were enthusiastic about their work. Furthermore, funding, while not adequate for them to achieve all of their visions, was more closely aligned with the department's needs than it would be in the decades to come. The degree of contact between the naturalist staff and visitors also seemed to be at its apex during this decade. Finally, the desires of the visiting public seemed to be more aligned with the goals of the interpretive division than it would be in decades to come, with visitors seeking out an educational experience rather than just a purely recreational one, a trend that began to change in the postwar era.

Setting the Stage: National Events Shaping Grand Canyon

Interpretation in the 1930s

Though at first it seems counterintuitive, the Great Depression actually led to a period of expansion in the National Park System. New Deal programs put people to work across the country in construction, writing, arts, conservation, and other public projects. Perhaps most important to the NPS was the Civilian Conservation Corps, which played a major role in transforming the infrastructure and appearance of parks and how people experienced them. CCC men were heavily utilized to build park infrastructure, which freed rangers and naturalists to work on other activities and tasks had been delayed for years. Also important was the Public Works Administration (PWA), which in some parks helped build museums or other structures. The NPS could now implement projects that had been previously scrapped for lack of time, labor, and/or money.

As national parks began benefiting from New Deal programs, many administrators cautiously created wish lists of what projects they would like to see completed at their parks. At Grand Canyon, the interpretive staff proposed a centralized museum to cover all topics of interest at the Canyon. Future naturalists and superintendents became obsessed with this idea, yet it never ultimately came to fruition (this project will be discussed in more detail later in the chapter). Though building proposals at the Grand Canyon could have easily gotten out of hand, especially with an engineer like Tillotson administering the Park, it seems that the NPS and even the public saw that there should be limits to development in the Park. For example, an article from *Arizona Highways* in 1935 criticized a

proposal to build roads in and across the Canyon. Even though it was a magazine devoted to promoting roads and travel in Arizona, the editors hoped that this would never happen, stating “Too much romance and mystery has already been lost to commonness in our country by failure to recognize the proper halting point.”²¹⁸

Another significant development in the NPS occurred in the 1930s when Franklin Roosevelt turned over administration of all the national historic sites, memorials, battlefields, and monuments from the War and Agriculture Departments over to the National Park Service. This led to not only an expansion in the size of the NPS but also a shift in its identity and purpose. Instead of just preserving the amazing natural wonders of the United States, the NPS was now responsible for managing the most significant sites of its cultural heritage as well.

Despite this added responsibility, the NPS still emphasized its tradition of natural resource protection and education. According to cultural geographer Barbara Morehouse, during the 1930s the NPS was particularly influenced by scientific trends and the new discipline of ecology, which stimulated a new effort to preserve desirable species and habitats. In other words, natural science increasingly influenced management decisions for natural parks competing with recreational development and cultural interpretation. The movement that had begun in the 1910s to turn parks into field laboratories for scientific research and classrooms to educate the public blossomed at this time, which in turn led to a

²¹⁸ “New Facts About Arizona’s Front Yard” *Arizona Highways* 11:4 (April 1935): 28.

new emphasis on how scientific and natural features should be interpreted to the public.²¹⁹ Therefore, even as the NPS was expanding into custodianship of historical and cultural areas, its emphasis on natural sciences received new energy and support, a trend noticeable at Grand Canyon National Park. However, McKee also noted that the strategies of the interpretive division also relied on Congressional support, which fluctuated wildly over time. The distribution of Congressional appropriations affected what areas were emphasized in the NPS, whether it was education, construction, maintenance, or other aspects of park administration.²²⁰

During the 1930s the NPS leadership in Washington, D.C., underwent significant changes as well. In 1933 Arno Cammerer moved up from his job as Assistant Director to replace Horace Albright as Director of the NPS, and stayed in that position until he suffered a heart attack in 1939. McKee believed that Cammerer was much different from Albright as well as his eventual successor, Newton B. Drury. Cammerer was a lawyer by training and had no background in natural history or geology. McKee believed that for this reason he did not try to influence the messages interpreters at GCNP sought to convey. In fact, McKee recalled that Cammerer's policies had little impact on what the interpretive staff did at Grand Canyon. This was in part because Cammerer took over leadership of

²¹⁹ Barbara J. Morehouse, *A Place Called Grand Canyon: Contested Geographies* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1996), 65-66.

²²⁰ "Edwin McKee Oral History," GRCA 35718, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

the NPS at the same time that Roosevelt transferred all of the new cultural and historical properties to the NPS, meaning his work load was much heavier than his predecessors Mather and Albright, and he had little time or inclination to get involved in the management of specific Parks. With virtually free reign, the GCNP interpretive division continued to expand and improve (in McKee's opinion) throughout Cammerer's term.²²¹

After Cammerer suffered a heart attack, Newton B. Drury, executive secretary of the Save-the-Redwoods League, took over as Director of the NPS in 1940 and led it until 1951. He was the first director of the NPS with no prior experience working for the Park Service. Drury became known for resisting, with some success, calls by the government and private interests to open the parks to logging, mining, and other extractive activities during the war effort.²²² McKee described Drury as a close friend of John C. Merriam who had a deep interest in science and nature, so that under his tenure the NPS re-emphasized education and natural history. Interestingly, therefore, while the interpretive program at the Grand Canyon benefited from the hands-off approach of Cammerer, it also benefited from the hands-on approach of Drury. Although McKee did not head the interpretive division for most of Drury's term, he believed that the interpretive program at GCNP improved through the 1940s because of the enthusiastic

²²¹ Ibid.

²²² "Directors of the National Park Service," NPS History E-Library. Available online: <http://www.nps.gov/history/history/hisnps/NPSHistory/directors.htm>. Accessed 19 October 2010.

support and shared vision of the Director of the NPS, Superintendent of GCNP, and the interpretive staff at the Park.²²³

Changes were also taking place at the federal level in regards to Native Americans that shaped local interactions and interpretation at the Grand Canyon. Though this led to a more visible Native American presence at the Canyon and more interpretation of their ancient past, it did nothing to solve the derogatory attitude some NPS personnel maintained toward them, and failed to give Native Americans any more voice in the park's administration and interpretation. In the 1930s, the Bureau of Indian Affairs under the direction of John Collier began pursuing a policy of cultural pluralism, rejecting assimilationist efforts and instead encouraging self-determination with a variety of policies under the Indian Reorganization Act. Still, the NPS (and many other agencies in the federal government) did not always share this point of view. For example, at Grand Canyon, local NPS officials felt that they were responsible for taking care of and trying to "civilize" the Havasupai, by such means as giving them jobs working on trails or roads at the park and allowing them to live in a settlement near the Village. After Collier resigned from the BIA in 1945, his successors largely abandoned his ideas for cultural pluralism. At the same time, the NPS began trying to remove the Havasupai from the rim, and hired fewer Havasupai to work

²²³ "Edwin McKee Oral History," GRCA 35718, Grand Canyon Museum Collections. Drury had been offered the directorship of the NPS in 1933 but declined it, at which time Cammerer was approached and accepted the job.

in the Park.²²⁴ Although NPS interpretive personnel made efforts to improve their interpretation of Native Americans, their overall treatment of the subject and the people was the major blemish marring this otherwise golden age of interpretation.

Wayside (Tusayan) Museum and the Development of Native American Interpretation

Throughout the 1930s, Park Naturalist Edwin McKee continued to build on the interpretive program at the Grand Canyon that he helped establish, as well as come up with new innovations. Particularly important among these were his efforts to expand interpretation at the Canyon to incorporate more cultural themes, especially by including more Native American history. However, just because he and his interpretive staff were telling more stories about Native Americans did not mean that they were consulting with them about what stories were appropriate to tell, or what themes they would like to have interpreted about their history or culture. Everyone involved in the administration of GCNP, as in other parks, was Euro-American. All Native Americans working for the NPS at this time were hired for manual labor, while those working for concessionaires were salespeople, artisans, or hotel employees and were not considered for management or other leadership positions.²²⁵

²²⁴ Jacilee Wray, "The Havasupai: Their Ethnohistory on the South Rim of Grand Canyon National Park: A Case Study for Cultural Resource Management in the National Park Service" (MA thesis, Northern Arizona University, May 1990), 10.

²²⁵ Acting Superintendent Patraw indicated in 1930 that they were implementing preferential hiring of local Native Americans, especially Havasupai, but these were all positions of manual labor, mostly related to CCC work. Preston Patraw to

Not long after Yavapai Observation Station opened its doors, McKee oversaw construction of the next significant interpretive facility built at GCNP—the MacCurdy Wayside Museum (later renamed Tusayan Museum) near the Tusayan ruins. In 1929 Harold S. Gladwin of the Gila Pueblo in Globe, Arizona, applied for permission to excavate these prehistoric ruins south of Lipan Point. At the same time, he also proposed a museum at the site and pledged \$5,000 to reconstruct part of the ruin for this purpose. He wanted the museum to be devoted solely to archeology, especially as it related to the local ancient Native American culture he was researching. As part of the deal, he would donate half of all the material recovered to the Park, and take the other half back to his base in Gila Pueblo for research.²²⁶

At first, the park administrators and its consultants were not enthusiastic about this idea. John Merriam advised the agency to carefully consider the application, expressing his belief that

the matter of excavation of archeological sites at the Grand Canyon is relatively one of the lesser features of this particular park, and it should be subordinated...While it is true that everything in nature ultimately relates itself to the problem of man, it is also true that the problem of man's development can be forwarded in a more satisfactory manner elsewhere... At the Grand Canyon it is quite clear that the major features of nature so marvelously expressed

NPS Director, 16 October 1930, GRCA 32096, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

²²⁶ Harold S. Gladwin to Minor Tillotson, 10 October 1929, Box 89 Folder D3415: Museum Building File 1925-1949 [2/2], NARA.

have to do with the background of development of man rather than with the specific steps of human progress.²²⁷

Tillotson wholeheartedly agreed that archeological and anthropological features were of minor importance at the Canyon, stating “there is one main story to be told and such stories as will be told by the proposed Lipan Point project should be considered only as supplemental or addenda thereto.”²²⁸ Other Euro-Americans with a long history at the Canyon concurred. For example, in Margaret Verkamp’s 1940 master’s thesis on the history of Grand Canyon National Park (which focused mostly on the development of mining and tourism there), she noted that people were mainly attracted to the Canyon as nature lovers and natural scientists, not for human history.²²⁹

It is likely that Euro-American opinions of local contemporary Native Americans at the time influenced this hesitancy. For the most part, NPS personnel viewed them as a source of cheap labor and colorful stories at best, or as dirty, inferior, uncivilized squatters at worst. Nearly every early superintendent or person in administration at the park seems to have hired at least one Native American girl, usually Hopi, to help with their housework. Barbara McKee, wife

²²⁷ John C. Merriam to Jesse L. Nusbaum, 8 February 1930, Box 89 Folder D3415: Museum Building File 1925-1949 [2/2], NARA.

²²⁸ Minor Tillotson to Jesse L. Nusbaum, 19 February 1930, Box 89 Folder D3415: Museum Building File 1925-49 [2/2], NARA.

²²⁹ Margaret Verkamp, *History of Grand Canyon National Park* (Flagstaff: Grand Canyon Pioneers Society, 1993). Verkamp was the daughter of early Canyon entrepreneur John Verkamp (who settled there in 1905 after a brief business stint in 1898) and grew up at the Canyon.

of Park Naturalist Edwin McKee, recalled that she hired a Hopi girl to help around the house and required her to wear a traditional uniform, stating “I used to have her dress in her Hopi dress, you know, dark blue blanket, one shoulder bare. She’d wait on table [*sic*].”²³⁰ When asked about the relationship between Native Americans and GCNP staff, Jimmy Lloyd, who was the Assistant Superintendent at the Canyon from 1932-41, described it as “very good,” pointing to the fact that many personnel hired Native Americans as servants in their homes. Obviously this was a very culturally one-sided view, largely based on ideas of white paternalism which believed that Native Americans should be grateful to Euro-Americans for providing them with “opportunities” and an excuse to move off their reservations; Native Americans undoubtedly had a very different perception of the situation.

Euro-Americans by this time had also developed a hierarchy by which they ranked the tribes. Lloyd made clear that the Hopi were considered the best for employment in the park, since they “responded more to education and adaptation to civilized dress, costume and so forth, than did the other tribes. They were the better educated. They didn’t mind going to school and the government did a good job for them.”²³¹ Dean Tillotson recalled that the Hopi who lived at Hopi House were considered part of the community; their children attended

²³⁰ “Barbara McKee Oral History,” GRCA 65884, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

²³¹ “Jimmy Lloyd Oral History,” GRCA 40190, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

school with white children, they celebrated together at parties, and shared meals together. Dean also recalled that some Hopi would invite his parents to eat with them, and they would come, sit on the floor, and eat out of the common pot. On the other hand, he stated, “The Havasupai had a reputation for not being too smart. The Hopis were the smart ones, and the Havasupai were the dumb ones, and the Navajos were kind of in between. We know different now, but...your initial reaction, you felt that way.”²³² For others, the Native American presence was virtually nonexistent; naturalist Russell Grater could not remember anything about Indians apart from them working at the village while he was there from 1931-34.²³³ These biases had a significant effect on how NPS personnel interpreted these tribes.

The cultural values Americans ascribed to national parks further complicated the decision about whether interpretation of Native American history was appropriate at the Grand Canyon. Administrators at GCNP felt a paternalistic responsibility to local Native Americans but at the same time saw their presence as a problem with no easy solution. The problem was two-fold. First, the American public was invested in the idea that national parks were created out of wilderness—lands that were uninhabited, natural wonders with little economic value to potential Euro-American settlers or developers apart from their tourism

²³² “Dean Tillotson Oral History,” GRCA 40193, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

²³³ “Russell Grater Oral History,” GRCA 65556, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

potential. If the public were to learn more about the modern Native American presence and their dispossession, it could easily sour their vision of national parks as great symbols of freedom and democracy. Still, this was a tourist site, and romanticized, ancient Native American history sold easily and attractively, as anyone who had seen the success of Fred Harvey's Hopi House well knew.

Secondly, the relationship between NPS and local tribes was rocky at best. For example, although the BIA agent for the Havasupai saw Minor Tillotson as a friend of the tribe, GCNP administrators and officials in Washington were not entirely accepting of the Havasupai. In this time period the NPS frequently implied that the Havasupai were a doomed race, and therefore their beautiful canyon home should come under NPS management to ensure that it would be protected forever, but the BIA continuously resisted.²³⁴ In the early 1930s the Havasupai made a significant effort to have some plateau lands restored to them; instead, in 1932 President Herbert Hoover created Grand Canyon National Monument along the western boundary of the park, which included land the Havasupai used for grazing, further restricting their access to these lands.²³⁵ In 1938 NPS Director Arno Cammerer expressed an interest in working with the BIA to remove the Havasupai to areas outside the Park but was rebuffed. Tillotson wrote that he did not believe it would ever happen, but he expressed his opinion that if the GCNP could "be relieved of the responsibility of looking after

²³⁴ Stephen Hirst, *I Am the Grand Canyon: The Story of the Havasupai People* (Grand Canyon: Grand Canyon Association, 2007), 154, 159-160.

²³⁵ Morehouse, 66.

these Indians” it would lift a great burden from the administration.²³⁶ Just two years later, NPS Acting Director A.E. Demaray asked the Commissioner of Indian Affairs again if there was any possibility of moving the Havasupai away, suggesting that they relocate them to the Hualapai Reservation and add the former Havasupai Reservation to the park, but in keeping with their emphasis at the time on cultural pluralism and resisting assimilation, the BIA again refused this idea.²³⁷

Despite these reservations about the desirability of interpreting Native American history at the Canyon, excavation of the Tusayan site began in 1930 with the \$5,000 funding provided by Mrs. Winifred MacCurdy, for whom the museum was originally named. Gladwin, Emil Haury, and a staff of seven other archeologists completed the project within a few months, and construction of the museum began in 1931. The data Gladwin and Haury recovered from this site allowed him to prove that it marked the western boundary of Ancestral Puebloan settlements, making it a significant site for understanding archeology in the Southwest.²³⁸

²³⁶ Quoted in Wray, 74.

²³⁷ Wray, 75.

²³⁸ Emil Haury, *Kivas of the Tusayan Ruin: Grand Canyon, Arizona* (Globe, AZ: Private printing for the Medallion, Gila Pueblo, 1931), 1-3; Janet R. Balsom, “A Little Knowledge Goes a Long Way: A History of Archeological Research at the Grand Canyon,” in Michael F. Anderson, ed., *A Gathering of Grand Canyon Historians: Ideas, Arguments, and First-Person Accounts: Proceedings of the Inaugural Grand Canyon History Symposium, January 2002* (Grand Canyon: Grand Canyon Association, 2005), 112.

In early 1932, the naturalist staff unloaded a truckload of material from Gila Pueblo and installed displays at the museum.²³⁹ Unlike the massive collaborative effort of premier scientists, museum curators, and NPS enthusiasts from around the country who had come together to consult on the displays and themes of Yavapai Observation Station, McKee noted that he alone planned all of the exhibits and only the archeological staff of the Gila Pueblo were consulted to approve them. It was also completed with less than half the money.²⁴⁰ In conjunction with the museum's opening, McKee distributed a memo meant to acquaint his rangers with Indian legends of the Grand Canyon. He included fairly detailed versions of Navajo and Paiute stories about the creation of the Canyon, Hopi stories of their emergence from the Canyon, and Havasupai stories about two stone pillars that they believed guarded their home in Cataract Canyon, noting that they were the only stories of which he was aware.²⁴¹ Relying on secondhand stories that had been passed around to visitors for years without adding any new information or insight to them does not represent the innovation or detailed primary research for which McKee was generally known, and was far removed from the scientific research to which he was usually dedicated.

²³⁹ Louis Schellbach, "Manuscript of Interpretive Data," 14 October 1942, GRCA 58396, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

²⁴⁰ "Superintendent's Annual Report, 1932," GRCA 54706, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

²⁴¹ Edwin McKee, "Memorandum," 25 May 1932, GRCA 52836, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

The museum itself was designed to pick up where the Yavapai Observation Station left off by describing the emergence of man in earth's history and at the Grand Canyon.²⁴² By today's standards the early exhibit texts at this museum were Eurocentric and unsophisticated. Take, for example, the display case on "Early Man in America." The text label began by pointing out that humans were relatively recent arrivals in the Americas compared to the Old World. The case included skeletal remains showing that American Indians were "normal" people and that no one had ever discovered fossils of "ape-men" in the New World like they had in the Old World.²⁴³ The exhibit case also discussed theories of where these people came from, including a Mormon Church-inspired theory about Native Americans being one of the lost tribes of Israel and the far-fetched theory that they may have been survivors of the fabled lost city of Atlantis. The exhibit did not mention a single origin story from any of the local tribes. Instead it focused on the anthropological theory of Asiatic migration, using as its evidence "the fact that the American Indians are not 'red men' but 'yellow brown' people" who resembled Asians.²⁴⁴ The museum included several cases describing different phases of ancient Basketmaker culture before concluding with an exhibit on modern Puebloan Indians.²⁴⁵

²⁴² Harold C. Bryant to Supervisor of Research and Information, 10 January 1940, GRCA 70901, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

²⁴³ Ibid.

²⁴⁴ Ibid.

²⁴⁵ Ibid.

After the MacCurdy Wayside Museum opened in June 1932, Miner Tillotson admitted that it fit into the park's educational program "far better than I had anticipated" and noted that many people were "intensely interested" in the archeological story. However, he still stood by his belief that the archeological features of the park should not be overemphasized, stating "The main educational story to be told here is one of geology and such archeological stories as we have are, and should be, incidental only." Instead of seizing this opportunity to expand the interpretation of the park, he encouraged tourists to visit other NPS sites like Mesa Verde and other nearby national monuments, recommending that the naturalist stationed at the museum read up on these sites in order to give people more information about them.²⁴⁶

Still, it seems that visitors' surprising interest in the Park's archeological features influenced some changes in the naturalists' focus, at least for a short time. The 1933 NPS guidebook to the Park encouraged visitors to take advantage of the interpretation available at the museum, where they could learn about "the stages of human history represented by house types and pottery in the American Southwest."²⁴⁷ In the same year the naturalist staff began systematically recording prehistoric sites at the Canyon, and by 1949 had plotted 491 of them on contour maps and collected, recorded, and filed materials from them. However, this work

²⁴⁶ Minor Tillotson to Edwin McKee, 18 July 1932, GRCA 70901, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

²⁴⁷ "Guide Leaflet No. 1," 1933, DG-67, Arizona Collection, ASU.

was not a priority, and was hampered by growing constraints on time and personnel.²⁴⁸ In 1934 McKee proposed replacing a display on pottery shards with an exhibit showing a column of sediments from a pre-historic midden and mounting artifacts from different levels—exactly as his geological column with fossils did at Yavapai Observation Station.²⁴⁹

Unfortunately, this was the last time in this decade that the museum would receive significant attention. In 1940, Superintendent Harold Bryant wrote to the Supervisor of Research and Information for the NPS, begging the museum division to take pity on them and help improve Tusayan Museum in any way possible. Since the museum was seen as secondary to the main interpretive mission to the Park, no money had been allocated to maintain or update it. None of the displays had been changed in six years; instead, the Park had spent their entire museum budget on Yavapai Observation Station and had no money left.²⁵⁰

McKee's Early Innovations in Grand Canyon Interpretation

Despite the flurry of activity surrounding the planning and construction of Wayside Museum in the early part of the decade, most of Edwin McKee's energy and inspiration went into improving interpretation of natural history at the Grand

²⁴⁸ "Plan, Interpretive Development Outline," GRCA 28818, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

²⁴⁹ Edwin McKee to Minor Tillotson, 9 July 1934, Box 102 Folder D6215: Museum and Exhibit Activities: Planning, Preparation, Maintenance, and Preservation 1940-53, NARA.

²⁵⁰ Harold C. Bryant to Supervisor of Research and Information, 10 January 1940, GRCA 70901, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

Canyon during the course of the 1930s. Developing wayside exhibits, improving auto caravans, helping to found the Grand Canyon Natural History Association, and paying attention for the first time to developing North Rim interpretation were just a few of the more important innovations that became part of McKee's legacy from this period.

One of the key elements in NPS interpretation that McKee played an important role in introducing to the Grand Canyon during this time was wayside exhibits and self-guided trails. Originally known as "wayside shrines," wayside exhibits were meant to be a small, open structure containing educational features like flat maps on a table, topographic relief models, wall maps showing topographical or geographical features, panoramic charts showing important features, or even small exhibits with rocks, fossils, or similar material.²⁵¹ McKee recalled that Horace Albright's administration gave a great deal of support to creating trailside exhibits, though backing for them fluctuated with subsequent directors.²⁵²

McKee oversaw the creation of many wayside exhibits at Grand Canyon National Park. He also developed side trails that led to exhibits at sites with exceptional interpretive value, such as an area with many fossil ferns, and made

²⁵¹ Unknown to Minor Tillotson, 2 February 1934, Box 89 Folder D3415: Museum Building File 1925-1949 [1/2], NARA.

²⁵² "Edwin McKee Oral History," GRCA 35718, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

signs to locate and explain them.²⁵³ In a later oral history interview, McKee mentioned that he believed these wayside and trailside exhibits were one of the best ways to stress important ideas because it allowed people to look at and experience the original thing being interpreted, which allowed them to gain the most understanding of it. For example, he got excited talking about how providing labels and diagrams and allowing people to touch the rocks at the point of contact between sandstone and granite at the Great Unconformity provided a great multi-sensory experience in which visitors could touch a moment in time 500 million years ago.²⁵⁴

It seems that McKee's intuition on this matter resonated with visitors. In a 1939 *Arizona Highways* article, H.G. Franse argued that personally walking on trails taught people more about geology than reading a dozen books, and that the exhibits on different kinds of fossils that McKee had placed along the trails at Grand Canyon added enormously to this understanding.²⁵⁵ However, Barbara McKee recalled that many of these wayside and trailside exhibits were

²⁵³ Edwin McKee, "Statement of Naturalist Work at Grand Canyon," Box 114 Folder K1815: Naturalist and Educational Activities 1930-1945, NARA.

²⁵⁴ "Edwin McKee Oral History," GRCA 35718, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

²⁵⁵ H.G. Franse, "Seven-Down Seventy-Seven Up" *Arizona Highways* 15:11 (Nov 1939): 30-31.

vandalized, destroyed, or stolen, including a fossil exhibit at Cedar Ridge on the Kaibab Trail and metallic signs at several significant geological formations.²⁵⁶

Despite these efforts to develop interpretation on trails, the nature of visitation to the Grand Canyon, and the kinds of interpretation that visitors expected, began to change in this time, a fact that McKee also recognized and to which he tried to adapt. The 1930s saw increasing numbers of people arriving at the Grand Canyon by personal automobile, and NPS interpretation shifted to accommodate this trend, such as with the aforementioned auto caravans. Their popularity continued to grow throughout the decade until, McKee recalled, visitors began to greatly prefer them to foot walks along the rim.²⁵⁷ McKee therefore decided that the subject matter covered on these interpretive trips be expanded. Russell Grater, who worked as a naturalist at GCNP from 1931-34, described how he and his co-workers conducted auto caravans at the Canyon. A ranger in a car would lead a group of tourists, each in their own car, to specific spots along the rim drives. Caravans usually consisted of about 10 to 15 cars. Naturalists were supposed to cover geology, history, biology, and archeology on each trip. At each point the people would disembark and the ranger would tell about the forests, wildlife, history, or other aspects of the area. In the caravans, as well as the campground talks and ranger walks that he led, Grater stated that his

²⁵⁶ “Barbara McKee Oral History,” GRCA 65884, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

²⁵⁷ “Edwin McKee Oral History,” GRCA 35718, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

goal as an interpreter was “to acquaint the visitor with the values of the park, environmental needs and problems, general information about the park and its operation.”²⁵⁸

Recognizing that auto travel was making more NPS sites readily accessible to visitors, McKee also made efforts to expand the interpretive program regionally by visiting nearby Zion and Bryce Canyon National Parks, observing their museums and working with them to better correlate the geologic stories being told at the three parks.²⁵⁹ This trend was also a response to a growing awareness among geologists such as McKee that geological and natural systems did not conform to the boundaries that humans assigned to them, but that the stories told about the Grand Canyon related to other regional sites as well.

Another significant moment in the history of interpretation at GCNP occurred in February 1932, when McKee joined with others who wanted to assist the NPS in their interpretive activities to form the Grand Canyon Natural History Association (today known as the Grand Canyon Association). For the next half century, the Park Naturalist would also serve as the executive secretary of the Association. This was the fourth such “cooperating association” to be formed for a National Park site. Today these types of nonprofit associations are often created at NPS sites “to support museums, libraries, exhibits, publications, and other

²⁵⁸ “Russell Grater Oral History,” GRCA 65556, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

²⁵⁹ Ansel Hall to Minor Tillotson, 23 August 1934, Box 101 Folder D6215: Museum and Exhibit Activities: Planning, Preparation, Maintenance, and Preservation 1934-39, NARA.

aspects of the interpretive, educational, and scientific research programs,” but at the time the GCNHA was created it was still a rather unique concept.²⁶⁰ The purpose of the GCNHA was “to stimulate and encourage scientific research and investigation in the fields of geology, botany, zoology, ethnology, archaeology and related subjects in the Grand Canyon region.”²⁶¹ Its mission did not end with the mere collection of facts and items to be stored in dusty warehouses, however; it also was determined to help the NPS “further visitor understanding and enjoyment of the scenic, scientific and historical values of Grand Canyon National Park.”²⁶²

The GCNHA was an essential partner in helping establish Grand Canyon National Park’s interpretive program on a basic level. Most of the funding for interpretation at the Park over the years came from this Association—not the federal government. As Todd Berger points out, “NPS’s Naturalist Division received GCNHA money that was earmarked for specific, tangible purchases—many basic needs for a largely do-it-yourself operation.” In the first 20 years of its operation, the Association helped the division buy items essential to helping them create displays, such as a jigsaw, electric sander, entomological and laboratory

²⁶⁰ Quoted in Todd R. Berger, “Science and Education, Birdseed and Power Tools: The History of the Grand Canyon Association. Part I: The Early Years,” *Canyon Views* 13:1 (Spring 2007): 10.

²⁶¹ *Nature Notes* 7:1 (April 1932): 1.

²⁶² J. Donald Hughes, *The Story of Man at Grand Canyon* (Grand Canyon: Grand Canyon Natural History Association, 1967), 149.

supplies, lantern slides and slide viewer, a microphone, and many other items.²⁶³

As time passed, production and creation of displays would be contracted out to regional labs and later a national centralized lab, but for the time being interpretation was a home-grown operation.

The Association did not employ any workers; instead, volunteers worked on projects in their spare time from their everyday jobs with the NPS.²⁶⁴ Under McKee, the first duties of the Association were to help develop new exhibits for Yavapai Observation Station and prepare other natural history exhibits.

Association members often became experts on the Canyon and could volunteer to give interpretive programs when necessary. They also supported research that contributed not only to the academic community but also assisted NPS staff in developing more up-to-date interpretive programs for the public.²⁶⁵ In cooperation with the NPS, the group published aforementioned “Nature Notes” and technical bulletins about science topics at the Canyon. Their assistance in producing publications would become especially important when the government started to reduce its printing budget in the 1940s. The small amount of money the GCNHA made from selling books and other items went right back into projects such as

²⁶³ Todd R. Berger, “Science and Education, Birdseed and Power Tools: The History of the Grand Canyon Association. Part II,” *Canyon Views* 13:2 (Summer 2007): 13.

²⁶⁴ Berger, “Science and Education, Birdseed and Power Tools,” Part I, 12.

²⁶⁵ Hughes, 149.

creating exhibits or developing publications, making it an essential pillar of NPS interpretation.²⁶⁶

Another area that McKee was determined to address in his early years as Park Naturalist was the purpose and method of interpretation on the North Rim, a problem that the Naturalist Division would continue to struggle with well into the 1960s. The North Rim received substantially fewer visitors than the South Rim, and therefore there was much debate over how much time, money, and effort to devote to interpretation there. The first NPS effort at interpretation on that side of the Canyon seems to be when McKee opened an exhibit room with the permission of the Utah Parks Company in the Grand Canyon Lodge in 1932. The exhibits focused primarily on plant and animal life there, as well as geology. However, neither McKee nor NPS officials in Washington seemed to have a clear idea of how to proceed beyond this introductory effort. Instead, a series of letters and memos circulated within the Park from the 1930s-60s indicated ongoing debates about whether to stress stories not told elsewhere at the Park, or to make interpretation on the North Rim the same as on the South Rim, or exactly what stories to tell. Debates also continued over the need for interpretive sites on the North Rim. Little was resolved, and the North Rim remained more neglected than the South for many decades.²⁶⁷

²⁶⁶ Berger, "Science and Education, Birdseed and Power Tools," Part I, 12.

²⁶⁷ Various documents, GRCA 65060, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

Not all innovations that took place under McKee's leadership were suitable for implementation throughout the NPS. Whereas auto caravans had blossomed at other parks after their successful start at Yellowstone, in 1932 his staff initiated an idea that did not immediately take off at other sites: having naturalists accompany privately operated airplane flights over the park.²⁶⁸ This is likely because the Grand Canyon was uniquely well-suited to this type of interpretation, since many of its features were nearly impossible to reach on foot or by car. Junior Park Naturalist Donald McHenry began this service (without McKee's knowledge or official NPS approval) in cooperation with Grand Canyon Airlines on the North Rim. McKee eventually grudgingly approved it, and the federal government-printed circular that advertised "A ranger-naturalist accompanies parties on the daily scenic flights, and points out places of special interest."²⁶⁹ An article from *Arizona Highways* by Grand Canyon Scenic Tours manager James Kintner lauded how air tours made interpretation of the Canyon easier, giving flyers a better idea of how natural forces work on the earth's crust because they can more easily see lava flows, huge faults, and the large-scale effects of earth movements and erosion.²⁷⁰ Having naturalists participate in these

²⁶⁸ Barry Mackintosh, *Interpretation in the National Park Service: A Historical Perspective* (Washington, D.C.: History Division, National Park Service, Department of the Interior, 1986), 39.

²⁶⁹ Louis Schellbach, "Manuscript of Interpretive Data," 14 October 1942, GRCA 58396, Grand Canyon Museum Collections; *Rules and Regulations: Grand Canyon National Park, 1933* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1933), 5.

²⁷⁰ James E. Kintner, "I Travel the Skyway of the Grand Canyon." *Arizona Highways* 14:6 (June 1938): 12, 24.

tourist flights not only reinforced the NPS's role as premier interpreters of the Park, it also ensured that visitors were hearing the NPS-approved, scientific story of the Canyon.

Apart from initiating new projects, the naturalist staff also had to maintain and update those they had already started. In 1932, McKee noted that "In the steady effort to reach the ultimate refinement of service at Yavapai Observation Station a considerable amount of revision was done during the year." This included replacing old black and white exhibit transparencies with color, installing a large relief map, and placing a guide barrier "to facilitate directing visitors to parapet views in such a way that the views are studied in proper sequence."²⁷¹ Another small but important change that McKee initiated at this time was to have naturalists give introductory talks at El Tovar before the Fred Harvey Company evening entertainment began. McKee believed this change was significant since "for several years the Park Service has been interested in being represented in these programs as they are a means of reaching those rail visitors who do not take the bus trip, or otherwise get around in the park."²⁷² This allowed the NPS a chance to give at least some educational information to the public who might otherwise slip past them.

²⁷¹ "Superintendent's Annual Report, 1932," GRCA 54706, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

²⁷² *Ibid.*

The popularity of McKee's innovative interpretive programming is evident by the sheer numbers of visitors who participated in them. In 1932 McKee estimated that about 90% of the park's 117,700 visitors had talked directly with a ranger or received a copy of the latest NPS park circular at the Information Office, and about 88% were reached by the interpretation department either through the Yavapai Observation Station talk, auto caravans, nature walks, or campfire talks.²⁷³ This is a staggering accomplishment considering that his entire staff consisted of just half a dozen individuals.

The onset of the Great Depression did not seem to severely impact the interpretive program at the Grand Canyon until 1933. Though he had struggled for years to find some way to end the Depression, Herbert Hoover could not ignore the shrinking federal budget, and in the final year of his administration he urged Congress to pass the Revenue Act of 1932. In the meantime, these monetary problems affected the resources available to all federal offices and programs, including the NPS. McKee's projected budget for 1933 therefore had to be slashed, which meant he had to cut his workforce in half even though visitation to GCNP remained relatively steady at 108,823.²⁷⁴ With his reduced staff and resources, McKee estimated that in 1933 the naturalist division only reached about 45% of Park visitors. Along with McKee, two of the other three

²⁷³ Michael F. Anderson, *Polishing the Jewel: An Administrative History of Grand Canyon National Park* (Grand Canyon: Grand Canyon Association, 2000), 90; Louis Schellbach, "Manuscript of Interpretive Data," 14 October 1942, GRCA 58396, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

²⁷⁴ Anderson, *Polishing the Jewel*, 90.

interpreters, Paul Krause and Joe Bryan, were trained in geology, while Louis Schellbach, who became a towering figure in the history of interpretation at Grand Canyon, was trained in archeology and ethnology. This further underscores the preponderance of emphasis on geology and natural history interpretation at the Canyon.²⁷⁵

Because of his background, Schellbach spent most of 1933 at the Tusayan Wayside Museum, studying visitor reaction to the exhibits there and trying to revise the exhibits as much as possible to meet visitor demand, while surveying and cataloging archeological sites. As he recalled, “Some of the Service people weren’t too happy about a ‘seasonal’ reworking the exhibits, but when the eminent archeologist, Dr. Harold Gladwin, remarked enthusiastically, ‘that’s the way it should have been done in the first place,’ I heard no more static.”²⁷⁶

Because there were no open naturalist jobs at the Canyon, at the end of the year he took a position as a Park Service museum technician and reported to the Western Museum Laboratory in Berkeley, California, though the Grand Canyon and its interpretive program remained in his thoughts.²⁷⁷ He returned the following year to install the exhibits he had developed while working there, arranging the displays “to tell a well connected and clear story of early man, such

²⁷⁵ Louis Schellbach, “Manuscript of Interpretive Data,” 14 October 1942, GRCA 58396, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

²⁷⁶ Quoted in Natt Dodge, “Mister Grand Canyon,” *National Parks Magazine* (Dec 1959): 3.

²⁷⁷ Louis Schellbach, “Manuscript of Interpretive Data,” 14 October 1942, GRCA 58396, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

as was needed to serve as a continuation of the geological story presented at Yavapai [Observation Station].”²⁷⁸ This is the last update the museum received until after World War II.

Dissonance Grows between Concessionaire and NPS Interpretation

In 1934, John Boynton Priestly, a British visitor to the Grand Canyon, argued that the country should promote and boast about their national parks more because “the People, through their Federal officers, run these Parks perfectly, and are ideal hosts.” On the other hand, he disdainfully criticized the local concessionaires for their overly commercialized and gaudy enterprises, such as when describing his unnamed hotel on the rim as “almost theatrically Western.”²⁷⁹ Priestley’s comments are just one example of how during the 1930s visitor (and even NPS) complaints about the quality of the concessionaires’ interpretive services at the Grand Canyon seemed to be increasing. McKee felt he needed to address this issue quickly to maintain his reputation as one of the NPS’s premier naturalists. However, just as the NPS was expanding its interpretive facilities and programming, the concessionaires scrambled to do the same as visitation to the Park increased. The Fred Harvey Company in particular built new facilities and developed new services for visitors in the 1930s, but their innovations slowed by the end of the 1930s even as the NPS’s expanded. In fact, the NPS became directly involved by brazenly stepping in and suggesting training programs for

²⁷⁸ Ibid.

²⁷⁹ Paul Schullery, *The Grand Canyon: Early Impressions* (Boulder: Colorado Associated University Press, 1981), 109-110.

concessionaire interpreters, providing information for them, and finding other ways to cooperate with but also direct them.

In their first major effort to address such complaints, and to assert more control over the messages and information being disseminated at GCNP, administrators developed a pamphlet for Fred Harvey drivers and tour guides in the early 1930s. In the forward to this document, Superintendent Tillotson said that the guide was a joint venture between the NPS and Fred Harvey “as a source of authentic information” for trail guides and bus drivers particularly, as well as anyone else who regularly interacted with the public. He warned that “The day of flippant, exaggerated, incorrect or ‘wisecracking’ answers to legitimate questions has passed. The Park visitor comes with an honest desire for certain information and it is the duty of all concerned to supply that information as completely and as courteously as possible.”²⁸⁰ If the NPS had their way, the old days in which visitors were regaled with tall tales with the Wild West would have been long gone in the face of more accurate, educational interpretive programs. Of course, this guide was probably useful for the agency’s own naturalist staff as well, since they too received little formal training.²⁸¹

²⁸⁰ “Grand Canyon Guide Manual,” Lauzon Family Collection, Cline Library, NAU.

²⁸¹ At this time, there was no formal system to introduce naturalists to the Canyon or guide them on how to interpret it. They were simply expected to observe their superiors in action, and then jump in with both feet. “Russell Grater Oral History,” GRCA 65556, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

This effort to influence concessionaire interpretation was not successful, and in late 1940 Superintendent Frank Kittredge revealed lingering problems with interpretation done by those not affiliated with the NPS. In a memo to McKee, he stated that he had been on tours with several Fred Harvey Company guides and “I have wondered whether they were staying sufficiently close to the facts in their description of the Canyon to the public.” Kittredge pointed out that the manual McKee had developed was several years old and needed to be revised not only for the guides but other GCNP personnel, a project he gave to the Park Naturalist as a top priority.²⁸² This was eventually completed, but not until after World War II disrupted and delayed the effort. In the meantime, it is unlikely that, without enforcement by the concessionaire’s management (who did not seem inclined to make changes on their own anyways), this manual would have made much of a difference in their employee’s interpretive habits.

Perhaps the most significant source of controversy between the NPS interpretive staff and concessionaires at the time was the Fred Harvey Company’s construction of Desert View Watchtower. The great commercial success of Hopi House led the Company to investigate further ways to exploit the Native American mystique at the Canyon. In the early 1930s, therefore, they enlisted Mary Colter to design a building as a concession site to sell Native American arts and crafts at the eastern edge of the Park, not far from the NPS’s Wayside (Tusayan) Museum. Colter came up with the idea to construct a building directly

²⁸² F.A. Kittredge to Park Naturalist, 16 December 1940, Box 114 Folder K1815: Naturalist and Educational Activities 1930-1945, NARA.

on the rim inspired by a mishmash of architectural concepts gleaned from the ruins of ancient structures she had seen elsewhere in the Southwest, but which local ancient Native Americans had never constructed at the Grand Canyon. The structure ultimately consisted of a stone tower with adjoining kiva, or Puebloan ceremonial room, carefully constructed to look as if it was haphazard, crumbling ruins that had been there for centuries.

For the interior of the building, the Company hired Hopi artist Fred Kabotie to paint murals depicting Hopi legends and ancient Puebloan symbols. In his reminiscences, Kabotie indicated that he was free to decide what designs to use. For example, because the Colorado River was one of the major features people observed from the building, he decided to paint the Snake Legend “showing that the first man to float through the canyon was a Hopi—hundreds of years before Major John Wesley Powell’s trip in 1869.”²⁸³ However, less advertised was the fact that Kabotie was not responsible for the other individual artwork that adorns the walls and stairways. As Christine Barnes pointed out, Fred Harvey Company artist Fred Geary replicated pictographs and petroglyphs from sites that Colter and Harvey Indian Department manager Herman Schweizer had seen and found especially compelling or unusual.²⁸⁴

²⁸³ “Fred Kabotie Manuscript,” Fred Harvey Company Collection, Cline Library, NAU. Of course, Kabotie did recall clashing with Colter over the specific tint of the colors he was using.

²⁸⁴ Christine Barnes, *Hopi House: Celebrating 100 Years* (Bend, OR: W.W. West, Inc, 2005), 36.

The Desert View Watchtower was finished in 1932 and opened in 1933, not long after Tusayan Museum opened. Even today, despite having a real, excavated archeological site and artifacts from ancient cultures at its museum, Tusayan ruins do not attract nearly as many visitors as does the nearby Watchtower. Though not technically an interpretive site, and not operated by the NPS, it has been a site of contention over interpretation at the Park for many years.

Even within the NPS, opinions about the building were divided. McKee was far less enthusiastic about the new site than was Superintendent Tillotson. In an oral history interview, McKee recalled that Tillotson defended the tower even though most other people in the NPS, including those in Washington, thought it was a bad idea. Tillotson called it “an authentic recreation of Southwestern Pueblo Indian architecture,” though most people familiar with the project knew it was not.²⁸⁵

McKee in particular complained that the Watchtower interfered with his staff’s interpretive efforts at the Park. He said that it stuck out like a sore thumb and took away from the natural landscape, so that “instead of being something that blended into the background, it was something that stood out and everybody would ask about it from a distance...instead of admiring the beauty of the

²⁸⁵ “Grand Canyon National Park Information Bulletin,” 10 May 1933, Fred Harvey Company Collection, Cline Library, NAU.

canyon.”²⁸⁶ McKee went on to state that he disliked the term “Indian Watchtower” because it was not based on any actual architectural structure but was simply what Colter believed they should look like. He explained that “we of the naturalist force felt resentful that here was a fake natural thing that we refused to describe as an Indian tower to the public when elected. We’d just say the tower at Desert View. And we’d like to have said the sore thumb, but we didn’t dare.”²⁸⁷ Despite the complaints of the naturalist staff, this site would become a major tourist destination at the Canyon, and many visitors still do not realize that the structure was entirely fabricated.

The dedication of the Watchtower in 1933 afforded visitors and locals some of the best opportunities they had had since the dedication of El Tovar and Hopi House to experience local Native American culture. It included a traditional Hopi kiva blessing ceremony, though Navajo and Havasupai also participated in it.²⁸⁸ Kabotie helped to organize several songs and dances that tribal members performed. While the kiva blessing took place inside, as was traditional, the entire ceremony was also repeated at a nearby dance platform so a larger audience could observe it as well. Because the entire ceremony was performed in the Hopi

²⁸⁶ “Edwin McKee Oral History,” GRCA 35718, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

²⁸⁷ Ibid.

²⁸⁸ “De-Ki-Veh’ Souvenir Booklet,” CE EPH IHO-10.11, Arizona Collection, ASU.

language and it included symbolic dances, a souvenir booklet interpreted the ceremony for visitors and gave them tips on how to behave.²⁸⁹

While it seems some parts of the program were included simply to satiate the audience's expectations (such as a ritualized chant addressed to the setting sun at an event that took place in the afternoon), the Hopi seem to have had some say in the program. For instance, the booklet's authors were unable to describe one scheduled dance since "The Hopi, as ever fond of mystery, refuse to give any advance information in regard to this dance, either as to its character or the identity of the dancers."²⁹⁰ The producers of the booklet also seem to not be entirely clear on the meaning or purpose of the dances; at one point they simply speculate on what or whom the characters represent. At the end of the ceremony, all guests were fed a traditional Hopi meal, though barbeque was also available to those preferring a less adventurous diet. At this meal both Hopi and Navajo performed songs around a campfire, and two Hopi women demonstrated how to grind meal on *metates* and make the *piki* bread that was traditional at such a feast.²⁹¹ Native Americans were on hand to guide people through the building and interpret the significance of its design and decorations.²⁹²

²⁸⁹ Ibid.

²⁹⁰ Ibid.

²⁹¹ Ibid.

²⁹² "Grand Canyon National Park Information Bulletin," 10 May 1933, Fred Harvey Company Collection, Cline Library, NAU.

Two years later, Fred Kabotie came back to work at the Watchtower as the manager of the gift shop there. On days when it was not too busy, he would guide people through the tower, explaining the ceremonial objects and his murals, though this was not a part of his job description. He pointed out that, although it was isolated, the site quickly began seeing swarms of visitors.²⁹³ Tillotson and McKee were likely as much surprised by this as they had been the popularity of Tusayan Museum, not only because of their disregard for cultural interpretation but also, at least in McKee's case, because he disdained the fraudulent reality it promoted.

In the same year that the Watchtower opened, the Fred Harvey Company prepared a manual for its drivers and guides to help them interpret it to visitors, since so many guests and employees were asking questions about it. It pointed out that it was not based on any actual structure, but was inspired by ancient ruins whose original use and purpose was unknown, though Colter fancied that they were ancient lookout towers such as one would find at a European castle, an idea that archeologists strongly dispute. It described kivas as being like a "Masonic Temple," a place for men only to hold religious rites and meetings. It mentioned that Hopi believe the place where they emerged into the modern world was located in the Grand Canyon, and gave a brief synopsis of this story. It also gave a

²⁹³ "Fred Kabotie Manuscript," Fred Harvey Company Collection, Cline Library, NAU. Kabotie worked at the site in this capacity for several years; in 1940 an article appeared in *Desert Magazine* that talked about an unnamed Hopi guide who would take tourists through the tower and tell them about other sites to see in the area. A.R. Hipkoe, "Indian Watch Tower" *Desert Magazine* (June 1940).

detailed explanation of the Snake Legend depicted in a painting inside the Watchtower, as well as other paintings Kabotie completed there. It ended with an appendix containing additional information on Hopi legends, a biography of Fred Kabotie, and excerpts about modern Native Americans from other authors.²⁹⁴ Since the NPS had no similar publication on local Native American myths and culture, it likely became the basic manual for their interpretive staff on the subject as well.

The renewed interest in Native American culture sparked by Tusayan Museum and fanned by the opening of the Watchtower influenced the development of the annual NPS circular for 1934. As with previous editions, it relied on Native American imagery and metaphors to capture readers' attention. However, it included much more text attempting to flesh out the connection between Native Americans and the Grand Canyon, though in a way meant to attract visitors rather than enlighten them. For instance, alongside photographs of Native Americans, it stated "The Grand Canyon region is one of the few areas where the red man still lives in his native state, primitive but happy, unchanged by the white man's civilization" and included a picture of a small, smiling girl in traditional clothes with the caption "A Navajo belle."²⁹⁵ As before, the publishers

²⁹⁴ *Manual for Drivers and Guides Descriptive of the Indian Watchtower at Desert View and its Relation, Architecturally, to the Prehistoric Ruins of the Southwest* (Grand Canyon National Park: Fred Harvey, 1933), 8, 10-13, 26-27, 41.

²⁹⁵ *Rules and Regulations: Grand Canyon National Park, 1934* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1934), 13, 34.

were still playing on romanticized Euro-American ideas of Native Americans as an ancient, noble, happy-go-lucky race unaffected by the harsh realities and fast pace of modern life.

The circular portrayed human history with a romantic hue, noting that “The region is filled with the lore of American pioneers, Spanish settlers of many centuries ago, and myths and legends of an Indian occupancy lost in the past.”²⁹⁶ Despite the naturalist staff’s disdain for the site, the circular touted the Watchtower and Kabotie’s paintings. Unlike earlier versions, this one obscured the modern Native American presence at the Canyon—gone were the references to Havasupai living at Indian Garden cultivating fields, or Navajo camps near the hotels. Furthermore, the circular described the naturalist programs available on geological features, flora, and fauna, but mentioned none on human history.²⁹⁷ Therefore, while Native American imagery was used to attract visitors, it was still not incorporated into programming among the interpretive staff.

Even as the NPS and concessionaires attempted to develop more Native American interpretation at the Canyon, it seems that popular culture was moving in a different direction. For instance, an article in the popular *Arizona Highways* magazine from 1935 completely obscured the Native American presence at the Canyon. Instead, it depicted Euro-Americans as the divinely appointed custodians of the place, with the author describing the Canyon as “the magnificent gift Don

²⁹⁶ Ibid., 34.

²⁹⁷ Ibid., 31.

Lopez, the first white man to see it, accepted from Providence for Caucasian posterity.”²⁹⁸ Just five years earlier, the magazine had included an article that described the Native American and Euro-American presences as part of an interactive continuum. The one thing that this article had in common with NPS interpretation at the time was an attempt to obscure the *modern* Native American presence in favor of triumphant narratives of Euro-American progress. For the rest of the decade, almost all references that the naturalists made to Native Americans in their publications focused on the ancient people who had lived at the Canyon.²⁹⁹

The New Deal’s Impact on McKee’s Interpretive Plans

In November of 1932, Franklin Delano Roosevelt won the presidency of the United States, and almost immediately upon taking office in March of the following year began implementing the legislative package known today as the New Deal. At the Grand Canyon this relief made a swift yet lasting impact with the labor and funding that it provided for various projects at the Park.

Most directly for visitor education, it meant that the interpretive division regained its financial footing. Following the brief budgetary and staffing cut of 1933, McKee’s budget expanded and his prior workforce of six naturalists was

²⁹⁸ “New Facts about Arizona’s Front Yard,” *Arizona Highways* 11:4 (April 1935): 6, 28.

²⁹⁹ *Rules and Regulations: Grand Canyon National Park, 1936* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1936), 7. The most significant exception to this was the 1936 circular, which for the first time acknowledged the Paiute as one of the tribes with a traditionally strong connection to the Grand Canyon.

reinstated for 1934, with two permanent and four temporary personnel listed in the “Educational Department.”³⁰⁰ In his 1934 year-end report, McKee estimated that his reinstated staff of half a dozen had reached about 70% of the nearly 150,000 visitors to the Canyon, a great improvement from the previous year. Audience participation in interpretive activities remained high since “Advantages of the opportunities offered by interpretive activities of the Service was [*sic*] being recognized by the visiting public.” In particular, campfire programs were so popular that they were filled beyond capacity every night.³⁰¹

Another aspect of the NPS interpretive program that seemed to benefit immediately from the New Deal was the annual circulars and promotional materials that the Washington Office published for the Park with the infusion of money gained from FDR’s new legislation. These sources allow the most consistent glimpse into the NPS’s vision for the Grand Canyon, including the interpretive message told there. The NPS and Department of the Interior seemed to expand their work in publicizing and promoting the parks, including Grand Canyon, during the 1930s. This was likely meant to stimulate the economy on many levels, such as by putting artists and writers to work developing travel literature as they were doing as part of the Federal Writers’ Project and other WPA initiatives, by spurring development in the parks with the help of the CCC, and luring visitors who could spend their money in the local economies. Michael

³⁰⁰ Louis Schellbach, “Manuscript of Interpretive Data,” 14 October 1942, GRCA 58396, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

³⁰¹ *Ibid.*

Anderson indicates that during the Depression the NPS was intent on increasing the economic value of the Parks as tourist attractions, which in part relied on having solid and interesting interpretive programming. While the national NPS office continued to publish circulars, press releases, and respond to information requests, the local administrators left most regional advertising to concessionaires or local tourism or chamber of commerce offices and instead focused on educational goals and other means of enhancing visitor experiences.³⁰²

In 1933 the US Government Printing Office produced the first tourism guide for the Canyon, a leaflet describing a tour route through the Park with information about key points of interest.³⁰³ The brochure told people what they could see at Yavapai Observation Station and the interpretive services they could expect there. Taking its cues from the popularity of local concessionaires' publications and advertisements, it also relied on Native American imagery and stories to attract interest, relying on familiar, romantic ideas of a vanished Indian civilization. For example, it notes: "Masonry found on the small butte just beyond Moran Point is believed to represent an ancient fort. This structure was built by early Pueblo Indians. Several hundred of these dwelling sites, dating from a period a few centuries before the coming of Columbus, have been discovered

³⁰² Anderson, *Polishing the Jewel*, 33.

³⁰³ "Guide Leaflet No. 1," 1933, DG-67, Arizona Collection, ASU. The government reprinted an almost identical copy of this guide in 1940 as "Guide Leaflet No. 3."

along the rim and in the canyon.”³⁰⁴ This description shows their Eurocentric interpretation of the ruins as a fort, though Native Americans did not build such structures (at least as conceptualized in Western culture). It also fails to point out that there was any modern Native American presence at the Canyon, implying that they had disappeared before Columbus arrived on the continent, which in turn helps paint the area as an uninhabited wilderness that Euro-Americans could claim guilt-free and transform into a national park. Also in 1933, the annual circular for the Grand Canyon was revamped, and revealed to the public new developments in interpretation at the Canyon, such as the recently opened Wayside Museum and the novel naturalist-led airline flights.

As mentioned above, when CCC workers began arriving at the Canyon in 1934, it freed up a great deal of labor hours for the naturalist staff at the Park, allowing them to complete more projects and explore new interpretive ideas. For example, a new area of science, climatology, became part of the interpretive program’s themes in 1934 as the division started long-term research on the topic that year.³⁰⁵ McKee tried to acquire projection equipment to show films on site but also away from the park to help expand their interpretive message. He even wrote the script for a film, produced by the NPS Washington Office, called *Tracks of Time in Grand Canyon*. Meant to focus primarily on geology and natural features, in its original version it did mention early Spanish and Euro-

³⁰⁴ Ibid.

³⁰⁵ “Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1934,” GRCA 54706, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

American explorers and the beginnings of tourism at the Canyon, though nothing about Native Americans. But in later versions all this cultural history was eliminated from the film. Instead, it emphasized the Yavapai Observation Station and naturalist activities there.³⁰⁶ To further facilitate interpretive contact, the staff designed and installed educational trail signs all along the Kaibab and Bright Angel Trails, and developed educational leaflets for several other trails. They also installed a display of dinosaur fossil footprints as an educational exhibit at Yavapai Observation Station, possibly as an attempt to harness the growing interest in dinosaurs that had been whetted with recent popular films such as *Lost World* and *King Kong*.³⁰⁷ They did much of this without McKee's supervision, however, since toward the end of 1934, the Washington, D.C., NPS office called him there for four months to consult on interpretation and education issues, illustrating again what a major reputation McKee made for himself in the field of interpretation and for the Grand Canyon's interpretive program.³⁰⁸

As New Deal programs gathered steam, federal agencies scrambled to ensure they would get their own piece of the pie. For example, in 1933 Congress created the Public Works Administration, a program designed to employ men to

³⁰⁶ Louis Schellbach, "Manuscript of Interpretive Data," 14 October 1942, GRCA 58396, Grand Canyon Museum Collections; Edwin McKee, "Tracks of Time in Grand Canyon," Box 115 Folder K3015: Photography: Production and Acquisition of Motion Pictures 1926-47, NARA.

³⁰⁷ Louis Schellbach, "Manuscript of Interpretive Data," 14 October 1942, GRCA 58396, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

³⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

construct roads, dams, and other public building projects around the country. The following year, Ansel Hall, head of the NPS Field Division of Education, instructed GCNP Superintendent Miner Tillotson and McKee to develop preliminary museum plans for the Park, since “in light of the developments of the past year or two it seems desirable to be ready with plans in case an unexpected building program eventuates.”³⁰⁹ Tillotson for years had been reporting that one of the Park’s greatest needs was a centrally located museum to house the items that McKee and his staff were continuously gathering for research and display.³¹⁰ McKee therefore began laying out his dream for a museum in Grand Canyon Village that would tell the entire story of the Grand Canyon and serve as a headquarters for the naturalist staff—a dream that lingered in the minds of GCNP administrators and naturalists for years, yet sadly was never realized. Other building projects for the interpretive division that McKee proposed in this plan included a museum at Bright Angel Point, lookout stations at Lipan and Havasupai Points, and other smaller self-operating stations, all emphasizing natural features or information about the Canyon.³¹¹

McKee’s blueprints envisioned a large two-story building with a five-room museum on the first floor and office space above. The first two rooms

³⁰⁹ Ansel Hall to Minor Tillotson, 27 September 1934, Box 89 Folder D3415: Museum Building File 1925-1949 [1/2], NARA.

³¹⁰ “Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1931,” GRCA 54706, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

³¹¹ Minor Tillotson to Ansel Hall, 28 September 1934, Box 89 Folder D3415: Museum building File 1925-1949 [1/2], NARA.

focused on geology while the third emphasized biology. McKee described proposed exhibits for these rooms in great detail. The other two rooms emphasized human history. One looked at regional history beginning in 1540, while the other emphasized the modern Indian, focusing on the Navajo, Hopi, and Havasupai. The structure also housed a lecture hall, office space, reference library, and naturalist workshop and storage rooms. Tillotson wrote a letter to the Director of the NPS in Washington, D.C., with detailed estimates on its projected \$200,000 cost and its justifications as an educational project in an effort to get it built. He emphasized that one of the Park's greatest needs was a central museum and educational headquarters, since collections were scattered in different buildings, the naturalist staff was crowded into a single room with no laboratories or workspace, and there was not sufficient room to show exhibits or hold indoor lectures.³¹² The plan even progressed to the point where McKee and Tillotson met with the NPS Assistant Director and Assistant Landscape Architect to discuss the designs.³¹³ However, despite reiterations of the necessity of this type of facility at the park even into the 21st Century, one has never been constructed.

Another project at GCNP related to the PWA that also failed to materialize was a plan to develop an NPS interpretive site to compete with Hopi House. As Grand Canyon Village grew, many members of the Havasupai tribe had moved to

³¹² Minor Tillotson to Director of the NPS, 24 December 1934, Box 89 Folder D3415: Museum Building File 1925-1949 [1/2], NARA.

³¹³ Minor Tillotson to Ansel Hall, 4 April 1935, Box 89 Folder D3415: Museum Building File 1925-1949 [1/2], NARA.

residential camps in the area to seek work. The NPS later consolidated them into a small settlement known as Supai Camp, a site that administrators and locals saw as an eyesore. In 1933 the PWA gave the park \$9,000 to construct cabins to house Havasupai working for the NPS (mostly constructing trails) at the Canyon. At first, the administrators considered constructing cabins resembling *hogans* (traditional Navajo style homes) so they would serve a dual function as housing and a public exhibit somewhat like Hopi House.³¹⁴ Instead, they decided to tear down all the homes and build entirely new houses—all without consulting any of the people living there.³¹⁵ Similar ideas for the site continued to resurface over the subsequent years, but were likewise not implemented. For instance, a few years later NPS Associate Director Arthur Demaray wrote to the Park Superintendent about an idea to create a “model Havasupai Indian colony” that would serve as a sort of living exhibit open to the public where tourists could watch tribal residents create arts and crafts (particularly baskets) and then purchase the items. Cammerer disdained this idea, however, writing that it was obvious it would never work because, in his opinion, the Havasupai did not have an interesting culture and were unattractive to whites.³¹⁶

The fact that CCC workers were taking over some of the more menial construction jobs and non-educational tasks for which naturalists were previously

³¹⁴ Wray, 58.

³¹⁵ “Jimmy Lloyd Oral History,” GRCA 40190, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

³¹⁶ Wray, 78, 128.

responsible helped the staff better respond when visitation to the Park exploded to 214,407 in 1935.³¹⁷ Furthermore, because of this growing demand for interpretive services, three CCC enrollees were assigned to assist the interpretive force over the summer. This allowed staff to implement several changes to their interpretive programming that year. Tillotson pointed out that the naturalist staff was increasingly taking the initiative to actively educate people on many topics rather than just responding to visitors' questions.³¹⁸ The GCNHA stopped publishing "Nature Notes," and instead produced informational leaflets of facts about the Canyon that were distributed to visitors at various locations. Auto caravans were so popular they were becoming too cumbersome and the naturalist staff had to add another tour, and even considered having three each day. Participation in naturalist programs on the North Rim increased 50%. McKee considered expanding the interpretive services there by installing exhibits in one of the Utah Parks Company cabins, but decided that the space was not suitable. He also allowed naturalists giving campfire talks to have a short musical program before the regular lecture, likely in an attempt to compete with the entertainment being offered by the Fred Harvey Company. Staff gave the Yavapai lecture three times

³¹⁷ Anderson, *Polishing the Jewel*, 90.

³¹⁸ M.R. Tillotson and Frank J. Taylor, *Grand Canyon Country* (Stanford University, California: Stanford University Press, 1935), 51.

daily, and a short talk on the history of Pueblo Indians and Cliff Dwellers several times daily at the Wayside Museum.³¹⁹

Though McKee left the Canyon for part of the year to finish work on a paper for the Carnegie Institution, the naturalist staff achieved a great deal in 1936, largely because of the CCC's assistance. Visitor numbers again rose by almost 60,000, and the Superintendent's Annual Report for 1936 noted that "The large increase in the number of visitors consequently increased the demands for the educational services." While CCC enrollees manned the information desk, naturalists could plan exhibits for the Colorado River trailside shelter house at the foot of the Bright Angel Trail near Phantom Ranch and make trailside exhibits of fossils along the Bright Angel and Tonto Trails. The staff worked with the CCC to repair the Wayside Museum's ceiling and floor.³²⁰ Naturalists also found time to improve the interpretation at Yavapai Observation Station, placing next to each binocular a label with a color picture of what it was pointed at with a short explanation to the side so it was easier to understand what feature the user was supposed to be observing.³²¹

³¹⁹ "Superintendent's Annual Report, 1935," GRCA 54706, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

³²⁰ "Superintendent's Annual Report, 1936," GRCA 54706, Grand Canyon Museum Collections; Louis Schellbach, "Manuscript of Interpretive Data," 14 October 1942, GRCA 58396, Grand Canyon Museum Collections; Anderson, *Polishing the Jewel*, 90.

³²¹ *Rules and Regulations, 1936*, 7.

The CCC was not the only source of change and improvement in the division in 1936. When Junior Park Naturalist Donald McHenry left to become Chief Naturalist at the National Capitol Parks in Washington, D.C., Louis Schellbach decided to take a pay cut in order to return to the Canyon to fill the vacant position. Schellbach had spent the last six months in Washington, D.C., helping to install exhibits in a new NPS museum there. In a letter to McKee expressing his pleasure to be working together again, Schellbach indicated that he had never let the issue of interpretation at the Canyon get far from his mind. Schellbach told McKee “I have been studying our museum problems some time now and have checked them with known institutions of merit East and West and I feel sure that at the Canyon if we plan wisely and well, and insist on what we want we will have one mighty fine Educational Service with mechanisms that will aid greatly.” Schellbach expressed his enthusiasm towards working at ground-level interpretation again, telling McKee that he could not wait to rejoin him so that “we can do things a heap better—gained a heap from my six months work in Washington and I believe its all going to aid us in putting over Grand Canyon in a fine way.”³²²

In later years McKee spoke of Schellbach as an excellent museum technician who showed great talent in thinking of ways to exhibit things to make them meaningful to the public, as well as a good lecturer who helped develop a

³²² Louis Schellbach to Edwin McKee, 3 March 1936, GRCA 64672, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

strong program for presenting information³²³ Schellbach's experience made him comfortable in giving advice to McKee on interpretive issues at the park. For instance, when McKee toyed with the idea of installing a motion picture machine at Yavapai Observation Station, Schellbach discouraged the idea since he had seen firsthand that they were expensive and needed frequent repairs. Soon after arriving at the Canyon, Schellbach put his training to use by "the professionalizing of the exhibits and cases at the Yavapai Observation Station," lining cases with monks cloth, constructing specimen mounts, treating exhibit cases with oil and wax, and making drapes and curtains for windows.³²⁴

Interpretive staff participated in two interesting events in 1937. One was a radio broadcast from the air as a plane flew McKee and others, including Hopi Sam Penahinye, over the Canyon. This was one in a series of broadcasts from a flying studio in a plane above various National Parks. In this 30 minute program, McKee and his companions talked about the Canyon as a barrier to life, the Native Americans living there, how to get to the Canyon, and other topics.³²⁵ The other event brought the national media spotlight to the Canyon. An expedition was organized to explore the top of Shiva Temple, a butte with a large top that some scientists guessed might contain dinosaurs or other fearsome ancient

³²³ "Edwin McKee Oral History," GRCA 35718, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

³²⁴ Louis Schellbach, "Manuscript of Interpretive Data," 14 October 1942, GRCA 58396, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

³²⁵ "National Park Broadcasts from the Air," *Standard Oil Bulletin* 25:2 (June 1937).

organisms that had been isolated and left behind by evolution. For three weeks hourly broadcasts were given from the base camps to an enthralled national audience, reporters from across the country came to cover the story, and international news agencies reported the story in newspapers and on the radio. Of course, the predictions and speculations turned out to be false.³²⁶ These events captivated national audiences who were increasingly turning to their radios for cheap entertainment as well as to listen to FDR restore their trust in the American dream and strengthen their national pride.

In terms of their regular duties, the interpretive force continued working to “advance the educational advantages for the public through research, study and new methods of presentation.”³²⁷ They continued holding three talks a day at Yavapai Observation Station on the history and origin of the Canyon and two at the Wayside Museum on the ruin and early man in the Southwest. On the North Rim, CCC workers assisted the division in conducting an archeological site survey, while Schellbach led interpretive training for the concessionaires, teaching them about the NPS goals, ideals, regulations, Canyon statistics, natural history information, and interpretation so that they could give more accurate

³²⁶ H.G. Franse, “Shiva Temple Takes a Bow” *Arizona Highways* 13:11 (Nov 1937): 2, 18, 33.

³²⁷ M.R. Tillotson, “Annual Report for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1937, Grand Canyon National Park,” 20 July 1937, GRCA 58675, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

information to visitors.³²⁸ Not much would change in the following year; demand for lectures, field trips, nature hikes, and auto caravans continued to rise, and Yavapai Observation Station was so busy that the staff of two permanent naturalists and five seasonals were now giving four or five talks daily to accommodate them all.³²⁹

Administrators continued trying to get their slice of the New Deal pie. Tillotson in 1938 wrote to the director of the NPS mentioning that he had submitted about 70 proposals for PWA and CCC projects that could be done in the Park. Among these was a revamped proposal to construct a central museum on the South Rim at a cost of \$15,000 by converting the administration building. However, he and McKee privately believed that it would better serve visitors if the Park could develop two separate smaller units, a natural history specimen display building at the campground and a museum on the North Rim near Bright Angel Point since no other interpretive service was available there. Just as in 1934, this proposal was not accepted, though the CCC got approval to work on some of the smaller projects, such as constructing a fossil footprint exhibit *in situ*

³²⁸ Ibid.; Louis Schellbach, "Manuscript of Interpretive Data," 14 October 1942, GRCA 58396, Grand Canyon Museum Collections. It seems that at this time concessionaires were becoming more receptive to NPS interpretive ideas. For example, an NPS brochure for the park for 1937 pointed out that many of the interpretive devices that the NPS pioneered at the Canyon had been adopted by the concessionaires, such as binocular telescopes at Lookout Studio and Verkamp's Curios. "Grand Canyon National Park, 1937," DG-9, Arizona State University Archives and Special Collections.

³²⁹ "Superintendent's Annual Report, 1938," GRCA 54706, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

on Hermit Trail to match the one at Yavapai Observation Station and developing trails for self-guided nature walks.³³⁰

In 1939 the staff was able to expand its ability to interpret cultural history at the Canyon through various means. A grant from the GCNHA kept the naturalist staff busy gathering information on natural and archeological resources. Another grant allowed them to research the early Euro-American history of the area by gathering articles from local newspapers from 1885-1910. They also received fragments of the boats Powell and his men had used to navigate the Colorado River, as well as a donation from Powell family members of papers and other items; these fragments and documents would be used in interpretive displays at the Canyon for many years. Furthermore, McKee proposed creating a Hopi craftsman exhibit at the Wayside Museum, with a family of Hopi camping nearby making pottery, baskets, katchinas, bows and arrows, and other arts and crafts. He noted that his staff had experimented with it before and it had been popular with visitors as “an exhibit of real educational value.”³³¹ This was likely a dig at the inauthentic nearby Desert View Watchtower, and an obvious attempt to compete with it and Hopi House. The BIA and the Park Superintendent approved, and apparently this plan was carried out for the rest of the summer of 1939 but not continued thereafter.

³³⁰ Minor Tillotson to Director of the NPS, 23 July 1938, GRCA 64672, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

³³¹ Edwin McKee to GCNP Superintendent, 15 July 1939, Box 102 Folder D6215: Museum and Exhibit Activities: Planning, Preparation, Maintenance, and Preservation 1940-53, NARA.

This broadening cultural emphasis is evident in the wider variety of subjects covered at campfire talks, including wildlife problems; human uses of local plants; the Navajo, Hopi, and Havasupai; National Parks in general; and even cliff dwellings and pueblos.³³² This variety was necessary because, at that time, visitors tended to stay for many days or even weeks at a time, so interpreters would often see the same faces again and again and needed fresh material to keep their interest. These returning visitors meant that the programs were entertaining and successful, but also meant that the staff had to work harder to keep things new, diverse, and interesting. Therefore, unlike most modern tourists who typically only spend a few hours at the Canyon, the naturalist staff at that time was able to give visitors a much more in-depth familiarity with the Canyon.³³³

The continued availability of CCC labor allowed administrators to reapportion the naturalist force through the end of the decade. For example, the North Rim information desk had a CCC person staffing it to free up a ranger for full time duty elsewhere. In 1939 Schellbach requested permission to get two CCC men assigned to help his department with interpretive duties like maintaining contact with the public, keeping exhibits in order, and preventing theft and vandalism, a request that the regional director approved. In September, McKee again left the Canyon, this time for an extended period, when he accepted

³³² "Schedule of Campfire Talks," 1940, Box 114 Folder K1815: Naturalist and Educational Activities 1930-1945, NARA.

³³³ "Edwin McKee Oral History," GRCA 35718, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

a Yale General Study fellowship. He did not return to the Canyon until June of the following year; in the meantime, Schellbach filled in for him as Acting Park Naturalist.³³⁴ That winter, Schellbach was the only naturalist available at the South Rim, and it was his duty to keep Yavapai Observation Station open all day, give the afternoon lecture, maintain its exhibits, and give a lecture at Bright Angel Lodge every evening.³³⁵

In 1940, Grand Canyon administrators received a strange request that could have changed the course of interpretation at the Canyon. An unknown benefactor had made it known that he was interested in endowing Yavapai Observation Station and taking over its operation. In response to these confidential overtures, administrators pointed out that the NPS owned and financed Yavapai Observation Station, but that the Park could use contributions to develop other stations or especially “a vitally needed central interpretive and information museum unit.” Once administrators found out that the secret potential philanthropist was Lincoln Ellsworth, a wealthy, adventurous American who was fascinated with scientific discovery, they decided to cautiously pursue the offer. Although the middleman attempting to arrange the deal indicated that Ellsworth’s “personal peculiarities [might] make it difficult to have him in complete charge of an instrument like the Grand Canyon Museum,” the NPS seemed excited about

³³⁴ Louis Schellbach, “Manuscript of Interpretive Data,” 14 October 1942, GRCA 58396, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

³³⁵ J.V. Lloyd to H.C. Bryant, 27 September 1939, Box 114 Folder K1815: Naturalist and Educational Activities 1930-1945, NARA.

the possibilities of such an alliance. McKee and Tillotson dusted off the old plans they had made for a PWA-funded central museum and sent them to Ellsworth to show him what a \$100,000 investment would buy. Ellsworth responded that he was interested, but perhaps not willing to pay that large of a sum. A flurry of correspondence flew back and forth as negotiations continued, but eventually Ellsworth was drawn instead to a project in the Antarctic, where he had conducted many prior expeditions.³³⁶

With these failed attempts to cash in on New Deal and private funding to build a new facility, the interpretive division instead had to take over the recently abandoned local three-room school building to move the naturalist workshop there and use it for storage and display space. This was located near the Village, and was intended as a temporary solution until a central museum could be built. It housed all the Park's study collections, reference library, reading/exhibit room, and the laboratory and workrooms for the naturalist force. Visitors with above-average interest in certain topics could come to learn more, and teachers could visit to learn different pedagogical techniques.³³⁷ These types of personal connections were important for the naturalist staff to develop, since as a Department of the Interior Information Service press release from that time stated,

³³⁶ Various correspondence, Box 102 Folder D6215: Museum and Exhibit Activities: Planning, Preparation, Maintenance, and Preservation 1940-53, NARA.

³³⁷ Louis Schellbach to John R. Fitzsimmons, 26 November 1941, Box 114 Folder K1815: Naturalist and Educational Activities 1930-1945, NARA.

“Uncle Sam’s best bet among the popular features offered in his national park areas are the naturalist programs.”³³⁸

In 1940, the Park organized an event commemorating the 400th anniversary of the European “discovery” of the Canyon. Interpretive programming associated with this event included a reenactment that climaxed with Spanish explorers reaching the rim of the Canyon. Several Hopi also participated in the reenactment, reliving “the peaceful part which their ancestors played in welcoming Captain Cardenas and his party to the country and in leading them to the Grand Canyon.”³³⁹ Though highly Eurocentric in its depiction of the cultural history of the Canyon, the event also helped spark public and administrative interest in the Park’s cultural resources. That year, the chief of the archeological sites division wrote to the director of the NPS pointing out the importance of archeological sites at the Canyon. As he stated, “While not large, or spectacular, these number over 400” and experts recognized that “Grand Canyon sites have more than ordinary scientific importance, representing a fringe of peripheral distribution of what some leading Southwestern students...regard as a separate distinct cultural group.”³⁴⁰ In other words, leading scientists realized that

³³⁸ “Department of the Interior Information Service Press Release,” 7 November 1940, GRCA 58733, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

³³⁹ Frank Kittredge, “Memorandum,” 24 September 1940, Box 117 Folder K3819: Publications, National Park Service: Free Informational Literature, Park Bulletins, 1938-51, NARA.

³⁴⁰ A.R. Kelly to Director of the NPS, 10 February 1940, Box 102 Folder D6215: Museum and Exhibit Activities: Planning, Preparation, Maintenance, and Preservation 1940-53, NARA.

archeological sites at the Canyon were unlike those found elsewhere in the region, and therefore the Canyon had a unique story to tell about human history, yet because of the nearby natural spectacle it was all but ignored.

At the dawn of WWII, therefore, NPS interpretive programming was still immensely popular and vibrant. Kittredge reported that the Yavapai Observation Station was perpetually crowded, the lectures at Bright Angel Lodge drew from 150 to 300 people every night, and campfire programs had an average attendance of 200 people.³⁴¹ However, significant changes were on the horizon. New NPS policies limited the amount of time workers could stay at a specific park and in a specific position. McKee was reaching the end of the time he was allowed to stay at GCNP, yet he refused to accept a transfer to any other NPS unit. Although administrators regretted losing such a valuable asset, McKee went on leave until the end of the year, when his forced resignation from the NPS took effect. This did not end his relationship with the Park, or with the interpretation division of the NPS. In spring of the following year, he was appointed as a collaborator in the Branch of Research and Interpretation of the Washington Office of the NPS, but he found ways to stay close to the Canyon.³⁴² In his place his protégé Louis Schellbach would step in to guide the naturalist division with the same devotion and demand for excellence McKee had exhibited, but World War II, budget cuts,

³⁴¹ F.A. Kittredge to Director of the NPS, 3 October 1940, Box 114 Folder K1815: Naturalist and Educational Activities 1930-1945, NARA.

³⁴² Louis Schellbach, "Manuscript of Interpretive Data," 14 October 1942, GRCA 58396, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

different vacationing habits, and other changes signaled that the Golden Age was drawing to a close.

Summary

Though many Americans often see the 1930s as a bleak time in the nation's history as it struggled through a Great Depression, it was a time of exciting expansion and development within the national parks. At Grand Canyon, the autonomy granted to the local staff, the federal funding for a variety of projects, the vision and creativity of men such as Edwin McKee and Louis Schellbach, and the enthusiasm of visitors means that this period could even be considered a golden age of interpretation at the Park.

The most significant step backward that interpretation took during this time was in its construal of the Native Americans associated with the Grand Canyon. The NPS and concessionaires alike tended to disregard the *modern* Native Americans at the Canyon, and instead focused on celebrating a romanticized and mythologized past. Sites such as Wayside (Tusayan) Museum and Desert View Watchtower emphasized the ancient Native American presence at the Canyon, illustrating a significant change from the earliest days of tourism when visitors were highly conscious of the modern Native American presence and were often drawn there by the unique cultural experiences and interactions with Native Americans it offered as well as its archeological stories. Ironically, however, despite the NPS virtually ignoring Indian ties to the Canyon and even occasionally removing them from local history, academics at the time praised the NPS for its role in bringing more attention to Native Americans. For instance,

ethnobotanist A.F. Whiting wrote that few people, including tourists, knew about the Havasupai and “apart from the work of the Indian Service and Park Service, there has been little organized interest in the Havasupai.”³⁴³

During and after World War II, it became much harder to get facilities constructed for both the NPS and concessionaires at the Park. The NPS Washington Office attempted to standardize interpretation throughout the National Park System, and exert more control over the messages and methods being employed. Visitation to national parks exploded, and an increasingly diverse population arrived at parks with a variety of expectations and needs for interpreters to meet. At the same time, however, funding remained static, forcing GCNP interpretive staff to stretch themselves thin trying to maintain the high quality services they had been accustomed to providing. Though interpreters continued to pour their hearts and souls into their work, the end of the 1930s marked the end of the golden age of interpretation at Grand Canyon National Park.

³⁴³ Steven A. Weber and P. David Seaman, eds., *Havasupai Habitat: A.F. Whiting's Ethnography of a Traditional Indian Culture* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1985), 13.

CHAPTER 5

STAGNATION AND RECOVERY: THE 1940s

By the end of the 1930s, the clouds of war had gathered over Europe, and Americans were becoming increasingly afraid that they might get caught in the conflict. The fear of war led to an increase in military spending and production, which affected the budgets of all federal agencies and threatened the natural resources of national parks and monuments.³⁴⁴ It also led to a burst of patriotism, which imbued how people saw national parks and how interpreters talked about them to the public.

At the Grand Canyon, the World War II era was a time of stagnation. Rationing, travel restrictions, and altered priorities meant visitation dropped from 436,566 people in 1941 to just 64,568 people in 1944, many of them military personnel on leave.³⁴⁵ Louis Schellbach, who had just taken over control of the naturalist division from McKee in early 1941, became a one-man show as budget cuts and military service siphoned off his staff and left him the sole interpreter for the entire park. The one bright spot for Schellbach during the war was the appointment of Harold C. Bryant, one of the original supporters of interpretive services in national parks, as GCNP park superintendent in late 1941. Together

³⁴⁴ Lary M. Dilsaver, ed., *America's National Park System: The Critical Documents* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1994), 165. Western parks mostly faced threats of grazing, lumbering, and mining.

³⁴⁵ Michael F. Anderson, *Polishing the Jewel: An Administrative History of Grand Canyon National Park* (Grand Canyon: Grand Canyon Association, 2000), 90.

Schellbach and Bryant would help Park interpretation survive these temporary doldrums and poise it for a major postwar renewal.

Louis Schellbach and Harold C. Bryant Take Charge

After four years of working with Edwin McKee at the Grand Canyon, Louis Schellbach took over as Park Naturalist following McKee's resignation (effective at the beginning of 1941), and continued to head the Naturalist Division until 1957. During their overlapping years, these two figures together laid much of the groundwork for interpretation at the Canyon, developing a theory and understanding of their mission at the Canyon that would guide the Naturalist Division for many years.

Schellbach was born in New York in 1887. He served in the U.S. Cavalry during WWI, was a gun captain in the Naval Reserve, served as state archeologist of Nevada for five years, and worked at the Museum of the American Indian, Aztec Ruins National Monument, and the Interior Department Museum in Washington, D.C.³⁴⁶ He studied art for a while at Pratt Institute of Art in New York because he wanted training in drawing natural history subjects as a way to help educate others. One of his classmates at the Pratt Institute was Norman Rockwell. Schellbach's artistic training benefited him in his later career when he designed and built museum exhibits.³⁴⁷ Known as "a slave to accuracy," he

³⁴⁶ Mike Buchheit, "The Family that Climbs Together: A Granddaughter's Journey to Schellbach Butte" *Grand Canyon Views* XI:I (Spring 2005): 1.

³⁴⁷ "Preston Schellbach Oral History," GRCA 35722, Grand Canyon Museum Collections; Natt Dodge, "Mister Grand Canyon," *National Parks Magazine* (Dec 1959): 4.



Fig. 4. Louis Schellbach examines some of the interpretive division's research collections in the Naturalist Workshop. Schellbach's artistic training, museum experience, and dedication to his job were invaluable to keeping the Park's interpretive program active and respected during the WWII and postwar era. GRCA 09477, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

worked to collect and document specimens of rocks, plants, birds, mammals, insects, and historical items.³⁴⁸ Even after his retirement on October 31, 1957, at age 70, he spent his spare time making exhibit panels for museums.³⁴⁹

Some of Schellbach's innovations at Grand Canyon spread throughout the park system, such as a "Layman's Herbarium" that simply and quickly introduced

³⁴⁸ Buchheit, "The Family that Climbs Together," 2.

³⁴⁹ Dodge, "Mister Grand Canyon," 3.

visitors to local flora. Each season he took care to train new seasonal staff members, insisting that they demonstrate “absolute accuracy in all their statements” yet were always courteous, friendly, and informal but dignified in their attitude. Schellbach put his artistic skills to work, personally revising all exhibits in Yavapai Observation Station. He also insisted that “accurate interpretation depended upon sound and complete basic knowledge of park values, without favoritism for any one field” so he systematically collected and preserved a variety of specimens and items from the Park. His reputation as one of the top interpreters in the system drew many young naturalists who wanted to work under him. As a result, Regional Naturalist Natt Dodge reported in 1959, “Today it is a mark of distinction among Service naturalists to be a Schellbach ‘graduate,’ and scattered throughout the system are many ‘alumni’ of his Grand Canyon training program.”³⁵⁰

Schellbach most enjoyed interacting with the public in his role as interpreter, and his skills in this job are confirmed by dozens of newspaper clippings, letters, and other items kept by his family. Paul Schulz, who worked as a naturalist at the Canyon in the years around World War II and later served as Chief Naturalist for the Park, described him as a “superb” interpreter whose stories invariably entertained and delighted audiences.³⁵¹ Schulz characterized Schellbach as an inspiring boss, “a true artist, a thinker, a craftsman, a scientist,

³⁵⁰ Ibid., 5.

³⁵¹ “Paul Schulz Oral History,” GRCA 35738, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

and a man with a lot of class,” and though he could be “a bit of an egotist” Schulz held him in high regard.³⁵² Louise Hinchliffe, who worked with Schellbach for many years, recalled that even though he gave his Yavapai lecture thousands of times, he never lost his enthusiasm and enjoyed personal contact with visitors, making him “really an inspiring person to work with.”³⁵³

In 1954 the Secretary of the Interior awarded Schellbach the Distinguished Service Medal, the department’s highest civilian award, for what one of his former ranger-naturalists described as “his indefatigable efforts in organizing an effective naturalist program despite a disheartening lack in almost everything a naturalist needs.”³⁵⁴ Schellbach also held the title of Park Naturalist Emeritus at Grand Canyon until his death in 1971.³⁵⁵ Those who worked with him recalled his sense of humor, great dramatic talent at telling stories, especially at dinner parties, and the fact that he always had a pipe firmly clenched in his mouth, to the point where one person pondered whether he even took it out while sleeping.³⁵⁶ He received scores of complimentary letters over the years from royalty, religious

³⁵² Schulz also implied that his nine-month training under Louis Schellbach at Grand Canyon helped open many doors for him in his career in interpretation. *Ibid.*

³⁵³ “Louise Hinchliffe Oral History,” GRCA 35957, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

³⁵⁴ Max K. Gilstrap, “Plans for Grand Canyon Bar Trams and Lifts” *Christian Science Monitor* (March 8, 1956): C7.

³⁵⁵ Buchheit, “The Family that Climbs Together,” 2.

³⁵⁶ “Russell Grater Oral History,” GRCA 65556, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

leaders, scientists, government officials, and everyday people who were so appreciative of his efforts they wrote to him to express their gratitude.³⁵⁷ In these many ways, Schellbach helped touch the lives of the eleven million visitors who came to Grand Canyon National Park during his tenure, as well as hundreds of NPS employees and the visitors they encountered at Grand Canyon and other parks.

Around the same time that Schellbach took charge of the naturalist department, the administration of GCNP changed as well. Harold C. Bryant became Acting Superintendent of the park in 1939 after Miner Tillotson left to become Director of the Southwestern Region.³⁵⁸ When Bryant left briefly from 1940-41, engineer Frank Kittredge stepped in as Superintendent, but had little lasting effect on the interpretive division.³⁵⁹ Bryant returned to Grand Canyon as Superintendent in late 1941 and stayed in that position until he retired in 1954. Under Harold Bryant's leadership, Grand Canyon National Park turned more of its attention back toward interpretation. Bryant's priorities were to serve the

³⁵⁷ Dodge, "Mister Grand Canyon," 4.

³⁵⁸ James V. Lloyd also served as Acting Superintendent twice briefly during this time, but no documents or oral histories speak of him as having any special impact on the naturalist program at the time. Anderson, *Polishing the Jewel*, 90.

³⁵⁹ Like Tillotson, Kittredge was another engineer and admitted he knew nothing about natural science, but McKee recalled that he was supportive of protecting nature at the Canyon and educating the public about it, and always encouraged McKee in his interpretive efforts during his brief time as Superintendent. "Edwin McKee Oral History," GRCA 35718, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

public, specifically by making their experience at the Park more valuable and meaningful rather than more comfortable or glamorous.³⁶⁰

As mentioned previously, Bryant was a close friend of Stephen T. Mather and Horace Albright, and was one of the earliest educators and interpreters involved in the NPS. Because of his success in establishing these foundational aspects of NPS interpretation, in 1930 Bryant was appointed as the assistant director of the NPS's Branch of Research and Education, in which position he trained interpreters in all the national parks. While in this position, Bryant announced that his goal was not to standardize programs in all the parks, but instead to share what other parks were doing to help find new ways of interpretation. In fact, he urged that each program should be unique and distinct, emphasizing the special features of each site.³⁶¹ Upon his retirement Bryant was awarded the Cornelius Amory Pugsley National Medal "for his outstanding work in guiding people afield, organizing the administrative structure up on which the interpretive program of the NPS is based, and in recognition of his successful pioneering efforts to make the great scenic, scientific, and historic heritage of the country meaningful to its people." NPS leaders and supporters recognized the

³⁶⁰ "Paul Schulz Oral History," GRCA 35738, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

³⁶¹ Harold Bryant to Park Naturalists, 25 April 1932, GRCA 58733, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

interpretive program he and Schellbach developed at GCNP “as the finest in the NPS system” at that time.³⁶²

People he worked with generally agreed that Bryant was not much of an administrator, leaving most of these duties to his Assistant Superintendent Lon Garrison while he busied himself with the Interpretive Division at GCNP. McKee recalled that Bryant was different from all the other Superintendents at GCNP because he was a biologist by training and encouraged the interpretive staff to develop a diversity of programs.³⁶³ In fact, Bryant was so enthusiastic about interpretation that he had a habit of making a nuisance of himself at the Naturalist Workshop, often using it for programs or to entertain dignitaries. Though this irked some of the staff, Preston Schellbach believed that his father, Louis Schellbach, was secretly pleased: “I think deep down inside he was extremely proud that Mr. Bryant felt that the Workshop was of that importance to be shown. So there was a friendly rivalry and I think a little bit of professional jealousy between the two of them.”³⁶⁴ All of this attention he focused on the Interpretive Division meant he was lax in other areas, however. As McKee pointed out, unlike

³⁶² American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration, Cornelius Amory Pugsley Awards. Available online: <http://www.aapra.org/Pugsley/BryantHarold.html>. Accessed 19 October 2010.

³⁶³ “Edwin McKee Oral History,” GRCA 35718, Grand Canyon Museum Collections. McKee described Bryant as enthusiastic about learning but not a scholar.

³⁶⁴ “Preston Schellbach Oral History,” GRCA 35722, Grand Canyon Museum Collections; “Howard Stricklin Oral History,” GRCA 40195, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

Tillotson, Bryant was not good at finessing politicians and making the case for more funding and park development to the Congress, largely because he was too outspoken in his personal points of view.³⁶⁵

In fact, Bryant had intervened in the interpretation and management of the Park even before joining the staff at the Canyon, eliciting some protest. In 1938, while he was the NPS supervisor of research and education, Bryant arrived at the Park for a surprise visit to evaluate the interpretation being done there. In a confidential memo to Superintendent Tillotson, Bryant revealed his fear that McKee and Schellbach felt undervalued and consequently dispirited. Bryant pointed out that McKee and Schellbach were “two of the best men in the Service—one turns out more and better scientific papers than anyone else; the other gets more complimentary letters as to his ability and the service he renders than anyone else.” He suggested that both were discouraged to the point that they were on the verge of leaving the Canyon and the NPS, and urged Tillotson to do all he could to support them and encourage them to stay.³⁶⁶ Bryant continued to display unflinching support for the interpreters he worked with as Superintendent.

Despite the enthusiasm for interpretation of both Bryant and Schellbach, funding would be a continual source of frustration for the program. As Preston Schellbach, Louis’s son, recalled, “whenever there were funds cut at Grand

³⁶⁵ “Edwin McKee Oral History,” GRCA 35718, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

³⁶⁶ Harold C. Bryant to Minor Tillotson, 1 September 1938, Box 114 Folder K1815: Naturalist and Educational Activities 1930-1945, NARA.

Canyon, they were usually cut first in the Interpretive Division. My father had to suffer being able to borrow, beg or steal whatever he could to get his program done.” At the end of the day, however, Schellbach loved his job and would not have traded it for the world; his son later stated that “I think the greatest pleasure was the response that he got from just the average visitor when they would come up to him after he’d given a lecture and thanked him for telling the story of the Grand Canyon so that they would understand it and make it meaningful to them. That was it.”³⁶⁷

Schellbach’s philosophy of interpretation at this time can be found in a letter he wrote to John R. Fitzsimmons, a professor of Landscape Architecture at the Iowa State College of Agriculture in Ames in response to some questions he had asked about Schellbach’s job. Schellbach stated that the naturalist staff was “engaged in a specialized field of education in which our main objective is not primarily to raise the intellectual standard of our visitors in the academic sense. Our function lies in the inspirational enthusiasm which we can develop among our visitors.” Among the objectives of the interpretive division were to impart to visitors a “feeling of fellowship with the outdoors, based upon understanding,” that would inculcate a sense of stewardship of natural resources. Schellbach noted that simplicity was key in both subject matter and how it was presented so that everyone would be able to comprehend and enjoy it. The Park Naturalist had to

³⁶⁷ “Preston Schellbach Oral History,” GRCA 35722, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

nominate, and the administration approve, all staff members, ensuring that they had a solid academic background and good rapport with others working there.³⁶⁸

In terms of the focus of interpretation, Schellbach did not differ much from his predecessor. According to a 1942 report, Schellbach identified the themes of the interpretive program in order of importance as geology, biology, archeology, ethnology, and history. Despite his training as an archeologist, he accepted the subservient place of that discipline, noting that the only reason ethnology was included was because the public demanded it. At the same time, however, Schellbach argued that much more research needed to be done in the areas of archeology and human history, and gave more attention to these subjects than McKee did during his tenure.³⁶⁹

Schellbach also produced much more detailed descriptions of different types of interpretive services and the theories behind them than McKee did. For example, he wrote that guided trips were meant to immerse visitors in the site through personal contact, thereby instilling a more sympathetic understanding of the resource. Schellbach argued that these were some of the most important activities at the Park. In these trips, guides were encouraged to stimulate discussion, thereby emphasizing ideas not facts. Museums were meant to orient the visitor, give them the story of the Park as a whole, help them understand its

³⁶⁸ Louis Schellbach to John R. Fitzsimmons, 26 November 1941, Box 114 Folder K1815: Naturalist and Educational Activities 1930-1945, NARA.

³⁶⁹ Louis Schellbach, "Manuscript of Interpretive Data," 14 October 1942, GRCA 58396, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

interesting and inspirational features, and to exhibit ideas not just objects or specimens.³⁷⁰

Immediately after taking over as Park Naturalist, Schellbach conducted a survey of naturalists' duties, evaluated the status of all records and collections, and began a systematic work plan for the division to help train his staff and rotate them to prevent burnout.³⁷¹ Under Schellbach the training of naturalist staff seemed to become a bit more formal. It consisted of a series of talks and conferences followed by a period in which the trainee was assigned to shadow experienced naturalists as they conducted their duties at museums, auto caravans, nature walks, and lectures. The trainees were given basic scientific literature on the Park to study in their spare time, and were requested to memorize parts of the Information Manual on the Park. The Park Naturalist and his assistant would periodically inspect their work, give them instructions, and observe their public lectures to give them tips. The staff also worked with the concessionaire's employees to improve their knowledge of the Park and presentations to the public.³⁷² Schellbach made sure to continue cultivating a strong relationship with

³⁷⁰ Louis Schellbach to John R. Fitzsimmons, 26 November 1941, Box 114 Folder K1815: Naturalist and Educational Activities 1930-1945, NARA. Schellbach noted that the Wayside Museum was very well attended because it told the story of man at the Canyon, yet it was only open seasonally in the summer months.

³⁷¹ Ibid.

³⁷² Louis Schellbach, "Manuscript of Interpretive Data," 14 October 1942, GRCA 58396, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

the Grand Canyon Natural History Association, which began funding installation of wayside signs along the rim drives on the South Rim in 1941.³⁷³

The Influence of World War II on Park Interpretation

In the early 1940s, with the situation in Europe looking bleaker and the possibility of American involvement in WWII becoming more likely, the National Park Service began shifting the tone of interpretation in the national parks to reflect and encourage a growing patriotic sentiment among the American public. Though the NPS encouraged a general policy of presenting information to visitors and letting them make up their own minds about issues and theories, nevertheless it has at times used interpretation for propaganda purposes. Barry Mackintosh argues that this tendency was especially pronounced during WWII, at which time many parks were under pressure to allow the resources they contained to be used as war materiel.³⁷⁴

In order to protect the parks from being ravaged to provide resources for war materiel and to build support for park interpretation at a time when the government had other fiscal priorities, NPS supporters began emphasizing the patriotic value of the parks, as well as the patriotic value of interpretation itself.

³⁷³ Todd R. Berger, "Science and Education, Birdseed and Power Tools: The History of the Grand Canyon Association. Part III" *Canyon Views* 13:3 (Fall 2007): 10.

³⁷⁴ Barry Mackintosh, *Interpretation in the National Park Service: A Historical Perspective* (Washington, D.C.: History Division, National Park Service, Department of the Interior, 1986), 75.

Even before the war started, the national Advisory Board on National Parks, Historic Sites, Buildings, and Monuments adopted a resolution stating:

the National Park Service's interpretive program in national park areas, particularly the historical parks and monuments and the great national scenic areas, is one of the most valuable contributions by any Federal agency in promoting patriotism, in sustaining morale, and understanding of the fundamental principles of American democracy, and in inspiring love for our country. The Advisory Board would therefore suggest that the National Park Service's interpretive program should be expanded by every means including publications, radio, motion pictures, guide service, park museums, etc., during this period of national exigency.³⁷⁵

It also urged that the NPS interpretive programs should work to encourage national pride in the armed forces and citizens involved in defense of the country.³⁷⁶ Not surprisingly, interpreters on the front lines agreed with this assessment and recommendation. A report from a conference of historical, archeological, and interpretive personnel in the spring of 1941 stated that attendees agreed that programs should illustrate the educational, historical, and inspirational values of their park, but also promote appreciation for the country and invoke patriotism.³⁷⁷

Though most programs were traditionally developed locally by rangers based on their personal interests, the Washington NPS office began making

³⁷⁵ Quoted in Mackintosh, 75.

³⁷⁶ Carl P. Russell, "Confidence in the American Way," 1941, GRCA 57833, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

³⁷⁷ "Recommendations and Report from Conference of Historical, Archeological, and Interpretive Personnel," 8-9 May 1941, Box 13 Folder A4047: Historians and Archeologists 1941-1969, NARA.

recommendations for what types of themes should be included at this time. Carl P. Russell, Supervisor of Research and Interpretation for the NPS, wrote in 1941 that budget officials, congressional committees, and NPS leaders in 1940 had started analyzing “the effect of National Park Service activities in the America [sic] preparing its defenses.” He indicated that conservationists and educators were thinking about how to more effectively provide the public with a basic understanding of American society and culture, which would thereby strengthen democracy and make the public mentally prepared to defend their way of life. These experts concluded that “the preservation of American traditions, the teaching of history and the popular interpretation of natural history can make important contributions to the preparedness program of the United States.”³⁷⁸

One of the best ways to achieve this, they argued, was by visiting national parks and taking advantage of their free educational services to learn about American history, culture, natural resources, and heritage. Russell stated that Americans were becoming increasingly aware that “an important educational aspect is to be found in the public enjoyment of the national parks; that scenic and scientific appreciation, historical mindedness and national patriotism are intensified through their use.”³⁷⁹ The article included 19 letters that the public had written to the NPS office supporting Russell’s point of view, arguing that parks instilled a love of country, helped counteract war hysteria, taught necessary

³⁷⁸ Carl P. Russell, “Confidence in the American Way,” 1941, GRCA 57833, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

³⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

conservation ethics, and taught people to appreciate the natural world. Bryant and Schellbach would use similar rhetoric to justify the continuing operation of Grand Canyon National Park and its interpretive programs during the war.

After its shocking entry into World War II, the country began shifting its money, resources, and attention to the war effort, and many government agencies and programs were viewed as temporarily expendable. This left the National Park Service scrambling to justify their continued existence during wartime. For interpreters this was an especially tricky task, since wartime rationing and other concerns meant that the national parks saw some of the lowest visitation numbers in recent history. Even before the war during the economic stress of the Great Depression certain interpretive services were reduced or eliminated. For example, in 1938 the NPS federal information office ordered that circulars be cut in half from 32 pages to 16. In the fall of 1941 it further announced it would print no more free trail guides and was cutting back on printing other publications as well, suggesting that parks rely on their natural history associations to provide this service.³⁸⁰

Many parks saw their naturalist interpretive programs vanish in these war years as their full time and seasonal staff left for war and funding dried up. But Schellbach steadfastly resisted this at the Grand Canyon. In October 1942,

³⁸⁰ Isabelle Story to Minor Tillotson, 9 May 1938, Box 117 Folder K3819: Publications: Service: Free Informational Literatures 1935-40, NARA; Isabelle Story to Grand Canyon National Park Superintendent, 29 September 1941, Box 117 Folder K3819: Publications, National Park Service: Free Informational Literature, Park Bulletins, 1938-51, NARA.

Schellbach wrote a lengthy report on the interpretive situation at Grand Canyon National Park, likely in an attempt to justify the need to continue its programs. In November 1943, Bryant gave an accounting of the Park's Naturalist Division to the Chief Naturalist in Washington, D.C. attempting to justify its existence and expense. In it he pointed to interpretation as one of the primary reasons for keeping the Park open during the war years. He argued that the Park and its interpreters were providing important services to military personnel. He noted that thousands of soldiers were coming to the Canyon while on leave or moving between military bases. In fact, although visitation was dropping, in 1943 almost one third of the visitors to GCNP were in uniform.³⁸¹ Sometimes they were simply interested in learning more about the place, while other times they were applying things that they learned from interpreters to their military training, such as learning about camouflage. Bryant also argued that parks such as the Grand Canyon were necessary more than ever in wartime to provide a place for relaxation from the stresses of life.³⁸²

According to Bryant's report, in 1942 the naturalist staff at the Park consisted of Schellbach, his assistant, and six temporary ranger-naturalists. By the following year, "Visitor education and interpretation was left to the Grand Canyon Natural History Association and Louis Schellbach, who conducted all

³⁸¹ Harold C. Bryant to Chief Naturalist, Washington, D.C., 4 November 1943, Box 114 Folder K1815: Naturalist and Educational Activities 1930-1945, NARA.

³⁸² Ibid. In Region Two, parks began shifting all interpretive duties to rangers, basically eliminating the position of naturalist.

lectures, campfire talks, and nature hikes by himself.”³⁸³ Yavapai Observation Station talks had been reduced from 3 daily to one per day, and the Wayside Museum had closed completely for lack of personnel. Lectures at Bright Angel Lodge and campfire programs on both rims were discontinued, as were daily auto caravans on both rims. Bryant argued that Schellbach faced a “Herculean task” trying to update exhibits and maintain collections, continue long-term research projects, operate Yavapai Observation Station, and basically do all of the jobs that a seven-person team had been responsible for before, but it was necessary because tens of thousands of visitors were still coming.³⁸⁴

Although Schellbach faced unprecedented pressure in maintaining the interpretive program at this time, he continued to provide visitors with high quality service as much as possible. A letter from visitor W.A. Peery to Newton B. Drury, Director of the NPS, praised the staff for the job they were doing at the Park, stating “One cannot help but be inspired by the enthusiasm of those entrusted with contact with the public.” He had particularly kind words for Schellbach, stating “I have yet to come across one who possesses his gift of bringing alive both the beauty and the meaning of the Grand Canyon and of arousing in one a desire for a closer acquaintance.” Peery concluded that

We ourselves went into the Grand Canyon National Park almost entirely ignorant of its significance; we came away filled with the

³⁸³ Anderson, *Polishing the Jewel*, 43.

³⁸⁴ “Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1943,” GRCA 54706, Grand Canyon Museum Collections. Schellbach did not leave GCNP from spring 1942 until the end of the war because of rationing on tires and gasoline.

desire to learn not only more about the Canyon itself but of the Indians, their history and their arts. When the representatives of the Park Service can accomplish that in even a small percentage of the vacationers who pass through the Park, they are performing a function of far more lasting benefit and influence than if their services were confined solely to giving transient enjoyment to park visitors.³⁸⁵

Even popular media emphasized the important role of interpreters at the Canyon during the war years. As an article in *Arizona Highways* by Catherine Chambliss states, “Just as you enjoy the opera more if you know the story, the Ranger-Naturalists on duty at the Grand Canyon make your delight for Grand Canyon keener as they unfold before you in their nightly lecture in Bright Angel Lodge or on the Rim auto-caravans, the fascinating story of earth’s history as revealed in Grand Canyon.” The article goes on to describe how naturalists interpret the Canyon to the public: “They try to make you feel the beauty of the Canyon. They want you to look and see not merely oxidized mineral formations, but look and see a gigantic painting” with vivid colors and forms. However, Chambliss argued that it is ultimately the job of the visitors to decide how to interpret it for themselves, indicating that the NPS interpreters she encountered were successful in instilling at least one of their traditional messages in their guest.³⁸⁶

³⁸⁵ W.A. Peery to Newton B. Drury, Director of the NPS, 15 November 1943, GRCA 61834, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

³⁸⁶ Catherine Chambliss, “Sermon in Phantasy,” *Arizona Highways* 20:4 (April 1944): 6-7.

Apparently Bryant's justifications were acceptable to the federal government, since GCNP stayed open throughout the war and Schellbach kept his job.³⁸⁷ However, the Park was required to complete monthly reports on the activities of the Naturalist Division to justify its expenditures and existence. By 1945, the lack of staff and funding during this period had taken a toll not only on the services provided to the public, but on the physical interpretive structures as well. For example, because of neglect the ruins on display at the Wayside Museum were disintegrating, and two walls had fallen in at the Tusayan Ruin.³⁸⁸ Schellbach spent most of his "spare" time at the naturalist workshop simply trying to sustain the status quo by maintaining exhibits and collections.³⁸⁹

A New Normal: The Immediate Postwar Years

In the first few years after World War II, interpretation at the Grand Canyon faced a number of challenges. The Washington Office (WASO) became more serious about standardizing interpretive practices and services. Growing crowds put a major strain on staff and facilities, while budgetary constraints restricted what they could do. In some ways, interpreters at this time were the victims of their own success. They had succeeded so well in "selling" the parks,

³⁸⁷ Interestingly, Colonel Elliot Roosevelt, son of President Franklin Roosevelt, was married at Yavapai Observation Station on December 2, 1944. Box 114 Folder K1815: Naturalist and Educational Activities 1930-1945, NARA.

³⁸⁸ Louis Schellbach, "Monthly Report, March 1945," Box 114 Folder K1815: Naturalist and Educational Activities 1930-1945, NARA.

³⁸⁹ "Superintendent's Annual Report, 1945," GRCA 54706, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

in attracting the interest of the public, in proving that they had important messages to tell, and in serving as effective middlemen between the federal government and the public, that interpreters were nearly overwhelmed as vacationers kept coming...and coming...and coming.

The widespread prosperity of the postwar era after the lean years of the past two decades, the arrival of the baby boom generation, and the explosion of automobile culture combined to create a desire to take vacations to destinations people had only dreamed about before. Many headed to national parks, where huge numbers of visitors strained facilities and guest resources to their limits.³⁹⁰ This trend also introduced a new demographic to the parks. As historian Hal Rothman pointed out, the earliest national parks tended to cater to upper- and upper-middle-class tourists and appealed to a sense of cultural nationalism, such as in the “See America First” campaign. In the postwar era, tourism around the country and especially at national parks became much more popular among the expanding middle class, who were primarily seeking leisure activities at affordable prices and therefore had different demands and expectations for their vacations. Rothman argued that this ushered in an era of “entertainment tourism” in which the American West “became a playground, the American dreamscape, historic, mythic, and actual.”³⁹¹

³⁹⁰ Anderson, *Polishing the Jewel*, 90.

³⁹¹ Hal K. Rothman, “Selling the Meaning of Place: Entrepreneurship, Tourism, and Community Transformation in the Twentieth-Century American West” *The Pacific Historical Review* 65:4 (Nov 1996): 548.

At Grand Canyon National Park, administrators and staff had little time to adjust to or plan for new postwar realities. Visitation to the Park immediately shot up, from a wartime low of 64,568 visitors in 1944 to 486,834 visitors in 1946. At the national level, the NPS declared that interpretive services were back to prewar levels by 1947, but it took until 1948 for the Grand Canyon interpretive division to get back to its prewar staff levels.³⁹² Nevertheless, escalating visitation remained far ahead of park capacity to service it. By 1959 the number of visitors had risen to 1,168,807.³⁹³ Bryant complained as early as 1946 that GCNP was caught in “a ceaseless effort to keep many steps behind escalating demands of soaring visitation.”³⁹⁴ Still, in this same year, Congress gave interpretation a more solid mandate than ever before when it gave the NPS specific authority to use funds for educational lectures at national park sites.³⁹⁵

At this time campfire talks were reinstated, as were daily nature walks and evening lodge talks. Park interpreters also presented programs at the naturalist workshop at Grand Canyon Village upon request. The Wayside Museum, which had closed in 1941 due to staffing shortages, finally reopened on July 1, 1947.³⁹⁶

³⁹² Lemuel Garrison, “Memorandum,” 25 June 1947, Box 114 Folder K1815: Naturalist and Educational Activities 1946-1948, NARA.

³⁹³ Anderson, *Polishing the Jewel*, 90.

³⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 45.

³⁹⁵ “Information and Interpretation in the Field,” 1952, Box 115 Folder K1819: Information and Interpretation in the Field, NARA.

³⁹⁶ Lemuel Garrison, “Memorandum No. 22,” 25 June 1947, Box 114 Folder K1815: Naturalist and Educational Activities 1946-1948, NARA.

New Types of Visitors and New Types of Messages At GCNP after the War

Lon Garrison remembered that during his tenure as Assistant Superintendent at the Canyon from 1946-52 the NPS emphasized research, interpretation, and planning throughout the National Park System. However, Garrison also pointed out that though interpretation was always deemed important, it never seemed to grow at a rate sufficient to meet demand. Still, in his opinion Grand Canyon was different in its approach to interpretation, because “there was a higher percentage of your money in interpretation at Grand Canyon because of Dr. Bryant’s influence. And also the fact that Louis Schellbach had a sparkling program and it was easy to feel...enthusiastic about that.”³⁹⁷

Garrison noted a marked difference in the types of visitors to the Canyon and how the Canyon was interpreted to them in the early postwar period.³⁹⁸ According to historian Michael Anderson, “Canyon administrators also noticed disheartening postwar sociological changes that consumed ranger time and increased costs.” Acts of vandalism and littering increased, so the Park had to install signs to discourage this behavior, which took space, time, and funds that could instead have been used to erect more interpretive or educational signs.³⁹⁹

³⁹⁷ “Lon and Inger Garrison Oral History,” GRCA 35731, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

³⁹⁸ Ibid.

³⁹⁹ Anderson, *Polishing the Jewel*, 45.

Additionally, according to Lon Garrison, Americans embraced an ethic of physical fitness, which encouraged the young baby-boom generation and their parents to get outdoors and experience nature through physical contact and exploration. During WWII the Park offered some interpretive texts at the Wayside Museum and some trailside exhibits along the South Kaibab Trail for those interested in hiking.⁴⁰⁰ To meet increasing visitor demand, and to help reach a broader audience than they could with face-to-face interactions, the naturalist staff decided to place a new emphasis on trail construction, maintenance, interpretation, and patrols in the postwar period.⁴⁰¹

Interpretive themes at the Park also changed in response to the changing needs and ideas of the public. As more people began visiting national parks, a wider range of visitors saw nature firsthand in a way that the previous generation had not, and the naturalist staff began to see that environmental concerns were not just relevant to outdoor enthusiasts or NPS rangers.⁴⁰² Historian Barry Mackintosh noted that there was a postwar trend at National Parks that shifted interpretation away from a cataloging approach, which stressed learning names and data about natural features, to an ecological approach that emphasized

⁴⁰⁰ “Paul Schulz Oral History,” GRCA 35738, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

⁴⁰¹ “Lon and Inger Garrison Oral History,” GRCA 35731, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

⁴⁰² Samuel P. Hays, *Beauty, Health, and Permanence: Environmental Politics in the United States, 1955-1985* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 3.

interrelationships of resources.⁴⁰³ Garrison personally recalled that a different attitude was emerging among American citizens during this time toward ecological and environmental issues, and this influenced the direction that interpretation took at GCNP.⁴⁰⁴ Interpretive staff member Louise Hinchliffe explained that the postwar interpretive goal was “Not just to take [visitors] out and name a bunch of birds or flowers for them, but to make them realize how these things are related to each other and to us.”⁴⁰⁵ However, NPS personnel still often saw parks themselves as museums rather than dynamic systems.

Most of the interpretive emphasis at the Canyon continued to revolve around science and nature.⁴⁰⁶ However, the interpretive staff also developed themes that made the Grand Canyon relevant to current events, linking these scientific stories with humanistic ones. As it had during WWII, the NPS encouraged patriotic-themed interpretation during the Cold War. It argued that interpreters helped educate the American public on their heritage and democracy, and that this would help keep America safe from the threat of Soviet philosophy.⁴⁰⁷ Of course, it also provided a rationale for the continued funding of

⁴⁰³ Mackintosh, 67.

⁴⁰⁴ “Lon and Inger Garrison Oral History,” GRCA 35731, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

⁴⁰⁵ “Louise Hinchliffe Oral History,” GRCA 35957, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

⁴⁰⁶ “Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1948,” GRCA 54706, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

⁴⁰⁷ Mackintosh, 77.

interpretation within the Service, and it helped publicize the NPS. These serious topics sometimes clashed with the public's desire for entertainment tourism, however, and had to be integrated carefully into the overall interpretive plan for the Park.

An oral history interview with naturalist Paul Schulz provides many details about interpretation at the Canyon during this time. The staff considered the daily Yavapai Observation Station lecture the single most important duty of naturalists at the Canyon because, as Schulz said, it told “the whole damn story” of GCNP, touching on how the Canyon was formed, life through the ages, the Canyon as a barrier, ethnology, and more.⁴⁰⁸ Second, in Schulz's opinion, was the nightly talk at Bright Angel Lodge. This program incorporated more human history, focusing on the first Europeans at the Canyon.⁴⁰⁹ The third most important interpretive duty was the campfire program, though it was also the true test of an interpreter, or as Schulz put it, “a one man show which revealed the interpreter to be what he was: good or poor.”⁴¹⁰ Over time Schulz became a champion of campfire programs as one of the most important interpretive features

⁴⁰⁸ “Paul Schulz Oral History,” GRCA 35738, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

⁴⁰⁹ Ibid.

⁴¹⁰ Ibid.

at parks because of the opportunities it gave for interaction with the audience in a unique environment.⁴¹¹

In the summer of 1946 Schulz was in charge of interpretive programs at the North Rim. Interpretation there was extremely limited, the only facility being a small frame building that served as an information station, museum, office, storeroom, and starting point for ranger walks. Schulz's reminiscences about his time there give insight into the daily life of interpreters in the Park. He recalled one instance when a seasonal naturalist he worked with, Lester Arnberger, succumbed to the monotony of ranger life and the repetitiousness of giving the same campfire programs night after night. As Schulz humorously recalled, Arnberger "performed an impressive rain dance on the North Rim parking area complete with our live exhibit gopher snake in hand and mouth and chanting to bring forth a downpour from the threatening dark clouds so that he would not have to give his campfire program that night."⁴¹²

⁴¹¹ Unfortunately, this coincided with a decline in the popularity of traditional campfire programs (in which groups would gather around a campfire and sing songs, tell jokes or stories, and then listen to a ranger presentation) after the late 1940s. A survey in 1948 showed that their popularity had already declined to below pre-war levels in favor of programs at large amphitheaters with sound systems and flashy slide presentations. Mackintosh, 85, 90, 91; Paul Schulz to Regional Director, 3 September 1958, Box 25 Folder A6633: Manual—Personnel 1954-61, NARA.

⁴¹² "Paul Schulz Oral History," GRCA 35738, Grand Canyon Museum Collections. Arnberger obviously did not intend this performance for public consumption, and though this incident would likely have offended Native Americans, it is included here to give a sense of the everyday lives and frustrations of interpreters during this time.

The interpretive staff also added an outreach program to their repertoire. They began to work in conjunction with many other institutions, such as the Arizona State College, Girl Scouts, and others, to teach science, even offering a special Kaibab Trail trip on geology for student groups. The staff gave lectures to groups such as Rotary Clubs and PTAs as part of their outreach, though unlike other National Parks they did not sponsor radio programs. Other new elements they experimented with at the time included utilizing motion pictures, slides, maps, and live and still exhibits to make campfire programs and lectures more entertaining and engaging.⁴¹³

Still, Paul Schulz and many others believed that the key to the high-quality interpretive program at the Grand Canyon at this time was Louis Schellbach. His presentation at Yavapai Observation Station was so popular that the director of the NPS and film companies expressed an interest in videotaping his lecture.⁴¹⁴ Eventually Schellbach made a recording of his Yavapai Observation Station talk so that it could be distributed among interpretive personnel within the National Park System to help train interpreters. In 1950, Bryant and Schellbach did several tape recordings for the Division of Education and Information for the Arizona Game and Fish Department.⁴¹⁵ Freeman Tilden, who is considered the father of

⁴¹³ “National Parks Survey,” 30 April 1948, Box 114 Folder K1815: Naturalist and Educational Activities 1946-48, NARA.

⁴¹⁴ Hugh M. Miller to Herbert Evison, Box 115 Folder K3015: Moving Pictures 1951-54, NARA.

⁴¹⁵ “Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1950,” GRCA 54706, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

interpretation at the NPS, recalled that visitors to the Park during Schellbach's time were lucky to have had the chance to "fall under the spell of his interpretive charm." Tilden said, "yes, Louis was just a teeny bit of a showman. His timing, his sudden assault upon the dramatic revelation, his pauses of humility; they were artful" and kept audiences riveted for over 40 minutes, with many coming back just to hear him speak over and over again.⁴¹⁶

Furthermore, Schulz realized that Schellbach had surprising foresight in his vision for the Grand Canyon that others in the Park System did not share. For example, Schellbach understood that increasingly large numbers of visitors would crowd the facilities at the Grand Canyon. He tried to get a centralized interpretive facility designed in such a way that exhibits would allow large groups to cluster around and provide interactive interpretation among themselves, an idea that some planners ridiculed as turning the place into "Grand Central Station."⁴¹⁷

One of his weak points, in Schulz's opinion, was that when it came to training others to give presentations, his instruction was lackadaisical. Schellbach also expected a lot from his staff; in writing to a student who asked what skills a naturalist needed to have, Schellbach answered that they should demonstrate a broad background in natural sciences, especially historical and scenic geology, ecology, meteorology, and hydrology, as well as public speaking, museum

⁴¹⁶ Freeman Tilden, "Interpreting the Grand Canyon" *National Parks Magazine: A Special Grand Canyon National Park Issue* 36:175 (April 1962): 5.

⁴¹⁷ "Paul Schulz Oral History," GRCA 35738, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

techniques, how to prepare specimens, develop and install exhibits, and build and make things with one's hands.⁴¹⁸ New rangers were expected to develop a compelling, personalized talk simply by reading scientific and popular material and observing other naturalists in action—a method that Schulz said involved a lot of “blood, sweat and tears.”⁴¹⁹ Still, Schellbach's example inspired the interpretive staff to remain committed to giving high quality programs that felt spontaneous and natural. For instance, in response to a student's request for a typed copy of the talk he had heard at Yavapai Observation Station, naturalist Christensen replied “We believe in avoiding any tendency of fixing the text to avoid the monotony of a ‘canned talk.’”⁴²⁰

In 1949, Schellbach prepared an Interpretive Development Outline to inform the Washington Office of the current activities, needs, and wants of GCNP's interpretive program.⁴²¹ Following a lengthy, detailed description of GCNP's interpretive program, Schellbach concluded that the ultimate goal of all

⁴¹⁸ Louis Schellbach to Warren L. Anderson, 9 November 1951, Box 114 Folder K1815: Naturalist and Educational Activities 1949-1953, NARA.

⁴¹⁹ “Paul Schulz Oral History,” GRCA 35738, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

⁴²⁰ Ernst Christensen to M.E. Hatter, Phoenix, 14 February 1948, GRCA 49664, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

⁴²¹ His son, Preston Schellbach, later stated that he believed it to be the first Master Interpretive Plan for interpretation in the entire NPS. The NPS valued Schellbach's insights so much that they began to send him to other parks to advise them on interpretive issues, such as when WASO sent him to Carlsbad Caverns National Park to help them prepare exhibits in 1949. “Preston Schellbach Oral History,” GRCA 35722, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

this interpretation was to satisfy curiosity but also to help visitors improve their lives by giving them opportunities to stimulate their intellectual, spiritual, and physical well-being through appreciating the Canyon.⁴²²

However, the plan also discussed the looming problems that increased visitation, both in numbers of people and the amount of time they stayed, meant for the NPS and its efforts to provide interpretive services to the public. For example, at the time, naturalists led daily auto caravans and nature walks, but so many people lined up to join them that the groups became unmanageable, and the quality of interpretation declined as interpreters had to focus most of their attention on keeping the groups together and safe. To help alleviate this the staff began offering special nature walks for organized groups and a two-day geological field hike to Phantom Ranch for visiting geology students, though Schellbach even suggested ending the caravans entirely.⁴²³ Rangers also gave nightly talks at Bright Angel Lodge, but had recently seen huge crowds that overran the facilities so much they had to be discontinued. Campfire talks also drew large numbers of people who crammed into deteriorating facilities, making it hard to give effective programs and leaving many staff and visitors disgruntled.⁴²⁴

⁴²² “Plan, Interpretive Development Outline,” 1949, GRCA 28818, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

⁴²³ Ibid.

⁴²⁴ Ibid.

In light of all these challenges, Schellbach proposed expansion of the interpretive division in several ways. Some were meant to help disperse crowds throughout the Park so that programs would not be so packed, while others were meant to justify the construction of much-needed facilities for staff and visitors. For example, the report stated that the Park urgently needed a central museum structure near the Village that could give the naturalist staff much needed space and storage facilities, as well as provide exhibit rooms and study facilities. A satellite unit was also recommended for the North Rim, as well as an additional facility similar to Yavapai Observation Station. Schellbach also indicated that he felt that basic geologic knowledge of the Park was sufficient, but that many other scientific and cultural topics needed to be expanded or investigated further to prepare better interpretive programs.⁴²⁵

A Growing Interest in Cultural Interpretation

One area in which Schellbach differed from McKee was his interest in the cultural history of the Canyon. Although he supported the interpretive program's major emphases on geology and biology, Schellbach acknowledged that human history at the Canyon was important and provided human-interest stories for visitors. Freeman Tilden in 1951 also urged more cultural interpretation at the Grand Canyon, noting that "the fullest enjoyment of visits to these areas calls for some knowledge of their first and continuing effect upon man. For this is the

⁴²⁵ Ibid.

American story; this constitutes the richest American heritage...⁴²⁶ Both Schellbach and Bryant seemed to put more effort into studying and interpreting the Euro American and Native American history of the Canyon than previous managers. For example, archeologist Christopher Coder indicated that little substantial archeological work (apart from the Tusayan Ruin excavation) was done in the Canyon before the leadership of these men.⁴²⁷

Schellbach's interest in expanding interpretation of these subjects is evident in many of his written plans. In his 1949 Interpretive Development Outline, Schellbach stated that "Popular interest in Indians and general lack of accurate knowledge among visitors regarding Indians of the Southwest make it desirable to give ethnology more prominence."⁴²⁸ He also noted that more research on prehistoric sites was needed "to obtain greater knowledge of the prehistoric people, for both the interpretive needs of the Park and as an aid in filling in gaps in the archeology of the Southwest."⁴²⁹ Schellbach recommended

⁴²⁶ Freeman Tilden, *The National Parks* Rev and expanded by Paul Schullery (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1986), 198.

⁴²⁷ Christopher M. Coder, *An Introduction to Grand Canyon Prehistory* (Grand Canyon: Grand Canyon Association, 2000), 8.

⁴²⁸ The report noted that the NPS urgently needed to do a thorough archeological site survey in the park that mapped out every site. This had been started in 1933 but fell to the wayside due to a lack of staffing and time. "Plan, Interpretive Development Outline," 1949, GRCA 28818, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

⁴²⁹ As early as 1942, Schellbach began arguing that preservation efforts for archeological and cultural sites needed to be stepped up immediately or they would be in danger of being lost forever to souvenir hunters and the elements. Louis Schellbach, "Manuscript of Interpretive Data," 14 October 1942, GRCA

excavating some sites “for scientific and interpretive reasons,” establishing trailside exhibits and markers at important archeological or historic places, and surveying all historic trails associated with early explorers, prospectors, and scientists.⁴³⁰ Bryant similarly showed an interest in improving cultural interpretation, consulting with regional archeologist Erik Reed for advice on the topic.⁴³¹

However, both Schellbach’s and Bryant’s interest in interpreting Native American history at the Canyon was mostly limited to the prehistoric era. This helped perpetuate the focus of concessionaires and other early interpreters on emphasizing a romanticized Native American past without acknowledging their present. It also in some ways reflected the contemporary status of Native Americans. As governmental policies moved toward a policy of assimilation that attempted to negate the cultural differences between modern Native Americans and Euro Americans, it makes sense that interpreters would focus on archeological resources, since these allowed interpreters to address the unique aspects of these cultures

In the period after WWII, with the resignation of John Collier as director of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) in 1945, the agency no longer actively

58396, Grand Canyon Museum Collections; “Plan, Interpretive Development Outline,” 1949, GRCA 28818, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

⁴³⁰ “Plan, Interpretive Development Outline,” 1949, GRCA 28818, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

⁴³¹ Erik Reed to Regional Director, 24 October 1950, GRCA 70901, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

pursued a strategy of cultural pluralism, but instead moved toward a policy of termination and relocation.⁴³² In the postwar era, the government cut many social programs while building a military-industrial complex to keep pace with the Soviet Union in the Cold War. One of the targets of the budget cuts was the BIA. The federal government proposed setting up a timeframe to terminate the reservation system and the federal relationship with tribes, and eliminate the BIA. They believed that in the meantime this would push Native Americans to relocate and integrate into mainstream society, thereby helping to achieve the uniformity of American culture that architects of this policy sought in the 1950s.⁴³³

At the Grand Canyon, the termination and relocation policy of the federal government at first led to a deteriorating relationship between Park administrators and local tribes. The NPS more openly treated Native Americans in the Park as squatters and worked to restrict their presence and use, while the Fred Harvey Company began firing many from their jobs—except for those in which they served as tourist attractions.⁴³⁴ Those who continued to work at the Canyon remained stuck in menial jobs. Nearly a decade after witnessing the dedication of

⁴³² For a detailed examination of this era from a Native American scholar's perspective, see Donald L. Fixico, *Termination and Relocation: Federal Indian Policy, 1945-1960* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1990).

⁴³³ Frances Paul Prucha, *The Great Father: The United States Government and the American Indians*, abridged ed. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986), 340-356.

⁴³⁴ Jacilee Wray, "The Havasupai: Their Ethnohistory on the South Rim of Grand Canyon National Park: A Case Study for Cultural Resource Management in the National Park Service," MA thesis, Northern Arizona University, May 1990, 10, 85.

the Desert View Watchtower, Edith Longhoma came back to the Canyon to work at Hopi House, where she lived in a downstairs apartment. She later worked at Bright Angel Lodge in their bakery. She remembered that an old Hopi man named Sam lived in one of the two little *hogans* near Verkamp's Curios, working as a janitor by day and dancing for tourists in the evening. Her Hopi uncle and his Navajo wife both danced in the nightly program at the Hopi House dance platform along with other boys.⁴³⁵

In the late 1940s and early 1950s the Park started hiring more Havasupai as a means to help assimilate them, although they were placed mostly as short-term, low-wage manual laborers. Still, by the early 1950s, GCNP employed only three Havasupai as permanent employees, and had ten who worked on a seasonal or emergency basis, all in maintenance areas. In the meantime, the NPS purchased machinery to replace these kinds of jobs, and no longer offered the tribe preferential hiring. Even after the government moved away from its termination policy, the NPS never made the hiring of Havasupai a priority again.⁴³⁶ Residents made more efforts to integrate Native Americans more equally into social life at the Canyon, such as by allowing Indian children to attend the local school.

However, at least once in this period the strained relationship between the Havasupai and the NPS erupted into physical hostility. Both sides were concerned

⁴³⁵ "Edith Longhoma Oral History," GRCA 70891, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

⁴³⁶ Chia Lin (Amy) Wu, *Image and Reality of the Grand Canyon through the Havasupai People* (Grand Canyon: National Park Service, 1999), 15.

about such developments; as Michael Anderson states, “[Harold C.] Bryant and Chief Watahomigie wondered at the unruly nature of young Havasupais returning from the war and the need to police their activities and eject several from the park.”⁴³⁷

Personnel who worked at the Canyon at the time had mixed recollections about the relationship between the NPS and the various local Native American tribes at the time. Lon and Inger Garrison generally believed that race relations were fine at the Canyon. Inger recalled holding a fundraiser so that all the girls at the Canyon could attend a camp, including Indian and Mexican children, and stated “One really nice thing about Grand Canyon, there was never any discrimination.” Lon interjected “Yes. We had no discrimination. It started with us—we just ignored it, it didn’t exist.”⁴³⁸ However, just because they ignored it does not mean that discrimination and racial differences did not exist, and may have contributed to problems when the issues and concerns of minorities were not recognized and addressed.

On the other hand, Howard Stricklin was outspoken in his derogatory views of Native Americans at Grand Canyon. Stricklin was the Chief Ranger at GCNP from 1948 to 1955, and would become Superintendent of the Park from 1964 to 1969. He later expressed his belief that the Havasupai were “the least sophisticated, most primitive of any of the Southwest Indians and it would take a

⁴³⁷ Anderson, *Polishing the Jewel*, 45.

⁴³⁸ “Lon and Inger Garrison Oral History,” GRCA 35731, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

tremendous effort to change them.” He qualified this by adding that many got jobs with the Santa Fe Railway “and became excellent, efficient employees.”⁴³⁹

Stricklin also argued that the relationship among the Navajo, Havasupai, and Hopi was full of “vicious hatred” toward one another and that they would not associate with each other.⁴⁴⁰

Even so, the NPS expressed more sensitivity about the language they used interpreting Native American topics at this time. In a memo to superintendents of all Region III parks (including GCNP) Acting Associate Regional Director John M. Davis in August 1949 urged everyone in a position that involved public contact to “make a point of referring to Indians, living or archeological, as men, women, and children—not as bucks or braves, squaws, or papooses.” He also encouraged interpreters to be careful and specific in the terminology they used to describe culturally significant objects to make sure they were using local and culturally appropriate language.⁴⁴¹

Although Bryant and Schellbach began initiatives to document more of the archeological past, they were woefully lax in their efforts to understand the more modern lives of nearby Native Americans. For example, when someone wrote requesting information on Indians and Indian legends of the Grand Canyon, Louis

⁴³⁹ “Howard Stricklin Oral History,” GRCA 40195, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

⁴⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁴¹ John M. Davis to Region III Superintendents, 19 August 1949, GRCA 32097, Grand Canyon Museum Collections; Robert Keller and Michael Turek, *American Indians and National Parks* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1998), 136.

Schellbach responded that the NPS had no books on the subject, and recommended she contact the El Tovar bookshop for a list of publications on Indians in the region. He indicated that he knew a great deal of literature existed especially on the Navajo and Hopi, but did not know of any books on Indian legends about the region.⁴⁴² This also shows once again the importance of concessionaires in interpreting Native American history at the Park.

Opinions on the quality and content of NPS interpretation of Native Americans in the postwar years seems to vary a great deal. Jack Breed, a contributor to *National Geographic Magazine*, reported in 1948 that, “At Grand Canyon village, on the south rim, few of the National Park personnel could give information on the canyon of the Havasupai.”⁴⁴³ However, the National Park Service provided descriptions of Havasu Canyon and information for visitors in its yearly reports, and rangers sometimes gave campfire presentations or other talks on the Havasupai and their canyon home. This information reflected the prejudices and popular myths of the time. For instance, the script for a campfire talk given at the time was effusive in its description of the Havasupai yet was overwhelmingly paternalistic, describing them as “simple folk” who lived happily and without fear for almost 1000 years. Still, it did include some accurate

⁴⁴² Louis Schellbach to Eileen Cunningham, 1 September 1948, Box 116 Folder K38: Publications Service 1941-49, NARA.

⁴⁴³ Jack Breed, “Land of the Havasupai” *National Geographic Magazine* 93:5 (May 1948): 655.

information, such as the fact that most Grand Canyon trails were originally Native American footpaths.⁴⁴⁴

Despite the Park's lackadaisical approach to its Native American history, commercial sources continued to connect the Grand Canyon with Native Americans in their interpretations of the Canyon during this time. Guidebooks and travel magazines for decades had described Cataract Canyon as a Garden of Eden, Shangri-La, Utopia, or some other fabulous paradise, and continued to do so during this time period. National exposure in magazines such as *National Geographic*, *Westways Magazine*, and *Arizona Highways* drew tourists to the Havasupai's gorgeous canyon home in increasingly large numbers during the postwar era. In 1948 only 30 tourists visited the canyon, though numbers grew steadily until over 700 visitors came to Havasu Canyon in 1965.⁴⁴⁵

Also in this time period, General Petroleum Company expressed interest in creating a color film about the Canyon that relied heavily on the presence of a Native American boy to convey its message. A script for this film exists, and though it is unclear if the company ever actually produced it, it provides interesting insight on how the American public might have interpreted the Canyon at the time. Its opening sequence was meant to show the Canyon as "one of Nature's most magnificent and awe-inspiring accomplishments—with both

⁴⁴⁴ "Land of the Sky Blue Water," GRCA 70915, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

⁴⁴⁵ "Havasupais Depend on Tourist Trade, Lead Happy-Go-Lucky Lives." *Arizona Daily Sun*, Flagstaff, March 15, 1966; "Home of the Blue Green Water People," William Bass Collection, Cline Library, NAU.

physical and spiritual qualities that literally overwhelm the senses—and to Establish a Mood, inspired by the Canyon’s incredible magnitude, its splendor and majesty and mystery, its strange and almost fearful silence, like the silence of Eternity itself.”⁴⁴⁶ To establish this mood, the opening sequence proposed to start with shots from the bottom of the Canyon giving an eerie quality, then flying to the top of the South Rim where a young Indian boy would be standing and pointing off at the Canyon without talking, supposedly as a way to show the size relationship between people and the Canyon. It also called for shots including uniformed interpreters while explaining how the Canyon was created using information from Edwin McKee, but then returned again to the Indian boy, looking into the Canyon as the narrator talks about different rock formations.⁴⁴⁷

Actual mention of human history itself at the Grand Canyon in this video script was brief, however, summed up with the statement: “Like other Mammals, the record of Man in the Grand Canyon is a meager one. McKee said that the earliest human history with a clear, detailed record goes back to about 300 AD—and the Man is the Southwest Indian.” At this point the film was supposed to show a few images of petroglyphs and possibly ruins or cliff dwellings, but it never made any effort to go beyond the archeological period to discuss the presence of modern Indians or white men. The film script ended with the image of

⁴⁴⁶ “In the Beginning, the Grand Canyon Story,” Box 115 Folder K3015: Moving Pictures 1951-54, NARA.

⁴⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

the Indian boy, still on top of the cliff, pointing off into the Canyon.⁴⁴⁸ The boy was obviously meant to be a stock character, invoking subconscious emotions and responses in the viewer, rather than educating them in any way about the Native American presence or experience at the Canyon.

Increasing Attempts at Standardization

One of the most significant changes in the NPS as they readjusted in the postwar era was a growing push by the Washington Office to turn the Service into a more centralized agency. Some of these efforts had begun before the war. In the early 1940s, national NPS leaders began exerting more influence over the style and methods of interpretation in individual Parks in order to set service-wide standards and create a more unified image for the agency and all its sites. Park museums were one area where this was evident. Over the course of the 1930s, small museums that had been established at places like Mesa Verde, Yosemite, and the Grand Canyon suffered from a lack of professional museum staff. Grand Canyon National Park was lucky to have Schellbach, with his extensive museum training, working as a naturalist there. However, across the National Park System, interpretation at such sites was uneven at best, so in 1941 the NPS issued a Field Manual for Museums to help superintendents, archeologists, naturalists, or whoever might be in charge of these museums. This manual went out of print

⁴⁴⁸ Ibid.

during WWII, but continued to guide NPS museum design, development, and programming for 35 years.⁴⁴⁹

After the war, National Park Service officials began to see standardization, in interpretation and other areas of management, as essential because employees often transferred or were reassigned to other units within the system (which was required for their career advancement). It also was a way to help them better cope with the flood of visitors appearing in their parks. In terms of interpretation, this standardization was meant to assist parks that were still short-staffed after the war, that only had one naturalist or interpreter on staff, or that had no specialists with training in areas such as museum exhibit development, by giving “how-to” instructions on different types of interpretation. The NPS began producing manuals on techniques such as designing herbariums, developing nature trails, creating museums plans, and other skills they felt might be useful, thereby creating uniform methods of interpretation throughout the Service.⁴⁵⁰

The Washington Office also began ordering parks to keep statistics on visitor usage of interpretive facilities, and seemed to become more interested in evaluating the interpretive programs at parks. Perhaps this was because of their constant need to justify them during the war, or perhaps it was a way to generate more funding to relieve the dire situation they faced. They may also have been

⁴⁴⁹ Ralph H. Lewis, *Manual for Museums* (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, Department of the Interior, 1976), v.

⁴⁵⁰ Hugh Miller to Superintendents, 27 November 1951, Box 114 Folder K1815: Naturalist and Educational Activities 1949-1953, NARA.

genuinely interested in improving park interpretation, and controlling interpreters who preached their own opinions too much or told eccentric and ill-informed stories. At Grand Canyon, Harold C. Bryant and Louis Schellbach saw these efforts as unnecessary meddling in interpretive programs they had invested decades developing and over which they felt a sense of ownership.

From 1946 to 1953 the naturalist staff at the Grand Canyon (and other parks) was required to provide monthly reports of their interpretive services, such as the number of conducted trips given, attendance at interpretive events, and the duration of time visitors spent at self-service interpretive devices.⁴⁵¹ In 1948 a survey given to park administrators asked them to suggest how to improve interpretation in their park, Schellbach called for more money, personnel, and interpretive facilities—which would become a common mantra for him and others involved in GCNP’s interpretive programming. As he pointed out, GCNP did not have one major government-built interpretive unit (both Yavapai Observation Station and the Wayside Museum had been funded by private investors), and was only able to muster a ratio of one naturalist for every 80,000 visitors; by comparison, during the early years of the golden age under McKee, there was approximately one naturalist for every 20,000 visitors.⁴⁵² These points are rather

⁴⁵¹ Various monthly reports, Box 115 Folder K1819: Interpretive Reports 1946-53, NARA.

⁴⁵² “National Parks Survey,” 30 April 1948, Box 114 Folder K1815: Naturalist and Educational Activities 1946-1948, NARA; Louis Schellbach, “Manuscript of Interpretive Data,” 14 October 1942, GRCA 58396, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

shocking considering that the NPS considered Grand Canyon one of the major jewels of the National Park System.

Some of the efforts to evaluate the interpretive programs at parks came from outside the National Park Service. In 1948, Cornell University and the American Nature Association Study Group completed an independent report that looked at visitor reactions to interpretive programs at the Grand Canyon. Researchers asked visitors who had participated in NPS programs questions about what activities they experienced, what they gained from them, and what criticisms or suggestions they might offer. Some of their most interesting responses dealt with the interpretation of cultural history at the Canyon. For example, those who attended the Wayside Museum talks were generally pleased with them, indicating that they had learned new ideas and viewpoints about contemporary Indians, though at least one visitor indicated that they were disappointed that anthropologists did not agree with the Biblical story of the origin of men. Another visitor complained that in a campfire program on the Hopi, “some of the historical facts given were erroneous, and the pronunciation of some Indian words and names was inaccurate.”⁴⁵³

This report also reveals a great deal about the relationship between the NPS and concessionaires at GCNP at the time, especially in regards to interpretive services. One of the major problems they reported was that many

⁴⁵³ “National Parks Survey: Brief Preliminary Report on Grand Canyon National Park,” 1948, Box 114 Folder K1815: Naturalist and Educational Activities 1946-48, NARA.

visitors to GCNP did not know that the government offered free services. In particular, those arriving by train or bus were almost entirely dependent on the concessionaire for information, and not surprisingly the concessionaire was far more likely to advertise their own activities instead of those offered by the government.⁴⁵⁴

Visitors registered specific complaints about the concessionaires as well. Several wondered about Fred Harvey's power at the Canyon, stating that they felt like the company controlled the Park and engaged in monopolistic practices.⁴⁵⁵ One stated that the NPS should train concessionaire guides and be able to force them to dispense accurate information, stating that some guides told "atrocious stories" that weakened the government's programs. The researchers therefore suggested having naturalists accompany Fred Harvey tour drivers, or require these drivers to pass a competency test on facts about the Park. The report also pointed out that drivers for the Nava-Hopi tour buses were dressed in uniforms that closely resembled NPS uniforms, which the researcher believed was "a deliberate attempt to associate these drivers with the park service in the minds of the public." This implies that the public had a perception of the NPS's integrity and standards in interpretation that were highly valued and therefore worthy of emulation—but that also needed to be protected.⁴⁵⁶

⁴⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁶ Ibid.

The NPS interpretive personnel at the Park and in its regional headquarters were already well aware of this problem, but could do little to solve it. In a 1950 report, Regional Naturalist Natt Dodge argued that the NPS needed a more visible presence at the Canyon, stating that “I personally have talked with people who have been to Grand Canyon without knowing it was a national park, and I have met others who called it ‘Fred Harvey National Park’ because concessioner activities monopolized their time and attention.”⁴⁵⁷ The solution to this problem in their minds was more NPS personnel, but there was never enough money to hire any new naturalists until the mid-1950s. Furthermore, even if the Park had the budget to hire more personnel, it would have been difficult to find experienced men because the government required that they recruit only veterans and single men.⁴⁵⁸

The staff tried to overcome these problems as best they could. For instance, Lon Garrison’s wife Inger noted that when rangers were gone on patrols, their wives would give information to anyone who called or came by the station, meaning that “through many of the years that we’ve had a Park Service, they’ve hired two for one.”⁴⁵⁹ In the meantime, there was little else the small staff could

⁴⁵⁷ Natt Dodge to Regional Director, 24 October 1950, Box 115 Folder K1819: Interpretive Reports 1946-53, NARA.

⁴⁵⁸ “National Parks Survey: Brief Preliminary Report on Grand Canyon National Park,” 1948, Box 114 Folder K1815: Naturalist and Educational Activities 1946-48, NARA.

⁴⁵⁹ “Lon and Inger Garrison Oral History,” GRCA 35731, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

do to counter the concessionaires' poor interpretation except encourage them to have their employees consult the driver's manual McKee had completed many years before, and to try to have a more visible interpretive ranger presence at the Village.

The 1948 Cornell report concluded that the only reason the naturalist staff was able to accomplish as much as they were was because they were all donating their spare time to complete projects because they were highly motivated and enthusiastic about their jobs. The survey summarized that the interpretive services offered at GCNP were a credit to the NPS, yet not capable of handling the growing number of visitors.⁴⁶⁰ Things were so bad that Associate Regional Director P.P. Patraw even suggested to Bryant that the Park would be better off not advertising their interpretive services despite the criticism this might bring from the public.⁴⁶¹ The situation seemed irresolvable unless Congress appropriated more resources to the NPS.

Perhaps in response to the above report and its criticism of the concessionaires at the Park, a year later Fred Harvey published an informational book for its drivers/guides that had been prepared with help from the NPS. Most of its suggestions echoed NPS ideas on how to give good interpretive programs. This guide booklet contains a surprising amount of information on Native

⁴⁶⁰ "National Parks Survey: Brief Preliminary Report on Grand Canyon National Park," 1948, Box 114 Folder K1815: Naturalist and Educational Activities 1946-48, NARA.

⁴⁶¹ P.P. Patraw to Superintendent, Grand Canyon National Park, 26 August 1948, Box 114 Folder K1815: Naturalist and Educational Activities 1946-1948, NARA.

American sites and cultural history at the Canyon, though of course drivers utilized this data at their own discretion.⁴⁶² For example, when providing information about the Tusayan ruins and Desert View, the guidebook notes that drivers can talk about Indians in the region at this point, but that they should do so sensitively:

“Your judgment and manner of presenting the subject of the present-day Indians, can be both interesting and instructive. A word of caution; do not belittle them to your group. They are the sum, total and product of the environment in which they find themselves forced to live, even as with us. To attempt to criticize [*sic*] their way of life, by our standards, is unfair. We only know our own way of living and are products of that way, and therefore prone to be biased. Much of our criticism of the Indians’ way of life is unjustified and founded on standards that can be, and have been, questioned.”⁴⁶³

The manual further suggests that drivers read up on the topic themselves but to make sure the information comes from credible sources, since “Too much hokum has been dispensed all over the United States about our Native Americans.”⁴⁶⁴ Though this might have improved interpretation for a bit, Lon Garrison believed that after the Fred Harvey Company sold out to AMFAC in the 1950s there was a noticeable decline in the quality of concessionaires’ interpretive services.⁴⁶⁵

⁴⁶² “Information for Fred Harvey Guides,” 1949, Box 66 Folder C34: Information for Fred Harvey Guides, NARA.

⁴⁶³ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁵ “Lon and Inger Garrison Oral History,” GRCA 35731, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

Attempts by NPS Washington DC and Regional offices to become more proactive in assessing their parks through internal reviews led to some clashes with GCNP managers in this time period, although they agreed on some basic needs. Regional Naturalist Natt Dodge filled out a series of surveys meant to assess the status of the interpretive program at Grand Canyon National Park in 1949 and 1950. Dodge included some criticisms but generally approved of the status of interpretation in the Park. However, in both reports he noted the problems caused by the lack of adequate interpretive facilities and stated that more buildings were essential to their public service, calling for the immediate construction of a central interpretive facility on the South Rim.⁴⁶⁶ Dodge's report included a lengthy discussion of the overcrowded conditions at Grand Canyon and its effect on visitors. He testified that they were annoyed and inconvenienced, could not obtain quality interpretive service, and felt like large herds of cattle being given no personal attention.⁴⁶⁷

Bryant and Schellbach bristled at some of Dodge's criticisms, especially when he opined that they were providing inadequate service and attention to visitors. Bryant responded that based on monthly reports the Grand Canyon

⁴⁶⁶ "Appraisal of Interpretive Program," 21-22 August 1949, 31 August to 1 September 1949, 2-3 September 1950, and 4-5 September 1950, Box 115 Folder K1819: Interpretive Reports 1946-53, NARA.

⁴⁶⁷ Dodge noted that he did not just experience this problem at Grand Canyon, but also at other regional NPS sites like Carlsbad Caverns, Petrified Forest, Zion, and Mesa Verde. P. P. Patraw to Harold C. Bryant, 28 September 1950, Box 115 Folder K1819: Interpretive Reports 1946-53, NARA.

offered more interpretive services than other parks—and this was despite having only two permanent and 10 seasonal interpretive rangers to serve 5,000 to 6,000 visitors each day.⁴⁶⁸ However, they both agree with Dodge and Acting Regional Director P.P. Patraw on the need for more facilities.

These surveys and Bryant and Schellbach's response to them also reveal a dichotomy in how the Washington and Southwest Regional Office viewed the role of interpretation and how GCNP personnel saw it at this time. Dodge criticized the naturalists' programs for not adequately explaining the basic principles of the National Park System or objectives of the NPS, which he saw as essential to protecting parks against constant pressure by various groups to gain access to NPS sites and exploit their resources. As a solution, he suggested creating a uniform training program that would establish naturalist standards throughout the system.⁴⁶⁹

Schellbach, however, disagreed with the idea that it was vital to inform people about the NPS. He stated that naturalists did talk about the NPS values when appropriate, but that it could not be fit into every talk if they wished to keep the audience's attention and truly interpret GCNP for them. Bryant echoed Schellbach's opinion, arguing that it was not appropriate to include it in some,

⁴⁶⁸ In a subsequent letter Dodge noted that in the June 1950 monthly report, "only" 75% of visitors had utilized any interpretive services, a percentage that most modern GCNP interpreters only dream of. *Ibid.*; Natt Dodge to Regional Director, 24 October 1950, and Harold C. Bryant to Regional Director, 13 October 1950, Box 115 Folder K1819: Interpretive Reports 1946-53, NARA.

⁴⁶⁹ P. P. Patraw to Harold C. Bryant, 28 September 1950, Box 115 Folder K1819: Interpretive Reports 1946-53, NARA.

and including it in all would be too repetitious and cut down on the amount of material they wanted to interpret. He said “Such would be extremely boring to those who attend all of the interpretive talks—and, as has happened, a voiced objection to it as ‘Park Service propaganda’ from some person or persons in the audience.”⁴⁷⁰ Schellbach also resisted the idea of standardization in the parks, arguing that “No uniform program can be formulated to cover all parks and monuments. Each has its own problems.”⁴⁷¹

Despite these ruffled feathers, in 1951 Dodge arrived at GCNP to test out a new checklist the NPS had developed to evaluate Parks. This survey includes a concise mission statement concerning interpretation in the NPS: “The immediate objective of the interpretive program is to enhance each visitor’s enjoyment and make his visit to a national park or monument a memorable experience by helping him to develop an understanding and appreciation of the things he sees there. The long-range objective is to stimulate pride of ownership in these great places of America, thus developing a desire to preserve and protect them.”⁴⁷² Dodge gave Grand Canyon high marks when evaluating how well GCNP staff fulfilled these objectives, but still noted that a “lack of adequate facilities and funds makes

⁴⁷⁰ Harold C. Bryant to Regional Director, 13 October 1950, Box 115 Folder K1819: Interpretive Reports 1946-53, NARA.

⁴⁷¹ P. P. Patraw to Harold C. Bryant, 28 September 1950, Box 115 Folder K1819: Interpretive Reports 1946-53, NARA.

⁴⁷² Natt Dodge, “Notes on Interpretive Program,” 17 August 1951, Box 115 Folder K1819: Interpretive Reports 1946-53, NARA.

necessary continual apologies.”⁴⁷³ Unfortunately, Congress and the NPS did not answer such calls for more interpretive facilities for several more years.

Summary

Although Grand Canyon National Park’s interpretive staff was reduced to one employee during World War II, Louis Schellbach and Harold C. Bryant successfully fought to prove the value of interpretive services and to justify their continued existence. Their dedication to interpretation left the Park poised to become a leader in interpretation within the National Park Service in the postwar years. Despite growing visitation, insufficient facilities, and understaffing, Schellbach and his staff developed a reputation as some of the premier interpreters in the NPS. They demanded high standards for their interpretation, and successfully shifted the messages of their interpretation to appeal to the public’s feelings of nationalism during the war, assuage their uncertainties about the Cold War, and appeal to their growing enthusiasm for environmental and ecological concerns. They attempted to expand their interpretation of cultural history at the Canyon, though their inclusion of Native American themes remained limited to the ancient inhabitants of the Canyon. At the same time, the NPS Washington Office attempted to standardize interpretation throughout the National Park System, and exert more control over the messages and methods being employed, a trend that Schellbach and Bryant mostly resisted.

In some ways, the years after World War II saw the NPS and Grand Canyon National Park becoming victims of their own success. Interpretive

⁴⁷³ Ibid.

programs were so popular they overwhelmed staff trying to fulfill their responsibilities. Trends that had begun during the war in which parks had to justify expenditures and report on usage continued after the war, and expanded into attempts to standardize and centralize the NPS as a way to assist stressed local personnel but also as a way to tell a more coherent message at the parks and justify the continuation of the NPS. These were only baby steps, however; the NPS was on the cusp of major changes that would alter the National Park Service and its sites forever.

CHAPTER 6

NEW DIRECTIONS: PREPARING THE STAGE FOR MISSION 66

In the post-World War II period, the National Park Service seemed on the verge of becoming a victim of its own success, a success due largely to the work of interpreters who promoted the benefits and values of parks and served as the front-line contacts between the NPS and the public. As the NPS realized that this trend was likely to continue throughout the 1950s, it became increasingly proactive about finding ways to alleviate some of these stresses while still providing a quality experience for visitors to the parks. Much of this change was due to the leadership of Conrad Wirth, who took over as director of the NPS at the beginning of 1952.⁴⁷⁴ Wirth began his career with the NPS when he arrived by train at Grand Canyon National Park as a ranger in 1931 and was immediately put on a mule and sent down the Bright Angel Trail and halfway up the North Rim before descending again to stay at Phantom Ranch that night. He recalled his time at Grand Canyon fondly, and stated that it taught him that parks have natural wonders that are easy to see and appreciate, but that they also have historic areas “which offer greater intellectual challenge and reward to the visitor.”⁴⁷⁵

⁴⁷⁴ In May 1951, Newton B. Drury retired as director of the NPS. Arthur Demaray, who had been an assistant director since 1933, briefly filled in as director until he also retired in December of that year.

⁴⁷⁵ National Geographic Society, *America's Wonderlands: The Scenic National Parks and Monuments of the United States* (Washington, D.C.: The National Geographic Society, 1959), 12-13, 16.

Wirth, who was trained as a landscape architect, would have a major impact on the development of the National Park Service in his 12-year tenure. Part of his impact included a complete organizational restructuring of the NPS, dividing it into different branches with new hierarchies and relationships that had a significant impact on interpretation. It also involved the implementation of Mission 66, which will be discussed in depth in the following chapter. To understand the interpretive practices put into action under Mission 66, it is important to examine the concepts that Wirth laid out in memos and manuals in his first years as NPS director, the focus of this chapter. In Wirth's first years of leadership he encouraged NPS interpreters to make conservation one of the major themes of NPS interpretation. This shift was due to a growing idea within the NPS that they could use interpretation proactively as a management tool to help alleviate some of the burdens that the blossoming visitor numbers were imposing on their staffs. This initiative rested on the idea that interpreters could instill a sense of appreciation in visitors that would translate into a sense of stewardship, leading them to treat the parks more carefully and thus reduce damage to resources and the need for ranger patrols. This idea continues to at least partially shape NPS interpretation even today.

A New Interpretation Division and New Objectives Shake Things Up

In 1953, the new Eisenhower administration demanded governmental restructuring to help reduce federal expenditures, thereby reducing wasteful

spending and reduce the administrative burden of the federal government.⁴⁷⁶ To comply with these orders and help make his agency more streamlined and efficient, Wirth reorganized the NPS, creating the new Division of Interpretation in the Washington Office.⁴⁷⁷ Ronald F. Lee, who had been serving as the assistant director for research and interpretation, found himself in charge of this new division, which was composed of four branches: history, natural history, information, and museums. Furthermore, each of the five regional offices received a Chief of Interpretation plus a staff naturalist, historian, biologist, and archeologist. Wirth envisioned this newly formed division as a way to educate people but also to create better public relations with the American people.⁴⁷⁸ Freeman Tilden noted that this change was made “with a view to strengthening the work of Interpretation in the field” and saw these developments as part of “a constant movement toward a more coherent...program for Interpretation in the National Park System.”⁴⁷⁹

⁴⁷⁶ Paul Hirt, *A Conspiracy of Optimism: Management of the National Forests since World War Two* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994), 105, 107.

⁴⁷⁷ Conrad Wirth to Washington Office and All Field Offices, 16 February 1954, Box 114 Folder K1815: Interpretive Activities Services 1954, NARA.

⁴⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷⁹ Freeman Tilden, *Interpreting Our Heritage*, 3rd ed. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1977), 35; National Park Service, *The Interpretive Challenge* (Arizona Memorial Museum Association et al, 1988), 35, 106, 107; “National Park Service Administrative Manual, Vol. 25: Information and Interpretation in the Field,” GRCA 55370, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

This new division helped make it clear that this administration saw interpretation as a key NPS function, especially under Lee's leadership, which lasted until 1959.⁴⁸⁰ Together, Wirth and Lee would initiate new efforts toward centralizing, standardizing, and influencing the messages of NPS interpretation. However, Wirth's early connection to and fondness for GCNP did not automatically endear him to Superintendent Harold C. Bryant and Chief Naturalist Louis Schellbach, who resisted many of the changes in interpretation that he made, even though it soon became obvious that the Grand Canyon staff were fighting a losing battle.

One of the most noticeable examples of Wirth's and Lee's efforts to develop system-wide standards in NPS interpretation happened early in their tenures, when they worked to develop a field manual on interpretation. In 1952, the Washington Office (WASO) distributed first draft copies of this manual, asking various superintendents for their input. This manual represented a growing effort to define and describe the interpretive philosophy and mission of the NPS, as well as the style and look of interpretive displays throughout the system. It began by defining interpretation as an educational process designed to stimulate curiosity to connect people to the natural world, history, and prehistory of the country and inspire the human spirit.⁴⁸¹ In other words, "the interpretive program

⁴⁸⁰ Ralph H. Lewis, *Museum Curatorship in the National Park Service, 1904-1982* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Interior, NPS, Curatorial Services Division, 1993), 130, 138.

⁴⁸¹ "Information and Interpretation in the Field," 1952, Box 115 Folder K1819: Information and Interpretation in the Field, NARA.

in the areas of the National Park System is a considered presentation of the inspirational, spiritual, esthetic, educational, and recreational values of these areas supplied in such ways that visitors may derive the utmost in understanding, appreciation, and enjoyment from their experiences.”⁴⁸² This definition emphasized more intangible aspects of parks and interpretation, such as values and visitor experience, rather than facts and figures. According to historian Samuel Hays, identifying these values with the natural environment signified an important cultural shift that took place in the postwar years in which environmental amenities became increasingly important to the middle class lifestyle and personal well-being.⁴⁸³ The manual repeatedly emphasized that interpretation should move toward placing NPS sites into a broader context as well by helping the public better understand the NPS, the purpose and mission of the national parks, and how each park related to other sites in the system.⁴⁸⁴

Wirth and Lee emphasized conservation as an important interpretive theme in this manual and many other memos.⁴⁸⁵ As later clarifying documents show, their description of conservation included both ecological issues and

⁴⁸² Ibid.

⁴⁸³ Samuel B. Hays, *Beauty, Health, and Permanence: Environmental Politics in the United States, 1955-1985* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 3-4, 13.

⁴⁸⁴ “Information and Interpretation in the Field,” 1952, Box 115 Folder K1819: Information and Interpretation in the Field, NARA.

⁴⁸⁵ Ibid.

“proper park use.” As Richard West Sellars notes, this definition of conservation, focusing largely on nature protection and wildlife management, had guided the NPS since the 1930s, when Wirth had served as Assistant Director of the NPS.⁴⁸⁶ Some of the conservation behaviors that they hoped interpreters would address included fire prevention, the proper relationship between people and wildlife, protection of delicate natural features, cleanliness of camp sites and trails, and the safety of recreationists.⁴⁸⁷ Other more specific concerns, such as overgrazing, environmental impacts from dams, and the value of scenic forested areas in comparison to adjacent clearcut areas were also topics of conservation interpretation. For example, Grand Canyon interpreters discussing the issue of predator control and its effect on grasslands and wildlife used the example of the Kaibab deer population explosion and crash on the North Rim as a result of wolf extermination.⁴⁸⁸ Such interpretation helped inform the public of important local conservation issues while also garnering support for NPS policies that might have seemed controversial without detailed knowledge. The conservation messages also helped protect the NPS from political foes during the early years of the Eisenhower administration, which sometimes seemed hostile to the agency and to

⁴⁸⁶ Richard West Sellars, *Preserving Nature in the National Parks: A History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 155.

⁴⁸⁷ Conrad Wirth to All Field Offices, 23 April 1953, Box 115 Folder K1815: Naturalist and Educational Activities 1953, NARA. Over the course of the decade the concept of conservation would expand to encompass concerns about overconsumption, pollution, and other topics, which will be discussed in subsequent chapters.

⁴⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

conservation. For example, Eisenhower political appointees supported efforts to permit the construction of dams and allow mining within NPS sites. This includes proposed dams at Bridge Canyon and Marble Canyon, both within the Grand Canyon, which the NPS protested.⁴⁸⁹

Wirth and Lee saw the “proper use” message of conservation interpretation as essential to solving the problem of visitation exceeding park capacity. This increased visitation damaged resources, yet budgetary constraints inhibited the NPS from adequately dealing with this problem by such means as increased ranger patrols or other protection measures. By cultivating an ethic of conservation, the NPS hoped to instill in the public a sense of ownership responsibility for the parks that would translate into a decrease in vandalism, littering, and other abuses. It believed that this would prompt the public to regulate themselves so that rangers could focus on interpretation rather than enforcement. In this way the NPS took a proactive approach to protecting its resources, or as the manual put it, preventing a fire instead of putting it out later. For instance, at the Grand Canyon, interpreters giving campfire programs on wildlife might tell stories about people who had left food trash at picnic tables or campsites, which attracted wildlife that became camp nuisances, often requiring those animals to be euthanized. Without being too “preachy,” such a message could inform the public as well as encourage them to clean up after themselves at

⁴⁸⁹ John Ise, *Our National Park Policy: A Critical History* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1961), 557, 561. Both of these areas were outside of the Park’s boundaries at the time, but would have had significant effects on the Colorado River and its ecosystem within the Park.

the Park and in their own backyards, accomplishing managerial and interpretive goals and freeing rangers to do more pressing work than trash pickup.⁴⁹⁰

Grand Canyon administrators were not impressed with the ideas expressed in the manual. A memo, probably from Assistant Superintendent Lemuel Garrison, stated that it did not add much to what was already understood and practiced by rangers at the Grand Canyon. Instead, he argued, “The interpretive program seems to me to have gone off on a...tangent and is not well integrated with other phases of administration.”⁴⁹¹ Harold Bryant and Assistant Regional Director Hugh Miller at this point engaged in correspondence discussing their different ideas about education and interpretation brought into focus by the manual. Their discussion reveals the difference between administrative views of interpretation, which seemed mostly focused on budgetary issues, and front-line interpreter views, which focused on the informative aspects of interpretation. There was no resolution to this debate, which had already been ongoing in NPS circles for decades, and is still continuing today. For example, Bryant criticized the manual, stating that it “Shows fear of the use of the word ‘education’ which is simpler, better known, more understandable than interpretation...Have never understood why we must desert the good word ‘education.’”⁴⁹² On the other side

⁴⁹⁰ “Information and Interpretation in the Field,” 1952, Box 115 Folder K1819: Information and Interpretation in the Field, NARA.

⁴⁹¹ [Lemuel Garrison], “Memorandum,” 7 August 1952, Box 115 Folder K1819: Information and Interpretation in the Field, NARA.

⁴⁹² Harold C. Bryant to Regional Director, 14 November 1952, Box 115 Folder K1819: Information and Interpretation in the Field, NARA.

of the issue, Miller argued that the official impetus for creating an interpretive service in the NPS was to help the public enjoy the parks, and to garner fiscal support for such interpretive programs they had to convince Congress that they were fulfilling the goal of making the parks pleasurable for the public. In Miller's mind, therefore, "the enjoyment and not the education is primary." In the margin of the letter is a handwritten note from Bryant calling this idea "nuts!"⁴⁹³

Miller continued that "there can be no doubt that the National Park Service should not consider itself to be an educational institution" and surmised that the NPS had trouble getting appropriations for interpretive services because Congress believed that education was not a justifiable expenditure for the NPS.⁴⁹⁴

Therefore, Miller believed that they should ask for interpretive facilities on the basis of a practical, urgent need to provide physical accommodations for visitors and a central information center for their convenience. As he stated, "All these would be aimed at serving the needs of the public in a specific and practical sense but would be described at no point as a scheme to educate them."⁴⁹⁵

In April 1953 Wirth issued a memorandum that even more clearly and emphatically asserted his belief that ranger-naturalists should use interpretation to achieve both proper use and resource conservation objectives. He urged them to

⁴⁹³ Hugh Miller to Harold C. Bryant, 5 January 1952, Box 115 Folder K1819: Information and Interpretation in the Field, NARA.

⁴⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁵ Ibid.

use “interpretation as an offensive weapon” to protect natural and historic resources. Wirth argued that the interpretive program was justified based on the 1916 NPS Organic Act that gave the agency the imperative to protect and preserve national parks for future generations to enjoy. However, he argued that interpreters had often focused too much on immediate enjoyment of parks at the expense of preserving them for future generations. In his opinion, interpreters had “a real obligation and opportunity, based upon law and policy, to contribute to preservation of the areas as well as to their enjoyment by the public.”⁴⁹⁶

Wirth then delineated ways in which interpretation could aid conservation. First, conservation education would give visitors a connection to and sense of investment in nature and history. He urged interpreters to find ways to get visitors to identify themselves with the parks by linking them to their own experiences; in other words, to generate “protection through appreciation, appreciation through understanding, and understanding through interpretation.”⁴⁹⁷ Secondly, interpretation would inform people about park management by telling them about NPS principles, policies, and objectives, as well as obstacles to these goals. Thirdly, interpretation would show specific ways in which visitors could apply conservation practices they learned at parks to situations in their own lives once they returned home, such as how to prevent erosion. Finally, interpreters were important to conservation efforts by helping to draw visitors’ attention to threats

⁴⁹⁶ Conrad Wirth to All Field Offices, 23 April 1953, Box 115 Folder K1815: Naturalist and Educational Activities 1953, NARA.

⁴⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

to parks, such as damming rivers, so that they could to take action to help address them once they left. However, he also warned people not to preach, lecture, argue, or over-dramatize the issue of conservation, and urged interpreters to avoid criticizing industry or other agencies.⁴⁹⁸

Louis Schellbach agreed with Wirth on this last point in particular. One of his handwritten notes at the top of the report states that “We have been doing this for the past 25 years and comments from visitors is the proof [*sic*]. But we cannot inject this in every talk without reaction from the visitors as repetition and advertising.”⁴⁹⁹ For example, he pointed out that every campfire program talked about issues such as fire “dos and don’ts,” littering, and feeding wild animals. However, like Wirth, Schellbach seemed aware of the pitfalls of harping too much on conservation issues, noting that it was too easy for this message to become “deadly” propaganda.⁵⁰⁰ Likewise, in developing displays, Schellbach tried to instill a message without harping on it. For instance, in describing an exhibit at Yavapai Observation Station about “Life Through the Ages,” Schellbach noted that the display was trying to convey the theory of evolution, though it was never mentioned by name. As he said, the emphasis was on “the idea of the struggle of life ever upward...The fossil specimens, reconstructed models, illustrations and labels tend to lead the spectator into the idea exhibited, yet the geological student

⁴⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁰ Ibid.

gets his satisfaction also by the practical geological display.” Therefore, though the message was compelling, it was more subtle and less controversial.⁵⁰¹

In response to Wirth’s memo, Regional Director and former GCNP Superintendent Miner Tillotson required all people involved in interpretation at the parks in Region Three, which included GCNP, to suggest how to better use interpretive programs to improve their conservation messages. Grand Canyon ranger-naturalists provided many different opinions on how to best achieve this, revealing that many practitioners of interpretation hesitated to accept Wirth’s ideas. Some simply repeated Wirth’s own words about instilling appreciation for the NPS and the value of the individual site. Others were more thoughtful about the implications of this new directive. James McCleary, Ernest Christensen, and Louis Schellbach agreed that a light touch was necessary, otherwise the public would become suspicious of the message as propaganda. As McCleary recalled, he had a visitor approach him after a campfire program asking why all the parks were suddenly talking so much about conservation issues, seeming annoyed by the new message.⁵⁰²

Donald M. Black pointed out that they needed to present ideas at the public’s level, but that most of the public had no more than a high school degree and were on vacation so they wanted to be entertained not bogged down with

⁵⁰¹ Louis Schellbach to Wayne Bryant, Box 102 Folder D6215: Museum and Exhibit Activities: Planning, Preparation, Maintenance, and Preservation, 1950-54, NARA.

⁵⁰² James McCleary, “Memorandum,” Box 114 Folder K1815: Naturalist and Educational Activities 1953, NARA.

depressing information; therefore he suggested using cartoons and light jokes that would present facts in a way that would be more easily remembered. In fact, in 1947, Bryant had actually proposed printing a series of cartoons about a character called “Roscoe the Ranger” that an employee at GCNP had created. The associate regional director expressed some interest in the idea, believing that it would be an effective way to educate the public about the NPS, though he worried that the ranger was portrayed as “dumb” and this might make the public see the Service in a negative light. It appears that this idea was never pursued, likely because of the shrinking NPS printing budget in the postwar years.⁵⁰³

Some GCNP interpreters were harshly critical of the whole enterprise. Joseph S. Lynch argued that too much time was wasted in filling out surveys that would better be used in simply educating employees with facts and figures that they could use immediately in their interpretive programs. Vernon Ruesch and District Park Ranger Frank E. Sylvester agreed, noting that most rangers did not know about issues outside their immediate park, so if they could more easily learn about them they could talk about such issues more easily with the visitor. Lynch also argued that this responsibility should not fall solely on the already highly overtaxed interpreters at the site, but that the NPS should try to educate the public about the agency’s purpose and principles before visitors reached the Park.⁵⁰⁴

⁵⁰³ John Davis to Grand Canyon National Park Superintendent, 3 September 1947, Box 115 Folder K30: Pictures 1946-53, NARA.

⁵⁰⁴ Joseph S. Lynch, Vernon Ruesch, and Frank E. Sylvester, Memoranda, Box 114 Folder K1815: Naturalist and Educational Activities 1953, NARA.

Despite Wirth and Lee's enthusiasm for these new interpretive guidelines, realities at individual parks meant that for the time being they were not always practical to implement. For example, in 1952 interpretive staffing shortages at the Grand Canyon seemed to become more desperate than ever before. A memo from Assistant Regional Director Miller revealed that a budget shortage in the NPS meant that many sites would not be able to hire seasonal rangers and ranger-naturalists until the middle of that summer. Because this meant that they would not receive adequate training before starting their jobs, Miller urged the experienced naturalists to keep a close eye on them, and above all else to encourage them to mention the NPS's messages of stewardship and preservation in every presentation.⁵⁰⁵

Although his workforce was significantly understaffed, Schellbach decided to increase the number of talks at Yavapai Observation Station from two to three and then four daily to try to alleviate crowding, but visitors kept packing into the small facility to hear the talks. As the Superintendent's Annual Report for 1952 stated, "This station is growing more and more inadequate in keeping up with the pressing need for visitor interpretive facilities. On numerous occasions the Station was so crowded there was not enough room for all the visitors to stand inside the building, let alone hear the lecture."⁵⁰⁶

⁵⁰⁵ Hugh Miller to Superintendents, 8 July 1952, Box 114 Folder K1815: Naturalist and Educational Activities 1949-1953, NARA.

⁵⁰⁶ "Superintendent's Annual Report, 1952," GRCA 54706, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

Ironically, though the interpretive hiring and supply budget seemed strained to the extreme, in 1952 the NPS released a revised, 16 page free circular for tourists on the Grand Canyon following years of having no publications. Because of this, the staff continued to face the conundrum of having the Washington Office advertise services to the public that were increasingly becoming impossible for them to provide. After giving the usual basic information about the Park, the circular went into some detail on interpretive activities available there, encouraging people in particular to visit Yavapai Observation Station and attend naturalist talks. It also gave quite a bit of information about Native American archeological sites at the Park, and mentioned the presence of four contemporary tribes—Navajo, Hopi, Havasupai, and Paiutes—in the region.⁵⁰⁷

Grand Canyon National Park was not alone in complaining about budgetary strains, time constraints, and the explosion of visitors. Such pressures led to a growing grumbling amongst naturalists in the Southwestern parks and monuments. As early as 1940 in Region Three park naturalists had gathered to talk about mutual problems and discussed creating a coordinated region-wide interpretive program, but nothing substantial resulted.⁵⁰⁸ Finally, in 1952, Park Naturalists from Region Three reached their breaking point. They held a meeting

⁵⁰⁷ “Grand Canyon National Park,” 1952, Box 117 Folder K3819: Publications, National Park Service: Free Informational Literature Printing and Binding 1951-54, NARA.

⁵⁰⁸ Minor Tillotson to Superintendents, 27 June 1952, Box 114 Folder K1815: Naturalist and Educational Activities 1949-1953, NARA.

at which they produced thirteen recommendations that reveal their growing frustration with many aspects of their job. They also indicated that their current situation would make them much more receptive to the changes Wirth and Lee were initiating, by showing a growing willingness to encourage more cooperation and standardization in their work.

The top recommendation adopted at this meeting was that the responsibilities of park naturalists be recognized and included in staffing standards, job descriptions, and budget justifications. Apparently at several sites the role of interpretation as part of the naturalist position was not clearly defined, and therefore many naturalists did not receive fair compensation or appreciation for these duties. Other recommendations suggest that many naturalists felt ignored or marginalized by park administrators despite their important role. Some suggestions focused on ways to alleviate their staffing shortage, such as asking for more self-guiding trails and audio-visual aids to help better utilize their personnel. Finally, these recommendations also reflected a continuing interest in the quality of their interpretative programs, such as the suggestion that a regional laboratory be established to help with exhibit preparation and improvement, and that all concessionaires be encouraged to have naturalists review manuscripts before publication to better control the information coming from these sources.⁵⁰⁹

Whether influenced by the results of this meeting, or whether they simply reaffirmed plans already in development, Wirth and Lee would address these

⁵⁰⁹ Minor Tillotson to Region III Superintendents, 15 January 1953, Box 114 Folder K1815: Naturalist and Educational Activities 1949-1953, NARA.

complaints in a number of organizational changes and program initiatives over the next several years.

It was not only those within the NPS who noticed the impact of budgetary restrictions and the lack of adequate personnel at parks; the public was becoming aware of these problems too. For example, in a satirical article in *Harper's Magazine* in 1953, Bernard DeVoto argued that all the national parks should be closed, likely in an attempt to shame politicians into providing more funding for the NPS. He detailed all the complaints superintendents received and praised personnel for their dedication and courtesy, but pointed out that morale amongst employees was quickly being undermined because of low salaries and poor working conditions. Therefore, even though NPS personnel had accomplished great things under extreme handicaps, DeVoto half-seriously argued that the government should temporarily close the parks until they could allocate enough money to run them properly, otherwise they were on the verge of becoming a national disgrace.⁵¹⁰

In early 1954, Chief of Interpretation Lee reported on what progress had been made in implementing Wirth's objectives for the new Division of Interpretation. One of the major objectives was to improve interpretive services for park visitors. To accomplish this, the new Division of Interpretation was working on creating several training aids. They also began to experiment with

⁵¹⁰ Bernard DeVoto, "Let's Close the National Parks" *Harper's Magazine*, 1953. NARA Box 119. K4223 Magazine Articles 1951-54.

holding system-wide training courses for interpretive personnel.⁵¹¹ This shift was noticeable and positive; in his history of NPS interpretation Barry Mackintosh made specific note of how the Washington Office in the 1950s succeeding in training more personnel in the techniques of interpretation by publishing booklets on interpretation techniques for talks, conducted trips, campfire programs, and information centers.⁵¹²

Training aids were becoming increasingly necessary as funding cuts under the Eisenhower administration meant interpretive staff often no longer received adequate training. For example, at GCNP, by 1954 training for seasonal rangers consisted of a week-long course on necessary subjects, but Acting Superintendent Charles Shevlin pointed out that often seasonal employees could not be hired until they were desperately needed so many of them missed these sessions. Part of the problem was that seasonal rangers preferred to volunteer at different parks each season, meaning that every year they had to train an almost entirely new crop of rangers. Therefore, training programs and manuals that could address general concepts that applied to all parks could be highly useful.⁵¹³ The first major step Lee took in this regard was introducing Freeman Tilden's new (and soon to

⁵¹¹ Ronald F. Lee to Conrad Wirth, 25 May 1954, Box 114 Folder K1815: Interpretive Activities Services 1954, NARA.

⁵¹² Barry Mackintosh, *Interpretation in the National Park Service: A Historical Perspective* (Washington, D.C.: History Division, NPS, Department of the Interior, 1986), 85, 90, 91.

⁵¹³ Charles Shevlin to Isabella Alden, 12 February 1954, Box 119 Folder K4223: Magazine Articles 1951-54, NARA.

become classic) study of interpretation, *Interpreting Our Heritage*, to staff throughout the system.⁵¹⁴

One of the training aids that the NPS produced in 1955 as a result of Wirth and Lee's objectives was the *Manual on Information and Interpretation in the Field*. It in many ways resembled the draft manual circulated among superintendents three years previously, but had been revamped and expanded. It began by placing responsibility for park informational and interpretive facilities on each Park Superintendent, not the Chief Naturalist, although it held all NPS employees responsible for assisting in providing interpretation, saying that it was a topic that required "active and continuous concern."⁵¹⁵ The manual argued that no other government agency provided so much face-to-face contact or service to the public as the NPS, and emphasized the role of interpreters as public servants.⁵¹⁶ It also again reiterated the importance of including a conservation message in interpretation without being overly propagandistic or critical of private enterprise.⁵¹⁷

Whereas in the draft manual the main debate seemed to be the difference between *education* and interpretation, in its final draft it addressed the differences

⁵¹⁴ Ronald Lee to Conrad Wirth, 17 January 1955, Box 115 Folder K1815: Interpretive Activities Services 1952-56, NARA.

⁵¹⁵ "National Park Service Administrative Manual, Vol. 25: Information and Interpretation in the Field," GRCA 55370, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

⁵¹⁶ Ibid.

⁵¹⁷ Ibid.

between *information* and interpretation, a distinction that seems much easier to make. The manual provided definitions for both terms, acknowledging that the line between the two was blurred. According to this manual, information is knowledge about an area, while interpretation is a means for making that knowledge meaningful. In other words,

Information deals with facts; interpretation with meanings, definitions, explanations, and relationships. Information satisfies the immediate and evident needs of the visitor for knowledge concerning routes, destinations, and available services; it gives him names, dates, figures, and other facts about the features of the local environment; and it includes instructions, guidance, and admonitions. Interpretation seeks to stimulate curiosity and help people understand their relationship to the historical setting or natural world about them; in brief, to broaden mental and spiritual horizons.⁵¹⁸

NPS administrators could also use this argument to justify expenditures on interpretation. For example, Republican policy favoring private business might have led supporters to ask why interpretation could not be left to concessionaires; NPS supporters could point to this manual and show that, while information was available from any untrained person or book and provided only instant gratification, interpretation was a skill that made facts useful to the person and helped them potentially become better citizens. It also continued the NPS tradition (based a great deal on John Muir's influence) of emphasizing the spiritual value of nature and the parks as sacred places to nourish the soul, improve virtue, and

⁵¹⁸ Ibid.

tame antisocial impulses.⁵¹⁹ Both angles would likely have appealed to Americans struggling with how to maintain their identity and culture as they contrasted themselves to the U.S.S.R. during the Cold War.

Wirth's Impact (and Lack Thereof) at the Ground Level

Despite Wirth's new initiatives, much of the work of the Canyon's interpretive division was still directed locally. Louise Hinchliffe, who began working as a clerk in the Interpretive Division in 1951 and remained at the Park into the 1980s, provided interesting insight into what everyday work was like for naturalists in this time period. She recalled that when she began her job, the division only had two permanent employees and 10 seasonal. They still created all of their own exhibits, and did not contract out or send them to NPS museum labs. Because they were short on staff, Yavapai Observation Station was not staffed all day (only when it was time for talks), so sometimes displays were vandalized or specimens stolen. One summer someone burned down the exhibit shelter at the Colorado River, so Hinchliffe designed a new display, collected all the labels and specimens, and hiked down with two seasonal employees to install the replacement.⁵²⁰ In a letter responding to a visitor who wrote asking why there

⁵¹⁹ Donald Worster, *A Passion for Nature: The Life of John Muir* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 8-9, 170, 425. Much of this interpretation could be very subtle; for example, in describing an exhibit on evolution, Schellbach implies that its message was that organisms evolved as part of a struggle "not for power, but for freedom." Louis Schellbach to Wayne Bryant, Box 102 Folder D6215: Museum and Exhibit Activities: Planning, Preparation, Maintenance, and Preservation, 1950-54, NARA.

⁵²⁰ "Louise Hinchliffe Oral History," GRCA 35957, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

were not more self-guided trails and other self-interpretation sites, Lon Garrison replied that the park had no money for label stands, holders, or labels, so all materials used in trailside exhibits were made from whatever naturalists could scavenge, including old gas pipes and roof tin, with labels typed on typewriter paper then dipped in floor varnish for weatherproofing.⁵²¹

The Superintendent's Annual Report from 1953 shows the amazing amount of work Schellbach and his staff were able to accomplish despite the many obstacles they faced. To help accommodate more visitors, in the past year they had remodeled Yavapai Observation Station, doubling the size of the space available for the daily lectures. The Park also enclosed the front porch in glass, rearranged the parapet exhibits, and constructed several entirely new exhibits. The local naturalist staff accomplished this on a shoestring budget and with little external help.⁵²² Hinchliffe recalled, "we just assigned one exhibit case to each one of us on the staff and went ahead and came up with our design ideas...In fact we even did scale models of them and if they were acceptable to the boss, that was it."⁵²³ In 1954, as time permitted, Schellbach, Ernst Christiansen, and Louise Hinchliffe continued this work by redoing exhibits at Yavapai Observation

⁵²¹ Lemuel Garrison to Francis Bacon, 25 July 1952, Box 102 Folder D6215: Museum and Exhibit Activities: Planning, Preparation, Maintenance, and Preservation 1950-54, NARA.

⁵²² "Superintendent's Annual Report, 1953," GRCA 54706, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

⁵²³ "Louise Hinchliffe Oral History," GRCA 35957, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

Station, many of which had been on display since McKee had installed them, to update their information and improve their look.⁵²⁴

The report indicated that interpretation efforts for the next few years included revamping the Wayside Museum, since current models were “amateurish, poorly done, and misleading.” This was the first time the museum had received significant updating since 1933. Bryant proposed installing larger display cases and using newer artifacts, charts, illustrations, maps, and a diorama of prehistoric peoples at this site. However, in 1953, renovations of Yavapai Observation Station took priority with no money left over for the Wayside Museum.⁵²⁵

Another major project by a member of the interpretive staff in this year was Hinchliffe’s effort to transcribe all the labels on the self-guiding Nature Trail from El Tovar to Yavapai Point into a booklet, since so many visitors had asked for copies of them (see Fig. 5). These labels included information such as how plants had adapted to their environment and reminders of the need for conservation, as well as poetic verses and bits of philosophy. It also includes information on how Native Americans (mostly Hopi and Navajo) and others used these plants. Reflecting the time period in which they were written and the messages the NPS was trying to convey about the Parks, quotes that Hinchliffe

⁵²⁴ Louise Hinchliffe, “Notes,” GRCA 65064, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

⁵²⁵ Harold C. Bryant to Regional Director, 29 September 1952, Box 102 Folder D6215: Museum and Exhibit Activities: Planning, Preparation, Maintenance, and Preservation 1950-54, NARA.

THE ELEVENTH COMMANDMENT

Thou shalt inherit the holy earth as a faithful steward, conserving its resources and productivity from generation to generation. Thou shalt safeguard thy fields from soil erosion, thy living waters from drying up, thy forests from desolation, and protect thy hills from overgrazing by thy herds, that thy descendants may have abundance forever. If any shall fail in this stewardship of the land thy fruitful fields shall become sterile, stony ground and wasting gullies, and thy descendants shall decrease and live in poverty or perish from off the face of the earth."

—Walter C. Lowdermilk

SAGEBRUSH

(*Artemisia tridentata*)

Sometimes called Big Sagebrush, this is probably the most abundant shrub in Western North America. The extensive root system allows it to survive prolonged drouth periods. Though never officially used as a drug it has been employed locally as a tea substitute, general tonic, a hair and eye wash, in treating colds and diarrhea and as an antiseptic for wounds. The wood ignites easily and burns with an intense heat. To the Indians, and early explorers, sagebrush was an invaluable source of fuel.

PLANT COMMUNITY

Here is a rather typical Upper Sonoran Plant Association: Sparse grass, rabbitbrush, sage, various flowering annual plants, and scattered Juniper trees. These plants often find it mutually benefiting to grow together. Some provide shelter or shade, some store water or increase soil fertility. Usually in semi-arid climates, such as this, plants are well separated. Often large bare spaces are present between clumps of foliage. This is due to lack of moisture and, of course, increases the rate of erosion.

ON WALKING

Walking is for all seasons, all weathers, all ages. Only the person afoot really knows the time of year.

Set your gait to please your mood, but not too fast in spite of eagerness.

A world lies waiting to be rediscovered. Walk into it! No one is so free as he who strides forth when he pleases. There is a promise that you will return with more fresh air in your lungs and your thoughts free of cobwebs.

The world of our better selves is most surely reached by walking.
—Dr. John Pinley

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OLD JUNIPER

Usually Juniper trees are small and twisted. This one is unusually large and probably very old. Some Junipers are estimated to be well over 1,000 years old. The age of trees is indicated by the annual rings of growth found in the wood. Here in the Southwest, where rainfall is the critical factor of growth, wet and dry periods are shown by thick and thin rings respectively. By studying these cycles scientists are able to date pieces of wood found in Indian ruins and thus learn more about the people who went before us.

SOIL IN THE MAKING

Dead and down timber is not removed from forests in Park Service areas. In and under fallen trees many smaller creatures make their home. Note the hole of the ground squirrel. Eventually such trees add humus to the soil. This tree is being reduced to soil by many things. Much of the wood is decaying. Insects and woodpeckers are chopping it up. Along the top is evidence of erosion by wind and water.

MISTLETOE

(*Arceuthobium campylopodum*)

Most of the Juniper trees along this trail are infected by mistletoe which is a parasite living from the sap of the tree. Heavy infestation usually results in the death of the tree. Study of the parasite has been made, but no measures of control have been taken. Usually in our National Parks the ways of nature run their natural course. Old trees die and new ones take their place. Control measures are used only when disease or infestation threaten large areas.

MINER'S PROSPECT HOLE

Across the side canyon from here can be seen a hole in the Kaibab Limestone. It is a prospect hole. In the early days much prospective mining was done in the Grand Canyon area. Little mineral of value was found. Some copper was actually mined but transportation problems rendered mining unprofitable and operation was abandoned years ago.

WORK OF SAPSUCKERS

The lines of small holes around the bark of this Juniper tree were drilled by sapsuckers, members of the Woodpecker family. Note how he stood at one level and circled the tree. Sap oozes from the holes and attracts insects. The sapsucker later revisits the tree and enjoys a handsome meal.

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Fig. 5. A page from the Nature Trail label brochure that Hinchliffe prepared shows the variety of topics and ideas the NPS interpreted at the time.

selected equated conservation to patriotism, invoked a sense of stewardship among readers, and called environmental protection a matter of duty for the public. For example, included a quote by New Hampshire Governor Sherman Adams (who in 1953 became Eisenhower's Chief of Staff), who said "The

practice of conservation is an act of patriotism and the understanding of it, the preaching of it and the contribution to it, are parts of the fundamental duties of a citizen in a free society.” The messages it included about conservation fit in with Wirth’s recommendations mentioned earlier in the chapter, such as an excerpt from the brochure discussing a juniper tree that was partly destroyed by fire. As it notes, it might have been caused by lightning, or it might have been caused by a tossed cigarette, and it gently admonishes readers to develop a conservation ethic: “This wild-life area is a heritage we must yet pass on to future generations. Save it intact by making sure each match and cigarette is completely out before throwing away. BE CAREFUL WITH FIRE.”⁵²⁶

Despite these efforts, the Superintendent reported that

Interpretive service continues to be insufficient to meet demands because of the well-known lack of funds for this purpose. It is truly regrettable that a lack of adequate personnel permits many of the visitors to come to and leave the Park without so much as a brief explanation of what is to be found here. Present facilities are inadequate to help more than a handful of visitors in securing a real knowledge of the story of the Canyon.⁵²⁷

By this time, the number of visitors to Grand Canyon National Park had already reached a quarter of a million, and by 1956 surpassed the million-visitor mark.⁵²⁸

⁵²⁶ “Grand Canyon National Park Nature Trail Labels,” 1953, Fred Harvey Company Collection, Cline Library, NAU. The leaflet was published by the GCNHA and reprinted 2 years later.

⁵²⁷ “Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1953,” GRCA 54706, Grand Canyon Museum Collections. Nationwide, visitation in national parks rose from 37 million to nearly 55 million visitors from 1951 to 1956, yet appropriations remained about the same. Ise, 534.

⁵²⁸ Anderson, *Polishing the Jewel*, 90.

In the meantime, Schellbach's staff was still limited to a handful of full time naturalists and not quite a dozen seasonal workers.⁵²⁹

Although WASO left most of the work in updating and maintaining interpretive exhibits and displays in the Park to the discretion of local naturalists, Schellbach grumbled any time the national office even slightly tried to influence his work. For example, in one document from the early 1950s, WASO's Interpretation Division suggested that parks utilize more self-guiding trails, and established guidelines for the content and appearance of these trails to instill more uniformity to the NPS experience. Schellbach, who had been trained in an era where individuals constructed signs ad hoc in ways that were relevant to local environments, apparently felt that this threatened his creative autonomy and feared it would lead to unoriginal signs that were cold and boring. In a long memo to Park Superintendent Shevlin, Schellbach pointed out that trails are complex and each area had its own distinct problems and constraints, so it was nearly impossible to standardize them. Instead, he believed efforts should be focused on making them fit into an overall, well-balanced interpretive program such as they had at Grand Canyon. Schellbach vigorously defended his system of trails and interpretation, stating

Each interpretive mechanism fits into the whole, without duplication and with the idea in mind of serving all types of visitor from the young and vigorous to the aged—from the lowest I.Q. to the Ph.D. Here we are progressing according to plan and not

⁵²⁹ Conrad Wirth to All Field Offices, 23 April 1953, Box 115 Folder K1815: Naturalist and Educational Activities 1953, NARA.

growing like Topsy. Our interpretive development plan in the Master Plan is based on expert study of the area and how best to provide full interpretation and its services to the many and varied visitors. Many years of study have gone into it...⁵³⁰

As always, Schellbach believed that the ideas and educational aspects were of primary importance; in other words, visitors would get more out of a well-organized and thoughtful program than a pretty, cookie-cutter tour. For example, he pointed out that the unique landscape and features along each individual trail should determine its interpretation and be used to arouse interest and curiosity, meaning that attempts to standardize their appearance or message were pointless.⁵³¹

However, in some ways Schellbach's suggestions were simply not feasible, especially in this era of staff shortages and shrinking budgets. For instance, whereas national Chief of Interpretation Ronald Lee suggested using stake and leaflet systems for most trails because they were cheap, easy to install and maintain, and unobtrusive, Schellbach argued that trailside interpretation needed to be changed seasonally (if not even more frequently) to describe changes that occurred along the trails—something that would undoubtedly require a great deal of labor and money.⁵³² He also argued that publishing trail leaflets was not feasible at the Grand Canyon because some trails were a mile and a half long and

⁵³⁰ Louis Schellbach to Charles Shevlin, 7 June 1954, Box 114 Folder K1815: Interpretive Activities Services 1954, NARA.

⁵³¹ *Ibid.*

⁵³² Ronald Lee to Conrad Wirth and All Superintendents, 12 April 1954, Box 114 Folder K1815: Interpretive Activities Services 1954, NARA.

the accompanying booklets were too large to be carried around; apparently Schellbach was unwilling to sacrifice the quantity of information he wanted the visitor to know for the visitor's ease.⁵³³

The external initiative that seemed to anger Schellbach most was the regional office's 1953 plan to build a public use building at the Canyon. Schellbach (and McKee before him) had long dreamed about getting a central interpretive museum, and had even drawn up specific plans for it. He was therefore infuriated when the office asked him to review their plans for this facility and he saw that it did not allow for this usage at all, but instead was basically an office building. Schellbach expressed his outrage to Harold Bryant, stating that he could not agree to such a building since "it would be tantamount to my sabotaging the interpretive program here at Grand Canyon National Park and going contrary to the procedures and organized plans established by the Naturalist Department of the Washington Office."⁵³⁴ Schellbach told the Superintendent that he and his staff, who were much more familiar with the Grand Canyon and its specific needs, had designed a better building and that it had been incorporated into the Interpretive Master Plan for the Park. He continued to rant that his own building, which he could not get approved, was "necessary to the interpretive program and the visiting public. In fact they have been and are recognized as

⁵³³ Louis Schellbach to Charles Shevlin, 7 June 1954, Box 114 Folder K1815: Interpretive Activities Services 1954, NARA.

⁵³⁴ Louis Schellbach to Superintendent of Grand Canyon National Park, 27 October 1953, GRCA 65068, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

being vitally important mechanisms in areas having highly complex natural features that need more interpretation than the natural scene would imply.”⁵³⁵

Schellbach concluded his memo by insisting that if administrators approved this plan, it would be in complete disregard of his 25 years of service to the Park, and would ruin the degree of autonomy the Grand Canyon had in setting their own agenda. If the Park accepted a building that they did not request or desire, in his opinion, they would lose any power they had to influence the Washington Office. He also particularly objected to the idea that the needs and ideas of the visitors and interpretive personnel at the Park had been totally ignored.⁵³⁶ It therefore must have seemed like a slap in the face to Schellbach when he was overruled. In 1955, construction of this public use building was scheduled to proceed. Fortunately, when the regional office found out that under the Mission 66 program (which will be discussed in the following chapter) they would be receiving funding for a much larger visitor center, they quickly expanded their plans and Schellbach was able to see his vision for a new interpretive facility at least partially fulfilled.⁵³⁷

Though Schellbach as always continued to insist that the top interpretive priority at Grand Canyon was a central museum or visitor center near the concessionaires, and even still corresponded with Eddie McKee on ideas for

⁵³⁵ Ibid.

⁵³⁶ Ibid.

⁵³⁷ “Exhibit Planning,” GRCA 65059, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

exhibits at Yavapai Observation Station, WASO and regional offices were pushing him to experiment with other forms of interpretation as well. The NPS at this time began investigating how to design interpretive programs specifically for children. The only parks at the time with children's programming were Yosemite, Lee Mansion, Rocky Mountain National Park, and National Capitol Parks, so information about what they did was circulated around the system. The NPS also began to encourage a new type of interpretation: live demonstrations. At Grand Canyon, the Fred Harvey Company had been doing this for years using Native American blanket weavers and silversmiths; however, it had "no particular connection with the [NPS] interpretive program or the park story" and it does not seem that the NPS tried to develop their own such programs at the Canyon.⁵³⁸

Instead, the concessionaires seemed to have been shifting their attempts at interpretation to mesh more closely to those of the NPS. By 1954, concessionaires had started publicizing government interpretive services in their advertisements as well, and started to mimic the style of the NPS yearly pamphlets. For example, a brochure by the Fred Harvey Company called "The Grand Canyon Beckons!" described the geologic history and climatic variety of the Canyon, and noted that the NPS ran an observation station and museum at Yavapai Point. They failed to say anything about ranger talks or any other NPS interpretive programs, though they were careful to point out that Indian dances took place daily at Hopi House, that Bright Angel Lodge featured a nightly cowboy orchestra and dance, that the

⁵³⁸ Ronald Lee to All Field Offices, 7 February 1956, Box 114 Folder K1815: Interpretive Activities and Services 1952-1956, NARA.

Kolb brothers offered a lecture and movie, and that visitors could hire Fred Harvey guides for group tours.⁵³⁹

The boom in popularity of the television also affected how the NPS presented parks to the public. A memo from the NPS director in 1951 spoke of an anticipated boom in color TV sales and programming. He urged NPS employees to use their parks' color motion pictures and slides to produce short TV programs and improve their visual aid collections with television in mind. WASO also anticipated that audio-visual materials would take the place of some face-to-face interpretation when appropriate in order to alleviate the burdens on interpretive staff.⁵⁴⁰ Schellbach again expressed his resistance to these new ideas, reporting that he had tried using a tape recording to do the Yavapai talk instead of a live interpreter, "but found it ineffective in holding attention of groups at Yavapai."⁵⁴¹ Though Schellbach's resistance in some areas seems reasonable (such as his protests against cookie-cutter interpretation), his reference to a single attempt at using audio/visual material and its supposed failure implies that he just did not like the idea. Therefore, while in some ways his tenacious nature had benefitted the interpretive program at the Canyon, keeping it active during World War II and

⁵³⁹ Fred Harvey Company, "The Grand Canyon Beckons!", 1954, DG-12: Grand Canyon Informational Brochures, 1950s, Arizona State University Archives and Special Collections.

⁵⁴⁰ A.E. Demaray to Everyone [all NPS personnel], 13 July 1951, Box 115 Folder K30: Pictures 1946-53, NARA.

⁵⁴¹ Louis Schellbach to Grand Canyon National Park Superintendent, 16 January 1957, GRCA 57837, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

struggling to improve in the postwar period, in other ways it may have set it back. Furthermore, Schellbach lost a valuable ally in his fight to ensure that his vision for interpretation at the Grand Canyon would prevail above that of the Washington Office when his collaborator and supporter Harold C. Bryant retired as Park Superintendent in March 1954 at the age of 68.⁵⁴²

Whereas in the past the Grand Canyon Natural History Association might have been able to aid Schellbach by providing financial and volunteer support to the interpretive staff, this organization was also going through changes. As WASO began taking over responsibility for exhibit design and construction in these years, the GCNHA became more focused on their research and publication programs (although Schellbach did use their funds for an exhibit-related taxidermy project in 1952). For example, they funded and published studies on park butterflies and the Grand Canyon Herbarium mentioned in the previous chapter. They also devoted a great deal of their funds to improving the Park's research library during the 1940s and 1950s, which helped keep interpreters and the public informed on topics relevant to the Park.⁵⁴³ However, even as they were expanding their publishing program, sales began to decrease steadily throughout

⁵⁴² Preston Patraw filled in as Superintendent for a year until John McLaughlin took over the position in mid-1955. There are no significant documents that indicate Patraw's opinion or influence on the interpretive program during this brief tenure. Anderson, *Polishing the Jewel*, 90.

⁵⁴³ Todd Berger, "Science and Education, Birdseed and Power Tools: The History of the Grand Canyon Association. Part I: The Early Years," *Canyon Views* 13:1 (Spring 2007): 11.

the 1950s, and by 1956 the organization was operating at a net loss.⁵⁴⁴ Although the group remained closely affiliated with the interpretive division (the chief naturalist continued to head it until 1980), their financial support for and influence over the physical aspects of interpretation at the Canyon was waning even as WASO's was increasing during this period, though this would change again in the future.

Some portions of the public were likely to agree with Schellbach that GCNP did not need any outside interference or assistance in interpreting the Park, and that he and his staff were doing an exceptional job despite not having enough money and personnel. In 1954 a survey done by the Arizona Highway Department, US Bureau of Public Roads, and Department of the Interior/NPS looked at travel in Grand Canyon National Park. Although they soon realized that the design of the survey was flawed, they were able to glean some useful information from it. For example, when asked to rate attractions, which included mule trips, hiking, Indian dances, and more, participants identified naturalist talks as the most popular and desirable feature of visits.⁵⁴⁵

In 1954, NPS trainee Wayne Bryant was studying interpretation and had been assigned to help prepare exhibit plans for the proposed public use building at

⁵⁴⁴ Todd Berger, "Science and Education, Birdseed and Power Tools: The History of the Grand Canyon Association. Part II," *Canyon Views* 13:2 (Summer 2007): 13.

⁵⁴⁵ Arizona Highway Department Division of Economics and Statistics and U.S. Department of Commerce Bureau of Public Roads, *Grand Canyon Travel Survey* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1954).

GCNP, so he wrote to Schellbach to get his input on what was needed at the Park. Schellbach's answer reveals a great deal about how he envisioned interpretation, its purpose and goals at the Park. He explained that in his opinion, interpretation is about showing not just "cut and dried display of things, but ideas." In other words, displays should not just consist of row after row of specimens, otherwise they are "merely visible storage" and do not convey any kind of message. He advised Bryant to avoid flat graphs, posters, and specimens, but instead emphasizing depth, color, and broad themes to help visitors "gain interest, inspiration, and new ideas or concepts not encountered in their everyday living."⁵⁴⁶

Schellbach also passed along some technical advice on museum and exhibit planning and construction that he had picked up from his many years on the job. For example, he went into great detail on the use of color in exhibits to help attract and guide visitors through displays. He pointed out that in exhibits he had designed at the Grand Canyon, different colors were assigned to different fields; for example, geological topics were in the color range of blue, history was in red, biology in green, and so on. Schellbach emphasized that displays must be three dimensional, and to use colored spotlights to call attention to important objects. When drafting the narrative for exhibits, he advised using a factual, to-the-point newspaper style of writing. Effective interpretation, he argued, required

⁵⁴⁶ Louis Schellbach to Wayne Bryant, Box 102 Folder D6215: Museum and Exhibit Activities: Planning, Preparation, Maintenance, and Preservation, 1950-54, NARA.

“imagination, devising techniques, the use of psychology, good label writing, good color selection, and above all a harmonious whole.”⁵⁴⁷

This letter also revealed that Schellbach believed that if another interpretive site was built at the Canyon, there were other stories that needed to be told beside that of geology. For instance, he pointed out that the Park displayed four historical boats that Powell used to run the Colorado River that were very popular with visitors, and deserved to be displayed in a history room that showed the archeology, ethnology, art, and history of the Canyon, including dioramas illustrating prehistoric dwellings, the first hotel and railroad, and other cultural aspects. He also would have liked to see more space given to interpreting how life at the Canyon illustrated five “laws” of nature; he believed that this would help visitors better understand the NPS philosophy concerning preservation and conservation.⁵⁴⁸

In Schellbach’s mind, these “laws”—limiting factors, adaptation, succession, multiplication, and control—provided an interesting way to present everyday concepts to the public. For example, rather than simply displaying many different specimens with their scientific names, Schellbach envisioned them as part of an exhibit on the theme of multiplication, which addressed how species perpetuated themselves. Therefore in one exhibit visitors could compare and contrast specimens of the offspring of birds, animals, plants, and insects while

⁵⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁸ Ibid.

still understanding them under one organizing concept. For Schellbach, the ultimate goal of informing the public of these broadly applicable laws as well as specific examples of them at the Grand Canyon was to illustrate the concept of natural balance or harmony, where all natural things worked together to produce a stable carrying capacity of living things on the land. He argued that this would inform visitors of the “penultimate” NPS ideal of protection of natural resources and wildlife by making visitors feel like they understood and belonged in these areas. Such exhibits and concepts would show the public that “the Park Service is the purest of pure conservation organizations, differing from all others in that all wildlife is protected” and that their policies were reasonable and worth supporting.⁵⁴⁹

This emphasis on conservation and natural history came at the expense of other areas of interpretation. Native American interpretation issues at parks did not receive any of Wirth’s attention, and were likewise neglected at Grand Canyon National Park as Schellbach and his staff were focused on simply surviving these lean years. The termination and relocation policy of the 1950s, which was mentioned in the previous chapter, was likely the major reason why Native American interpretation was virtually ignored; if the tribes were supposed to disintegrate and assimilate, interpreters would likely have seen little value in researching or developing programs on their cultures and lifeways. However, some NPS supporters at the time were also calling for the NPS to turn over

⁵⁴⁹ Ibid.

“superfluties” such as second-rate scenic areas and historical parks to state and local governments as a solution to the budget crisis, and Wirth himself even suggested turning over control of “historical” parks to a different bureau, so it is not surprising that the NPS did not prioritize cultural interpretation.⁵⁵⁰

Little changed overall in terms of NPS-Native American interpretation in this time. However, in the midst of this lack of attention, and in an effort to hold onto their culture and autonomy in the face of increasing threats, some tribes associated with the Grand Canyon began efforts to exert more control over the role they played in the local tourism economy, as well as the way that the NPS interacted with them. For example, the growing popularity of river running in the 1950s added a new dimension to the relationship between Euro Americans and the Hualapai. The tribal reservation’s northern boundary is the Colorado River (though its exact location is the subject of heated debate even today between the tribe and the NPS). The Hualapai therefore began to insist that anyone passing through their reservation must request a permit and pay a small fee.⁵⁵¹ In subsequent years, this led to the development of Hualapai-run river trips, which offered their own interpretations of the history and significance of the Grand Canyon.

One of the more important developments in this period was that the Havasupai began their own tourism enterprise. As early as 1952 the Havasupai

⁵⁵⁰ Ise, 532-533, 540-541.

⁵⁵¹ Raphael Glaser to P.T. Reilly, 6 April 1954, P.T. Reilly Collection, Cline Library, NAU.

tribe had an appointed tourist manager, Lee Marshall, who advertised for visitors to Havasu Canyon. The informational sheet gave rates for trips into the canyon, and warned that hikers arriving without advance reservations were trespassing on private property. Visitors could rent saddle and pack horses, but they were also required to hire a Havasupai guide to accompany them. Unfortunately, none of these brochures mentioned what places these tours went or what stories the guides might have told about them.⁵⁵²

Summary

At the beginning of the 1950s, the NPS was poised on the cusp of major changes. When Conrad Wirth took over as director of the agency in 1952, he immediately began issuing initiatives that indicated a new direction for the NPS and interpretation; these changes only intensified under the impetus of the new Eisenhower administration. Wirth recognized the problem many parks, including the Grand Canyon, were facing with growing tourism numbers and insufficient staff, and therefore directed that interpreters focus on conveying a practical message of conservation—a type of conservation that would not only encourage visitors to patrol their own behavior but also show how the NPS was preserving nature and why it was important, thereby helping to ensure the agency’s perpetuation and the perpetuation of the natural features of the parks.

⁵⁵² “Supai Tourist Information” July 1952, P.T. Reilly Collection, Cline Library, NAU. A brochure from 1960 reiterated much of the same information. “Supai Tourist Information, January 2, 1960,” William Bass Collection, Cline Library, NAU.

At the Grand Canyon, Chief Naturalist Louis Schellbach agreed with many of Wirth and Director of Interpretation Ronald Lee's underlying theories on the purpose of interpretation, yet resisted an overemphasis on such messages as too propagandistic and feared that the NPS would become too cookie-cutter in its interpretation if everything became dictated from the top-down in this way. While some of his complaints seemed reasonable, he often seemed to be simply too stubborn and convinced that his way was the only correct way to attempt to make these changes work at GCNP. Unfortunately for Schellbach, these policies were harbingers of more drastic changes to come, as the discussion of Mission 66 and its impact on interpretation will show in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 7

A CAUTIONARY TALE: GRAND CANYON INTERPRETATION

UNDER MISSION 66

In 1956, Conrad Wirth made a presentation to President Eisenhower and his Cabinet detailing a new proposal for the entire National Park System. Wirth's idea was that the current piecemeal approach to managing parks could not continue, because it was too easy for Congress to ignore their year-to-year plans when other pressing political issues intervened. Instead, Wirth proposed a sweeping, 10-year program that would ready the Service for its 50th anniversary in 1966 by building much-needed housing for personnel, expanding visitor facilities, and completing a number of high-priority projects at individual parks. The price tag was steep at \$786 million, but the NPS convinced the Eisenhower administration and Congress that it was necessary. By 1955 the NPS saw nearly 55 million visitors a year, and projected that 10 years later that number would rise to 80 million.⁵⁵³ Wirth intended Mission 66 to make the parks more accessible and user-friendly—better able to physically handle the immense increase in visitation, but also to satisfy visitors' desires to be educated and entertained at these sites. The Eisenhower administration and many Congressmen from western states strongly supported the initiative, and Congress provided generous funding

⁵⁵³ Lary M. Dilsaver, ed., *America's National Park System: The Critical Documents* (Lanham, MA: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc, 1994), 193; John Ise, *Our National Park Policy: A Critical History* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1961), 546.

for the plan throughout the decade it was in place, even though the ultimate cost of the project ended up topping one billion dollars.⁵⁵⁴

Mission 66 resulted in a wave of construction in parks, and had a significant impact on the interpretive services they offered. In fact, Ethan Carr stated that “Wirth made interpretation the single most important programmatic aspect of his postwar development campaign.”⁵⁵⁵ However, though Mission 66 helped revitalize the parks and expand interpretation, it was not always a success. The Grand Canyon served as a testing ground for portions of the Mission 66 program, putting it on the cutting edge of interpretive services for a brief moment—although it soon became a cautionary tale for other parks as Mission 66 progressed. For instance, mechanical devices and interpretive exhibits that were meant to display the latest in museum technology often proved faulty, and the NPS failed to properly fund the staffing of the Park’s popular new visitor center, which in some ways negated the purpose of opening it in the first place. It also marked the end of locally directed and prepared interpretive exhibits and facilities for the GCNP; the interpretive staff was forced to hand over control for producing exhibits and signs to the regional and then national museum laboratories. Ultimately, the impact of Mission 66 on interpretation at the Grand Canyon was a mixture of successes and disappointments.

⁵⁵⁴ Ise, 547; Dilsaver, 166.

⁵⁵⁵ Ethan Carr, *Mission 66: Modernism and the National Park Dilemma* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2007), 187.

Wirth's New Plan

Although many remember it for its building program, Wirth also emphasized that Mission 66 was meant to improve visitor services as well, which meant that it had a direct impact on interpretation. On January 10, 1956, Chief of Interpretation Ronald Lee submitted to Wirth a memorandum suggesting how the new Mission 66 program would affect interpretive objectives, a memo that was later distributed to all NPS site administrators. He acknowledged that interpretation could not be reduced to one formula that would work for all parks, but his division still attempted to create a standard set of procedures and a statement of their philosophy that would help NPS interpreters gain a common footing and “move forward in harmony.”⁵⁵⁶

Lee pointed out that over the previous two years the service had been emphasizing improved *methods* of interpretation, particularly by preparing manuals on how to create various types of interpretive devices like roadside markers, self-guiding trails, audio-visual materials, different types of exhibits, and so on. However, as part of the new Mission 66 program, Lee decided to take the division in a new direction and focus on *content and meaning*. This was to be accomplished by creating liaisons with specialists outside the NPS, such as academic researchers and professional societies. As a first step, Lee decided to assign specialists within the NPS to re-evaluate interpretive statements from

⁵⁵⁶ Ronald Lee to Conrad Wirth, 10 January 1956, Box 114 Folder K1815: Interpretive Activities Services 1952-56, NARA.

master plans at parks that related to their specialized field, while also consulting with top specialists in the nation.⁵⁵⁷

Lee also discussed plans to improve content in various types of interpretation, mostly by defining standards for each variety (such as audio-visual displays and campfire programs) and ways to evaluate them. He also indicated his desire to create minimum standards for park visitor services, since there was a wide variation as to what information and services were offered at each NPS unit—which he stated were caused by differences between parks but also different ideas of individual superintendents and naturalists.⁵⁵⁸ The Washington Office’s efforts to standardize NPS interpretation, including its physical appearance, continued through the early 1960s with the issuance of several manuals and handbooks addressing different types of interpretation. Wirth approved of all these ideas because, along with creating a uniform appearance at all national parks, he believed that it would ultimately reduce the cost of interpretation.⁵⁵⁹

Interpretive staff duties had long included conducting research, but Wirth and Lee wanted to move away from this under Mission 66. Although Wirth believed that “preservation and presentation of national park areas to the public must be based on sound knowledge. Sound knowledge requires research,” he did

⁵⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁵⁹ “Sign and Wayside Exhibit Handbook,” 1960, GRCA 55360, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

not want Mission 66 funds appropriated for this use.⁵⁶⁰ Instead, he proposed continuing affiliations with universities and other educational institutions, as well as by introducing new cooperative relationships with educational and research bodies at the federal, regional, and local levels, to take over this role.⁵⁶¹ The NPS also started reaching out to other organizations that dealt with visitor services and interpretation, including museums, sites with visitor centers like the United Nations Building, and even Disneyland, to see how they dealt with improving visitor use patterns.⁵⁶²

Lee also pointed out the need for better training of interpretive staff, calling for the creation of NPS schools that would train personnel in all types of Park Service work. He believed this was rather urgent, since interpreters would have to become familiar with new information quickly to adequately inform the public about Mission 66. He also stated that the interpretive program suffered from a lack of skilled writers, and that each region needed at least one writer to conceptualize publications, edit material, help create labels, and do other writing tasks, especially because the NPS was planning a publishing blitz to inform the public about Mission 66.⁵⁶³

⁵⁶⁰ Ronald Lee to Conrad Wirth, 10 January 1956, Box 114 Folder K1815: Interpretive Activities Services 1952-56, NARA; Carr, *Mission 66*, 191-192.

⁵⁶¹ Ronald Lee to Conrad Wirth, 10 January 1956, Box 114 Folder K1815: Interpretive Activities Services 1952-56, NARA.

⁵⁶² Ibid.

⁵⁶³ Ibid.

The Washington Office (WASO) asked administrators at each NPS site to come up with a new master plan or prospectus that detailed how they would work toward these Mission 66 goals. Grand Canyon National Park submitted its Mission 66 prospectus in 1956; however, WASO completely ignored or reversed many of its proposals. For example, administrators at Grand Canyon called for the removal of all concessionaire and national park facilities from the rim in order to restore it to a more natural condition. Instead, the Mission 66 era eventually saw concessionaires construct several new buildings at Grand Canyon, including some right along the rim, while facilities that the GCNP staff proposed were located at a distance from the rim and the central Village location.⁵⁶⁴

Although Schellbach's ideas on how to improve interpretation at Grand Canyon were often very similar to those being promoted under Mission 66, his ideas for how to best achieve these changes were often at odds with those of WASO. This is best evidenced in the debate over construction of the Grand Canyon Visitor Center. As mentioned in the previous chapter, in the mid-1950s one of Schellbach's two main goals was to create a new and better interpretive facility at the Canyon. Schellbach envisioned developing a central interpretive hub with a museum, interpretive stations, library, lectures, and study collections to help visitors enjoy a fuller, more well-rounded educational experience at the

⁵⁶⁴ Michael Anderson, *Polishing the Jewel: An Administrative History of Grand Canyon National Park* (Grand Canyon: Grand Canyon Association, 2000), 58.

Canyon.⁵⁶⁵ This goal seemed about to be realized when in 1955 Congress appropriated funds for four new park museums, including one at Grand Canyon. Plans for these museums quickly became co-opted under the major Mission 66 imperative to build visitor centers in all of the major parks.⁵⁶⁶ The central NPS office defined a visitor center as the major interpretive and informational facility that served as the meeting place between the visitor and the NPS, which seemed to mesh with Schellbach's vision.⁵⁶⁷

Most historians attribute the fact that Grand Canyon National Park was one of the first parks in the system to secure the right to develop a Mission 66 visitor center to the work and legacy of Bryant and Schellbach. NPS historian Ralph Lewis stated that "By the mid-1950s Grand Canyon had built up a collection so significant that it constituted the decisive justification for the government to erect a larger museum designed to assure its protection and facilitate its use."⁵⁶⁸ Schellbach's former supervisor Natt Dodge commented, "Arguing that accurate interpretation depended upon sound and complete basic knowledge of park values, without favoritism for any one field, Louie collected,

⁵⁶⁵ "Preston Schellbach Oral History," GRCA 35722, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

⁵⁶⁶ Ralph H. Lewis, *Museum Curatorship in the National Park Service, 1904-1982* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Interior, NPS, Curatorial Services Division, 1993), 141.

⁵⁶⁷ Conrad Wirth to All Field Offices, 29 May 1962, GRCA 65059, Grand Canyon Museum Collection.

⁵⁶⁸ Lewis, *Museum Curatorship*, 42.

identified, recorded, preserved, and systematically stored an amazingly complete series of significant specimens of the rocks, plants, birds, mammals, insects, and historical items of the park.” Dodge helped point out to WASO and other interested parties that these vastly important collections that Schellbach and his staff had so meticulously collected were housed in a wooden, highly flammable building under improper conditions.⁵⁶⁹ Influential people such as Arizona Senators Carl Hayden and Barry Goldwater pushed to have a proper storage and exhibition site at the Canyon built sooner rather than later because they knew Schellbach was close to retiring and they wanted to be able to utilize his museum expertise for the project.⁵⁷⁰ They helped bring the situation to the attention of officials in Washington, D.C., so that when Mission 66 started Grand Canyon was one of the first parks to gain approval for a visitor center.⁵⁷¹

Unfortunately, this did not turn out to be as much of a triumph as hoped. Although Harold Bryant, Louis Schellbach, and others had been pushing for just such a site for years, they had to leave the Park before they could see their dream fully come to fruition. Bryant retired in 1954; in his place Preston Patraw would take over for a year before John McLaughlin became the new superintendent, serving in that role until 1964. Schellbach, who soon grew disillusioned with the

⁵⁶⁹ Quoted in Lewis, *Museum Curatorship*, 263.

⁵⁷⁰ Louis Schellbach to Superintendent of Grand Canyon National Park, 27 October 1953, GRCA 65068, Grand Canyon Museum Collection.

⁵⁷¹ Natt Dodge, “Mister Grand Canyon” *National Parks Magazine* (December, 1959): 5.

whole planning and construction process, retired in November 1957, just a few months after the facility opened and before he could tinker with and improve it. Still, Schellbach's son recalled that his father was upset that he had to retire from the NPS because of his age (he was 70 at the time) with many of his interpretive plans incomplete.⁵⁷²

Although Bryant and Schellbach were important factors in why the Grand Canyon received approval for a new museum/visitor center, they were not able to influence its design and content nearly as much as they had hoped. Instead, in developing this new facility, the NPS further exerted its centralizing tendencies to the point of squashing local initiative by the GCNP interpretive staff. Ralph Lewis pointed out that it was well-known that Schellbach (and other administrators) had long discussed the need for such a facility, knew exactly where they wanted to place it, and had planned what interpretive content it would include for years. However, the NPS decided that they should not construct any more buildings right along the Canyon Rim in the interest of preserving viewsapes.⁵⁷³ Instead, WASO decided that the new facility would be built near the pioneer cemetery, away from the rim and from tourist facilities at Grand Canyon Village. Schellbach was irate that this facility would be so far from the central tourist hub. In fact, Lewis argued that "The change of location disappointed Schellbach so deeply that he lost heart for the enterprise, leaving its planning largely in the hands of the

⁵⁷² "Preston Schellbach Oral History," GRCA 35722, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

⁵⁷³ Lewis, *Museum Curatorship*, 142.

Museum Branch by default.”⁵⁷⁴ Furthermore, it soon became clear that the building would serve as the main administrative offices for the entire Park as well as the main interpretive center. Schellbach was disappointed that the new building was not entirely dedicated to interpretation.⁵⁷⁵

Rather than relying on local staff who were most familiar with the landscape, stories, and educational themes of the area, the NPS sent Design and Construction Chief Tom Vint, Oklahoma architect Cecil Doty, and various artists and curators from the WASO museum branch out to the Canyon to go over proposals for the building and exhibits.⁵⁷⁶ Planners came to the Park to gather data and plot the storyline for the museum, then worked with a designer to develop an exhibit plan including content ideas, draft layouts and label copy. Grand Canyon interpretive staff assisted these outside planners and designers in brainstorming ideas and drafting exhibit plans. These plans were then sent off to the regional office for approval.

The subjects covered in the 46 exhibits included fossils, geology, flora, fauna, archeology, modern Native Americans, the history of exploration and tourism, and a number of other topics. Conservation themes (as discussed in the

⁵⁷⁴ Lewis actually helped in the planning of these exhibits under the direction of Schellbach. Ibid.

⁵⁷⁵ “Preston Schellbach Oral History,” GRCA 35722, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

⁵⁷⁶ Along with their focus on exhibit content, the NPS made sure to use the most modern museum technology and techniques in developing this facility, such as using lighting with minimal heat and ultraviolet emissions and installing furred walls to absorb ambient sound. Lewis, *Museum Curatorship*, 143, 144.

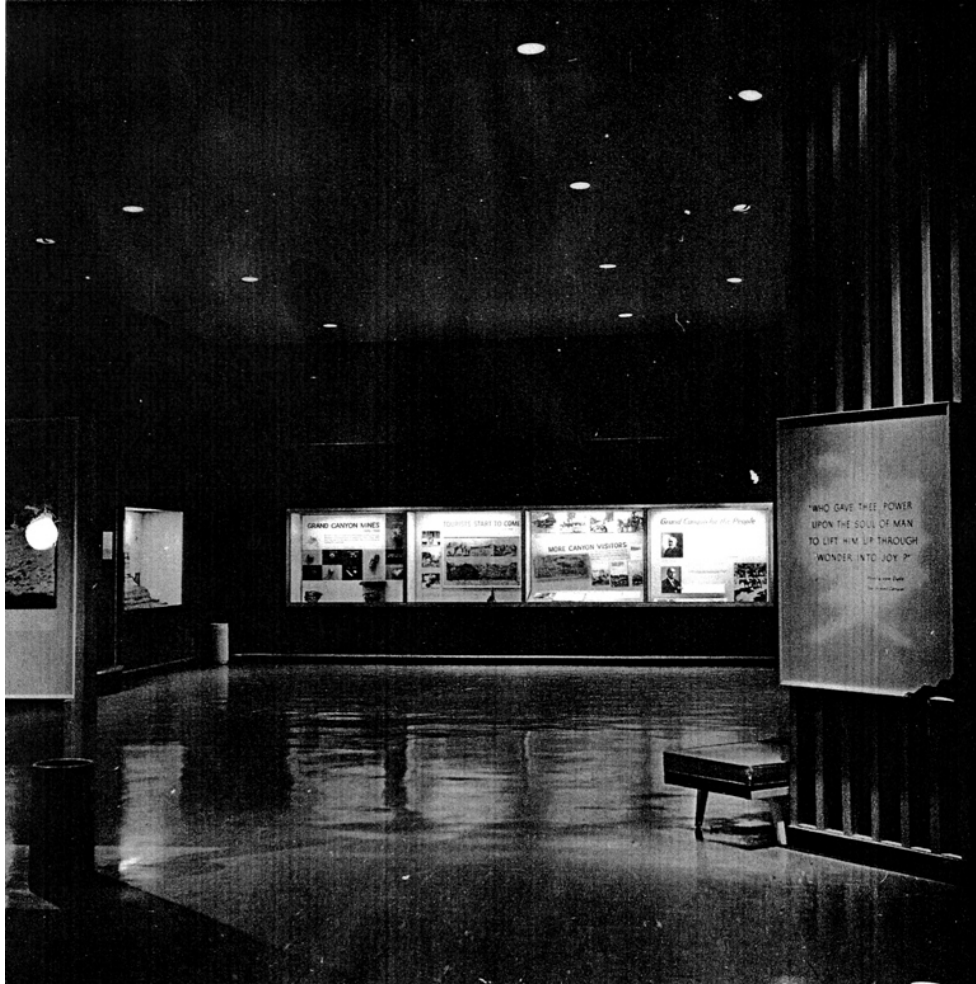


Fig. 6. Although the new visitor center added much-needed exhibit space, the Washington Office controlled most of the process of conceptualizing and constructing the displays, angering Schellbach and other interpreters at the Park. Administrative offices soon overtook much of this space. GRCA 58682, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

previous chapter) were obvious; for example, one case discussed the impact humans can have on the environment, arguing that even small changes can have a big impact, such as when prospectors abandoned their burros in the Canyon, leading to an explosion of feral burros that overgrazed range and threatened the survival of native flora. Another exhibit specifically addressed NPS conservation

policies, showing how the agency tried to preserve the natural scenery and environment by letting plants and animals thrive and interact freely.⁵⁷⁷

Five exhibits featured local Native American tribes, while ten detailed the Euro-American history of the Canyon, beginning with Spanish exploration and ending with the creation of the Park and modern tourism. This represents not only a growing effort to balance natural and cultural interpretation at the Canyon, but also a new desire to interpret more modern cultural history and acknowledge that humans had a significant place in the landscape. For example, in an exhibit case about the Navajo, it acknowledged that many visitors to the Canyon traveled through the Navajo Reservation to arrive there, and that this generated many questions about the tribe, which the exhibit tried to answer. It gave some history and demographic information about the tribe and noted that it was the largest and fastest growing in the country. It described the construction of their traditional dwellings or *hogans*, which visitors might have seen on the Reservation. It also described their talents at creating arts and crafts.⁵⁷⁸ In this way, it provided interpretation of the tribe's past and present, without relying on stereotypes or one-dimensional characterizations that had typified NPS and concessionaire interpretation of Native Americans in the past. It did not, however, describe their cultural connection to the Grand Canyon, or mention anything about their relationship with the NPS. Other exhibits worked to rectify some elements of

⁵⁷⁷ "Exhibit Planning," GRCA 65059, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

⁵⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

Grand Canyon history that past NPS and concessionaire interpretation had glossed over. For example, in an exhibit about the European presence at the Canyon, although it included a diorama illustrating Cárdenas's "discovery" of the Canyon (which the NPS and concessionaire brochures had mentioned often before), it showed Hopi guides leading the Spaniards to the rim of the Canyon, the first time this was shown or mentioned in a major interpretive area.⁵⁷⁹

Upon reviewing the exhibit proposals, Regional Chief of Interpretation Erik Reed had several suggestions. In some ways, he attempted to airbrush history; for example, he wanted to cut down the exhibit on mining to a bare minimum because he believed emphasizing it was "undesirable and unnecessary." Reed was probably concerned that it was too controversial a topic, and was afraid that it would contradict the preservation principles for which the NPS stood and which he thought deserved more overall discussion. He also suggested being vague about prehistoric Indians and their occupation of the Canyon because he feared being drawn in the middle of ongoing land claims cases, such as the dispute between the Navajo and Hopi over reservation boundaries that had been ongoing since the late 19th century, and which sometimes hinged on their tribe's traditional geographical range.⁵⁸⁰ Once these changes had been made, planners

⁵⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁸⁰ Erik Reed to Superintendent, 30 November 1955, Box 103 Folder D6215: Museum and Exhibit Activities: Planning, Preparation, Maintenance, and Preservation 1955-56, NARA.

sent everything, including label texts, off to the Museum Laboratory in Washington, D.C., to be approved and constructed.⁵⁸¹

Although the preparation and installation of exhibits at the new Grand Canyon Visitor Center was one of the major projects for the NPS Interpretive Division, it was also ultimately detrimental to the autonomy of the Grand Canyon interpretive staff.⁵⁸² The experience of the WASO staff working on the new Grand Canyon Visitor Center convinced administrators that curator and designer exhibit planning teams sent out from the main office to individual parks were more efficient and created a better product than if it was left to individual parks going through a multi-step process. Though many applauded this new approach to museum interpretation, there were also many, especially within the NPS, who disliked the loss of autonomy and complained that NPS museums from this point on became too cookie-cutter and tried to cram in too much information.⁵⁸³

The Cutting Edge Cuts Both Ways

The new Grand Canyon Visitor Center opened June 29, 1957, one of seven visitor centers finished in that year as part of Mission 66. The featured speaker at the dedication ceremony was Ronald F. Lee, Chief of the NPS Division

⁵⁸¹ "Exhibit Planning," GRCA 65059, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

⁵⁸² Ronald Lee to Conrad Wirth, 10 January 1956, Box 114 Folder K1815: Interpretive Activities Services 1952-56, NARA.

⁵⁸³ Lewis, *Museum Curatorship*, 146, 162-163. In fact, as a result of the Mission 66 program and its centralizing tendencies, the NPS soon became the nation's largest manufacturer of museum exhibits. National Geographic Society, *America's Wonderlands: The Scenic National Parks and Monuments of the United States* (Washington, D.C.: The National Geographic Society, 1959), 54.

of Interpretation. Other speakers included Marques de Alcantara del Cuervo, Consul of Spain in Los Angeles, representing the Spanish Ambassador, and Louis Schellbach.⁵⁸⁴ The sweet smell of success that permeated the event would soon turn sour, however. As Barry Mackintosh pointed out in his history of NPS interpretation, “Technological advances, increased visitation, lack of interpretive staff, the desire for consistent presentation quality, and sometimes just the lure of novelty inspired a range of new media and techniques over the years. Some stood the test of time to become permanent ingredients of interpretive programming; others proved of transitory value.”⁵⁸⁵ Unfortunately, many of the Grand Canyon Visitor Center’s cutting edge interpretive tools would quickly prove to have transitory value.

As early as July of 1957, just one month after its dedication, the staff reported that “some of the mechanized exhibits are already in need of repair or replacement, with children finding the operation of switches and push buttons an enticing pastime.”⁵⁸⁶ In late 1957, J.O. Brew, a member of the advisory board of the Peabody Museum of Archeology and Ethnology, stopped by to evaluate the new center. Though he was generally impressed with it, he saw much room for improvement. He believed that both its appearance and content were too

⁵⁸⁴ “Exhibit Planning,” GRCA 65059, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

⁵⁸⁵ Barry Mackintosh, *Interpretation in the National Park Service: A Historical Perspective* (Washington, D.C.: History Division, NPS, Department of the Interior, 1986), 38.

⁵⁸⁶ “Staff Meeting Minutes, July 1957,” GRCA 49758, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

superficial.⁵⁸⁷ Furthermore, although it had been open for less than 5 full months, all self-operating devices were out of order while he was there. He suggested that “complicated or expensive self-operating devices are not practical when we are dealing with the run-of-the-mill public...I greatly fear that the only automatic devices that can safely be put before the public are those which operate simply by turning a light on and off with an ordinary switch that can be replaced cheaply and easily from time to time.”⁵⁸⁸

Freeman Tilden’s *Interpreting Our Heritage*, which was first published the same year as the Grand Canyon Visitor Center opened, addresses the topic of interpretive devices in the parks, though whether the problems the Grand Canyon faced influenced his work is unknown. He argued that mechanical interpretive devices were only as good as the person who designed them, and that poor interpretation by a machine was worse than poor interpretation by personal contact. He opposed the use of mechanical devices unless it was clear “that such gadgets can be adequately, continually, and quickly serviced. No matter how good they may be when they are working properly, they are a source of shame and chagrin, as well as an imposition on the public, when they are allowed to be more

⁵⁸⁷ Ironically, one of the major complaints that NPS museum staff faced toward the end of Mission 66 was that their exhibits, such as those at Grand Canyon, were too content-heavy, so this criticism seems unjust. Mackintosh, 48.

⁵⁸⁸ J.O. Brew, “Report,” 4 November 1957, GRCA 65072, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

than briefly inoperative.”⁵⁸⁹ This was advice that the interpretive staff at Grand Canyon soon wished the NPS had taken.

It no longer fell to Louis Schellbach to fix these problems, however. After Schellbach’s retirement in late 1957, the NPS hired Paul E. “Ernie” Schulz, who would serve as Chief of Interpretation there until 1960.⁵⁹⁰ Schulz was born in 1910 in Bremen, Germany, though he attended grade school in California and received a bachelor’s degree in geological sciences from the University of California in 1932. He began his NPS career as a ranger-naturalist at Sequoia National Park in 1935, and later served at many different sites, including a job as a museum assistant at Lassen Volcanic National Park and time as a ranger-naturalist at the Grand Canyon.⁵⁹¹

Schulz was excited to be taking the helm of such a prestigious interpretive program. Although he respected Schellbach’s work, he also had new ideas for interpretation at the Canyon. For instance, he wrote to Barry Goldwater, a friend of Schellbach, to assure him that he would continue Schellbach’s program of gathering scientific collections and doing research, but he also indicated that he wished to take the Park in a new direction, stating that “of course I shall strive to maintain and to expand these [collections and research], but I keep uppermost in

⁵⁸⁹ Freeman Tilden, *Interpreting Our Heritage*, 3rd ed. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1977), 96.

⁵⁹⁰ Upon Schellbach’s retirement in late 1957, the interpretive staff put up a temporary exhibit on his contributions to the Park. “Staff Meeting Minutes, November 1957,” GRCA 49758, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

⁵⁹¹ “Biographical Data,” GRCA 49664, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

my mind the fact that we want to provide even more service to the visiting public.”⁵⁹²

Schulz’s plans to bring change to the GCNP interpretive program were frequently put on the back burner as he tried to address the many problems that seemed to crop up at the visitor center. In 1958, Schulz reported that the month-old “River Roar” exhibit was out of order for at least the second time, and another exhibit they had received from WASO operated for just a few hours before failing to work properly again.⁵⁹³ A letter from Schulz to the superintendent of the Park at the end of the summer season in 1959 reveals they were still having a number of problems with displays. Their audio/visual unit was so unreliable they had to stop using it. The dioramas were made at a height that children could not see, so they had to install steps for them. Displays that relied on push buttons to start audio or light displays worked for three months but became a problem thereafter. Stereo-slide viewers illustrating Canyon moods did not hold up under normal use. Many switches on interpretive displays had already begun to fail. Louise Hinchliffe recalled that the interpretive staff wasted a great deal of time repairing electrical and audio exhibits at the visitor center. As she stated, “Things like that, they were nice ideas but they just didn’t stand up under people.”⁵⁹⁴ Schulz also

⁵⁹² Paul Schulz to Barry Goldwater, 15 October 1957, GRCA 49664, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

⁵⁹³ “Staff Meeting Minutes, September 1958,” GRCA 49759, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

⁵⁹⁴ “Louise Hinchliffe Oral History,” GRCA 35957, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

pointed out that, as Schellbach had feared, the center was primarily a data distribution center, with 95% of the questions visitors asked considered informational and only 5% interpretive.⁵⁹⁵

In a 1959 report on the operation of the Grand Canyon Visitor Center, Schulz harshly criticized the planning and execution of it. He complained that it was not in a good location because few visitors came, the displays had too many technical glitches, and few visitors looked at exhibits or read labels. Furthermore, several of the exhibits were misleading, some were too complex, and others had erroneous information.⁵⁹⁶ To back up his claims he cited a field report by respected NPS archeologist Al Schroeder, who felt that the exhibits on Native Americans were the worst. As Schroeder stated,

As far as the exhibits on the Indians of the region are concerned, not one of them relates these groups to the canyon in any way. The Navajo exhibit contains a velvet shirt and photographs of flocks of sheep. No mention is made of their pinyon gathering trips in the Grand Canyon region. The same applies to the Hopis. Their use of the Salt Mine near the Little Colorado River junction or their trails to the Havasupais could well have been included. The case on the Havasupais is outright insulting.⁵⁹⁷

⁵⁹⁵ Paul Schulz to Superintendent, 13 July 1959, Box 102 Folder D6215: Museum and Exhibit Activities: Planning, Preparation, Maintenance, and Preservation 1955-59, NARA.

⁵⁹⁶ Paul Schulz, "Final Report on Operation of South Rim Visitor Center," 31 October 1959, Box 102 Folder D6215: Museum and Exhibit Activities: Planning, Preparation, Maintenance, and Preservation 1955-59, NARA.

⁵⁹⁷ Fragment of letter from Al Schroeder, GRCA 65072, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

Schulz concluded his comments by arguing that the visitor center concept as implemented by the WASO Division of Interpretation might not be appropriate everywhere, a comment that the NPS likely did not appreciate and for the time being chose to ignore.⁵⁹⁸

Schulz's report was included in a report on visitor centers that WASO compiled and published in 1960. The conclusions of the national office, however, were much different than Schulz's. Their report indicated that the public was happy and appreciative of the new visitor centers being built across the country, and operating staffs were enthusiastic and supportive of the program. The biggest problem, according to WASO's report, was that more funds and personnel were needed to operate the centers, and that most were not large enough to fulfill their purpose. The report acknowledged that each park had its own problems with the centers, even specifically listing those at Grand Canyon, as well as Schulz's suggestions on how to improve visitor centers in the future.⁵⁹⁹ However, WASO continued to hype the success of its visitor centers and interpretation initiatives. For example, in 1959 Ronald F. Lee distributed a report entitled "What's New in Interpretation." In it he boasted about the recent proliferation of visitor centers, predicting that "when we have, as we will soon have, more than 100 interpretive centers over America, the total impact as a force for education and citizenship will

⁵⁹⁸ National Park Service, Washington, D.C., "A Report on Visitor Centers," January 1960, GRCA 65072, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

⁵⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

be tremendous.”⁶⁰⁰ Around the same time Lee also reported on a growing interest in interpretation at NPS sites across the country, observing that other institutions from the United Nations Headquarters to Colonial Williamsburg, were now looking to the NPS as an example.⁶⁰¹

The idea that interpretation in national parks was important in defining and expressing American citizenship was not new. It had its beginnings in the Progressive Era idea that national parks were symbols of democracy, since as public lands all citizens owned them and had the right to visit them (and in fact were encouraged to because of the supposed uplifting effect contact with nature would have on their souls, which would in supposedly make them better citizens). As time went on, NPS officials became even more conscious of the fact that the NPS should not dictate what was best for the American public, but that it was the public’s role and duty to speak out on NPS policies and tell the agency their needs and desires for their parks. This would not only ensure that the NPS reflected the American democratic heritage, but also encourage democratic participation by the public.⁶⁰² With the development of visitor centers as part of Mission 66, the NPS believed that even more people could be exposed to their collective heritage embodied within national parks, giving them a sense of pride in their culture, for

⁶⁰⁰ Ronald F. Lee, “What’s New in Interpretation,” 2 December 1959, GRCA 58733, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

⁶⁰¹ Ibid.

⁶⁰² William C. Everhart, *The National Park Service* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1972), 91-93.

as future NPS Director George B. Hartzog, Jr., said, “Perhaps second only to liberty itself, the national park idea is the finest contribution of the United States to world culture.”⁶⁰³

While Lee and Wirth might have primarily had “historic” parks, such as Civil War battlefields, in mind when making these comments about citizenship, the concept did have applications at “natural” parks as well. Interpretation specifically helped cultivate ideals of citizenship by informing the public of their democratic rights, and by giving them information on park policies and areas of concern as well as ideas on how to help solve them. For example, when WASO instructed interpreters to talk about the NPS mission in their programs, one of the topics they often included was the fact that the public “owned” the parks, and they had a right to speak up to the government and tell them about issues they wanted addressed. Also, when interpreters discussed specific conservation issues, which at the Grand Canyon might include the ecological problems the construction of dams along the Colorado River caused, they were informing their listeners about problems for which they could and should take action as concerned citizens. As Hartzog noted, “Make no mistake: citizen involvement and the spotlight of a probing media can bring about significant improvement in government management. It does not take many citizen complaints, exposes, and editorials to

⁶⁰³ George B. Hartzog, Jr., *Battling for the National Parks* (Mt.Kisco, New York: Moyer Bell Limited, 1988) xvi.

turn up the heat on the Congress and the administration. This combination can start a tidal wave of corrective action.”⁶⁰⁴

Although there might have been difficulties in implementing interpretive changes on the ground, WASO publications reflected the overall importance the NPS afforded interpretation during this time period. In fact, publicity for the Mission 66 program in and of itself became a major theme in interpretation at this time. Interpretive programs in the parks were no longer limited to discussing the resources of the park, but were also being used to publicize the NPS itself. As Barry Mackintosh pointed out, “A degree of self-promotion was also expected in interpretive presentations. In 1958 Ronald Lee called to the regional director’s attention several weaknesses in park campfire programs, among them no group singing, no campfires, and ‘too little mention of MISSION 66.’”⁶⁰⁵

Native Americans Fight to be Seen and Heard

The beginning of the Mission 66 program, which turned the emphasis of interpretation away from local stories toward national messages and mandates, coincided with the depths of the termination era. However, Native American tribes at the Grand Canyon did not stop fighting to have their voices heard. By the 1960s, they had even made progress toward self-determination, as well as a greater voice in interpretation and the local tourism economy.

⁶⁰⁴ Hartzog, 251.

⁶⁰⁵ Mackintosh, *Interpretation in the National Park Service*, 79.

One of the more significant problems that Native Americans in the region faced at the time was the arrival of a new Superintendent at the Grand Canyon, John S. McLaughlin, who lacked interest in Native American history, culture, and sovereignty. For instance, in one Mission 66 proposal, McLaughlin stated that the Havasupai Reservation would make “an ideal development site” and proposed taking the entire thing over. His Mission 66 report argued that the NPS could afford to pay the tribe for their lands, which included astonishingly beautiful rivers and pools that he believed would attract visitors but also could be used as a cheap source of water for tourist developments on the South Rim.⁶⁰⁶

Not all NPS personnel at the Canyon shared McLaughlin’s attitude toward Native Americans at this time. In particular, Schulz clashed with McLaughlin over his approach to Native American issues. In an oral history interview, Schulz stated that some NPS personnel at the Park were able to get along well with Native Americans while others could never understand them. For instance, Schulz recalled that Harold Bryant had been fairly open-minded and accepting of the Native American presence. On the other hand, he characterized McLaughlin as having a poor relationship with Native Americans regardless of their tribe, and that he was unable to overlook minor faults or transgressions. Schulz recalled that one year under McLaughlin’s tenure there was a good pinyon pine nut harvest, so many Navajo came to the Park to collect and sell their nuts. The tourists loved to

⁶⁰⁶ Barbara J. Morehouse, *A Place Called Grand Canyon: Contested Geographies* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1996), 86.

see and interact with them, but McLaughlin was uncomfortable having them around and eventually forced them to leave.⁶⁰⁷

Among the rest of the interpretive staff at this time there is evidence of a plethora of opinions about Native Americans. Former NPS ranger-naturalist Max Gilstrap did not like the idea of having the Havasupai at the Canyon at all, yet thought it was important to discuss issues relating to their presence even if they were unflattering. In an article published in the *Christian Science Monitor*, he discussed the problems of the tribe and described Supai Camp, a settlement near Grand Canyon Village where Havasupai who worked at the park lived, as unsanitary and unsightly, noting that many people wanted to remove it. The article concluded, “This is not the kind of story that one usually hears at Grand Canyon. But this is the kind of story that needs to be told if future generations are to have the privilege of witnessing a sublime spectacle without major encroachments of man.”⁶⁰⁸

On the other hand, there were also some attempts to more fully integrate Native American themes into interpretation around this time in ways that indicate respect for the tribes. The Grand Canyon Museum Collections possess the script of the ranger talk that Judy Franklin gave at Tusayan in 1959. In it she described the long history of Native Americans on the continent, putting local tribes into a

⁶⁰⁷ “Paul Schulz Oral History,” GRCA 35738, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

⁶⁰⁸ Max K. Gilstrap, “Plans for Grand Canyon Bar Trams and Lifts,” *Christian Science Monitor* (March 8, 1956): C7.

much larger context. She incorporated some ethnobotanical facts on Indian use of local flora as well as information on how archeologists interpret sites. She helped to bring the story of Native Americans at the Canyon more up-to-date by talking about the significance of the kiva in Hopi culture and mentioning that the *Sipapu*, the site where many Hopi clans believe they emerged into this world, is located within Grand Canyon National Park. Franklin concluded by pointing out that there was much to learn from Native Americans about living in an inhospitable landscape and creating cultural objects of beauty.⁶⁰⁹

Despite the range of opinions about Native Americans, tribes began to make progress on their efforts to assert more power in their relationship with the NPS and establish their own tourism enterprises to ensure that their stories and history in the Canyon were interpreted in a way acceptable to them. An *Arizona Republic* article from 1956 noted that a special state commission on Indian affairs found that Indian rights in GCNP, such as treaty rights to hunt, graze livestock, and collect pinyon nuts, needed to be clarified, but had suspended action because the Havasupai had recently filed a claim asking for compensation for lands they argued were illegally taken when the Park was created. The claim stated that the NPS treated them as if they were squatters. Park administrators, they declared, eagerly sought them as laborers in the summer only to evict them once their labor was no longer needed. It pointed out that even the BIA suggested that the Havasupai be encouraged to leave their reservation and move somewhere with

⁶⁰⁹ Judy Franklin, "Tusayan Talk," 1959, GRCA 70919, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

better economic and educational facilities. It was an issue that all local tribes felt deeply about; Navajo tribal leader Paul Jones offered emotional support to the Havasupai by stating in the article that Indians were strongly tied to their homelands and would not leave them easily.⁶¹⁰

However, because Grand Canyon National Park at the time surrounded the Havasupai Reservation, and because the NPS held some land within Havasu Canyon, it seems that the NPS believed they ought to control how tourism was handled in the Havasupai homeland. In 1957 the NPS opened a public campground two and a half miles down the canyon from Supai Village, allowing many more visitors to stay in the canyon. To reach this campground, visitors had to hike through the entire length of the reservation. Although the tribe protested this development, they also took advantage of it by developing a restaurant and tourist lodge in Supai Village to generate tourism employment within the tribe.⁶¹¹

The Havasupai fought stereotypes about their lives and their home in Havasu Canyon that were common in magazines, travel guides, and even NPS interpretations at the time. They also strove for more influence and partnerships with companies who were profiting from leading tours into Havasu Canyon and

⁶¹⁰ “Canyon Restriction of Indians Studied,” *Arizona Republic*, 15 September 1956, GRCA 32096, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

⁶¹¹ John Hough, “The Grand Canyon National Park and the Havasupai People” in Patrick C. West and Steven R. Brechin, eds, *Resident Peoples and National Parks: Social Dilemmas and Strategies in International Conservation* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1991), 218. The NPS was still operating the campground at least until 1967. Grand Canyon National Park, “Visiting the Havasupai Indians,” Robert C. Euler Collection, Cline Library, NAU.

interpreting the tribal culture as well. For example, Joseph Wampler, a self-described “Archeologist-Mountaineer,” frequently led trips into the canyon from his base in Berkeley, California. Wampler advertised his business using language representative of most newspaper articles and travel brochures at the time. He called the reservation a “canyon paradise,” a desert Garden of Eden, an “almost unbelievable desert Shangri-La, probably the closest approach to Utopia in all America,” a must-see for those who love the outdoors. His brochure claimed that the Havasupai live their “same tranquil, simple tribal life as over a century ago” and enjoy a happy existence far from the cares of the world.⁶¹² This romanticized interpretation of an idyllic, unchanging Havasupai life mimicked the stories and advertising gimmicks that tourism companies, most notably the Fred Harvey Company, had been using for decades. It would have been offensive to the Havasupai, as it gave no sense of the real lives of the people or the hardships they faced, and implied that their culture was stagnant and unable to adjust to contemporary life.

Havasupai efforts to exercise more control over how tourism operators used and interpreted their canyon can be seen most clearly in 1958 correspondence between Reed Watahomigie, Secretary of the Havasupai Tribal Council, and Bill Bass, son of pioneer miner and tour guide W.W. Bass. In 1958 Bass wrote to tell the tribe of his plans to make an educational video of the reservation. Watahomigie replied that he would have the tribe’s permission if he

⁶¹² “Wampler Trail Trips,” and “Ashfork, Arizona: Gateway to Havasupai Canyon,” William Bass Collection, Cline Library, NAU.

paid the customary \$100 fee and got consent from anyone whose face, home, or property was used in the video.⁶¹³

Bass wrote a long letter in reply. He told Watahomigie that his feelings were greatly hurt by this request. He argued that he was not trying to profit off of this video, but that he was doing it for the benefit of the people of Supai because it would attract more visitors. The letter gradually began to take on the tone of a paternalistic lecture, with Bass giving his (unsolicited) opinions on what the Havasupai should do improve tourist activity in their canyon. For instance, he urged the tribe to use their waterfalls to generate electricity and even suggested installing floodlights to illuminate them at night. He believed that the tribal council “should try and get all people to dress Indian style. Modern ‘White man style’ is not good.” He also suggested that the council get people to plant foods that tourists would like to buy to eat. Other proposals he offered were to have older people charge to have their picture taken, to restore old buildings while keeping their rustic qualities, and to train guides to take people on trips, especially teaching them to tell traditional stories and legends. Bass admonished that the Havasupai “can be free and prosperous” but that they needed a master plan, which Bass offered to assist them in developing.⁶¹⁴ Although the tribe would eventually do some of these things, it was without the input or assistance of Bass.

⁶¹³ Bill Bass to Reed Watahomigie, 29 June 1958, William Bass Collection, Cline Library, NAU. Watahomigie later served as Tourist Manager for the tribe.

⁶¹⁴ Ibid.

Paul Schulz's Turbulent Tenure

The frustrations with the visitor center that took up much of his time were likely grating on Schulz because he was trying to establish a new presence and direction in interpretation at the Canyon after the interpretive division had been headed for nearly two decades by Louis Schellbach. Louise Hinchliffe pointed out that when Schulz took over he wanted to do things in new ways, but it was somewhat like trying to steer the Titanic. Hinchliffe stated “I don’t know how many actual changes were accomplished. I think he, he was a very enthusiastic type of person who—I recall turning out vast volumes of correspondence during that time—initiating projects of all kinds—there was certainly a great flurry of activity, in an attempt to kind of catch up for what he felt was a period of just sort of holding our own.”⁶¹⁵

Regional and national changes affected Schulz’s effort to change the program that Schellbach had helped entrench as well. On top of WASO’s involvement, around this time Regional Chief of Interpretation Erik Reed also attempted to have more say in the interpretive programming at the Canyon. He created a series of interpretive objectives for Region Three in 1958, with specific suggestions for Grand Canyon, including adding nature walks and guided trips on the North Rim, revising unsatisfactory exhibits at the South Rim Visitor Center,

⁶¹⁵ “Louise Hinchliffe Oral History,” GRCA 35957, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

and developing more trailside exhibits.⁶¹⁶ All of these pressures seemed to pull Schulz in many different directions and diminish his ability to accomplish his vision and goals.

Schulz's philosophy on interpretation can be found in a presentation he gave at a training institute for park naturalists in 1952 while he was the Park Naturalist at Lassen Volcanic National Park. He pointed out that naturalists were first and foremost interpreters meant to help the public enjoy parks to the fullest extent possible. In his mind the objective was to teach people "the names of things; they want to know what makes them 'tick' and how they got that way," though the NPS was generally trying to move away from this type of interpretation. Still, Schulz urged his listeners to avoid using the term "education" to describe what they are doing since it "implies something forced down a schoolboy's throat...it may make for conscious or unconscious hostility." He admonished his audience to remember that "it's the public which pays your salary, and mine, too. It's his park, not yours personally."⁶¹⁷

Schulz believed that each park's interpretive program should depend on local conditions, and that each park must decide whether to focus on the quality or quantity of contacts. However, above all Schulz argued that interpretation should be balanced among various natural and cultural themes and touch on "all

⁶¹⁶ Erik Reed, "Suggestions for 1958 Interpretive Objectives for Region III," Box 115 Folder K1819: Interpretive Reports 1946-1953, NARA.

⁶¹⁷ Paul E. Schulz, "Talk for Training Institute for Park Naturalists of the California Division of Beaches and Parks," 17 June 1952, Box 115 Folder K1815: Naturalist and Educational Activities 1949-53, NARA.

applicable fields of natural and human history.” He argued that “every area has a fascinating geological past, history, and perhaps a good Indian story” but they are often overlooked. To ensure the best interpretation possible, “Scientific principles and park policies, Indian uses, pertinent legends, local history, human interest, industrial uses, aesthetics, etc., should be brought out at every opportunity.”⁶¹⁸ If done appropriately and successfully, Schulz believed that interpretation could inculcate not only an appreciation for nature but also “a maturity of mind which can make every man a bit of a philosopher.”⁶¹⁹

The realities at the Canyon and in the NPS plagued these lofty goals and theories, yet despite the challenges he faced, Schulz still tried to lead the Canyon’s interpretive program into new directions. Michael Anderson took note of these changes in his administrative history of the Park, stating that in the late 1950s and early 1960s the Park experienced a shift toward self-guided interpretation. For example, Schulz experimented with changing a self-guiding nature trail along the rim between the Village and Yavapai point to a stake-and-leaflet type of trail, something Schellbach had strongly resisted.⁶²⁰ At the same time he was initiating more self-guided interpretation, Schulz also encouraged his staff to “get us into a little more up to date or more aggressive form of visitor

⁶¹⁸ Ibid.

⁶¹⁹ Ibid.

⁶²⁰ Anderson, *Polishing the Jewel*, 60.

contact.”⁶²¹ One of Schulz’s major achievements was making significant improvements in visitor contacts; he reported in August 1958 that an estimated 92% of visitors had some form of contact with a ranger, usually from the interpretive division.⁶²² Schulz started an interpretive program at Phantom Ranch, though this was soon discontinued because of small attendance. He also hired three women ranger-naturalists for duty, the first to serve in that position since Polly Patraw.⁶²³

As the new Executive Secretary of the Grand Canyon Natural History Association, Schulz tried to move this organization and their interpretive activities in a new direction too. Revenue for the organization had been steadily dropping through the decade after peaking in 1950. Schulz believed that this was because its publications were outdated and irrelevant to the Park’s modern audience. Instead, he proposed “to publish interpretive booklets which will have public appeal rather than be sheer scientific treatises and checklists.”⁶²⁴ This would not only bring in more revenue, it would also “render increased benefit and

⁶²¹ “Louise Hinchliffe Oral History,” GRCA 35957, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

⁶²² “Staff Meeting Minutes, July 1958” and “Staff Meeting Minutes, August 1958,” GRCA 49759, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

⁶²³ “Staff Meeting Minutes, April 1959,” GRCA 49760, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

⁶²⁴ Paul E. Schulz, “1957 Annual Report [of GCNHA], Narrative Report of the Executive Secretary,” 22 January 1958, quoted in Todd R. Berger, “Science and Education, Birdseed and Power Tools: The History of the Grand Canyon Association. Part II,” *Canyon Views* 13:2 (Summer 2007): 13.

enjoyment to park visitors through greater appreciation and understanding of the natural and human history of Grand Canyon National Park.”⁶²⁵ For example, Schulz ordered a revised edition of Joe Ben Wheat’s *Prehistoric People of the Northern Southwest* to be reprinted, since it was the best-selling publication the GCNHA produced at the time. Schulz’s plan seems to have worked, since sales picked back up after these changes.⁶²⁶ Schulz also contracted with the GCNHA to hire someone to redo the labels on the parapet at Yavapai Observation Station, showing a willingness to move away from the older in-house method Schellbach insisted upon. As Louise Hinchliffe recalled, “Louie was an artist. He had been able to do most of the art work that was done in the exhibits when he was here and really did some beautiful work. But, when you didn’t have anyone on the staff and wanted a nice job, there wasn’t much alternative.”⁶²⁷

Another obstacle Schulz tackled was how best to interpret the North Rim and incorporate it into the rest of the Park’s interpretive program. Since the 1930s, when the GCNP interpretive staff seems to have first turned its attention to the North Rim, the division had conducted ongoing discussions and debates about the purpose and themes of interpretation on this side of the Canyon. Generally it seems that the local administrators wanted more cultural history to be interpreted at the North Rim so there would be more of a balance among history, biology, and

⁶²⁵ Ibid., 14.

⁶²⁶ Berger, “Science and Education, Birdseed and Power Tools,” Part II, 14.

⁶²⁷ “Louise Hinchliffe Oral History,” GRCA 35957, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

geology within the entire Park. However, Schulz argued that most people on the North Rim never went to the South Rim, so the NPS should tell the complete story of the Canyon there as well as on the South Rim. At the same time, he indicated that the Park should not devote many interpretive resources there, since significantly fewer visitors went there.⁶²⁸

In 1958 a debate began again within the NPS over what to do about Desert View Watchtower. During Mission 66, different factions argued over how and how much to develop parks nationwide. Should they be centralized? Dispersed? What role should concessionaires play in these developments?⁶²⁹ At Grand Canyon, this debate mostly focused on whether to eliminate services in Desert View and concentrate everything at the Village area, or if they should begin developing Desert View as a second major center for the Park. NPS plans to develop this area had existed for many years. Landscape Architect Charles W. Eliot noted that, though the Park had opposed construction of the Watchtower originally, he felt it was not realistic to tear it down. Instead, he believed the area should be cleaned up and developed as another NPS area where people could visit a museum, experience interpretive services, and get information about the Park. In fact, he thought that “Desert View is perhaps the best place in the whole park to give the visitor such an introduction” because it illustrated both the geologic and human history of the area, since Navajo and Hopi land was visible from the area,

⁶²⁸ “Interpretation—Planning—North Rim,” GRCA 65060, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

⁶²⁹ For more detailed information on Mission 66, see Carr, *Mission 66*.

and the Watchtower would make an excellent observation and interpretation station.⁶³⁰ Ultimately, the Watchtower remained in the hands of the Fred Harvey Company, and the NPS chose not to substantially develop interpretive facilities in the area.

Concessionaire interpretation was an area where Schulz saw a definite need for improvement. For example, he called mule trips to Phantom Ranch at Grand Canyon “a magnificent interpretive opportunity” but because they were concessionaire-run most were “almost completely lacking in interpretation worthy of the name.”⁶³¹ Although Schulz was not pleased with the quality of concessionaire interpretation at the Park, with all of the problems in the NPS interpretive program, he had little time to devote to help improve it.

The changing demographics of visitors to the Park, with more middle and lower class families traveling by personal automobile to the Canyon for short periods of time, also presented new challenges to the interpretive staff at this time. In Joseph Wood Krutch’s *Grand Canyon: Today and All Its Yesterdays*, he made some observations about visitors to the Canyon, and in doing so made a strong case for having interpreters on hand at the Park. He pointed out that a complete novice to the Canyon would likely be able to come to reasonable conclusions about its formation, but it was only through contact with interpreters that they

⁶³⁰ Charles W. Eliot to Director of the NPS, August 1958, GRCA 8944, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

⁶³¹ Paul E. Schulz, “Talk for Training Institute for Park Naturalists of the California Division of Beaches and Parks,” 17 June 1952, Box 115 Folder K1815: Naturalist and Educational Activities 1949-53, NARA.

could get the details of it and really start to understand it. However, many American visitors did not care to take the time to do this; as Krutch pointed out, “rangers remark sadly that [European visitors] are also much better informed, much better prepared to understand what they see, than the average American who frequently checks it off his list as he checks Notre Dame or St. Peter’s in his guidebook.”⁶³²

In 1959, the interpretive division worked to update Yavapai Observation Station so that its interpretive themes and displays better harmonized with those in the visitor center. They completely revamped the parapet texts and exhibits, started to renovate wall exhibits, and (despite the problems they had with audio-visual devices at the visitor center) talked about developing a “Canyon sounds” recording to use with talks given there to let visitors experience the roar of the river, the sound of rocks falling into the Canyon, a wren singing, and so on. Schulz also wanted to expand interpretive services at Desert View and Tusayan Museum, but this was impossible since he did not get any more staff despite his requests, and the staff he did have were already devoted to other projects. He expressed a desire to install another exhibit about the Havasupai at the visitor center and generally increase the Park’s interpretation of Native Americans in the area, but found this impossible for the reasons above as well.⁶³³

⁶³² Joseph Wood Krutch, *Grand Canyon: Today and All Its Yesterdays* (New York: William Sloane Associates, 1958), 49.

⁶³³ “Accomplishment of 1959 Objectives,” GRCA 57837, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

Part of the problem with Mission 66 was that while it funded visitor centers and exhibits throughout the Park system, it did not include funding for their staffing and maintenance.⁶³⁴ The Grand Canyon Visitor Center was finished in 1957—but the Park did not have enough rangers to fully staff the site until three years later. By 1968 they had to close the center two days a week because visitation was outpacing staffing capacities.⁶³⁵ Compounding the understaffed division’s problem in keeping up with exhibit repairs was a mandate from WASO, which had decided they needed to finish a museum records program in which every item in each park’s collection had to be cataloged according to national NPS standards. Superintendent John McLaughlin ordered the interpretive division to finish this project on time, which meant they had to focus on only the most popular interpretive programs and eliminate all interpretation at Desert View and Mather Point, end guided hikes into the Canyon, and stop giving evening talks at Bright Angel Lodge.⁶³⁶

The disagreement between Schulz and McLaughlin over the priorities for the interpretive division helps prove just how important it was to have a superintendent who was sympathetic to interpretation and just how lucky the

⁶³⁴ Mackintosh, 91; Carr, *Mission 66*, 190-191.

⁶³⁵ “Merrill Beal Oral History,” GRCA 35727, Grand Canyon Museum Collections. Beal states that in part this was a ploy to help get public attention to the fact that the Park did not have enough resources.

⁶³⁶ John McLaughlin to Paul Schulz, 14 May 1959, Box 102 Folder D6215: Museum and Exhibit Activities: Planning, Preparation, Maintenance, and Preservation 1959-60, NARA.

Grand Canyon had been in the past that their superintendents and chief naturalists had enjoyed such mutual respect and shared visions for the interpretive programs at the Park. In contrast, McLaughlin was more interested in making sure that the Park met WASO mandates, even when they came at the expense of visitor experiences. Instead of having interpretive walks and talks or developing new interpretive programs, ranger-naturalists were stuck inside at desks for month after month trying to catalog museum artifacts.⁶³⁷ While this was perhaps valuable in the long run, it certainly represents a shift in emphasis on interpretive services from one administration to another.

Strangely, although he had committed the entire interpretive staff at the Park to completing the museum records program, McLaughlin at the same time submitted a museum prospectus for the Wayside Museum calling for substantial revisions. He argued that it was dated in its designs and the information it gave, which had not changed in the past 20 years, yet was the only site giving the prehistory of the Canyon. He wanted the museum to relate more closely to the nearby ruins and show how man adapted to the unusual Grand Canyon environment.⁶³⁸ Considering the constraints the interpretive staff was under, it is not surprising that this was not accomplished right away.

⁶³⁷ "Paul Schulz Oral History," GRCA 35738, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

⁶³⁸ This interest in tying these cultures to the environment reflects the aforementioned conservation message WASO was urging at the time. John McLaughlin to Regional Director, 26 October 1959, Box 102 Folder D6215: Museum and Exhibit Activities: Planning, Preparation, Maintenance, and Preservation 1959-60, NARA.

Just three years after taking over as Chief of Interpretation, in 1960 Schulz left GCNP to take a position as the Regional Naturalist for Region One of the NPS in the eastern U.S. In evaluating his time leading the interpretive division at Grand Canyon National Park many years later, Schulz judged that he did not accomplish much. He recalled that he tried to sustain Schellbach's natural history collection and his commitment to excellent interpretive services to visitors, worked to get McKee's geological map of the Canyon published, and carried on a solid interpretive program on both rims, but these are the only things of value he remembered as having come from his time there.⁶³⁹ While Schulz is perhaps too modest in his assessment of himself, it seems clear that he did not achieve nearly as much as he had hoped for upon taking over the job as Chief of Interpretation.

Changes were also taking place at the national level that did not bode well for interpretation. Lee retired in 1959 as WASO Chief of Interpretation, at which time interpretation lost its high profile within the NPS organization. Not until William C. Everhart took over the role in 1965 did interpretation briefly regain its visibility, although the position was abolished in 1969.⁶⁴⁰

Merrill Beal Takes the Helm

When Paul Schulz left GCNP, Merrill D. Beal replaced him as Chief of Interpretation. Beal was born in 1926 in Utah, and became a career employee of

⁶³⁹ "Paul Schulz Oral History," GRCA 35738, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

⁶⁴⁰ Mackintosh, 81.

the NPS, working in interpretation for many years. His educational background focused on zoology and resource management. His first experience with the NPS started when he worked as a seasonal employee at Yellowstone National Park at the age of 17. He later became a full time ranger, and later Park Naturalist, at Yellowstone for 10 years before arriving at GCNP. After leaving the Canyon in 1969, he spent most of the rest of his career at Great Smoky Mountains National Park as assistant superintendent and later superintendent.⁶⁴¹ Beal later summarized his time at Grand Canyon, which included many years under Mission 66, as a “period of growth, increasing staff, availability of at least modest amounts of funding from the standpoint of improving interpretive signs, exhibits, visitor centers, things of this nature.”⁶⁴²

Beal indicated that it was this broad range of responsibilities and need for creativity that first drew him to the field of interpretation. As he stated,

“The attractive thing about interpretation and naturalists’ work, that got me involved in it in the beginning anyway, was that it was such a broad-ranging field. It involved so many spheres of activity that I personally was interested in. You did motion pictures. You did slide programs. You did publications. You did exhibits. You did self-guiding leaflets. You did public interpreting programs. You operated information facilities and so on. You worked in coordinating research programs—which is another phase of the activity that’s largely been peeled off.”⁶⁴³

⁶⁴¹ “Biographical Data,” GRCA 49664, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

⁶⁴² “Merrill Beal Oral History,” GRCA 35727, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

⁶⁴³ *Ibid.*

In the midst of his time at the Grand Canyon, however, Beal seemed to lose interest in interpretation, and instead expressed a desire to transfer to an administrative or managerial position.⁶⁴⁴ Despite his desire to switch career tracks, it seems that Beal devoted himself as much as he could to his job at Grand Canyon National Park. After 1963, he frequently attended classes at the Stephen T. Mather Training Center at Harpers Ferry, West Virginia, which focused on interpretation training, as well as the Albright Training Center at the Grand Canyon, which focused on other forms of ranger training, to improve his knowledge and skills. He particularly sought more guidance in how to use interpretation to help achieve management goals for the Park, and more interaction with other interpreters to exchange ideas.⁶⁴⁵

Beal recalled that GCNP in the 1960s saw many improvements in interpretation. He proudly pointed out that he was able to accomplish quite a bit with just a little money. However, considering that it was the hands-on nature of developing interpretive programs and displays that attracted him to the NPS in the first place, it does not seem surprising that he was frustrated with the growing NPS practice of giving most of the responsibility for interpretive programming to

⁶⁴⁴ Merrill Beal to Regional Director, Western Region, 24 June 1966, GRCA 49664, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

⁶⁴⁵ For instance, one of the first classes offered was a nine-week course in interpretation, with an enrollment cap of 30 students. Lewis, *Museum Curatorship*, 127; Mackintosh, 85; Merrill Beal, "Application for Albright Training Program," and Merrill Beal to Chief, Division of Personnel Management and Manpower Development, 4 August 1965, GRCA 49664, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

the regional and national interpretive division instead of leaving it in the hands of local staff.⁶⁴⁶

A report on the 1960 objectives of the Interpretive Division shows that during Beal's first year, the staff was kept busy on a number of projects, such as installing new exhibits at the visitor center to expand its interpretation of cultural history, namely river running on the Colorado.⁶⁴⁷ The following year Beal oversaw the creation of the first Park Interpretation Plan since Schellbach's 1949 prospectus. Unlike the original, the 1961 Interpretive Plan seemed to give cultural interpretation an equal status as environmental interpretation, with one of its main goals being to "enrich visitor understanding of the human and natural history of the Park."⁶⁴⁸ Beal's plan suggested many new ideas for the Park's interpretive division, such as having roving ranger-naturalists stationed at scenic overlooks and along trails, which "provides one of the finest possible contacts visitors can make with representatives of their government."⁶⁴⁹ However, the staff was still too small to handle ever-increasing visitation, and the report pleaded with WASO to provide more funding and support for interpretation, saying "We are starting

⁶⁴⁶ "Merrill Beal Oral History," GRCA 35727, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

⁶⁴⁷ "Accomplishment of 1960 Objectives," GRCA 57837, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

⁶⁴⁸ "Interpretation Plan, 1961," GRCA 28819, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

⁶⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

from scratch each year to develop seasonal interpreters during the height of our busiest season.”⁶⁵⁰

At this time, there were only three permanent naturalists, one clerk, and 14 seasonal workers on the interpretive staff to serve the 1,252,183 visitors who came to the Park that year.⁶⁵¹ Beal requested additional hires, including a museum curator position so that naturalists would not have to spend time maintaining the Park’s enormous museum collection at the expense of providing personal interpretation to the public.⁶⁵² In 1965 he received authorization to hire a professional museum curator, one of the few such positions in the entire National Park System.⁶⁵³ He was also allowed to add two more naturalists, which nearly doubled his division’s permanent staff.⁶⁵⁴ In October 1966 he mentioned that he had hired a Navajo, Peter S. Bennett, to work as a naturalist; this appears to be the first time a Native American had a formal full time position as part of the interpretive staff at the Grand Canyon.⁶⁵⁵ In the middle of the decade, therefore, the Interpretive Division had about five permanent naturalists, 21 seasonal

⁶⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁶⁵¹ Anderson, *Polishing the Jewel*, 90.

⁶⁵² “Interpretation Plan, 1961,” GRCA 28819, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

⁶⁵³ Lewis, *Museum Curatorship*, 325.

⁶⁵⁴ Merrill Beal to Chief, Division of Personnel Management and Manpower Development, 4 August 1965, GRCA 49664, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

⁶⁵⁵ “October 1966 Staff Meeting Minutes,” GRCA 49767, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

workers, and a handful of GCNHA employees who volunteered to help the division when necessary.⁶⁵⁶

As always, however, the NPS seemed to constantly be playing catch-up as the number of tourists continued to climb steadily and outpace the staff resources of the interpretive division. Furthermore, the Vietnam War would soon cause the federal government to cut NPS appropriations for staff and facilities as it shifted financial resources elsewhere.⁶⁵⁷ To help provide more interpretation on a tight budget, Beal in 1963 and 1964 begged for rangers from all the Park's divisions to develop presentations, relying on rangers' personal experiences and specialties to help cultivate unique interpretive programs.⁶⁵⁸

As others before him, Beal did not let these constraints limit his vision for interpretive programming at the Park. An undated memo written by Beal reveals priorities he had during his time at the head of the interpretive division.⁶⁵⁹ As Executive Director of the GCNHA, Beal took over where Schulz had left off in

⁶⁵⁶ Merrill Beal, "Application for Albright Training Program," GRCA 49664, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

⁶⁵⁷ "Merrill Beal Oral History," GRCA 35727, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

⁶⁵⁸ "Staff Meeting Minutes, May 1963," and "Staff Meeting Minutes, August 1963," GRCA 49764, Grand Canyon Museum Collections; Chief Park Naturalist to Park Staff and Training Center Staff, "Memo," 21 May 1964, GRCA 70915, Grand Canyon Museum Collections. He pointed out that the variety of work assignments at the Park gave rangers personal experiences and depth of knowledge on a wide range of topics that visitors would be eager to hear about, such as the daily life of a Park ranger, fire management, the story of Park concessionaires, and other topics.

⁶⁵⁹ "Memorandum," GRCA 49664, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

leading the organization to begin a more vigorous publishing program, and to expand their target audience. They even began to cater to a more global crowd, in the mid-1960s publishing French and Spanish versions of the ranger talk given at Yavapai Observation Station.⁶⁶⁰ At this time they also began publishing and distributing more books and leaflets about both human and natural history and producing self-guiding trail guides. This helped not only to broaden the range of interpretive materials available for visitors to buy and take home, but their sales helped fund other interpretive needs at the Park as well, such as in purchasing books, audio visual material, and museum display items.⁶⁶¹

Louise Hinchliffe remembered the 1960s as a time of growth and change in the Park, especially because interpretation received more financial support due in part to increasing revenue from the GCNHA. For example, she stated that while earlier trail leaflets (presumably those drawn by Schellbach) looked cheap, during this time they were able to produce better ones with quality illustrations, paper, and printing. They contracted with an artist to do a series of interpretive roadside exhibits, emphasizing natural features, history, and Native American topics. They also renovated inner canyon interpretive signs, replacing old white and green enamel signs that had nothing but a little information on rock

⁶⁶⁰ Todd R. Berger, “Science and Education, Birdseed and Power Tools: The History of the Grand Canyon Association. Part II,” *Canyon Views* 13:2 (Summer 2007): 15. Today, the association still publishes free interpretive guides for the Park, including translations of *The Guide* in Chinese, French, German, Italian, Japanese, and Spanish.

⁶⁶¹ “Interpretation Plan, 1961,” GRCA 28819, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

formations with aluminum signs that were more vandal-proof and allowed a much higher quality of artwork and new information to be displayed. Hinchliffe declared that “these were major steps in finding ways to reach greater numbers of visitors than was any longer possible through personal contact.”⁶⁶²

Another significant priority of Beal’s during this time was to develop a better understanding of concessionaire contracts and work more closely with them in training their staff in interpretation. Therefore, as Merrill Beal recalled,

We made a serious effort during that period of time to visit with the mule guides, for example, and talk to them about geology of the Canyon, and history of the Canyon, and things like that on the basis that they could benefit in the service that they rendered to Park visitors through that. We shared training programs with the concessioners [*sic*] on such things as safety and food services and basic information about the Park and things like that.⁶⁶³

In Beal’s evaluation, this effort was unsuccessful at the time because of problems with scheduling and participation, but he still believed that it was a good practice and should be sustained. Howard Stricklin, who took over as Park Superintendent in 1964, agreed with this and encouraged Beal to persist in these efforts. Beal continued to work with mule guides to help them give more accurate and factual

⁶⁶² “Louise Hinchliffe Oral History,” GRCA 35957, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

⁶⁶³ “Merrill Beal Oral History,” GRCA 35727, Grand Canyon Museum Collections. Beal recalled that, in an effort to get mule wranglers to attend these sessions they would go to the cowboy dorm “and have the concessioner supply a washtub full of beer. That kept everybody there and interested.” However this strategy was not practiced regularly and did not work for all programs.

interpretations to those riding mule trains, and wanted to do the same with bus drivers, though it is unclear if this ever actually happened.⁶⁶⁴

Beal also helped initiate more balance between the interpretation of natural and cultural history at the Park. In an oral history interview, Beal described the 1950s and 1960s as a time of growing conflict in the NPS between different generations of park personnel over what the purpose and goals of the National Park System should be. Older staff tended to see the NPS goal as strictly natural preservation and had a hard time accepting the growing movement toward including historical interpretation in their programming. Newer staff, such as Beal, saw the NPS mission much more broadly, and he therefore began incorporating much more cultural history into his interpretive plans.⁶⁶⁵

Beal discovered that earlier efforts by McKee, Schellbach, and Schulz had resulted in some knowledge about archeological resources, but there was an overall dearth of knowledge about the cultural history of the Canyon. In an attempt to fill this gap, he began collecting oral histories of Grand Canyon pioneers and enlisted the help of ranger-naturalist J. Donald Hughes to write a human history of the Canyon, which was later published as a book that has subsequently been reprinted several times.⁶⁶⁶ Hughes consulted a variety of

⁶⁶⁴ “Staff Meeting Minutes, May 1963,” and “Staff Meeting Minutes, August 1963,” GRCA 49764, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

⁶⁶⁵ “Merrill Beal Oral History,” GRCA 35727, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

⁶⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

people for the project including Emery Kolb, Edwin McKee, Juan Sinyella of the Havasupai Tribal Council and several Hopi.⁶⁶⁷ Throughout the decade the division also worked on more systematic surveys of archeological resources at the Grand Canyon.⁶⁶⁸ Beal and others on his staff were also beginning to realize that the human story told at the Canyon involved some inconsistencies, even if visitors did not mind. For example, Beal pointed out, “Strangely enough, in spite of the fact that it was not truly authentic and in place, such things as the Indian dances that were presented at the Hopi House and so on didn’t elicit much adverse comment [from the public].”⁶⁶⁹ NPS literature developed by WASO reflected this new interest in human history as well. In the official NPS brochures for the Park in 1964 and 1966, almost equal space is given to talking about natural history (such as geology and life zones) and cultural history (such as prehistory, pioneer history, establishment of the Park, and Native Americans today). This content remained basically the same until 1975.⁶⁷⁰

⁶⁶⁷ J. Donald Hughes, *The Story of Man at Grand Canyon* (Grand Canyon: Grand Canyon Natural History Association, 1967), 1.

⁶⁶⁸ Janet R. Balsom, “A Little Knowledge Goes a Long Way: A History of Archeological Research at the Grand Canyon,” in Michael F. Anderson, ed., *A Gathering of Grand Canyon Historians: Ideas, Arguments, and First-Person Accounts: Proceedings of the Inaugural Grand Canyon History Symposium, January 2002* (Grand Canyon: Grand Canyon Association, 2005), 113.

⁶⁶⁹ “Merrill Beal Oral History,” GRCA 35727, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

⁶⁷⁰ “Grand Canyon, 1964,” and “Grand Canyon, 1966,” DG-13, Arizona State University Archives and Special Collections.

The Public's Influence on Grand Canyon Interpretation

In the 1950s and 1960s, many naturalists started becoming interested in how man's actions could degrade the natural environment, a concern that grew in the public mind as well in the 1960s.⁶⁷¹ As former Assistant Park Superintendent Lon Garrison later stated, "it was something that we had to face at home in our back yard as well as up there [at Grand Canyon]. We really had not realized that this was a universal situation at that time."⁶⁷² For example, in 1953 the NPS sprayed a swath of trees on the North Rim with DDT to eliminate tent caterpillars. Though effective in killing the insects, the NPS abandoned it as concerns about the chemical became widespread following publication of Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* in 1962.⁶⁷³ Other environmental concerns that would grow in the 1960s at the Grand Canyon included the effects of uranium mining at the South Rim, the introduction of exotic species and the resulting extirpation of several native species, and the effects of damming the Colorado River on riparian communities, erosion, and sedimentation along the river. NPS interpreters eventually realized that they could make all of these issues relevant to visitors by talking about similar things that were happening in their own communities. Although the seeds were being planted in the early 1960s, major efforts at interpreting these types of

⁶⁷¹ Mackintosh, 67.

⁶⁷² "Lon and Inger Garrison Oral History," GRCA 35731, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

⁶⁷³ Anderson, *Polishing the Jewel*, 72.

environmental concerns did not become widespread until the late 1960s and 1970s, and will be explored in the following chapter.

In the meantime, individuals and businesses were becoming more vocal in expressing their ideas for what types of interpretation they would like to see at the Park. Many of the ideas for new facilities at the Canyon resembled some of the proposals that early developers had made around the turn of the century, in that they were intended to provide visitors with a way to experience more of the Canyon in a more immersive way. In fact, some of the ideas for developing the Park that the NPS had dismissed before were brought up again, such as a proposal to build a tramway across the Canyon, similar to the proposal to build a cableway across the Canyon mentioned in Chapter 2.⁶⁷⁴

In 1962, Vernon M. Dolphin of Tempe, Arizona, laid out one of the most interesting schemes, which received a great deal of attention from the NPS. Dolphin proposed building a “Museum of Time” on the South Rim of the Canyon. He envisioned showing 3-D movies to “enthral and educate” visitors. The museum would include a “Valley of Time” that would let visitors walk through diorama exhibits “seeing, feeling, and smelling the events which contributed to the formation of the earth and the Grand Canyon region.” His proposal included plans for three additional museums at the Canyon focusing on zoology, botany, and geology plus a research center, library, and slide lecture rooms. Dolphin

⁶⁷⁴ Interestingly, in the proposal to build this tramway, the NPS indicated that interpretation should be very simple and focus on the inspirational qualities of the canyon and its scenery, not geology. Robert L. Farrel to Volney Wesley, 7 November 1967, GRCA 57834, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

expressed his belief that people were not educated enough to understand the interpretation currently provided at the Park, so his facilities, he said, would help introduce them to the Canyon so they could better appreciate NPS interpretive programs once they arrived inside the Park.⁶⁷⁵

The NPS somewhat seriously considered the idea for a time, in large part because Dolphin had contacted the National Parks Advisory Board, Arizona Congressmen, Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall, and NPS Director Conrad Wirth with his proposal, and had presented it to local citizens, generating enthusiasm all around. Wirth referred the proposal to a committee including interpretive leaders like Natt Dodge and Louis Schellbach. Beal secretly wrote to McKee to get his opinion as well. Although Dolphin quoted interpretive comments that he attributed to McKee, McKee responded that he had never heard of Dolphin and warned Beal to proceed with caution.⁶⁷⁶

Dolphin gave a detailed presentation to the aforementioned NPS committee in early 1963. However, the committee quickly realized that he had no understanding of interpretation in National Parks, had never visited any other NPS sites, did not have realistic expectations about the cost of such facilities or a way to raise funds, and had no plans for staffing or managing the proposed facilities. They also noted that all of Dolphin's plans involved constructing fake dioramas or

⁶⁷⁵ Carl P. Russell, Louis Schellbach, and Earl Jackson to Regional Director, 20 January 1963, GRCA 57844, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

⁶⁷⁶ Merrill Beal to Eddie McKee, 27 December 1962, GRCA 49664, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

displays of the Canyon, “all quite contrary to present ideals—ideals which place the Canyon itself as the main exhibit. The type of presentation envisioned by him falls in the same class with television and radio, the very thing which the average visitor attempts to leave behind when he visits the national park.”⁶⁷⁷

Concluding that Dolphin’s ideas were impractical and half-baked, the committee asked Beal to write a response declining his proposal. Beal used the opportunity to passionately defend the NPS’s interpretive work. He indicated his offense at Dolphin’s claim that NPS interpretation at the Park was nothing more than a guide service that pointed out the most scenic views or unusual features. He asserted that the main goal of interpretation was to help visitors gain a greater general understanding of nature and a sense of connection to the Park. Beal argued that “We are more concerned with concepts—concepts such as the inexorable processes of nature, the power of unseen forces, the tremendous span of time required to produce the Canyon that the people come to see.” Rejecting the need for Dolphin’s extravagant proposal Beal concluded that “It is true that our interpretive efforts are not on a grandiose scale. They do not employ monumental buildings, and the emphasis in the past has been on personal service to park visitors, for it is believed face to face meeting of the park visitor with representatives of his government is one of the finest things that can be

⁶⁷⁷ Carl P. Russell, Louis Schellbach, and Earl Jackson to Regional Director, 20 January 1963, GRCA 57844, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

accomplished in a National Park.”⁶⁷⁸ With this letter, Dolphin’s scheme was effectively shelved.

Interpretation Evolves in the Late Mission 66 Period

In 1959, WASO Chief of Interpretation Ronald Lee had established a Committee on Interpretive Standards to review and evaluate the situation of interpretation in the NPS. In part, this was because Lee complained that interpreters were being increasingly excluded from the mainstream NPS and were rarely given opportunities for advancement or consideration for management positions.⁶⁷⁹ The Committee produced a report on the state of interpretation in the NPS in 1962 that revealed many major issues plaguing the field. It found that there were no standards for interpretive activities in the NPS that measured the success or failure of interpretation, leading to a huge disparity among parks in the quality and methods of interpretation. Among other complaints were that museum exhibits relied on stereotypes, the quality of seasonal workers was lacking, training for interpretive staff was inadequate or completely absent, it was easy to visit large parks and never see an NPS ranger (let alone an *interpretive* ranger), and there was little monitoring of interpretation by WASO, regional officials, or

⁶⁷⁸ Merrill Beal to Vernon Dolphin, 14 December 1962, GRCA 57844, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

⁶⁷⁹ National Park Service, *The Interpretive Challenge*, 107.

superintendents. The Washington Office was highly embarrassed by this evaluation, and tried to erase all evidence of its existence.⁶⁸⁰

Despite attempts to squash the report, it did lead to some changes in the NPS, particularly in efforts to improve personal, front-line interpretation. Robert Johnson of the Division of Planning and Interpretive Services wrote that “The feeling at the time was that personally conducted interpretation had not shared in the general improvement and advances made in our audiovisual efforts, museums, and publications. On the contrary, the opinion was, and remains, that the quality of personal interpretation is slipping and is in serious need of attention.”⁶⁸¹ In 1963, Conrad Wirth issued a memo to all regional directors addressing the issues raised in the report. He ordered that each park’s interpretive program be appraised by a regional interpreter annually and a member of WASO’s interpretive staff every three years. He also directed managers to encourage their rangers to have more contact with visitors, and called for more interpretive training programs.⁶⁸²

Unfortunately, throughout the decade the Park System was expanding rapidly, and every new park unit needed funding and staffing. To compensate, the NPS often eliminated interpretive positions since they were usually not considered as crucial as other positions such as firefighting or law enforcement.

⁶⁸⁰ After Wirth distributed the report to all regional directors to read, the NPS became worried that it would be leaked to the public and be used against the agency, so he ordered all copies to be destroyed, though at least one managed to slip through the cracks and survive to the present. Mackintosh, 92.

⁶⁸¹ Quoted in Mackintosh, 93.

⁶⁸² National Park Service, *The Interpretive Challenge*, 107.

This meant, however, that the responsibility for interpretation increasingly fell to workers with little or no training.⁶⁸³ Wirth's attitude towards interpretation, therefore, seems a bit schizophrenic—trying to raise its profile with one hand, while undercutting it with the other. He did not have to worry about the issue much longer, however. Wirth resigned in early 1964, two years before Mission 66 was scheduled to end, in part because of his rocky relations with Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall. George B. Hartzog, Jr., who was trained as a lawyer, took over his place as Director of the NPS, serving in that position for nine years.⁶⁸⁴

Interpretive theories and methods began to change in the 1960s as the NPS learned from the process of creating visitor centers throughout the service as part of Mission 66. By the mid-1960s, interpreters in the museum branch in particular were starting to criticize the chronological, “book on the wall” approach to exhibits that characterized museums even from just a decade before, such as the visitor center at Grand Canyon. The head of the Division of Interpretation and Visitor Services at the time, Wayne Bryant, stated “Our first job as interpreters is to stimulate interest. We must drop our compulsion to tell the complete story through exhibits if we are to achieve a new look or, more important, if we are to improve our communication with visitors.”⁶⁸⁵

⁶⁸³ W. Eugene Cox, “Challenges for the Nineties,” *Interpretation* (Fall/Winter 1992): 2.

⁶⁸⁴ William Sontag, ed., *National Park Service: The First 75 Years* (Eastern National Park and Monument Association, 1990), 80.

⁶⁸⁵ Mackintosh, 48, 49.

In 1964 new NPS Director Hartzog appointed a Museum Study Team to evaluate the museums throughout the National Park System and provide recommendations to improve them. Hartzog envisioned a new direction for interpretation that would require close coordination among several types of media, including updated publications, creative films, and streamlined museum exhibit creation. However, some worried that this new direction emphasized style over substance—fears that many Grand Canyon rangers saw realized.⁶⁸⁶

At the Grand Canyon, this new ideology came into play when Beal worked with the Western Museum Laboratory to renovate the Tusayan museum in the early 1960s.⁶⁸⁷ Museum planner and archeologist Lee Able worked with the Park to create a plan for thirteen new exhibits. Beal recalled that, for the most part, the ideas for what to do and how to do it, plus ideas for artifacts, were all first generated in the Park, then sent to the regional level for approval. Therefore, although the NPS was exerting more influence over the process, the Grand Canyon was still interpreted using a partially bottom-up approach that drew on the knowledge and resources of those most familiar with the area. The displays themselves, however, were built by the Western Museum Laboratory or by contractors.⁶⁸⁸ Though it was yet another example of how interpretation was being

⁶⁸⁶ Mackintosh, 51.

⁶⁸⁷ “Staff Meeting Minutes, October 1960,” GRCA 49761, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

⁶⁸⁸ “Merrill Beal Oral History,” GRCA 35727, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

taken out of local hands, it also must have been a relief to the overtaxed interpretive staff.⁶⁸⁹ A review of the exhibit plan for the museum indicates that at least a little more attention was going into how Native American audiences might respond to the displays. For example, the reviewer suggested changing the wording of an exhibit label implying that Hopi religion was based on myths, stating “This could possibly offend Hopis in our local situation.”⁶⁹⁰ Unfortunately, no known surveys or evaluations exist showing how visitors or Native Americans received these exhibits at the time.

This new attention reflects changing national policies toward Native Americans in the early 1960s. Under the presidency of John F. Kennedy, the termination and relocation policy of the BIA became increasingly unpopular. Kennedy’s administration urged a return to the policies of self-determination that John Collier had originally supported. Consequently, in the 1960s the NPS became increasingly interested in establishing favorable relations with tribes near national parks and involving them in management decisions that affected tribal interests. At Grand Canyon, NPS administrators had increasingly frequent interactions with local Native Americans, with both positive and negative overtones and results. For example, the NPS at the time engaged in “vigorous

⁶⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁹⁰ This document does not indicate the author of the report, but it appears that this exhibit was conceptualized by either the regional or federal museum division, then submitted to Grand Canyon personnel for review. “Comments on Tusayan Museum Exhibit Plan,” 15 February 1961, GRCA 70901, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

suppression” of Navajo bead sellers in particular but also of other tribal entrepreneurs because they believed they were annoying or harassing tourists.⁶⁹¹ One individual dressed up in a stereotypical Plains Indian feathered headdress and made money by taking pictures with tourists, sometimes becoming violent when the tourist did not give him enough money. The NPS did not want to allow this type of misleading interpretation of Native American culture, but they also did not want to tarnish their image by causing scenes.⁶⁹²

Interpretive planners in the NPS also slowly became more sensitive to Native American issues, making changes that, though they might seem minor, symbolized a growing consciousness of the needs and wishes of local tribes. For example, a memo from Regional Director Thomas J. Allen to the GCNP Superintendent advised that efforts should be made to use the terms “Hopi” and “Navajo” instead of “Hopis” and “Navajos” in interpretive programs because that was what most individuals in the tribes preferred. Allen also warned Park interpreters that sometime ambiguity was necessary when talking about prehistoric events; for example, he advised that a roadside exhibit on Indian Country should not state that the Navajo came from New Mexico around 1700, since this discounted Navajo stories about their origins. For another marker, Allen further pointed out that interpreters should make distinctions when talking about ancient people and modern beliefs, being careful not to imply that they are

⁶⁹¹ Robert Keller and Michael Turek, *American Indians and National Parks* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1998), 149, 153.

⁶⁹² *Ibid.*, 148-149.

unchanging or the same people.⁶⁹³ Similarly, at GCNP a museum specialist preparing an exhibit on the Havasupai for the Tusayan Museum argued that it must point out that they had modern conveniences instead of implying that their canyon was untouched by contemporary life, as most NPS, private, and public tour guides had been doing for years.⁶⁹⁴

After years of struggling to keep pace with growing visitation, in 1963 GCNP administrators finally allowed the hiring of new interpretive personnel, which expanded the interpretive workforce by 30 percent.⁶⁹⁵ Beal noted that “Both quantity and quality of interpretation were improved this year...More interpretive service was available for park visitors than ever before, and for a substantially greater portion of our heavy visitor use season.”⁶⁹⁶ Beal initiated ongoing group, individual, and self-critiques of interpretive programs to encourage his staff to continue to improve their performance.⁶⁹⁷ The larger

⁶⁹³ Thomas J. Allen to Grand Canyon National Park Superintendent, 31 March 1961, Box 102 Folder D6215: Museum and Exhibit Activities: Planning, Preparation, Maintenance, and Preservation 1960-61, NARA.

⁶⁹⁴ Leland Abel to Charles Shevlin, 5 December 1960, Box 102 Folder D6215: Museum and Exhibit Activities: Planning, Preparation, Maintenance, and Preservation 1960-61, NARA.

⁶⁹⁵ Although Beal did not give specific staff numbers at the time, a 1964 report noted that the interpretive division had seven permanent and 21 seasonal employees. “Accomplishment of 1964 Objectives,” GRCA 57837, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

⁶⁹⁶ “Accomplishment of 1963 Objectives,” GRCA 57837, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

⁶⁹⁷ “Accomplishment of 1964 Objectives,” GRCA 57837, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

workforce allowed the division to expand the number of programs they offered, and freed personnel to cooperate in training programs for the GCNHA and concessionaires and provide instructors to the Albright Training Center.⁶⁹⁸ It also allowed the Interpretive Division to set more substantial goals for the future. For example, in 1964 they began making plans to revise Yavapai Observation Station exhibits in 1966 and those in the visitor center the following year. They prepared a museum prospectus for a North Rim Visitor Center they hoped would be constructed in 1967, and began work on an exhibit plan for it.⁶⁹⁹ Still, a management appraisal that year found the interpretive program at the Park “slowly slipping behind the great increase of visitors.”⁷⁰⁰

Also in 1964 the Park administration began working on another Master Plan. Many of its objectives were related to interpretation. For example, one of the major goals listed in the plan was “To communicate the cultural, inspirational and recreational significance of the American heritage as represented in the National Park System.” This objective could only be filled by achieving “the highest quality of interpretive services through adherence to approved standards and guidelines, by systematic and critical appraisal and with programs planned

⁶⁹⁸ “Accomplishment of 1963 Objectives,” GRCA 57837, Grand Canyon Museum Collections; “Division of Interpretation Program at Grand Canyon National Park,” May 1964, GRCA 57834, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

⁶⁹⁹ “Accomplishment of 1964 Objectives,” GRCA 57837, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

⁷⁰⁰ “Management Appraisals,” December 1962-March 1970, GRCA 61481, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

and directed by full-time professional interpreters.”⁷⁰¹ The main theme of this interpretation was still supposed to be “the Grand Canyon as a natural textbook to illustrate an unrivalled geological story,” but it also emphasized that staff should “treat the prehistory and history of the Grand Canyon Region as important supplements to the basic natural history emphasis of the park.”⁷⁰² The plan also called for more information on Southwestern Indian culture and early history to be incorporated into programs, publications, and special exhibits, as well as the sale of authentic arts and crafts by concessionaires.⁷⁰³ In relation to this, Beal particularly emphasized the need to work to improve the training of NPS employees and concessionaires to “point out the obligation of the employee toward giving correct information to the visitor and maintaining proper attitudes at all times.”⁷⁰⁴

Continuing problems balanced the accomplishments of Mission 66 at GCNP. As Schellbach and others had predicted, the construction of a new visitor center at the Canyon under Mission 66 did not solve the needs of the interpretive division. The division was still in desperate need of office space and a room for a library and study collection, yet they still had to fight off an effort by

⁷⁰¹ “Grand Canyon National Park Master Plan, 1964,” GRCA 50704, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

⁷⁰² *Ibid.*

⁷⁰³ “Interpretive Planning Handbook: Preliminary Draft Interpretive Planning Handbook,” GRCA 55274, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

⁷⁰⁴ “Objectives for 1965 Fiscal Year: Division of Interpretation and Visitor Services,” GRCA 57837, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

Superintendent Stricklin to convert the entire building to administrative use. In the meantime, despite the planning and expense that had gone into preparing the exhibit space at the visitor center, the regional office proposed a plan to build a new visitor center at Yavapai Point and move all the exhibits there.⁷⁰⁵ Another area in critical need of attention was the 120 roadside and trailside exhibits, many of which had originally been placed in the 1930s and were long overdue for updating and repairs.⁷⁰⁶ These signs were quickly falling victim to increasing numbers of vandals, who would scatter trail guides and break display cases.⁷⁰⁷

Despite these concerns, the Grand Canyon continued to be recognized for its contributions to interpretation in the NPS in the 1960s. The interpretive services at the Park so impressed visitors that they sometimes even wrote to the director of the NPS to express their appreciation. For example, Weaver W. Pangburn, wrote that he had been on a tour of many National Parks in the West, and all had good interpretive services, but he wanted to praise Merrill Beal in particular “who gave an outstanding talk...on the Grand Canyon at the Yavapai Museum yesterday. He is extremely well informed and is an effective speaker.

⁷⁰⁵ Daniel Bear to Director of the NPS, 1964, GRCA 65072, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

⁷⁰⁶ “Interpretation Plan, 1961,” GRCA 28819, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

⁷⁰⁷ “October 1966 Staff Meeting Minutes,” GRCA 49767, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

His large audience was much impressed.”⁷⁰⁸ Of course, there were always others who wrote in with complaints as well, which ranged from disappointment that the Yavapai talk did not mention enough about God’s role in creating the Canyon, or that the interpreter gave incorrect facts about Navajo dyes, or the campfire lectures were too elementary.⁷⁰⁹ In 1963, the Grand Canyon Division of Interpretation received the NPS Unit Citation for Excellence of Service for outstanding interpretive achievements.⁷¹⁰ Beal personally received a “Superior Service Award” from the NPS in both 1964 and 1965 “for the educational and interpretive program established at Grand Canyon.”⁷¹¹

Summary

Though the Grand Canyon was on the cutting edge of providing interpretive services at the beginning of Mission 66, the cutting edge did not provide the foundation for a solid, long-lasting interpretive program. The construction of the new visitor center and its exhibits helped the interpretive staff better handle the flood of visitors at the park, but the Park’s need for more administrative space put their use of the building under threat almost immediately. Also, despite WASO sending professional teams to plan and design these

⁷⁰⁸ Weaver W. Pangburn to Conrad Wirth, 14 April 1961, GRCA 61482, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

⁷⁰⁹ Various letters, GRCA 61485, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

⁷¹⁰ Elmer N. Fladmark, “Press Release No. 35,” 23 November 1965, GRCA 61482, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

⁷¹¹ Newspaper clipping, *Idaho State Journal*, “‘Who’s Who’ for 66 lists Dr. Beal, Son,” 8 May 1966, GRCA 49664, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

exhibits, many of them did not work properly and had questionable content. Furthermore, despite the heavy spending on visitor centers and other construction projects, Congress did not provide funding to go towards hiring much-needed interpretive staff, at least in the early years of Mission 66.

Despite these obstacles, Paul Schulz and Merrill Beal led the interpretive staff in trying to keep pace with changing demands and continued to strive towards high standards of interpretation. Beal in particular worked towards creating more of a balance between natural and cultural interpretation at the Park. Native Americans and private citizens offered their own ideas on how this could be achieved, but the NPS still did not always give their viewpoints high priority. As the Mission 66 program drew to a close in 1966, the future direction of interpretation in the NPS and at Grand Canyon was unclear. Funding was in doubt, the NPS had not come up with a long-term plan to replace that of Mission 66, and new social movements were on the cusp of breaking through the national consciousness in ways that would have significant effects on NPS management and interpretation. Unfortunately, rather than building on the momentum of Mission 66, the quality and reputation of interpretation at the Grand Canyon began to slip, as the next chapter will show.

CHAPTER 8

WINDS OF CHANGE: THE LATE 1960s AND 1970s

At the end of the 1960s, the management structure of Grand Canyon National Park changed. Rather than treating the Park as a complete unit, the NPS divided it into geographical units each with its own staff. This fragmented interpretation efforts at the Park despite efforts under Mission 66 to create a unified, harmonious interpretive program. In the mid 1960s, the federal government ordered that all government jobs be reclassified as it reformed civil service standards; this purposely de-professionalized many positions, including those of NPS rangers, and made it hard to attract and retain well-qualified and dedicated interpreters. Funding all of the interpretive programs and projects necessary to keep up with the increasing numbers of visitors still flocking to national parks became a major problem. Although the agency's size and budgets did not shrink to pre-Mission 66 levels after the program ended, they did not expand rapidly enough either. As Ethan Carr pointed out, total funding per National Park System unit (in 1990 dollars) was approximately \$410,000 in 1949; by 1966 it was \$2 million per unit; by 1973 it was \$2.2 million per unit, and by 1995 it was \$2.9 million per unit. While these may seem like significant figures, visitor numbers were even more staggering: although Wirth in his initial proposal to Eisenhower and his Cabinet estimated that by 1966 the NPS would see 80

million visitors a year, in 1966 they actually saw over 124 million; in 1995 parks welcomed approximately 270 million visitors.⁷¹²

The interpretive messages that the NPS and GCNP told shifted a bit in this period following Mission 66. Native Americans continued their struggle to gain more control over the lands that had once been theirs, and more say in how their history and beliefs were presented to the public. Individuals with ideas for interpretive facilities or new methods of interpretation began to regain the ear of NPS staff in ways not seen since the turn of the century. As social reform movements such as the civil rights movement grew, the NPS developed new messages that they believed would appeal to changing public values and interests. In particular, as the environmental movement grew and environmental consciousness bloomed among the public, the NPS responded with a new emphasis on environmental education at the parks. However, more and more members of the public were beginning to envision and enjoy national parks more for their recreational value rather than their educational opportunities. Interpretive personnel therefore continued to experiment with new forms of interpretation combining education with entertainment.

⁷¹² Ralph H. Lewis, *Museum Curatorship in the National Park Service, 1904-1982* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Interior, NPS, Curatorial Services Division, 1993), 185, 189; Ethan Carr, *Mission 66: Modernism and the National Park Dilemma* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2007), 335. Carr also notes that in the 10 years of Mission 66, total authorized NPS staffing rose from 8,061 to 13,314—a significant increase, but hardly enough to keep up with visitation numbers.

Readjusting after Mission 66

Even after Mission 66 ended, the Washington Office (WASO) indicated that it was still committed to having a strong system-wide interpretive program. In 1967 Director Hartzog reiterated in the forward to the 2nd edition of Freeman Tilden's *Interpreting Our Heritage* that "We consider interpretation to be one of the most important single activities of the National Park Service."⁷¹³ Hartzog initiated three principle changes to NPS interpretation: he believed that effective communication should replace expert knowledge of subject matter as the prime requisite of interpreters, he believed that the NPS should increase investments in audiovisual materials to supplement personal interpretive contact, and he ordered that museum work be divided up into two branches of development and maintenance/operations.⁷¹⁴ These initiatives ultimately contributed to a decline in standards and the professional status of interpretation during the Hartzog years that would be difficult to reverse.

Under Hartzog, the NPS also experimented with different organizational structures meant to help improve management of parks, with mixed results for management as well as interpretation. For example, WASO developed a management scheme that divided NPS units into three categories: natural,

⁷¹³ Freeman Tilden, *Interpreting our Heritage*, 3rd ed. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1977), xiii. Hartzog, who had taken over as Director of the NPS in 1964, served in that role until President Nixon dismissed him at the end of 1972. "Directors of the National Park Service," NPS History E-Library. Available online: <http://www.nps.gov/history/history/hisnps/NPSHistory/directors.htm>. Accessed 19 October 2010.

⁷¹⁴ Lewis, *Museum Curatorship*, 163.

recreational, and historical. Each area was supposed to have its own management system, principles, uses, and programs. However, problems quickly arose because it was nearly impossible to neatly categorize units, so WASO backtracked and relinquished power to local managers to decide the appropriate management and interpretation policies for their individual unit. As administrators soon realized, “Nearly every unit of the National Park System is a mixture of natural, recreation, and historical features. It is the responsibility of the professional park manager to know and understand these complex interrelationships.” The NPS abandoned these management categories in the mid-1970s.⁷¹⁵

Just before the end of Mission 66, William C. Everhart took over as the new head of the Interpretation Division, and attempted to reinstate the position to the level of prestige it held under Ronald Lee in the 1950s. Everhart shared the basic NPS philosophy that interpretation was supposed to stimulate visitor interest, understanding, and appreciation for sites, but in a reversal from earlier interpretive leaders, he indicated that controversy was a necessary element in interpretation, as were revisionism and new ideas.⁷¹⁶ This stance signaled a willingness in the NPS, though it is impossible to tell how widespread it was, to acknowledge the cultural upheavals that were taking place in American culture at the time and address them in NPS interpretation.

⁷¹⁵ *Parks Etc.: Park Designations and How the Sites are Managed* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1986).

⁷¹⁶ William C. Everhart to Interpretive Planners, 19 April 1965, GRCA 55274, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

Under Hartzog and Everhart, WASO continued to issue publications and manuals to help interpreters throughout the system stay up-to-date in their interpretive practices. In spring of 1967 WASO's Division of Interpretation and Visitor Services started an *Interpreters' Newsletter* that was published monthly until 1970, when it ended due to a cutback in NPS publications. The Interpretive Division hoped the newsletter would connect interpreters throughout the system so they could share ideas and learn about new techniques.⁷¹⁷ The Washington Office, realizing that individual sites often did not have the time or opportunity to adequately train their staff, also tried to help improve local interpretation by publishing training brochures. For instance, in 1968 they issued pamphlets on topics such as how to deal with various types of troublesome visitors, how to leave a positive impression of the NPS, how to conduct campfire programs, and how to organize and give various types of talks. These brochures also indicate a growing awareness of their competition for audience's attention; as a publication on campfire programs points out, "Through TV your public is massaged almost daily with superb photographs and graphic technique. No longer can you get by with a pedestrian discussion and a set of 'pretty good' slides." However, what the NPS interpreter could offer that television or Walt Disney could not was live

⁷¹⁷ This journal was revived from 1974 to 1981 but was only published intermittently because it had difficulty getting article contributions. Barry Mackintosh, *Interpretation in the National Park Service: A Historical Perspective* (Washington, D.C.: History Division, NPS, Department of the Interior, 1986), 88.

interpreters who could interact with their audience and help visitors form a personal connection with the landscape or site.⁷¹⁸

At the Grand Canyon, Merrill Beal worked to expand interpretation following Mission 66 and the completion of the museum cataloging project that had taken up so much of his staff's time. After years of neglect and uncertainty about the direction or purpose of interpretation on the North Rim, Beal finally took definitive action in this area. He created an interpretive plan specifically for that side of the Canyon that balanced themes of geology, ecology, and history.⁷¹⁹ By 1967 the North Rim began offering campfire programs in the summer, talks at the Grand Canyon Lodge and Cape Royal, and self-guiding trails and nature walks. Beal also ensured that naturalists assigned to the North Rim cooperated with the Utah Parks Company to conduct training in interpretation for their seasonal employees, which seems to be the first time the NPS got involved in improving concessionaire interpretation on the North Rim.⁷²⁰

One area that was neglected, likely due to the uncertainties of its future and lack of funding marked by the end of Mission 66, was the South Rim Visitor

⁷¹⁸ These brochures, apparently for the first time, refer to rangers of both genders. John W. Hanna, comp., *Interpretive Skills for Environmental Communicators*, 2nd ed. (College Station: Department of Recreation and Parks, Texas A&M University, 1974), 90.

⁷¹⁹ "Objectives for 1965 Fiscal Year: Division of Interpretation and Visitor Services," GRCA 57837, Grand Canyon Museum Collections. Unfortunately these plans were not implemented, and even today there is no separate visitor center facility on the North Rim.

⁷²⁰ "Interpretation—Planning—North Rim," GRCA 65060, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

Center. In 1966, Superintendent Howard Stricklin complained that the 49 exhibits, panels, display cases and dioramas in the visitor center, most of which had been installed when the center opened nearly ten years before, were an embarrassment to the Park. According to him, most of these were showing signs of extreme wear, and several had obsolete terminology or outdated facts (though he did not give specific examples).⁷²¹ Almost ten years later, in 1975, Louise Hinchliffe reported that the visitor center exhibits and dioramas installed in the mid-1950s had still not significantly changed.⁷²²

In contrast, the NPS seemed to focus a great deal of attention, both negative and positive, on Yavapai Observation Station. At the national and local level, some NPS personnel called for drastic changes to the site; in fact, there was growing pressure to either demolish it or to completely rebuild it in the '60s and '70s. Some thought that with the new visitor center and its geology exhibits, the station no longer had a purpose and was a blemish on the landscape. NPS Director Hartzog in 1966 indicated that there was unanimous agreement within the NPS that the Yavapai Observation Station should be demolished, with a new, larger building with more space for exhibits, lectures, and other interpretive activities built on the same site.⁷²³ In 1968, GCNP Acting Superintendent Robert Bendt

⁷²¹ Howard Stricklin to Regional Director, Southwest Region, 8 July 1966, GRCA 64672, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

⁷²² Louise Hinchliffe to Jennifer Zobelein, 4 August 1975, GRCA 65072, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

⁷²³ George B. Hartzog, Jr., to Edward B. Danson, 3 August 1966, GRCA 57834, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

wrote a construction proposal that urged a new interpretive facility replace the station since he felt that Yavapai Observation Station had been inadequate for over 20 years.⁷²⁴ These plans all came to naught, yet the small Yavapai Observation Station remained one of the keys to interpretation at the Park.

In spite of these threats, the GCNP interpretive staff worked steadily to improve the site. As a management report from 1967 stated, “Justification for revamping Yavapai is not needed here—it is well known and uniformly agreed upon.”⁷²⁵ Proposals to expand the interpretive program there included creating a motion picture with animation and a professional script that could be translated into French, German, Spanish, and Japanese. The staff even considered building a display in which visitors could walk through a tunnel that would take them through the different layers of rock (an idea that seems to have been influenced by Vernon Dolphin’s proposal mentioned in the previous chapter). If the exhibits were expanded as proposed at Yavapai, the staff felt they could easily remove all geology interpretation from the visitor center except for one or two dioramas, which would free up more room for administrative offices.⁷²⁶

⁷²⁴ Robert Bendt, “Project Construction Proposal,” 1 April 1968, GRCA 65073, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

⁷²⁵ “Management Appraisal, 1967,” GRCA 61481, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

⁷²⁶ “Summary of Interpretive Planning Conference for Yavapai, Grand Canyon,” 18 December 1967, GRCA 65073, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

Despite the failure of previous attempts to bring the concessionaire-owned Desert View Watchtower under the auspices of the GCNP interpretive staff, proposals to do just that continued after Mission 66. In 1967, some NPS regional and national personnel again brought forth a proposal to acquire the Watchtower and convert it into an NPS visitor center. However, many interpretive staff at GCNP and at the regional office again opposed this idea, partly going back to the reasons McKee and other early interpreters despised it. In one particularly vehement objection, Robert L. Farrel of the NPS Southwestern Regional Office said:

I gag. I retch. I writhe on the floor in agony. The Desert Watchtower is totally unsuited to function as an interpretive facility for any interpretation we propose at Desert View. In fact, it is totally unsuited to exist at all in my opinion. It is a ghastly excrescence on the rim of the canyon...the damn thing was built to look like an Indian ruin, thereby attempting to foster a totally false impression of Indian architecture and use of that part of the South Rim. It should be dynamited, and as soon as possible.⁷²⁷

As they had always done in the past, the NPS did not follow through on this idea, and the Watchtower today remains in concessionaire ownership.

Unfortunately, according to a management appraisal of the interpretive program, interpretive services at GCNP were in decline toward the end of the 1960s. The appraisal applauded the Canyon's interpretive mission, stating that "Grand Canyon has an interpretive program that is far-sighted, is ably administered, is of generally high quality, and has no serious deficiencies other

⁷²⁷ Robert L. Farrel to Volney Wesley, 7 November 1967, GRCA 57834, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

than restrictions imposed by lack of adequate funding and personnel ceilings.”⁷²⁸ However, these deficiencies were starting to take their toll. In a previous appraisal from 1964, the author warned that care should be taken to maintain the momentum of the program, but the 1967 appraisal stated “momentum has been lost. The interpretive program has not developed. The enhancement of interpretation and services to the visitor has lagged behind increasing travel to the park.”⁷²⁹ Though visitation was steadily increasing, the number of interpretive staff stayed the same, and funding for interpretation steadily decreased as a proportion of the Park’s budget. For example, in 1965, there were 21 seasonal positions, a number that did not change over the next few years despite an almost 30% increase in visitation by the end of the decade. Furthermore, in 1958 (during Mission 66), the annual appropriation for the interpretive division was 25% of the Park’s budget, while in 1967 it was just 19.38%.⁷³⁰

The report argued that interpretation was extremely important because it is the “front line of public contact” and the public had started to notice the lack of support for interpretation in the form of lower morale and fewer services. Although GCNP administrators expressed an interest in enhancing the interpretive program, the report speculated that because the division ran smoothly and effectively, its needs were not as immediately noticeable as others, though just as

⁷²⁸ “Management Appraisal, 1967,” GRCA 61481, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

⁷²⁹ Ibid. Underlining in original.

⁷³⁰ Ibid.

important. As the report lamented, “interpretation rarely raises emergencies. So its needs are recognized, but never rise high enough on the priority list to reach the level for which there is enough money. The needs appear, year after year, but never reach the top.”⁷³¹ It noted that activities not directly related to interpretive programming, such as master planning and public relations, increasingly took up the Chief Naturalist’s time, and recommended reinstating the Assistant Chief Park Naturalist position which was previously eliminated.⁷³² Unfortunately, it becomes hard to track the specific development of the GCNP interpretive division after 1967, since WASO ordered all Superintendent’s Annual Reports discontinued until 1974, so it is unclear what steps if any the management took to address these issues.

Public Interpretive Proposals Fail to Gain Ground

Both private and public enterprises continued to suggest new ideas for interpretive opportunities at the Grand Canyon. Some of these had the germs of feasibility, while others were clearly wishful thinking. Although the NPS considered some of these ideas at least somewhat seriously, none ended up significantly altering interpretation at the Canyon, yet they show the public’s continuing interest in park interpretation, and the NPS’s willingness to hear their voices.

⁷³¹ Ibid.

⁷³² Ibid. Underlining in original.

As the popularity of nuclear energy declined in the 1960s, a company owning a uranium mine that had been operating in the Park since 1956 started looking for other ways to make money from its land. One of its proposals involved converting an old mine shaft into a high-speed elevator which tourists could enter at the rim and exit midway down the Canyon walls. Superintendent Robert Lovegren recalled that the NPS was interested in this proposal because it would not damage Park features much more than mining at the site already had, and would provide rangers with an easier way to interpret the inner canyon to visitors. However, because traveling through and around the mine potentially exposed visitors to radiation poisoning, the NPS nixed the plan.⁷³³

The same mining company also proposed to build a luxury hotel that would cascade over the South Rim “like a waterfall.” According to Michael Anderson, an artists’ conception of the hotel showed a monstrous white space-age structure that looks like an upside down skyscraper with 16 stair-stepped floors hugging the side of the Canyon. The company argued that this would allow visitors to have more of an inner canyon experience (though they would only be staying at most 100 feet below the rim, which was not far into the mile-deep Canyon) and for the NPS to expand their interpretation by giving programs there as they did at El Tovar and Bright Angel Lodge. The NPS was rather horrified

⁷³³ “Robert Lovegren Oral History,” GRCA 58395, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

with this plan because of its intrusiveness on the landscape, and quickly denied permission.⁷³⁴

Instead of giving up, the company simply approached the Havasupai with their idea. As Superintendent Robert Lovegren recalled, it appeared that the tribe was going to approve its construction on their reservation, but in the end talks with them also fell through. A plan for a proposed tramway to Supai met a similar fate. Lovegren stated that the NPS took a more active role in trying to halt that plan by dealing with the tribal leadership. Lovegren recalled that, “What we thought they wanted was the lifestyle they had there with a limited tourist business. This would have just flooded that little village with folks and it would have just destroyed—in our view—the lifestyle that we thought they wanted.” In this instance, the NPS and Havasupai seemed to be on the same page. Though many Havasupai showed interest in the plan, the tribe rejected it in the end out of concerns about mobs of tourists invading their canyon.⁷³⁵

Overall, private companies and individuals had the most impact on interpretation during this time in the area of river running. People traveling on the river obviously viewed the Grand Canyon from a very different perspective than those along the rim, and had access to very different natural and cultural features. River runner guides came up with their own interpretive stories about the Canyon,

⁷³⁴ Michael Anderson, *Along the Rim: A Guide to Grand Canyon's South Rim From Hermit's Rest to Desert View* (Grand Canyon: Grand Canyon Association, 2001), 41.

⁷³⁵ “Robert Lovegren Oral History,” GRCA 58395, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

and later began creating their own interpretive manuals to help explain features to their guests, often with little input or oversight from the NPS.

From a survey of these manuals, it seems that river guides were much more intent on telling the human story of the Canyon, perhaps because people on the river are surrounded by the Canyon and therefore feel a much closer physical connection to it, or maybe because they see themselves as following in the footsteps of historical figures such as John Wesley Powell. In Kim Crumbo's book *A River Runner's Guide to the History of the Grand Canyon* he argues that it is simply easier to focus on the human story of cabin ruins, foot paths, old boats, and ancient Native American artifacts because the natural story is too overwhelming to comprehend. From the river, the human history of the Canyon can be told mile by mile, making it easier to tie specific events to specific places.⁷³⁶ This allows a much different perspective on the Canyon than interpretation from the rim does, but even today it is largely left to concessionaires to provide it. The NPS regulates river trips, but does not operate any of their own, so their interpretation for river runners is limited mostly to self-guided walking tours at various points of significance.

Social Movements Impact NPS Interpretation

The social movements and cultural changes sweeping through American life in the 1960s and 1970s had a significant effect on interpretation throughout the NPS. As the public became more aware of issues affecting different groups of

⁷³⁶ Kim Crumbo, *A River Runner's Guide to the History of the Grand Canyon* (Boulder: Johnson Books, 1981), 23.

people through various civil rights or social consciousness movements, the NPS worked to change their message to address these issues. Unfortunately, this was occurring at the same time as the NPS interpretive workforce was becoming increasingly de-professionalized. Although in the 1960s and 1970s universities developed academic programs for people interested in interpretive careers, the NPS no longer recruited the top students in these areas because of the changing governmental job classifications. Interpretive jobs no longer required expertise in any subject area, and required nothing more than a high school degree. At the same time, budgetary and time constraints meant that they would likely receive little training by the NPS.⁷³⁷

The American Indian Movement and the environmental movement were the two social movements of the 1960s and 1970s with the most impact on interpretation at Grand Canyon National Park. In some ways each movement had specific implications and effects, but in others these two movements overlapped in terms of their affects on NPS interpretation. For example, in 1969 the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) called for more openness and citizen participation in decision making about public lands and resources. This provided an opening for Native American tribes to voice their opinions on issues involving

⁷³⁷ National Parks and Conservation Association, *Interpretation: Key to the Park Experience* (Washington, DC: National Parks and Conservation Association, 1988), 15. For a more in-depth discussion of how the “New Social History” has and has not been applied to cultural institutions, see Richard Handler and Eric Gable, *The New History in an Old Museum: Creating the Past at Colonial Williamsburg* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997).

national parks just as the Native American population was developing a national voice of protest with AIM.⁷³⁸

American Indian Movement

Barry Mackintosh reveals that during the 1960s and 1970s, the various civil rights movements had a great impact on interpretation in the NPS, because they signaled growing calls to make interpretation more relevant to the public. “One manifestation of the drive for relevance,” argued Mackintosh, “was increased attention to racial and ethnic minorities. Parks reflecting the black, Hispanic, and Indian heritage were highlighted to show the Service’s interest in serving these groups.”⁷³⁹ However, this also caused controversy. American opinions about the civil rights movements varied dramatically. Some saw the new emphasis on cultural diversity in national park interpretation as little more than political accommodation and thought the parks were too eager to jump on the racial harmony bandwagon. Some minorities believed that these changes were too little too late, an attempt to atone for and smooth over past mistakes and purge Euro American guilt from public memory.⁷⁴⁰ The civil rights movement that had the most significance for interpretation at Grand Canyon National Park was the American Indian Movement (AIM), and its effects were similarly controversial.

⁷³⁸ Barbara J. Morehouse, *A Place Called Grand Canyon: Contested Geographies* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1996), 87.

⁷³⁹ Mackintosh, 79.

⁷⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

A resurgence of support for Native American self-determination that began under the Kennedy administration led Congress to pass many acts meant to help Native American tribes in the 1960s and 1970s, particularly the Indian Civil Rights Act in 1968 that recognized Native American tribes as dependent sovereign nations. Native American efforts to gain more control over their land and lives grew stronger at this time, as tribes grew more confident in expressing their opinions and fighting for their rights. In the mid-1970s several events influenced the NPS to cultivate closer relationships with Native American groups, such as planning for the bicentennial celebrations, issues over the establishment of new national parks in Alaska, a push for greater public involvement in park planning, and the American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978.

The NPS, which had commonly adopted a paternalistic or dismissive attitude toward Native Americans, sought to improve relations with tribes while still maintaining control over the historical narratives told at the parks. Even outside the parks on nearby Indian reservation lands the NPS often sought to assert its influence when tribes proposed schemes that did not mesh with NPS goals. After years of distrust and neglect on both sides, at Grand Canyon the relationship between the NPS and surrounding tribes was understandably fragile. However, the NPS realized that it had little choice but to develop these relationships, especially because popular articles regularly appeared in magazines and journals informing the public about the Native American connection to the

Grand Canyon, piquing tourists' interest in surrounding tribes.⁷⁴¹ Interactions between the NPS and the tribes took many forms in this period, from the NPS assisting tribes in developing their own tourism enterprises to incorporating more Native American themes and voices in park programs. However, the NPS's traditional desire to exert control or influence over the tribes did not immediately come to an end.

With tourism such an important economic factor in the Grand Canyon region, it is not surprising that local tribes often focused their growing movement toward self-determination on tribal tourism enterprises. In the mid-1960s, GCNP personnel and the NPS Southwest Regional Office began meeting with members of the Navajo Nation to assist them in developing their own tribal parks by visiting and exchanging ideas on infrastructural and interpretive planning.⁷⁴² The NPS also reached out to the Hualapai, offering to train members of the tribe in interpretation and management issues with Grand Canyon river runners so that they could try to develop their own corporate or tribal river running enterprise. Today the tribe has a successful river running business, and its employees train with other Grand Canyon river guides.⁷⁴³

⁷⁴¹ John R. Winslowe, "Ancient Salt Trails," Fred Harvey Company Collection, Cline Library, NAU.

⁷⁴² Irving Handlin, "Report," November 1966, Box 9 Folder A3815: Public Relations 1966-68, NARA.

⁷⁴³ "Robert Lovegren Oral History," GRCA 58395, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

Havasupai efforts to take control of tourism and interpretation within their reservation that began in the 1950s (and discussed in previous chapters) grew stronger during the 1960s and 1970s. However, the transition to more tribally-controlled tourism in Havasu Canyon was not always smooth. Although the NPS tried to assist the tribe in their efforts, their long history of troubled interactions with the Havasupai over the years had led the tribe to develop a persistent distrust of the agency. As Robert Keller and Michael Turek state, “Without a doubt, the National Park Service could have turned Havasu Canyon into a cleaner, safer, and better ‘interpreted’ place. And, without a doubt, if that had happened, it would no longer be an Indian community or homeland for its people.”⁷⁴⁴ Martin Goodfriend, who had closely observed conditions on the reservation, even accused the BIA of trying to preserve it “in its primitive condition as a sort of living museum, for the amusement of the nation.”⁷⁴⁵ The Havasupai were not about to let this happen, and their resistance and endurance helped instigate growing efforts at cooperation and communication between Native American tribes and the NPS at the Grand Canyon.

In this time period adventurous tourists expressed a growing interest in Havasu Canyon, which led to the Forest Service, NPS, and BIA improving trails

⁷⁴⁴ Robert Keller and Michael Turek, *American Indians and National Parks* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1998), 184.

⁷⁴⁵ Dan Deder, series of articles appearing in the *Arizona Republic*: “How Lucky They Are; But is it Really So?” 1 October 1967, “Slow Starvation Diet Order of Day for the So-Called Paradise-Supai,” 2 October 1967, “Future Isn’t Hopeless for Outpost of Supai.” 3 October 1967, William Bass Collection, Cline Library, NAU.

and campgrounds in the area. Even though it legally had no control over national forests and Indian reservation lands, the NPS still maintained a presence in the tourism industry there. They ran a campground in Havasu Canyon that had been built overlying the place the tribe had traditionally cremated their dead.⁷⁴⁶ They also actively advertised trips to the canyon, though they were careful to mention that all visitors must make reservations in advance by contacting the Tourist Manager of the Havasupai Tourist Enterprise in Supai.⁷⁴⁷ At this time, some tribal members were already making money by providing pack animals, lodging, guide services, and food. In the 1960s the tribal council wrote and designed a tourist brochure to promote their land. The Department of the Interior had given them a \$10,000 grant to promote tourism to their canyon, most of which went to constructing a modern tourist lodge.⁷⁴⁸

Still, the Havasupai had little training in how to run their own tourist business, and faced many problems in making it successful. Hikers often avoided paying fees and accommodations were often overcrowded and unpleasant. An article written by Wallace Stegner published in 1969 describing a trip into Havasu

⁷⁴⁶ “Robert Lovegren Oral History,” GRCA 58395, Grand Canyon Museum Collections; “Grand Canyon National Park, Arizona, 1966,” GRCA 59658, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

⁷⁴⁷ “Visiting the Havasupai Indians,” Robert C Euler Collection, Cline Library, NAU.

⁷⁴⁸ Dan Dederer, series of articles appearing in the *Arizona Republic*: “How Lucky They Are; But is it Really So?” 1 October 1967, “Slow Starvation Diet Order of Day for the So-Called Paradise-Supai,” 2 October 1967, “Future Isn’t Hopeless for Outpost of Supai.” 3 October 1967, William Bass Collection, Cline Library, NAU.

Canyon reveals that tourism services provided by the tribe were sometimes less than satisfactory to Euro-American tastes. Stegner noted that his Havasupai guide did not say much on the way down the trail to the canyon and gave little cultural information about the landscape.⁷⁴⁹ The tribe did not have enough money to wage an advertising campaign comparable to other commercial enterprises in the area. Furthermore, tribal packers sometimes refused to pick up tourists from the Hilltop, and their tourism office staff was undermanned, overworked, and underpaid.⁷⁵⁰

The Havasupai fight for self-determination came to a head when NPS administrators began working on a new Master Plan for Grand Canyon National Park in 1971. The draft plan described efforts being made to work with five local tribes on “planning and technical assistance in connection with their recreational use of reservation lands.”⁷⁵¹ In particular, Havasupai tribal members and supporters had been calling for the NPS to help train Havasupai at the Albright Training Center and give them preference in recruiting for Grand Canyon National Park job openings.⁷⁵² The plan offered to assist the Havasupai (though

⁷⁴⁹ Bruce Babbitt, comp, *Grand Canyon: An Anthology* (Flagstaff: Northland Press, 1978), 114-115.

⁷⁵⁰ Martin Goodfriend, “Observations at Havasupai Reservation, June 2-13, 1967,” GRCA 32096, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

⁷⁵¹ “Master Plan: Grand Canyon National Park, Arizona. Preliminary Working Draft: Final Draft, August 1971,” Arizona Historical Foundation, ASU.

⁷⁵² Henry F. Dobyns and Robert C. Euler, *The Havasupai People* (Phoenix: Indian Tribal Series, 1971), 66.

not any of the other tribes) with developing recreational and tourism activities and agreed to provide this training and hiring preference.⁷⁵³ However, these superficial concessions did not mask deep flaws this plan revealed in terms of the NPS-Native American relationship. The Havasupai were outraged that their reservation was not shown on the Grand Canyon National Park map, implying to the tribe that despite their overtures about returning lands to the tribe, the NPS thought of the reservation as part of the Park. They immediately met with Park Superintendent Lovegren to discuss the issue, and the Tribal Council produced their own master plan for Grand Canyon Village in protest, which the NPS (not surprisingly) did not accept. Ultimately the NPS did not implement their draft 1971 master plan but continued to tinker with it over the next several years, with significant results for the NPS and Havasupai, as will be discussed later in the chapter.⁷⁵⁴

In the midst of these struggles, NPS interpretation broadened to incorporate more Native American information in more creative ways. Between 1955 and 1975, many proposed interpretive devices included proposals for wayside exhibits with Native American themes. For example, the NPS erected an exhibit near Hopi House that discussed the significance of Indian dances and

⁷⁵³ “Master Plan: Grand Canyon National Park, Arizona. Preliminary Working Draft: Final Draft, August 1971,” Arizona Historical Foundation, ASU.

⁷⁵⁴ Stephen Hirst, *I Am the Grand Canyon: The Story of the Havasupai People* (Grand Canyon: Grand Canyon Association, 2007), 204.

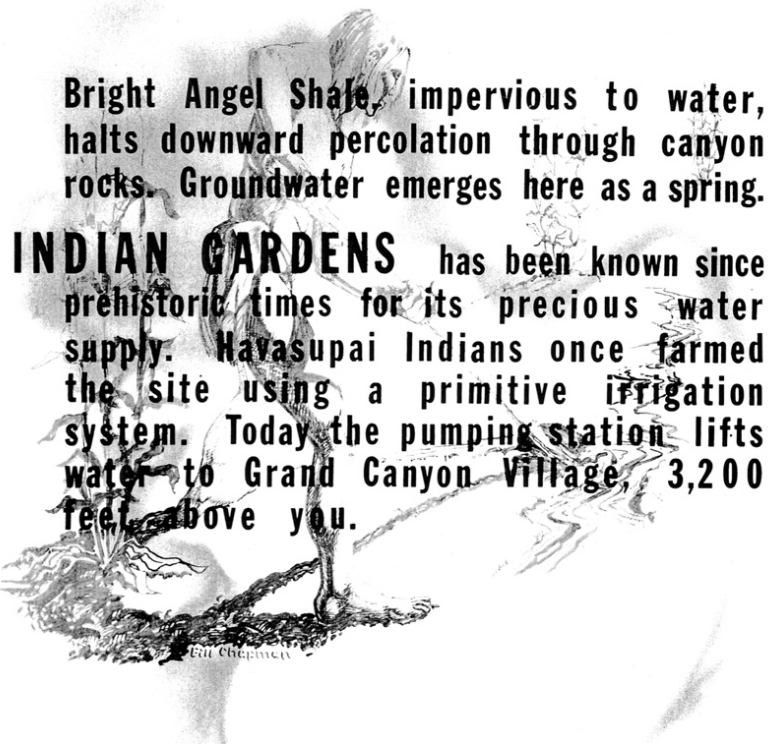


Fig. 7. This inner canyon sign that Merrill Beal had installed at Indian Gardens illustrates the NPS's growing interest in combining cultural and natural history interpretation. GRCA 57669, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

ceremonies held there.⁷⁵⁵ In 1968, Merrill Beal experimented with planting gardens at former Native American garden sites to provide a sort of “living history” demonstration area, but the crop was not satisfactory so they did not try it again.⁷⁵⁶ Kathy Williams, who worked at the North Rim in the 1970s, developed a

⁷⁵⁵ Park Naturalist McHenry to Chief Park Naturalist, GRCA 70904, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

⁷⁵⁶ “Staff Meeting Minutes, June 1968,” GRCA 49769, Grand Canyon Museum Collections. It is unclear whether this was done at Indian Gardens, Tusayan Ruins, or some other site. Beal seems to have missed the irony that he was expecting a substantial and attractive crop in an environment that was largely inhospitable to farming.

star walk program in which tourists walked along the rim at night to view the constellations, and specifically gathered Indian legends about the stars to share with these visitors.⁷⁵⁷

Unfortunately, though Park officials were looking for new ways to incorporate Native American history into their interpretation, they apparently did so with little input from the tribes themselves. In 1972, former tribal chairman Lee Marshall accused the NPS of developing a master plan for GCNP “that was more considerate of the lizards than [sic] it was of the Havasupai humans.”⁷⁵⁸ In fact, the first time WASO mandated that units coordinate planning with other agencies, including local Indian reservations, was in 1988. Major policy changes designed to better integrate Native Americans into administrative decision making and interpretation did not begin until after this time.⁷⁵⁹

Even so, Native Americans became more assertive about which aspects of their culture they allowed to be interpreted within Grand Canyon National Park. For example, the Hopi increasingly resented having their dances used for entertainment purposes at Hopi House, and forced the Fred Harvey Company to

⁷⁵⁷ “Kathy Williams Oral History,” GRCA 63380, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

⁷⁵⁸ “Arizona Album: Paradise Becomes Overloaded with Problems,” *Arizona Republic*, 16 October 1972, William Bass Collection, Cline Library, NAU.

⁷⁵⁹ Jacilee Wray, “Havasupai Ethnohistory on the South Rim of Grand Canyon National Park: A Case Study of Cultural Resource Management in the National Park Service,” MA thesis: Northern Arizona University, 1990, 10, 129.

stop holding them in 1972.⁷⁶⁰ In 1974, the Havasupai expressed concerns about proposed developments at Indian Garden, including rumors that a reproduction of a Havasupai sweat lodge was going to be built as an interpretive display there. The Havasupai protested that “the sweat lodge is a ceremonial feature which should not be ‘gawked at’ by uninformed visitors. It would be like placing your church on exhibit and have [*sic*] people walk through it that do not understand its function and meaning.”⁷⁶¹ As a result, the NPS never implemented these proposals.

Environmental Movement

The environmental movement of the 1960s and 1970s had a direct impact on interpretation at GCNP. Since the 1950s, the Division of Interpretation had urged personnel to incorporate more of a conservation message in their programs. This message emphasized protecting the parks and working towards maintaining an ecological balance within them, as well as garnering support for NPS conservation policies.⁷⁶² However, as mentioned briefly in the previous chapter, the American public in the 1960s became increasingly concerned about a wider

⁷⁶⁰ “Grand Canyon National Park Interpreter’s Manual, 1993,” Grand Canyon National Park Research Library.

⁷⁶¹ Quoted in Wray, 113.

⁷⁶² Although many ecologists and NPS personnel in the 1960s and 1970s believed in the concept of “balance of nature,” in recent decades ecological scientists have thoroughly discredited this notion of a natural stable equilibrium, and instead recognize that the environment is in a state of constant fluctuation. Richard West Sellars, *Preserving Nature in the National Parks: A History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 243-245.

variety of environmental issues, including pollution, the use of chemical sprays, climate change, and overconsumption of natural resources.⁷⁶³ The Johnson administration in particular supported passage of a series of environmental laws reflecting these concerns, most of which directly affected the NPS. For example, the 1964 Wilderness Act slowed the tourism-development orientation of Mission 66. Instead, it encouraged the NPS to increasingly focus on understanding the ecological nature of parks and ensuring the preservation of their “wilderness” features. The NPS responded to these impulses by developing policies that they hoped would put the NPS at the forefront of informing the public about environmental issues.⁷⁶⁴ In late 1967 William Everhart expressed his concern that the NPS was not doing enough to educate the public about conservation ethics and environmentalism. He listed many problems he had observed in this regard:

First, our interpretive programs have traditionally been limited to the parks themselves...Secondly, we have had a tendency to interpret a park in terms of its resources. We have not effectively carried out an educational campaign to further the general cause of conservation [outside of the parks]....⁷⁶⁵

Subsequently, in 1968 WASO started working to produce environmental education materials for schools under the direction of an Environmental

⁷⁶³ Steven Stoll, *U.S. Environmentalism since 1945: A Brief History with Documents* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), vii, 11-13.

⁷⁶⁴ National Park Service, *The Interpretive Challenge*, (Arizona Memorial Museum Association et al, 1988), 107; Bob Huggins, “Education: Moving Bravely Into the 21st Century,” *Interpretation* (Summer 1990): 15.

⁷⁶⁵ Quoted in Mackintosh, 67.

Education Task Force.⁷⁶⁶ The task force encouraged parks to establish Environmental Study Areas (ESA's) for school classes to visit, an initiative that was rapidly adopted since just two years later 63 parks (including Grand Canyon) had ESA's and 25 more were planned. At the same time, the Mather Training Center started offering interpretation classes geared toward environmental themes.⁷⁶⁷ WASO also initiated an Environmental Awareness program, which directed all parks to develop interpretive programming to educate the public about pressing environmental issues at the time, such as waterway pollution and declining air quality.⁷⁶⁸ As with almost every change, not everyone was happy with this new emphasis; for example, Ralph Lewis argued that this new focus made museum exhibits too propagandistic because they encouraged viewers to take particular actions, rather than presenting data that allowed visitors to make up their own minds.⁷⁶⁹ Nevertheless, the Park Service extensively promoted environmental protection themes throughout these decades.

The NPS insisted that these environmental interpretive programs include an element relating them to human actions. For example, in 1967 Albert Schroeder, the Regional Archeologist for the Southwest Region, circulated a memo to all NPS superintendents in the region urging them to work harder to

⁷⁶⁶ "Staff Meeting Minutes, February 1968," GRCA 49769, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

⁷⁶⁷ Mackintosh, 68.

⁷⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 59.

⁷⁶⁹ Lewis, *Museum Curatorship*, 173.

interpret prehistoric resources they might have in their NPS units. He insisted that they should be interpreted so that visitors understood both their cultural and natural qualities, stating,

Our interpreter is not accomplishing his task if the visitor leaves with an impression of ruins and features and not with an understanding of the story of people and their environment. One certainly would not attempt to interpret the life of an animal or plant without considering the environment in which it lived. The same principle applies in telling the story of man and his various cultures. The surroundings play a vital role.⁷⁷⁰

Schroeder further pointed out that it was important to help visitors understand that cultural survival depends on humans being in balance with their natural surroundings, and that personal interpretation was best at such sites because of the complex issues and questions they raised.⁷⁷¹

In March 1969, a new GCNP Interpretive Prospectus illustrated the new emphasis in the Park on environmental themes and education. The interpretive staff was supposed to communicate these themes using “environmental awareness techniques, to relate man to his environment by comparisons and contrasts with the broad natural principles illustrated by the Grand Canyon.” This involved such concepts as evolution and adaptation, continuity and change, and interaction and interdependence.⁷⁷² Even cultural history was tied back into environmental

⁷⁷⁰ Regional Archeologist to Southwest Region Superintendents, 24 April 1967, GRCA 61479, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

⁷⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷⁷² “Interpretive Prospectus, Grand Canyon National Park, Submitted March 1969,” GRCA 58682, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

themes; the prospectus states, “Archeology and history do have a place in interpretation of Grand Canyon and this human side of the story helps present-day visitors to better understand man’s past role in relation to his environment and the compelling need for a better relationship to be established in the future” both inside and outside the Park.⁷⁷³

However, this initiative revealed another problem in the GCNP interpretive division, namely that they had inadvertently started to ignore research in biology. As Steven Carothers of the Museum of Northern Arizona stated, in the late 1960s “there were not many local biologists interested in the canyon as a source of raw material for a career in the biological sciences. The area was practically the regional breeding grounds for geological fact and fancy, but except for a handful of significant contributions, the life sciences had been largely ignored.”⁷⁷⁴ During this time period, Americans were becoming increasingly concerned about the biological environment, such as endangered species, the effect of air and water pollution on plant and animal life, and how the overexploitation of natural resources affected ecological systems.⁷⁷⁵ The Interpretive Prospectus compelled the interpretive staff to reprioritize their research programs to better understand the Canyon’s biological systems, an effort

⁷⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁷⁴ Stephen Carothers, “MNA Biology in Grand Canyon,” 1979, DG-46, Arizona State University Archives and Special Collections.

⁷⁷⁵ For a more in-depth discussion of these issues see Samuel P. Hays, *Beauty, Health, and Permanence: Environmental Politics in the United States, 1955-1985* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

that would increase dramatically under the environmental education initiatives of the 1970s that will be discussed later in the chapter.

A 1969 GCNP management appraisal indicated that the division was only able to implement the mandatory Environmental Awareness program ordered by the NPS with a grant of \$1,500 from the Washington Office, and the division was lagging behind in several areas including publications and interpretive planning.⁷⁷⁶ However, it still continued to prioritize environmental programs. A proposed 1971 Master Plan for GCNP defined directives for the interpretive staff at the Canyon. The plan envisioned interpretation as utilizing the Canyon's "dynamic story of time and change to make relevant man's place on earth, and man's ability to cause changes in the landscape and environment."⁷⁷⁷

Popular literature from the time reflected this new environmental thinking and indicates that the messages the Grand Canyon was trying to convey were making an impression on the public, or perhaps vice versa. For example, in an article from *Arizona Highways*, William J. Breed speculated that people tend to return to national parks because they seem to be unchanging, yet when thinking of them ecologically and geologically they are really in a constant state of flux. He emphasized for his readers that humans changed the Canyon directly and

⁷⁷⁶ "Management Appraisal, 1969," GRCA 61481, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

⁷⁷⁷ "Master Plan: Grand Canyon National Park, Arizona. Preliminary Working Draft: Final Draft, August 1971," Arizona Historical Foundation, ASU.

indirectly in many ways, which according to official Park documents is the message the NPS and Park staff were trying to convey at that time.⁷⁷⁸

In some ways, the growing environmental awareness of the 1960s and 1970s became intermingled with a growing awareness of the plight of Native Americans that resulted from AIM. This led to the development of the image of Native Americans as models of environmentalism, an idea explored in Shepard Krech's work *The Ecological Indian*.⁷⁷⁹ As Keller and Turek point out, "In this stereotype, Indians had always lived in harmony with nature, revered Mother Earth as sacred, and offered a special wisdom to non-Indians." However, this perception tended to freeze Native Americans in a time and myth that had little to do with their modern realities and needs. While it made NPS officials more receptive to the idea of including Native American concepts into their interpretive messages, especially in their environmental programs, it also helped create an "all-or-nothing" scenario in which they believed that all Native Americans by nature should support protecting "wilderness" areas such as the Grand Canyon, and if they did not, they were hypocrites, traitors, or the tools of developers.⁷⁸⁰

The environmental focus of NPS interpretation grew stronger with the creation of a new Office of Environmental Interpretation in 1972, initiated in part

⁷⁷⁸ William J. Breed, "Our 'Unchanging' Canyon" *Arizona Highways* 52:5 (May 1976), 12, 15.

⁷⁷⁹ Shepard Krech, *The Ecological Indian: Myth and History* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1999).

⁷⁸⁰ Keller and Turek, 177, 178.

because the NPS wanted to harness the interest in environmental issues generated by the first Earth Day in 1970.⁷⁸¹ This Office mandated that each park establish its own unit devoted to environmental education. However, Nixon dismissed Hartzog in 1972, and his successor Ronald Walker was not as devoted to environmental education, so while the program continued into the 1970s it was not pursued with the same enthusiasm as before.⁷⁸²

Interpretation Gets Downgraded

In the late 1960s, as Richard Nixon began his presidency, the Washington Office went through a period of upheaval and structural reorganization. This led to a reclassification and downgrading of interpretive positions, including the abolishment of the position of Chief of Interpretation in the Washington Office in 1969. Instead, the director of the newly opened Harper's Ferry Center became the de facto head of interpretation within the NPS. The Center contained five divisions: audiovisual arts, museums, publications, administration, and general services and environmental projects.⁷⁸³ The opening of this new center meant that all local production of exhibits and audiovisual materials ended and were instead generated by this single central facility in West Virginia. While this helped streamline the process of creating interpretive displays and made them conform to standards of quality and visual appeal, it also dampened the initiative and

⁷⁸¹ National Park Service, *The Interpretive Challenge*, 107; Huggins, "Education: Moving Bravely Into the 21st Century," 15.

⁷⁸² Mackintosh, 68, 69.

⁷⁸³ Lewis, *Museum Curatorship*, 185, 189.

creativity that had been a hallmark of individual parks' interpretive programs in the past.⁷⁸⁴

These changes at the national level tended to discourage interpretive staff, as did changes at the regional and local level. Under the agency's restructuring, the heads of interpretation at each park were forced to become support staff to superintendents, so that they no longer oversaw front-line interpreters. Instead, interpreters were supervised by district managers, who often had no experience at all in interpretation. Because of new job classifications, it became harder for interpreters to develop long-term careers in the field, which discouraged new talents from entering it. Furthermore, WASO no longer had a division or branch there identified with interpretation, and regional chiefs of interpretation were abolished as well.⁷⁸⁵

The state and status of interpretation continued to concern advisory groups and interpreters into the 1970s, in large part because of these changes. The Advisory Board on National Parks, Historic Sites, Buildings, and Monuments in a

⁷⁸⁴ Mackintosh, 97.

⁷⁸⁵ *Natural Resource Issues Interpretation in the National Park Service: A Report from the Natural Resource Strategic Plan Natural Resource Interpretation Committee* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1994), 43; Roy Graybill, "Achieving Professional Excellence in the Interpretive Workforce," *Interpretation* (Spring/Summer 1991): 4; Mackintosh, 95. Upheavals in the federal government (such as Richard Nixon's impeachment) led to upheavals at the top of the NPS as appointments came and went. In late 1973 the Washington Office again reorganized, at which time the agency re-established the position of Assistant Director for Interpretation, but just three years later it was downgraded again. Mackintosh, 97, 98; Lewis, *Museum Curatorship*, 197.

1972 report stated “We must conclude generally...that interpretive positions, facilities, and performance are at a low point for recent decades...On a piecemeal basis, interpretation appears to have suffered most in the competition between programs for inadequate budgets and from personnel restrictions of recent years.”⁷⁸⁶ Employees of the NPS who completed a survey around the same time agreed that there had been a decline in the professionalism of interpretation and its perceived importance within the agency. The survey cited several factors for this decline, including

organizational changes that had lumped interpretation with resources management in many parks, often removing people with interpretive backgrounds from leadership; the de-professionalizing tendency of the new park technician series; increased park visitation and expansion of the National Park system without commensurate funding and personnel increases for interpretation; and increased emphasis on law enforcement after a 1970 disturbance in Yosemite, at the expense of interpretive positions and training.⁷⁸⁷

In 1973, William Everhart issued “A Report on National Park Service Interpretation” that described a growing crisis in interpretation, and even hinted of its demise. Everhart declared that all interpretation should be related to the legislative mandate of each individual park, which reaffirmed the role of interpretation within the NPS but also effectively reduced the breadth of themes they could explore. For many years afterwards managers and interpreters were

⁷⁸⁶ Quoted in Mackintosh, 94.

⁷⁸⁷ Mackintosh, 95.

hesitant to engage in educational activities unless directly mandated by their park's organic act.⁷⁸⁸

Along with the national and regional NPS offices, Grand Canyon National Park underwent a significant administrative restructuring in the late 1960s, as well as a change in leadership for the interpretive staff. In 1969, Merrill Beal left his position as head of the interpretive division, and a few months later was replaced by David Ochsner. Ochsner, another career NPS employee, received a bachelor's degree from Michigan State in 1952 in park management. He had been working at WASO as a Staff Park Naturalist in the Branch of Employee Evaluation, though he had previous experience working at several state parks and NPS areas as a ranger, naturalist, and instructor.⁷⁸⁹

A 1969 GCNP management appraisal of interpretive services reported that they were steadily worsening.⁷⁹⁰ The staff had been working unpaid overtime just to keep the bare bones of the program operating, so that for now the division was still meeting many of its goals, but they were not likely to keep this up for long.⁷⁹¹ Visitation continued to climb (numbers in 1969 surpassed the 2 million mark), the

⁷⁸⁸ W. Eugene Cox, "Challenges for the Nineties," *Interpretation* (Fall/Winter 1992): 2.

⁷⁸⁹ "Personnel Files," GRCA 49664, Grand Canyon Museum Collections; "Interpretive Prospectus, GCNP, Submitted March 1969," GRCA 58682, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

⁷⁹⁰ "Management Appraisal, 1969," GRCA 61481, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

⁷⁹¹ *Ibid.*

interpretive staff had been severely cut “not only in numbers but in experience,” and more cuts were expected.⁷⁹² Whereas a 1967 report had suggested adding three additional positions, by 1969 two of the existing positions had been cut and the division was about to lose another. A number of interpretive activities were no longer being provided because of inadequate staffing, and facilities were suffering from neglect of even routine maintenance for exhibits and devices.⁷⁹³

One of the first things Ochsner did in his new job was to help develop Chief Park Naturalist Performance Standards, though they were only in effect for a short time.⁷⁹⁴ Just a few months later, administrators decided to decentralize staff and facilities to better serve visitors since the Park was so large.⁷⁹⁵ They divided the Park into geographic units, each with its own staff (including interpretive personnel), so that separate units operated almost like separate parks. The Park no longer had a Chief of Interpretation to oversee the entire Park, and the Division of Interpretation disappeared as a separate entity.⁷⁹⁶ Instead, in 1970,

⁷⁹² Michael F. Anderson, *Polishing the Jewel: An Administrative History of Grand Canyon National Park* (Grand Canyon: Grand Canyon Association, 2000), 90.

⁷⁹³ “Management Appraisal, 1969,” GRCA 61481, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

⁷⁹⁴ “Chief Park Naturalist Performance Standards, 1969,” GRCA 61478, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

⁷⁹⁵ “Interpretive Prospectus, Grand Canyon National Park, Submitted March 1969,” GRCA 58682, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

⁷⁹⁶ “Louise Hinchliffe Oral History,” GRCA 35957, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

Ochsner became the Chief of Environmental Activities and Systems Evaluation. In place of a Chief of Interpretation, from 1970 to 1974 the Park had two “interpretive specialists” who shared responsibilities for leading the interpretive program.⁷⁹⁷ On the South Rim, Interpretive Specialist Keith Trexler and his staff oversaw Yavapai Observation Station, Tusayan Museum, and the Visitor Center, while Interpretive Specialist Richard S. Rayner on the North Rim did the same with facilities there.⁷⁹⁸

Despite these changes, interpretive personnel continued to experiment with new offerings, such as backpacking demonstrations and orienteering programs.⁷⁹⁹ Another new technique increasingly incorporated into GCNP interpretive programming throughout the decade was live demonstrations. In 1970 WASO began issuing brochures and memos urging interpreters to develop living history programs.⁸⁰⁰ Ralph Lewis attributes the growing interest in living history in the 1970s to increased interest in the performing arts. This also had implications for other types of interpretation, however, as communication and

⁷⁹⁷ “Personnel Files,” GRCA 49664, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

⁷⁹⁸ “Kathy Williams Oral History,” GRCA 63380, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

⁷⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰⁰ Freeman Tilden had noted the positive values of live demonstrations as early as 1957, stating that “Among our most effective efforts at interpretation are the demonstrations of how not only aboriginal people but our own pioneers used the material that they found at hand to create the things they had to have.” Hanna, 106; Tilden, *Interpreting our Heritage*, 72, 73, 76.

performance came to be seen as even more important to the detriment of subject area knowledge.⁸⁰¹

In 1972, South Rim Interpretive Specialist Trexler prepared a draft of a new interpretive prospectus for the Park.⁸⁰² Trexler described an eleven-point interpretive philosophy for the Park that emphasized programs being “action oriented.” As Trexler argued, “We must facilitate change.”⁸⁰³ In Trexler’s mind, this took the form of more immersive experiences. His suggestions for this proposed structure included having the entrance be a “tunnel of time,” which sounded quite a bit like what Dolphin had proposed a decade earlier. Trexler wanted visitors to feel themselves absorbed in the ongoing creation of the Canyon and to understand the environmental consequences of human actions.⁸⁰⁴ In the same vein, Trexler also revisited the previously discarded idea of constructing an elevator at Orphan Mine onto the Tonto Plateau that would make it easier for visitors to experience being in the Canyon, though fears of radiation poisoning ended this discussion again.⁸⁰⁵ Trexler also encouraged the development of living history demonstrations for both modern and historic Native American activities, such as making pottery and grinding corn or making tools at Tusayan Ruin; of

⁸⁰¹ Lewis, *Museum Curatorship*, 173.

⁸⁰² Keith Trexler, “Interpretive Prospectus Draft, 1972,” GRCA 64671, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

⁸⁰³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

Native American farming at Indian Garden and Phantom Ranch; mining at Orphan Mine or on Horseshoe Mesa; or of mule handling and packing.⁸⁰⁶ He also suggested speaking to the concessionaire about transforming El Tovar into a 1910-era theme hotel with costumed attendants, a plan that did not become reality.⁸⁰⁷

In the early to mid-1970s visitation to National Parks slowed fairly substantially for the first time since WWII, as a worldwide energy crisis led to rising fuel costs that kept many potential travelers at home. Although visitation numbers did not climb, GCNP still received nearly two million visitors a year—ensuring a major demand for interpreters. In fact, according to NPS historian Barry Mackintosh, from 1970-1974 there was a 73% increase in attendance on conducted tours and a 134% increase in attendance at interpretive demonstrations throughout the NPS.⁸⁰⁸

To help meet this demand, in 1970 the NPS began the Volunteers in the Park (VIP) program, which was the first formal program encouraging volunteers to work in jobs in visitor services, research, resource management, and maintenance. This program allowed parks to stay open and continue providing services to visitors. At the same time, however, it also led to parks relying more heavily on volunteers to do jobs that were formerly done by professionals, and in

⁸⁰⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁰⁷ Ibid. In the 1980s staff at the El Tovar sometimes would dress as Harvey Girls and participate in living history demonstrations there.

⁸⁰⁸ Mackintosh, 98.

some cases to supplant formerly paid positions.⁸⁰⁹ Though this program helped alleviate (not solve) budget concerns, and helped generate an enthusiastic, engaged, and active group of supporters for the national parks, the program also required interpretive staff to devote time and energy to recruitment, coordination, training, and supervision of these volunteers. This heavy reliance on volunteers also in some ways went against NPS policy, since the agency at the time recommended 850 hours of training for a professional interpreter, while volunteers rarely got more than 40 hours. Likewise, seasonal workers typically received a little over 1-2 weeks of training (though some got none at all), despite the fact that about 20-40% had little or no previous experience in their duties.⁸¹⁰ Despite padding their ranks with seasonal workers and VIP's, NPS interpreters were still not able to meet the public's demands. Nevertheless, in 1975 additional budget cuts further slashed interpretive services.⁸¹¹

In 1973, GCNP issued the first Interpreter's Manual for the Park; new and revised manuals would be released intermittently over the next several decades. The manual provided a brief overview of several subjects relevant to GCNP such as geology, flora, fauna, ecosystems, Native Americans and their arts and crafts,

⁸⁰⁹ By the mid-1980s, the NPS Division of Interpretation estimated that professional interpretive staff provided only about 25% of front-line interpretation, with the largest percentage of VIP hours going toward interpretation work. National Parks and Conservation Association, *Interpretation: Key to the Park Experience*, 65.

⁸¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 66-67, 78.

⁸¹¹ National Park Service, *The Interpretive Challenge*, 107, 108; Mackintosh, 98.

the development and administration of GCNP, and the more modern history of the area.⁸¹² This manual concluded by addressing concessionaires, arguing that they were as concerned with NPS ideas and policies as interpreters were, and that the interpretive staff should try to work with them at every opportunity.⁸¹³ New Superintendent Merle Stitt himself took the initiative in fulfilling this step. With the last interpreter's guide for the Park having been written in the 1940s for Fred Harvey Company drivers, Stitt decided to create a new manual in 1973. Basically this was just an edited version of the manual of interpretation, with information on geology, flora, fauna, and history.⁸¹⁴

In 1973 University of Arizona students conducted a year-long study of the practice of interpretation throughout the United States, looking at it from the point of view of the administration, field interpreters, and visitors. When WASO found out about the study, they specifically asked them to look at youth involvement and cultural diversity at their sites. The students' findings showed that youth and minorities disliked programs that only focused on local realities, instead preferring that they be applied to their own life and the larger world. In other words, they were less interested in learning about nature and culture at an individual site, and would rather have information applicable to their everyday

⁸¹² Former Chief of Interpretation Merrill Beal contributed a section on the development and administration of the Park and its human history, which he for the first time placed into a national context. "Interpreter's Manual: Grand Canyon National Park. 1973," Grand Canyon National Park Research Library.

⁸¹³ Ibid.

⁸¹⁴ Ibid.

lives, such as how water pollution affected not only the Colorado River but all water bodies and what they personally could do about it. On the other hand, adults wanted these programs to provide more specific local information, and saw them as a way to escape from the large-scale problems of the world. They wanted to learn in-depth information on a local area and what made it unique, rather than listen to lectures about national environmental problems that seemed to be clamoring for their attention non-stop. From these conclusions in the report, it appeared that older visitors wished to continue viewing national parks as wilderness refuges, untouched by modern life, while youths saw them as potentially more relevant to understanding and rectifying the problems of the modern world.⁸¹⁵ As this report shows, even as the NPS was undergoing massive transformations at all levels, a generational shift made it even harder to keep up with the times.

Grand Canyon's interpretive staff resolved to meet these challenges. In 1974, they devoted a great deal of attention to training programs, since the division had added two new interpreters that year and had many new seasonal workers who were inexperienced and required supervision and training. Volunteers from the GCNHA also assisted the staff in their duties, and helped train VIP's and Student Conservation Association recruits. Eventually, each

⁸¹⁵ "Preliminary Report of Susanna Baker and Rita Cantu, University of Arizona, February 1973," GRCA 58733, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

interpreter received skills training in a variety of topics, from giving campfire talks to informal myth-telling.⁸¹⁶

Environmental interpretation included a broad range of subjects by 1974. For example, programs at the Amphitheater included movies on four major subjects: pollution, medical progress, energy, and technology of the future. The interpretive staff also experimented with new ways to reach younger generations with environmental messages, such as having children who lived in the Park put on a puppet show each evening at the campfire program to “interpret environmental values to their visiting peers.” Other new events included an artist’s exhibit and Hopi and Navajo demonstrations at the Visitor Center provided under contract with the Grand Canyon Natural History Association.⁸¹⁷

Also, in this year portions of the Grand Canyon Village were first placed on the National Register of Historic Places as a National Historic District, helping to redefine cultural resources at the Park and how they were included in the management and interpretation of the Park.⁸¹⁸ For instance, in an oral history interview, former Park Naturalist Merrill Beal recalled that in 1956, Grand Canyon’s Mission 66 prospectus called for the elimination of all buildings from

⁸¹⁶ “Superintendent’s Annual Report 1974,” GRCA 66124, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

⁸¹⁷ Ibid.

⁸¹⁸ Rebecca Chorzempa and Laura Skawski, *Report on the Cultural Landscape of the Grand Canyon Village 1893-1994* (Grand Canyon National Park: National Park Service, 1994), 47; Tonia Woods Horton, “Indian Lands, American Landscapes: Toward a Genealogy of Place in National Parks,” PhD diss., Arizona State University, Dec 2003, 227.

the rim in order to help restore it to a more natural condition, and many historic structures were destroyed during this time. However, in the late 1960s and 1970s there was a concerted effort by the park administration to conserve these buildings because of the growing concept of historic preservation. Buildings previously seen as a nuisance that hindered the appreciation of the Canyon, such as the old railroad depot, were now being interpreted and promoted as an important aspect of the Park experience.⁸¹⁹

The 1975 Grand Canyon Enlargement Act

The aforementioned 1971 Grand Canyon National Park Master Plan draft opened with a statement about how environmental problems needed to be mitigated immediately in order to preserve the Park for future generations. One proposal suggested expanding the size of the Park to include the entire Grand Canyon system.⁸²⁰ The negotiations surrounding this plan and its eventual adoption significantly impacted the Park's relationship with local Native American tribes and affected the organization of the Park and its interpretive program.

This proposal to expand the Park's boundaries came into direct conflict with Havasupai efforts to expand their reservation. The Havasupai and their supporters had proposed legislation to enlarge their reservation by returning

⁸¹⁹ "Merrill Beal Oral History," GRCA 35727, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

⁸²⁰ "Master Plan: Grand Canyon National Park, Arizona. Preliminary Working Draft: Final Draft, August 1971," Arizona Historical Foundation, ASU.

traditional land to them in 1908, 1920, 1931, 1943, 1952, 1957, and 1968. The NPS had strongly resisted these bills as a threat to their attempts to preserve these lands, even though tribal supporters argued that, “The plateau lands are emphatically not ‘scenic’ in themselves; the view is from the very edge of the rim, and the Tribe agrees that it will never impair that view—nor will they exhaust it.”⁸²¹ Tribal supporters argued that the Havasupai would best be able to protect and interpret the landscape. A document prepared by the tribe in an attempt to gain advocates for their position stated,

For thirteen centuries the Havasupai have lived on this land and learned from it. Surely their human life is an authentic part of the natural life of the land, and surely knowledge of their profound and vital relationship to the land is essential to our understanding. To exclude them is to erect an artificial environment; and, by this intervention, the transcendental *human* values we seek to protect are subverted... You ask about the Grand Canyon? I *am* the Grand Canyon.⁸²²

Another document from the early 1970s noted that tourism had desecrated significant Havasupai spiritual areas within GCNP, and had led to artifacts being stolen from burial sites and holy places.⁸²³

To support the recommendations of their draft master plan, in 1971 GCNP officials met with the Havasupai to propose a land transfer that would give more land to the NPS. In return the NPS stated they “would be willing to hire tribal

⁸²¹ Association on American Indian Affairs, *The Havasupai: Prisoners of the Grand Canyon* (New York: Association on American Indian Affairs, Inc., nd), 12.

⁸²² *Ibid.*, 15.

⁸²³ *Ibid.*, 2-4.

members, provide training, and help the tribe with tourism development and road construction.”⁸²⁴ NPS officials also sought to repeal provisions in the Park’s organic act allowing the tribe use of Park lands. While the tribal chairman and council at first agreed to these terms, tribal members’ outrage forced the chairman to resign, and the proposal was subsequently rejected.⁸²⁵ Instead, the Havasupai demanded that they be given more land so that they were no longer surrounded by Park lands. In turn, the national Sierra Club strongly resisted the tribe’s position, and began a nationwide campaign to stop the proposal. The club claimed that the Havasupai wanted to develop the land or lease it to developers to create a “Disneyland” on the plateau, ignoring the ironic fact that firms that had designed Disneyland were simultaneously in the process of planning developments on the national park’s South Rim.⁸²⁶

Nothing was done in 1971 to enlarge the Park or the reservation, but the issue continued to fester over the next several years. In the 1973 draft of the Park Master Plan administrators indicated that the NPS still wanted the Havasupai’s special privileges deleted from the original organic act so the NPS could have more control over its lands near the Havasupai Reservation.⁸²⁷ Instead of sitting idly by, the Havasupai again reignited their longstanding efforts to regain control

⁸²⁴ Morehouse, 103.

⁸²⁵ *Ibid.*, 104.

⁸²⁶ Hirst, 210.

⁸²⁷ Morehouse, 104, 106-107.

of the area, demanding their historic grazing rights on park lands and control over Supai Camp (near Grand Canyon Village on the South Rim) and Havasu Campground. As the new Havasupai Tribal Councilman Augustine Hanna eloquently stated, “not many of you would stand the humiliation we stand every day. We live in a Park Service zoo. We have to open our house to somebody else’s guests. Remember, we used to own the whole place.”⁸²⁸

It was not just the Havasupai being targeted. In 1973 Congress debated various bills that would expand the Park in several directions and create what were essentially buffer zones between the Park and nearby reservations. The Hualapai objected to these bills and especially a map included in one of the bills that marked their reservation’s boundary as the bank of the Colorado River. The tribe believed the boundary should extend to the middle of the river. This was an important point because the Hualapai were on the verge of establishing their own river running outfit, which they did by the end of the year.⁸²⁹ The Navajo also argued that their land extended to the middle of the Colorado River, which again was important because of their plans for a tourism industry there and fears it would affect their grazing lands.⁸³⁰

Support for the Native American positions on these issues began to grow during this time. Local chapters of the Sierra Club, which had originally opposed

⁸²⁸ Quoted in Morehouse, 109.

⁸²⁹ Keller and Turek, 147.

⁸³⁰ Morehouse, 107.

enlarging the Havasupai Reservation by reducing the size of the Park, met with the tribe and came away supporting an enlarged Reservation despite the national organization's continued opposition. This struggle became national news when it was televised on the news program *60 Minutes* in 1974. The NPS remained hesitant to return these lands, however, for fear that it would set a precedent under which other tribes would seek a return of lands that the NPS currently administered.⁸³¹

Ultimately, both the NPS and Native Americans claimed a partial victory. The 1975 Grand Canyon National Park Enlargement Act added more land to the Park while also returning thousands of acres of plateau lands to the Havasupai—conditionally. The NPS maintained strict environmental controls over how this land could be used, which frustrated many Havasupai.⁸³² The Act almost doubled the size of the Park and established its modern boundaries, while at the same time changed the tone of interactions with local Native American tribes in future negotiations.⁸³³ Section 6 of the Act indicated that the NPS should coordinate with governmental agencies as well as interested Native American tribes to protect and interpret the Canyon as a whole, even in areas outside the park boundaries, to help create a unified interpretation of the entire Grand Canyon

⁸³¹ John Hough, "The Grand Canyon National Park and the Havasupai People" in Patrick C. West and Steven R. Brechin, eds, *Resident Peoples and National Parks: Social Dilemmas and Strategies in International Conservation* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1991), 219.

⁸³² *Ibid.*, 217, 219.

⁸³³ Anderson, *Polishing the Jewel*, 67.

area.⁸³⁴ The contemporary Self-Determination and Educational Assistance Act of 1975, which helped shift Native American policy toward embracing cultural pluralism, influenced this change as well. This act helped further open the NPS's eyes to the fact that Native Americans had cultural ties to national parks and that they could make good collaborators in NPS environmental and interpretive programs.⁸³⁵

The Enlargement Act forced yet another reorganization of the Park's management structure, including the interpretive staff. The plan that had divided the Park into geographical units with two interpretive specialists running two semi-autonomous interpretive programs did not work well, so this new reorganization created the Division of Resource Management and Interpretation to oversee interpretation throughout the Park.⁸³⁶ This move also brought the park library, study collections, and environmental education programs under this new division, which was headed by John C. "Jack" O'Brien. A career NPS man who had previously worked at Wind Cave National Park in South Dakota, O'Brien arrived at GCNP with his family in late 1975 to take over as Chief of Interpretation, having never before seen the Canyon. He would remain in this

⁸³⁴ "1986 Annual Statement for Interpretation and Visitor Services, Grand Canyon National Park," Grand Canyon National Park Research Library.

⁸³⁵ This is partly because the NPS began a shift toward managing parks as open systems rather than islands, which included the idea that social systems were a part of natural ecosystems. Wray, 14.

⁸³⁶ "Louise Hinchliffe Oral History," GRCA 35957, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

position for the next 15 years. Another two permanent positions in the Interpretation Division were added, though staffing was still inadequate to meet visitor needs.⁸³⁷ According to the next several Superintendent's Annual Reports, the administrative restructuring "greatly strengthened" the interpretive program both quantitatively and qualitatively over the next several years.⁸³⁸

In 1975, Tusayan Museum remained open through the winter for the first time, while summer programs in the park expanded to include climbing-rescue demonstrations, museum walks, and sunset rim walks. Because so many seasonal workers returned, training could cover many subjects more deeply, and the division continued working with concessionaires to train their staff.⁸³⁹ It seems that the division also focused on incorporating more Native American interpretation, as it began offering Native American craft demonstrations of silversmithing and rug weaving at the visitor center exhibit area.⁸⁴⁰

Despite the Enlargement Act's mandate that NPS work with Native Americans, the Havasupai continued to express frustration with the NPS's interpretations of the tribe. Tribal Attorney Joe Babbitt complained in 1976 that

⁸³⁷ "Superintendent's Annual Report, 1975," GRCA 66124, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

⁸³⁸ Ibid.; "Superintendent's Annual Report, 1976," and "Superintendent's Annual Report, 1977," GRCA 66124, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

⁸³⁹ "Superintendent's Annual Report, 1975," GRCA 66124, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

⁸⁴⁰ "Superintendent's Annual Report, 1976," GRCA 66124, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

What needs to be questioned and reassessed is the long-standing assumption that the Grand Canyon National Park should be 'Havasupai free.' The whole idea smacks of Hitlerlike thinking. What would be the harm in recognizing that the Havasupai have a unique and historical place in the Grand Canyon—that their culture and way of life, including their traditional separateness, have value.⁸⁴¹

Still, many members of the tribe were proud that they had achieved the return of their lands with very little help from the BIA.⁸⁴² This pride seems to be reflected in the way they promoted and interpreted Havasu Canyon after this achievement. For example, in 1977, Havasupai Tourist Enterprise distributed a two page informational sheet for visitors interested in coming to Havasu canyon. It mentions the beautiful waterfalls, vegetation, and farms of the Havasupai, "the people of the Grand Canyon." At the tribal-run bakery and village café, visitors could buy traditional crafts and view photographs from a historical collection kept by the Havasupai. Visitors paid an entrance fee and registered at the tourist office, with all funds going to maintain the trails and support the tribal government.⁸⁴³

Still on Shaky Ground at the End of the 1970s

As the 1970s drew to a close, NPS interpretative philosophies expanded to draw from a number of different disciplines. WASO therefore began publishing a significant number of brochures and articles to inform front-line interpreters of

⁸⁴¹ Quoted in a letter from the Havasupai Tribal Council to Regional Director of the National Park Service, 1977, Lauzon Family Collection, Cline Library, NAU.

⁸⁴² Morehouse, 109.

⁸⁴³ "Havasue [*sic*] Canyon Visitor Information" 1977, Robert C Euler Collection, Cline Library, NAU.

these new ideas. For example, a new trend of integrating sociological and psychological theories into traditional interpretative philosophy was sweeping through the interpretation profession at the time. In 1976 the NPS published a book on interpretation based on psychological theories, such as that visitors were in a dependency situation and looked to interpretation to fulfill parental functions like guidance, protection, and entertainment. In this way, interpreters were supposed to strive to make visitors have a comfortable, restorative experience that transported them from anxiety, depression, and restlessness plaguing them in their everyday lives.⁸⁴⁴

In 1976, the NPS produced *A Personal Training Program for Interpreters* designed for both new and experienced interpreters that allowed them to learn about interpretive techniques at their own pace. This program included five units of study with candid, unrehearsed videos made of interpreters at two different National Parks. The *Training Program* scripts encouraged interpreters to teach visitors how to interpret the parks themselves using questioning, critical analysis, and informal evaluation (drawing from sociological theories to explain how each of these were to be accomplished). The video argued that “Once visitors realize they can interpret a park, they can communicate with their surroundings without knowing scientific names and data, we may enter a new era in park use. When

⁸⁴⁴ See discussion in introduction to chapter three of Arthur Deikman, *A Guide to Implementing the Receptive Mode* (Washington, D.C.: NPS Division of Interpretation, 1976); Hal K. Rothman, “Selling the Meaning of Place: Entrepreneurship, Tourism, and Community Transformation in the Twentieth-Century American West” *The Pacific Historical Review* 65:4 (Nov 1996): 548.

visitors can begin to feel as one with their environment, a real part of it, rather than an external ‘visitor,’ maybe greater park respect and concern will be evidenced.”⁸⁴⁵

The Washington Office also issued a new Field Manual for Museums in 1976, written by head of the Branch of Museum Operations Ralph Lewis. In the 35 years since the first manual was published, the NPS had made great changes in how they visualized and constructed museums, and this manual reflected the professionalization of museum research, planning, and design. Unlike the previous version, this manual did not go over exhibit planning and preparation because by this time full-time planners, designers, artists, and craftsmen did it all at Harpers Ferry instead of locally. Instead, the local curator turned over specimens to these professionals, informed them of any special knowledge they had on the subject, and then verified the accuracy of the final display.⁸⁴⁶ However, over the next few years personnel debated the importance of eye-catching displays versus their educational purpose. As a result of this debate, museum planning within the NPS moved back toward decentralization in an effort to make each museum and its displays unique and engaging, as well as relevant to individual sites.⁸⁴⁷

⁸⁴⁵ National Park Service, *A Personal Training Program for Interpreters* (Washington, D.C.: NPS Division of Interpretation, 1976), 4.

⁸⁴⁶ Ralph H. Lewis, *Manual for Museums* (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, Department of the Interior, 1976), v, 116-118, 120.

⁸⁴⁷ Lewis, *Museum Curatorship*, 174.

Another major interpretive initiative from WASO in 1976 surrounded the Bicentennial celebrations. According to a decree from NPS Director Gary Everhardt, all national park units were supposed to incorporate interpretation relating to the events of 1776 and the birth of the nation into their programming, no matter how irrelevant it was to the park's mission and location. WASO also requested all regions to experiment with interpreters doing first-person interpretation in period dress appropriate for each individual park, which had mixed success.⁸⁴⁸ This only added to the overwhelming amount of material that WASO was encouraging parks to include in their interpretation. For instance, WASO's "Servicewide Goals for Interpretation" from 1976 suggested that interpretation at each park should incorporate resource preservation themes, an energy conservation message, relevance to cultural minorities, environmental education concepts and techniques, and Bicentennial activities.⁸⁴⁹ In the years following the Bicentennial, the NPS experimented with having annual themes, yet many in the agency disliked this approach because they often did not have much relevance to different parks, and took a great deal of time to plan and

⁸⁴⁸ Mackintosh, 59.

⁸⁴⁹ Mackintosh, 80. For example, a service-wide theme of "Black Heritage" would be particularly relevant to, say, George Washington Carver National Monument, but would be harder to create major interpretive programming at Grand Canyon National Park. However, an annual theme of "Water Pollution" would have great relevance to the Canyon, and harder to implement at George Washington Carver National Monument, yet all units were expected to create programs involving every annual theme.

implement.⁸⁵⁰ Although the Bicentennial focused public attention on the celebration of national heritage and identity, which for the NPS meant increased interest in interpretive services and activities at most park sites, funding for programs initiated at the time dried up almost as soon as the celebrations ended.⁸⁵¹ Still, it seems to have sparked a renewed interest in cultural resources at GCNP. The division started inventorying archeological resources again, uncovering many new sites.⁸⁵²

In 1976, William Penn Mott, Jr., the California state park administrator who would later become director of the NPS, expressed concern about the state of interpretation, foreshadowing the position he would espouse once he took over the NPS: “Interpretation must be taken out of the realm of entertainment. It must become the serious business of education. I am not suggesting that we eliminate entertainment, but all too often interpretive programs have as their primary objective entertaining people. Entertainment should not be the end product, but should be a means toward the end product, which should be education.”⁸⁵³ Just two years later, Congress enacted Public Law 95-344, which included a section stating that “the purpose of the National Park System is to preserve outstanding

⁸⁵⁰ Lewis, *Museum Curatorship*, 173; National Parks and Conservation Association, *Interpretation: Key to the Park Experience*, 6.

⁸⁵¹ Mackintosh, 80.

⁸⁵² “Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1977,” GRCA 66124, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

⁸⁵³ Quoted in Mackintosh, 99.

natural, scenic, historic, and recreation areas for the enjoyment, *education*, inspiration, and use of all people...[emphasis added].”⁸⁵⁴ This was the first time that education was explicitly mentioned as a function of the NPS in legislation, yet it still did not mandate it or appropriate any money for it. Furthermore, there was still a continuing debate within the NPS over how these educational goals were best reached. At a 1979 conference at Harpers Ferry attendees argued over whether interpretation should focus on communication skills or content knowledge, a debate that had been ongoing for years and which continues to rage even today.⁸⁵⁵

At GCNP, the Harpers Ferry museum and interpretive specialists completely revised the 22-year-old geologic displays at Yavapai Observation Station as part of a service-wide replacement program that updated out-of-date exhibits with new specimens and text in 1976.⁸⁵⁶ Although museum professionals were in charge of replacing the Station’s exhibits, it did not necessarily mean this was an improvement, at least in one man’s opinion. In 1978 Edwin McKee, who had been responsible for installing the first exhibits at the site nearly 50 years before, wrote a long letter to Superintendent Stitt to express his horror at the condition of the station. He wrote that his first impression upon entering the building was “terrible shock,” and he claimed that it took him “several days to

⁸⁵⁴ Quoted in National Parks and Conservation Association. *Interpretation: Key to the Park Experience*, 5.

⁸⁵⁵ National Park Service, *The Interpretive Challenge*, 108.

⁸⁵⁶ Lewis, *Museum Curatorship*, 199.

comprehend the extent of the setback that had been given the carefully planned and established [interpretive] program.” In fact, he called the present state of the station “a major regression in the progress of interpreting Grand Canyon for the benefit of the American people.”⁸⁵⁷

McKee concluded his letter by evaluating the current exhibits. He complained that an exhibit utilizing fossils that he had originally gathered and displayed did nothing to link them to the local environment and landscape—as McKee pointed out, the display would be equally interesting in Los Angeles or New York, but did little to help visitors better understand or appreciate the Canyon. He also criticized the inclusion of the Havasupai story of the Grand Canyon. Reflecting the traditional mindset in which there was a rigid line between natural and cultural history, McKee stated “This is perhaps an interesting story and would go well in a museum exhibit on Indian culture, but certainly not in a serious display of the scientific aspects of Grand Canyon.”⁸⁵⁸ This remark shows just how far interpretive philosophies had come in the past quarter century, and the degree to which natural and cultural history had become increasingly intertwined in Grand Canyon interpretation as a result of social changes that can be linked to the environmental and civil rights movements.

The GCNP Superintendent’s Report for 1977 stated that, out of a total visitation of 2.6 million, about 57,500 people went on formal interpretive tours,

⁸⁵⁷ Edwin McKee to Merle Stitt, 4 November 1978, Fred Harvey Company Collection, Cline Library, NAU.

⁸⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

while 155,000 attended interpretive talks. An additional 255,000 visitors viewed demonstrations on Native American crafts, Navajo silversmithing, and rug weaving. Tusayan Ruin also welcomed a record 345,709 visitors. The Environmental Education program gave 85 programs on and off site to 2,270 people. Though nowhere near the numbers of participants that McKee, Schellbach, Schulz, and Beal had reported in earlier years, this was still a greater percentage of visitors attending interpretive programs than the Park sees today. Although Jack O'Brien complained that volunteers were becoming a burden to the interpretive program because of the increasing amount of time and money spent on training, supervising, outfitting, and housing them for just 12-week appointments, he had little choice but to rely on them to supplement his regular staff.⁸⁵⁹ Their work allowed his interpreters to conduct a variety of programs, as well as work with concessionaires more extensively by observing bus tours, mule trips, and river trips and conducting more training programs.⁸⁶⁰

Since O'Brien did not have as much time to oversee day-to-day operations, he allowed members of the staff to work on their own to develop experimental programs such as walks at moonrise, a morning history walk, evening programs for children, and a nature walk for the deaf. He assigned an interpreter to the Backcountry Office to develop programs related to backcountry management issues, such as minimum impact camping. Staff developed a slide

⁸⁵⁹ "Superintendent's Annual Report, 1977," GRCA 66124, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

⁸⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

program to mail to hiking groups and brochures for foreign hikers. The visitor center, which saw an average of 600 visitors per hour in the summer months, had two new exhibits installed. Eleven new wayside exhibits arrived from Harpers Ferry and were installed throughout the Park.⁸⁶¹ By 1978, interpretation at the Park featured three major themes: Grand Canyon geology and natural history, human history, and resource management problems and programs.⁸⁶² In 1979, following the death of Emery Kolb three years prior, the Park began using Kolb Studio as an information center and exhibit space.⁸⁶³

External events also put new pressures on the interpretive staff. WASO designated Grand Canyon as one of six national energy conservation parks, so the interpretive staff had to develop a special visitor center exhibit on energy conservation and two slide programs, and they had to adjust the Environmental Education program to focus on this topic as well.⁸⁶⁴ Furthermore, UNESCO recognized Grand Canyon National Park as a World Heritage Site in 1979.⁸⁶⁵ This

⁸⁶¹ “Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1978,” GRCA 66124, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

⁸⁶² Ibid.

⁸⁶³ “Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1979,” GRCA 66124, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

⁸⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁶⁵ It was nominated under the four natural criteria, despite the fact that it has significant cultural resources as well. Janet R. Balsom, “A Little Knowledge Goes a Long Way: A History of Archeological Research at the Grand Canyon,” in Michael F. Anderson, ed., *A Gathering of Grand Canyon Historians: Ideas, Arguments, and First-Person Accounts: Proceedings of the Inaugural Grand*

eventually drew an even broader spectrum of foreign visitors, and interpretation again shifted to accommodate this new public as well.

Despite the many adjustments and improvements reported by the GCNP Interpretation Division during this time, Bruce Shaw, Assistant Superintendent of Grand Canyon National Park from 1975 until his retirement in 1983, expressed disappointment in interpretive efforts at the Canyon during his time there. He noted that the visitor center had not changed for over a decade and was out of date, calling it a “shame.” He lay most of the blame for this problem at the feet of the public who, he said, wanted to learn but resisted anything termed “educational.”⁸⁶⁶ While he mentioned that in some academic circles they ridiculed the old style of interpretation in which “the old time ranger who knew every plant and every tree along the road” as being irrelevant, interpreters still encountered these types of questions more frequently than almost any others.⁸⁶⁷ However, in their rush to please their audience, the interpretive staff sometimes went overboard. Shaw recalled that, when creating one of the interpretation manuals, the staff sat around for a week exploring ideas about how to present the Grand

Canyon History Symposium, January 2002 (Grand Canyon: Grand Canyon Association, 2005), 111.

⁸⁶⁶ “Bruce Shaw Oral History,” GRCA 40198, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

⁸⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

Canyon in new ways and came up with proposals that “approach, if not exceed, the aspects of a Disney World or Disneyland kinds of concepts.”⁸⁶⁸

Summary

From the mid-1960s through the 1970s, the nation and the National Park Service underwent many changes both structurally and philosophically. Social and cultural movements swept the country, and the NPS scrambled to remain relevant and address the needs of this changing society. The agency developed a variety of new interpretive initiatives and themes to address these changes. Efforts to expand the Park led to new conflicts and new relationships with local Native American tribes, though they often still remained contentious. Furthermore, the NPS seemed uncertain about whether management and interpretation should be centralized or decentralized. Upheavals and restructuring at all levels plagued the agency several times in this relatively short period. These fluctuations left interpretation on uncertain footing, and with an uncertain future. Though interpretive leaders at the Grand Canyon continued a valiant effort to keep their programs up-to-date and experimented with new forms of interpretation, the perpetual shortage of funding and staffing left many within and outside of the NPS feeling that their reputation and professionalism was slipping. Many of the problems, issues, and debates that arose at this time continue to plague NPS interpreters today; their impact will be discussed in the epilogue.

⁸⁶⁸ Ibid.

CHAPTER 9

EPILOGUE

In the years since the 1970s, Grand Canyon interpretation continued working to balance initiatives from the bottom-up and the top-down. The national office still frequently issued guidelines and reports on interpretation, indicating its value and continuing importance to the NPS mission. The local interpretive staff also kept developing unique and engaging interpretive programs, and reaching out to interested citizens and organizations for ideas on how to improve NPS interpretation. Supporters were still active in guiding interpretation by writing reports, serving on committees that set interpretive agendas, and otherwise supporting the interpretation mission. Native Americans also sought more widespread and accurate interpretations of their culture and connections to the Canyon in NPS programming, and developed their own tourism initiatives. While the importance of individual personalities in guiding interpretation seems to have waned in recent years, or at least is difficult to assess in the present, the foundation set by McKee, Schellbach, Bryant, and others continued to shape interpretation at Grand Canyon National Park.

Milestones and Changes in Grand Canyon Interpretation since the 1970s

Since the 1970s, the NPS and GCNP have made increasing efforts to maintain consistency in interpretive planning. In 1979 Jack O'Brien produced the first annual Statement for Interpretation and Visitor Services for Grand Canyon National Park. Three years lapsed before the next "annual" statement appeared, but today it is a regular report that provides clear ongoing guidance concerning

interpretive objectives and programming initiatives at the Park, a periodic written assessment that is unique in the history of the Park.⁸⁶⁹

Administrators still encourage efforts to integrate the interpretation of natural and cultural history at the Canyon. In 1982 the Park produced a Natural and Cultural Resources Management Plan and Environmental Assessment. It recognized the problem with dividing the Park into natural and cultural resources, stating that cultural resources “are also of permanent importance to the success of other natural resources management, interpretation, maintenance and construction, and visitor protection programs.”⁸⁷⁰ The study included a discussion of Native American uses of the Canyon, both contemporary and historical. It also noted that local tribes were eager to reach agreements with the Park over issues such as fire management, collecting plants for religious purposes, and other specific concerns.⁸⁷¹ Interpreters have also continued trying to reach out to new groups in their presentations. For example, as the number of foreign visitors to GCNP rapidly expanded, interpreters began developing more brochures and even

⁸⁶⁹ “1979 Annual Statement for Interpretation and Visitor Services,” Grand Canyon National Park Research Library. The statement included statistics on visitors, revealing that at this time, 35% used information services at the canyon and 25% attended ranger-led activities, while 40% did not utilize any government-sponsored interpretive programs. The 1982 report indicates that 56% of visitors used interpretive and informational programs, yet only 12% attended personally presented activities. This shows a marked drop from previous years.

⁸⁷⁰ “Natural and Cultural Resources Management Plan and Environmental Assessment, June 1982 revision,” Grand Canyon National Park Research Library.

⁸⁷¹ *Ibid.*

some talks in foreign languages. They also experimented with giving programs in sign language.⁸⁷²

Historian Michael Anderson stated that the Park made noticeable strides in interpreting cultural history during the 1990s. He pointed out that at the beginning of the decade there were very few books about the Grand Canyon focusing primarily on cultural history, but that by the turn of the 21st Century this had changed. By this time “Park interpretive rangers were including more of the human story in their programs and many were digging for data. Park interpretive signs touched on the canyon’s human past in a richer, more accurate way than I had noticed ten years ago.”⁸⁷³

After Jack O’Brien retired in 1990, Ellis Richard took over control of GCNP’s interpretive division, heading it until 2000.⁸⁷⁴ Richard obtained a degree in anthropology with a minor in biology from the University of California-

⁸⁷² For instance, in 1979, Jack O’Brien estimated that 40% of visitors were non-English speaking. Three years later, he reported that the Park employed people fluent in French, Russian, Japanese, Spanish, German, and Navajo, showing their commitment to reach out to more diverse audiences. The Park today continues to draw visitors from all over the world, and the NPS and Grand Canyon Association publish pamphlets in a variety of languages to accommodate them. “1979 Annual Statement for Interpretation and Visitor Services,” Grand Canyon National Park Research Library.

⁸⁷³ Michael F. Anderson, ed., *A Gathering of Grand Canyon Historians: Ideas, Arguments, and First-Person Accounts: Proceedings of the Inaugural Grand Canyon History Symposium, January 2002* (Grand Canyon: Grand Canyon Association, 2005), 2.

⁸⁷⁴ Superintendent of Grand Canyon National Park to Regional Director, Western Region, “Annual Narrative Report of the Superintendent,” 1991, GRCA 59666, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

Berkeley, and worked in interpretation at many different NPS sites before coming to GCNP as the Assistant Chief of Interpretation under O'Brien in 1988.⁸⁷⁵

Richard recalled that O'Brien was older and a bit of a "curmudgeon" who did not have much interest in interpretive innovation. When Richard took over the position of Chief of Interpretation he therefore wanted to energize the division, and encouraged his staff to propose ideas and programs that they would like to develop. However, he did discourage his interpreters from using their position as a soapbox for their own personal ideas. Richard noted that during his time at Grand Canyon, interpretation received 10% of the park budget at best, and administrators often cut its funding further when other needs arose since they did not see it as critical.⁸⁷⁶

In 1992 the Park held a workshop on visitor management to help prepare a new General Management Plan that involved a wide range of representatives from public and private organizations. Participants in the workshop included people from the Smithsonian Institution, Walt Disney, the Fred Harvey Company, the National Aquarium, NPS officials, and a Native American Liaison from the Denver Service Center. A 1992 scoping summary for the General Management Plan Environmental Impact Statement recognized that "From the earliest times

⁸⁷⁵ Ellis Richard, interview by author, 15 May 2008.

⁸⁷⁶ Ibid. For example, in 1991, Grand Canyon's Visitor Services and Interpretation Division employed 23 permanent and 43 temporary staff, and had an operating budget of \$931,392, which was 9.4% of the total park budget. Superintendent of Grand Canyon National Park to Regional Director, Western Region, "Annual Narrative Report of the Superintendent," 1991, GRCA 59666, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

people have sought to communicate what they feel about the Grand Canyon...In a sense the Grand Canyon is a touchstone for the human spirit, a place where people can stand in awe of the forces of nature and perhaps sense their relationship with creation.”⁸⁷⁷ The final report therefore focused a great deal on interpretation. It stated “One of the strongest recommendations of the workshop was the absolute need for adequate funding for state-of-the-art, high quality interpretation, and there should be a greater emphasis on personalized forms of interpretation.”⁸⁷⁸

Both the NPS and the public continued to realize what an important role interpretation played in the management of GCNP, and continued to call for more integration of cultural themes. In a 1995 visitor use management workshop, a team consisting of environmental leaders, representatives of government and community interests, private developers, and Native Americans discussed interpretation as a major topic. They made several recommendations, all relating to interpretation of the Canyon, as ways to help preserve it for future generations. The workgroup developed three principles that they hoped would guide future interpretation: (1) focus on the Canyon as a cultural landscape in which cultural attitudes helped shape this specific place; (2) consider the cultural landscape itself

⁸⁷⁷ “General Management Plan Environmental Impact Statement Scoping Summary, 1992,” GRCA 58591, Grand Canyon National Park Museum Collections.

⁸⁷⁸ “Grand Canyon National Park, Visitor Use Management Workshop Findings and Recommendations,” (Denver: Denver Service Center, November 1992), 19-20, Grand Canyon National Park Research Library.

as an exhibit, making human intervention a part of the learning process and interpretive message; and (3) tell the cultural story as a continually evolving narrative beginning with prehistory and extending into the future.⁸⁷⁹

In 1995, the Park instituted a new General Management Plan to replace the 1976 plan. In conjunction with this, the Division of Interpretive Planning in Harpers Ferry produced an interpretive plan for GCNP in 1996. A diverse group of stakeholders were also involved in planning and consulting to create this document, including NPS personnel from GCNP's division of interpretation, personnel from the main interpretive office at Harpers Ferry and offices in Denver and the Western Region, an American Indian Workgroup composed of eight local tribes and three representatives from the Council for American Indian Interpretation. Other agencies and institutions that were involved included the Museum of Northern Arizona, Fred Harvey Training Department, Flagstaff Chamber of Commerce, Grand Canyon Railway, Nava-Hopi Tours, Kaibab National Forest, Grand Canyon Association, Arizona Natural History Association, and Grand Canyon Field Institute.⁸⁸⁰ The number and variety of people involved indicates both a continued commitment to incorporating more Native American

⁸⁷⁹ "Grand Canyon National Park, The Sustainable Grand Canyon Workshop," (Denver: Denver Service Center, 1995), 10, 52, 59, 61-64, Grand Canyon National Park Research Library.

⁸⁸⁰ "Interpretive Plan, Grand Canyon National Park, Arizona: Prepared by the Division of Interpretive Planning, Harpers Ferry Center, WV, 1996," Grand Canyon National Park Research Library.

voices into Canyon interpretation, as well as a commitment to hearing the public's views on what interpretive issues and topics were significant to them.

The plan identified the major interpretive topics for the Park as archeology and ethnography, geology, history, inspiration and experience, and natural resources. Among these, the theme of inspiration and experience seems to be the only major innovation from past interpretive plans; while naturalists for years had discussed the spiritual and inspirational values that parks offered, this seems to be the first time it was included as a primary topic for interpretation. The planners envisioned interpretation for this concept to involve discussions of natural quiet, solitude, aesthetic and emotional appeal, and the influence of artists on demonstrating its inspirational qualities.⁸⁸¹ This suggests the growing emphasis within the NPS to promote parks as places to escape the hectic buzz of modern life and find peace and quiet, although with millions of visitors coming to the Grand Canyon every year this goal can be hard to attain.

Apart from proposing these major interpretive themes, the plan also proposed a Heritage Education Campus that sounds a great deal like Bryant and Schellbach's central museum proposed in the 1940s. Planners envisioned this site as being an "integrated learning center" located at the core of the Grand Canyon Village historic district that would "provide visitors with an opportunity to explore in depth the complex relationships embodied in the natural, cultural, and human history of Grand Canyon." Along with this campus, the planners

⁸⁸¹ Ibid.

envisioned an American Indian Cultural Center in the Village area, developed by a partnership between the NPS and eight tribes with affiliations to the Canyon. The center would serve Park visitors and people from participating tribes, as well as conduct outreach for area schools and community groups.⁸⁸² Though these plans were not implemented, interpreters at the Canyon today still mention them as active proposals that they would like to see realized in the future.⁸⁸³

While the Heritage Education Campus was not built, the NPS did build or renovate other interpretive facilities since the 1970s. Though NPS officials had considered tearing it down for years, in 1990 Yavapai Observation Station was listed on the National Register of Historic Places. By then, it mostly served as a bookstore, and many of the interpretive displays and devices had been removed. However, the Park's 1995 General Management Plan proposed to convert it back into a geology museum and interpretive facility. Accordingly, the site was closed for remodeling in 2005-06, opening in May 2007 with new exhibits on Grand Canyon's geologic story, but also with exhibits explaining the links between natural and human history.⁸⁸⁴

In 2000, the NPS opened the new Canyon View Information Plaza to the east of Grand Canyon Village and south of Mather Point. This new facility

⁸⁸² Ibid.

⁸⁸³ Judy Hellmich Bryan, Chief of Interpretation at Grand Canyon National Park, interview by author, 2 April 2008.

⁸⁸⁴ "Interpreter's Handbook: Yavapai Geology Exhibit Text," Grand Canyon National Park Research Library.

replaced the Mission 66 visitor center, which is now used as the park administrative headquarters and contains only a few interpretive displays. Its central courtyard provides a partially protected space for interpretive programs in inclement weather, but otherwise its function is largely informational, with rangers handing out brochures and answering frequently asked questions.

Cooperating Associations and Concessionaires at the Canyon

Although the Grand Canyon Natural History Association has continued to be a valuable partner to NPS interpretation, its relationship to the Park changed significantly in 1984. According to a 1983 mandate by NPS Director Russell Dickenson, NPS personnel were no longer allowed to hold any position with a cooperating association. Therefore the tradition of the Chief Naturalist/Chief of Interpretation also serving as the GCNHA's Executive Secretary ended. While this imposed an additional degree of separation between the two organizations, it also freed the Chief of Interpretation to concentrate exclusively on ever-increasing administrative duties. From its beginning, the GCNHA had primarily consisted of NPS staff and volunteers, but this 1983 mandate forced NPS staff to resign to avoid conflicts of interest. Though Jack O'Brien no longer headed the GCNHA, he still attended meetings and represented the NPS's interests.⁸⁸⁵

Despite this separation, the GCNHA collaborated closely with the national NPS office in the 1980s. For instance, in the late 1980s the GCNHA funded the

⁸⁸⁵ Todd R. Berger, "Science and Education, Birdseed and Power Tools: The History of the Grand Canyon Association. Part II" *Canyon Views* 13:2 (Summer 2007): 15.

replacement and expansion of 200 wayside exhibits on the North and South Rims. Whereas the earliest signs were mostly done on site, these were produced by the NPS's Harpers Ferry Design Center, and funded by the GCNHA at a cost of \$1 million for the design, production, and installation.⁸⁸⁶

The GCNHA also continued its valuable role in supplementing NPS interpretation. In 1990 the GCNHA agreed to open part the Kolb Brothers Studio as a bookstore and use its profits to restore the rest of the building. By late 1993, the auditorium in the building was ready to be used as an exhibition space for displays of history, art, and other topics.⁸⁸⁷ In 1991, the GCNHA donated \$371,000 to the division's educational and interpretive programs, and funded the planning, design, production, and installation of new interpretive wayside exhibits for each rim drive and inner canyon corridor trails at an estimated cost of \$800,000. The organization also helped fund student employees for the division of interpretation who helped design and produce new interpretive trail brochures and the park guide, and assist with the research library.⁸⁸⁸ In 1994, the organization changed its name to the Grand Canyon Association (GCA) to better

⁸⁸⁶ Todd R. Berger, "Science and Education, Birdseed and Power Tools: The History of the Grand Canyon Association. Part III" *Canyon Views* 13:3 (Fall 2007): 10.

⁸⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁸⁸⁸ Superintendent of Grand Canyon National Park to Regional Director, Western Region, "Annual Narrative Report of the Superintendent," 1991, GRCA 59666, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

reflect its broad interest in human and natural history at the Canyon. A close relationship between the NPS and GCA persisted into the 21st century.

Park interpreters have also made ongoing efforts to coordinate their interpretation with that of concessionaires, as well as influence its content. Starting in 1981, the Interpretation Division combined their training of seasonal workers with their training of concessionaire workers to help ensure that all people who had contact with the public were telling a uniform story with reliable facts and figures.⁸⁸⁹ Still, modern visitors can participate in some of the same concessionaire interpretive experiences that tourists have utilized for decades. For example, Xanterra, the current primary concessionaire on the South Rim, offers motorcoach tours in which “knowledgeable, entertaining guides” ferry visitors around the Canyon.⁸⁹⁰ They also have a railroad program and tours of the eastern and western portions of the South Rim. However, the rail line that runs from Williams, Arizona, to the Canyon promotes a “wild West” atmosphere including a cowboy show, holdup and gunfight with outlaws, and strolling musicians.⁸⁹¹ While some things may have changed since the days of John Hance in terms of concessionaire and privately-run interpretation, much continuity remains.

⁸⁸⁹ “Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1981,” GRCA 66124, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

⁸⁹⁰ “Grand Canyon National Park Lodges Tours” brochure, 2008, Xanterra South Rim, L.L.C.

⁸⁹¹ “Grand Canyon Railway” brochure, 2007-2008, GCR Acquisitions, L.L.C.

Native American Relations

Despite efforts by both sides to reach out to one another, the years of distrust between the NPS and local Native American tribes will not be overcome easily and their relationship remains rocky. Interestingly, Barbara Morehouse reveals that interpretation is often at the forefront of these tribes' concerns, stating that nearby tribes

all fault the park for failing to incorporate Indian history, culture, and experience into visitor interpretation materials and displays. They find particularly troublesome the separation of culture from nature—an approach diametrically opposed to their own worldview, which interprets humans and Nature as being one and indivisible. The difference in worldviews is critical, for by focusing on separation instead of unity, the Indians believe that park administrators fail to take proper care of the Grand Canyon.⁸⁹²

There are many difficulties to achieving a satisfactory partnership, however, such as a Native American insistence on face-to-face communication; the frequently revolving staff at National Parks and in tribal councils; the specialized knowledge needed to adequately accommodate the various cultural, social, and political distinctions among Indian groups; and the above-mentioned differences in worldview that are central to Native American and Euro American values.⁸⁹³

⁸⁹² Barbara J. Morehouse, *A Place Called Grand Canyon: Contested Geographies* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1996), 149-150.

⁸⁹³ *Ibid.*, 151. For more information on these different worldviews and how they affect park management, see my discussion of Native American scholarship in the appendix, particularly Theodore Catton's work.

In late 1987, NPS Director William Mott issued a memorandum announcing a new Native American Relationships Management Policy, signaling an official commitment by the NPS to actively promote tribal culture as a component of park sites.⁸⁹⁴ This policy made a public commitment to Native Americans “to involve them meaningfully in our planning, interpretation and management decisions.”⁸⁹⁵ Although legal requirements such as the American Indian Religious Freedom Act bind the NPS to consider Native American issues, the memo also points out that the agency has responsibilities because they manage lands and preserve archeological and ethnographic items important to Native American cultural heritage. As Mott acknowledged, “We interpret to millions of Americans annually both the past and present lifeways of Native Americans and thereby incur a very special requirement to be factually informed, culturally unbiased, and sensitive in our presentations.”⁸⁹⁶

Of course, simply issuing a memorandum does not create change. Keller and Turek note that even into the end of the 1980s “many NPS staff still saw themselves as the best custodians of Indian land and culture,” and as late as 1989 the NPS still published books treating Native Americans as artifacts or as

⁸⁹⁴ Robert Keller and Michael Turek, *American Indians and National Parks* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1998), 234. The authors indicate that the NPS began drafting this policy in 1978 but do not give reasons for why it was not released until nearly a decade later.

⁸⁹⁵ Acting Director of the National Park Service to All Park Superintendents, 3 November 1987, Robert C. Euler Collection, Cline Library, NAU.

⁸⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

elements of scenery.⁸⁹⁷ While the NPS has expressed interest in hiring more Native American interpreters, solving this problem is not easy, since working for the NPS often requires moving far away from home, and Native Americans often see the NPS as just another branch of a government that has been hostile to them for years.⁸⁹⁸ These problems plague GCNP's efforts to recruit more Native American employees, as Jacilee Wray and others have pointed out.⁸⁹⁹ Still, the NPS continues to make efforts to redress the situation. In 1995 the agency created an American Indian liaison office in Washington, D.C., and the following year they welcomed 12 Native American tribes as full partners in the NPS historic preservation program.⁹⁰⁰

In 1991, GCNP took another step to reach out to local tribes when it created the position of Indian Liaison and assigned the job to Park Archeologist Robert C. Euler. Euler began consultations with the Havasupai, Hualapai, Hopi, San Juan Southern Paiute, Kaibab Paiute, Navajo, and Zuni, meeting with tribal

⁸⁹⁷ Keller and Turek, 234, 235.

⁸⁹⁸ Ibid., 235.

⁸⁹⁹ Ibid, 237; Jacilee Wray, "Havasupai Ethnohistory on the South Rim of Grand Canyon National Park: A Case Study of Cultural Resource Management in the National Park Service" (MA thesis: Northern Arizona University, 1990), 97; Chia Lin (Amy) Wu, "Image and reality of the Grand Canyon through the Havasupai People" (Grand Canyon: National Park Service, 1999), 15.

⁹⁰⁰ Keller and Turek, 237.

elders about interpretation and other concerns.⁹⁰¹ In the early 1990s the Superintendent arranged for the manager of the Havasupai tourist lodge to come learn from the Park concessioners.⁹⁰² However, the changes of the 1970s led many tribes to take their own initiative to expand their tourism enterprises at the Canyon, often without the input or guidance of the NPS.

In 1987 the Hualapai tribe, expanding on their successful river running business, opened a tourist enterprise they called Grand Canyon West, a site that includes a “Wild West” town and Indian village where visitors can explore traditional dwellings of five different tribes. The tribe targeted vacationers, especially foreigners, who had already traveled to Las Vegas, since their reservation was much closer to Las Vegas than Grand Canyon Village in the Park. Later, the tribe erected the “Skywalk” at this site, which allows visitors to walk out on a glass bridge 70 feet out from the rim of the Grand Canyon.⁹⁰³ The tribe also offers helicopter tours and excursions led by Hualapai guides.⁹⁰⁴

⁹⁰¹ Superintendent of Grand Canyon National Park to Regional Director, Western Region, “Annual Narrative Report of the Superintendent,” 1991, GRCA 59666, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

⁹⁰² John Hough, “The Grand Canyon National Park and the Havasupai People” in Patrick C. West and Steven R. Brechin, eds, *Resident Peoples and National Parks: Social Dilemmas and Strategies in International Conservation* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1991), 225; Douglas Kreutz, “Havasupai Canyon: Land of the Blue-Green Water,” *Arizona Highways* 69:4 (April 1996): 32.

⁹⁰³ Keller and Turek, 147.

⁹⁰⁴ Anne O’Brien, *Traveling Indian Arizona* (Englewood, CO: Westcliffe Publishers, Inc., 2006), 189-190.

Modern magazine articles indicate a continuing interest among the public in the Native American history of the Canyon. An article by David Roberts published in *Smithsonian* magazine in June 2006 mentions how researchers and enthusiasts are still discovering new information about the ancient people who lived at the Canyon and clamoring to learn about the lives of modern Native Americans there. This ongoing interest has encouraged local tribes to further develop their interpretive skills, yet they also demonstrate an ambivalence about it. For instance, Rex Tilousi guided Roberts around Supai Village on the Havasupai Reservation, recounting tribal legends about the rocks, yet also discussed the tribe's general reluctance to try to interpret petroglyphs, saying "We feel we should never tell anyone besides ourselves' what the rock art means" since they did not know what outsiders would do with that knowledge. The author noted that Havasupai guides must accompany all visitors going off the main trail, but these guides told them several legends about the origin of the tribe that related to rock formations they passed, and took them to several rock art panels.⁹⁰⁵

Keller and Turek argue that it is important to always recognize Native American associations with and interpretations of landscapes managed by the NPS, stating that

These associations and memories are essential for Indian and non-Indian alike...The challenge is to accept the kaleidoscope of our past, to find diverse visions and at times conflicting memories embedded in our national parks, and to embrace this heritage as

⁹⁰⁵ David Roberts, "Below the Rim," *Smithsonian* 37:3 (June 2006): 63.

accurately and as fully as possible. Native people must take their rightful place in recapturing and telling these stories.⁹⁰⁶

Stewart Aitchison, in discussing the history and relationship of Native Americans at the Grand Canyon specifically, also indicates why these types of understandings are important: “The rich diversity of cultures, like the biodiversity within an ecosystem, is what keeps the human spirit vibrant and dynamic. To become a monoculture is to risk becoming stagnant, decadent, and eventually extinct.”⁹⁰⁷ The underlying Euro American worldview that has long dominated NPS foundational and interpretive philosophy makes this a difficult proposition. However, in the late 1990s a series of reports commissioned under the Glen Canyon Environmental Studies initiative sought to change this. These reports, which were produced in conjunction with Hopi, Southern Paiute, and Navajo tribal representatives, surveyed Native American cultural resources in the Grand Canyon region and recorded their stories and perspectives, thereby giving administrators a more concrete foundation upon which to base their managerial and interpretive practices in regards to Native American issues.⁹⁰⁸

⁹⁰⁶ Keller and Turek, 240.

⁹⁰⁷ Stewart Aitchison, *A Wilderness Called Grand Canyon* (Stillwater, MN: Voyageur Press, 1991), 119.

⁹⁰⁸ Alexa Roberts et al, *The River of Neverending Life: Navajo History and Cultural Resources of the Grand Canyon and the Colorado River* (Window Rock, AZ: Navajo Nation Historic Preservation Dept, 1995); T.J. Ferguson, *Ongtupqa Niqw Pisisvayu (Salt Canyon and the Colorado River): The Hopi People and the Grand Canyon* (Hopi Cultural Preservation Office, 1998); and Richard W. Stoffle, David B. Halmo, and Diane E. Austin, “Cultural Landscapes and Traditional Cultural Properties: A Southern Paiute View of the Grand Canyon and Colorado River” *American Indian Quarterly* 21:2 (Spring 1997).

Major Initiatives in Interpretation and the Public's Role since the 1970s

Writing in 1986, Barry Mackintosh complained that NPS interpretation was in crisis, though he acknowledged that this could be a common lament through most of the history of interpretation. Mackintosh argued that the crisis took many forms:

There is a shortage of good interpreters, well grounded in their parks' subject matter and able to communicate skillfully to visitors. Personalized interpretation has declined in favor of canned presentations. Interpreters are out of the organizational mainstream, often overlooked for advancement. Managers consider interpretation as nice but nonessential, cutting it first when funds are tight. Interpretation is in crisis. But interpretation has always been in crisis, it seems.⁹⁰⁹

Mackintosh further pointed out, "Interpretation seems to have been perpetually under siege, perpetually underfunded and short of personnel, perpetually missing the mark in one way or another."⁹¹⁰ As GCNP interpreter Stew Fritts noted in 1988, interpretation has always been a labor of love, as interpreters faced meager pay, scanty benefits, poor housing, and little recognition.⁹¹¹ Although the NPS still stresses interpretation's importance and issues guidelines and

⁹⁰⁹ Barry Mackintosh, *Interpretation in the National Park Service: A Historical Perspective* (Washington, D.C.: History Division, NPS, Department of the Interior, 1986), 90.

⁹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 102.

⁹¹¹ "1988 Interpreter's Manual, Grand Canyon National Park," Grand Canyon National Park Research Library. Fritts has worked as an interpreter at the Canyon since the 1970s.

recommendations for how to improve it, interpretation never quite seems to be what the agency or the public wants it to be.

In 1988, with an eye towards the NPS's upcoming 75th anniversary, the WASO Division of Interpretation circulated a booklet throughout the service entitled "The Interpretive Challenge." The upcoming anniversary, it stated, spurred "renewed intensive and spirited efforts to revitalize interpretive programs and activities."⁹¹² To prove this, WASO developed a clearer definition for the role of interpreters in the field, revised their interpretive standards, and offered more training programs for interpreters.⁹¹³

In the same year, the National Parks and Conservation Association, which had originated as an organization to help guide NPS educational policies, published *Interpretation: Key to the Park Experience*. It declared that their report "coincided with a renewed commitment to interpretation within the agency [NPS]" because Director William Penn Mott, Jr., had spent most of his career in interpretation and promised that one of his priorities was to improve support for interpretation.⁹¹⁴

⁹¹² National Park Service, *The Interpretive Challenge* (Arizona Memorial Museum Association et al, 1988), preface.

⁹¹³ Quoted in Mackintosh, 81, 82.

⁹¹⁴ National Parks and Conservation Association, *Interpretation: Key to the Park Experience* (Washington, DC: National Parks and Conservation Association, 1988), iii. Mott's interest in interpretation did lead to a substantial increase in attention and funding for interpretation that lasted nearly a decade. *Natural Resource Issues Interpretation in the National Park Service: A Report from the Natural Resource Strategic Plan Natural Resource Interpretation Committee*

The Association's report included 18 major and 14 secondary recommendations on how to improve interpretation in the parks. First and foremost the report suggested that Congress enact legislation mandating NPS interpretation. Other primary recommendations included clearly defining basic interpretive missions and evaluating them at each park, holding superintendents and regional directors accountable for maintaining quality interpretive services, professionalizing interpretive positions and giving opportunities for advancement, and providing high-quality training for seasonal and volunteer interpreters.⁹¹⁵ Unfortunately, the Association used GCNP as an example of inadequate interpretation, citing specific examples from 1983 and 1985 studies of Park visitors and their use of interpretive programs and facilities.⁹¹⁶

The fact that interpreters are no longer the naturalists of olden days, who gave talks and spent the day in workshops or in the field, marks a significant change in modern interpretation. Instead, interpreters now have tasks including administration, outreach, marketing, public relations, fundraising, and managing volunteers—jobs that often fall to them because they have strong communication skills.⁹¹⁷ In order for interpretation staff to advance within the agency, they had to

(Washington, D.C.: Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1994), 37, 38.

⁹¹⁵ National Park Service, *The Interpretive Challenge*, 101-102.

⁹¹⁶ National Parks and Conservation Association, *Interpretation: Key to the Park Experience*, 14.

⁹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 27, 41. In the mid-1980s, NPS Chief of Interpretation Dave Dame argued that the primary function of interpretation should be to develop public support for

move into management and leave interpretation altogether, making it hard to make a career out of interpretation.⁹¹⁸

Another problem that always plagued interpretation in the NPS, and will likely continue to do so, is budgetary issues. Interpretation services in parks nationwide account for only an average of 6% to 15% of a park's budget. Increasingly, volunteers or seasonal personnel do a majority of NPS interpretation, and in many parks it has been reduced or eliminated, affecting not only the quality and availability of interpretive services but also reducing the opportunities for visitors to interact with NPS personnel. However, the National Parks and Conservation Association points out that NPS interpreters "are the catalysts for visitor discovery, appreciation and enjoyment of the national heritage. The interpreters' efforts on behalf of the resources *and* the visitors weave together the strands of the past, present, and future."⁹¹⁹ As W. Eugene Cox, Chief of Interpretation and Visitor Services in Great Smoky Mountains National Park said in 1992, "National Park Service employees, especially interpreters, have played a significant part in developing the positive image of the NPS. A positive

preserving parks, which led to many interpreters being assigned to outreach, public relations, and fundraising efforts in addition to their usual duties. Mackintosh, 81, 82; *Interpretation: Special Issue: The Interpretive Challenge* (Fall 1989): 3, 10, 23.

⁹¹⁸ National Parks and Conservation Association, *Interpretation: Key to the Park Experience*, 78.

⁹¹⁹ National Parks and Conservation Association, *Interpretation: Key to the Park Experience* (Washington, D.C.: National Parks and Conservation Association, 1988), v, vi.

image helps rally support for the parks. The national park system cannot survive intact in the future without the efforts of interpretation.”⁹²⁰

In further planning for the NPS’s 75th anniversary, the agency reviewed its mission and responsibilities and issued a vision for its future during a symposium held in Vail, Colorado, in 1991. The six major objectives and various recommendations for achieving them generated at this meeting became known as the “Vail Agenda,” which continues to influence NPS policies today. One of the six major objectives the Agenda identified was education and interpretation. It argued that “The units and programs of the national park system, taken together, have an important story to tell—a story that is, at once, interesting, instructive, and inspiring. The national park system has the potential to bring together the landscapes, places, people, and events that contribute in unique ways to the shared national experience and values of an otherwise highly diverse people.”⁹²¹

However, it also pointed out that those involved in formulating the Vail Agenda were highly concerned that not enough was being done to tell this story, largely because interpretation was being undervalued and underfunded. The Agenda addressed the significance of NPS interpretation, stating that it “has been one of the most significant contributions that the agency has made in the world park

⁹²⁰ W. Eugene Cox, “Challenges for the Nineties,” *Interpretation* (Fall/Winter 1992): 3.

⁹²¹ *National Parks for the 21st Century: Report and Recommendations to the Director of the National Park Service (The Vail Agenda)*, (Montpelier: Chelsea Green Publishing Company, 1993), 1-2, 10.

movement,” and encouraged the NPS to maintain high standards and support for interpretive programming.⁹²²

In late 1999, the director of the NPS asked the National Park System Advisory Board to develop a report to help guide the management of the NPS over the next 25 years. In 2001 the board released a report entitled “Rethinking the National Parks for the 21st Century.” The importance of interpretation is again evident, as the board argued that the NPS should be considered an educational institution and that parks should be understood as places “to demonstrate the principles of biology, to illustrate the national experience as history, to engage formal and informal learners throughout their lifetime, and to do these things while challenging them in exciting and motivating settings.”⁹²³ How the NPS will utilize this report, and whether its recommendations concerning interpretation will be followed, remains to be seen.

Summary

Since the 1970s, the National Park Service has sought to initiate more consistent planning and regular evaluation of its efforts. The NPS also seemed more dedicated to seeking public input on interpretive policy decisions than ever before, whether it came from organizations such as the National Parks and Conservation Association or from citizens who respond to solicitations for public participation in developing GCNP managerial documents. Native Americans

⁹²² Ibid., 11, 78, 86-90.

⁹²³ National Park Service Advisory Board, *Rethinking the National Parks for the 21st Century* (Washington, D.C.: National Geographic Society, 2001), 7.

made some of their most significant strides so far in gaining more representation in GCNP interpretation, and interpretive policy documents elevated cultural interpretation to have equal status as interpretation of natural resources at the Park. Unfortunately, the trend of de-professionalization of interpretation persisted, making it harder for dedicated interpreters to advance within the field. Still, although interpretation might not always reach the goals and ideals the agency or public envisions for it, the fact that the NPS has frequently reaffirmed its commitment to interpretation since the 1970s in a series of high-profile reports indicates that it is still significant facet of NPS policy.

CHAPTER 10

CONCLUSION

People around the world can readily recognize the distinct characteristics of the Grand Canyon's scenery, yet it is interpreters who give these features meaning and perspective as a cultural landscape. Interpreters recount not only how American culture has shaped the Grand Canyon, whether through tourism or shifting social interests or the creation of the Park in the first place, but also how the Canyon has shaped American culture, such as by inspiring artists, authors, and photographers to create nationally and internationally renowned works of art. Interpreters tell the geologic stories of the Canyon, inform people about the flora and fauna which live within its walls and along its rims, proclaim the spiritual and inspirational qualities of its magnitude and solitude, and relate the stories of the people who have lived there throughout the years. They also invoke their listeners to take action to protect these features and encourage them to engage in discussions about their meaning and future, whether with their friends and families, NPS personnel, civic leaders, or government officials. As Paul Schullery states, interpretation in national parks can "help us understand who we are, where we have been, and, once in a while, where we're going."⁹²⁴ By looking at how interpretation at the Grand Canyon has changed over time, this dissertation illustrates how at least one national park has provided such a roadmap to understanding and shaping American culture and heritage.

⁹²⁴ Paul Schullery, *The National Park Service: A Seventy-Fifth Anniversary Album* (No place: Roberts Rinehart Publishers, 1991), 7.

In this dissertation I argued that a complex series of interactions shaped Grand Canyon National Park interpretation over the years. My analysis showed that, along with negotiations and power struggles at all levels of the NPS over interpretation goals and policies, public interest and involvement played a significant role in influencing the messages and construction of interpretive programming at GCNP. The NPS always had messages that it wished to convey to the public through its interpretation, yet the public also made the agency aware of what agendas were important to it and when these messages were not effective, such as in the 1950s when interpreters realized they must balance conservation messages which seemed overly propagandistic to visitors. At some points interpretation within the NPS seemed primarily directed from the top-down, such as during the Mission 66 period, while at other times agency personnel controlled it from the bottom-up, such as during the tenure of Edwin McKee. This pattern held true for public interests as well, with national organizations such as the National Parks and Conservation Association influencing it from the top-down, while at other times popular memes such as the environmental and civil rights movements affected it from the bottom-up.

The variety and complexity of the interactions among all these interests meant that the messages of NPS interpretation changed over the years to reflect changing times and cultural preferences. Native Americans, individual Euro-American entrepreneurs, and large corporations such as the Fred Harvey Company provided most of the earliest interpretation of the Grand Canyon to the public, and helped lay a foundation for how NPS personnel understood and

interpreted the Grand Canyon. While the NPS perpetuated some of these early trends, like the commodification and romanticizing of Native American culture, it also sought to distinguish itself from the “wild West” nature of these presentations and present a more scholarly, educational experience.

The earliest NPS interpretation focused primarily on geological and natural themes and was largely content based, with the goal of educating the public about scientific names of flora and fauna, or the specific geological formations that made up the Canyon. The NPS tended to leave cultural interpretation in the hands of the Fred Harvey Company, with its arts and crafts and dancing demonstrations at Hopi House and later the Desert View Watchtower. Public interest in Southwestern archeology and Native American cultures forced the NPS become more involved in this type of interpretation in the mid-1930s, but then only rather reluctantly.

While the 1930s saw a great expansion in the interpretive program and innovations in how it was accomplished at GCNP, its messages did not alter significantly during this time. This changed during WWII; as the NPS struggled to justify its relevance and need for funding, the agency used interpretation to tout the important patriotic contributions of its sites to American morale and culture. Louis Schellbach and Harold C. Bryant struggled to keep GCNP open and its interpretive program alive, pointing out its important role in providing relaxation and recreation to troops and the weary, worried public.

The preservation of natural resources had always been a significant theme within the NPS, but in the 1950s NPS interpretation began emphasizing

conservation messages even more. This helped administrators meet management needs as visitation to national parks, including GCNP, skyrocketed, drawing new constituencies to the parks but also damaging resources. It also reflected changing American cultural values at the time, which were starting to embrace natural resource conservation as a path toward social health and perceived cultural superiority, especially when compared to Soviet culture. In a similar vein, interpretation at this time also emphasized the concept that NPS sites were sites of democracy in action—a place where citizens came into direct contact with representatives of their government—and encouraged visitors to become actively engaged in the management of their public lands.

In the 1960s and 1970s, social changes sweeping through American culture altered the tone of NPS interpretation once again. At GCNP a new emphasis on environmentalism and Native American issues were the major manifestations of this change. Many universities at this time began offering programs in resource management, museum studies, interpretation, and other related fields, and the NPS began developing interpretive training programs as well as a centralized interpretation and museum building facility. However, this also meant that interpretation became much more streamlined and bureaucratic, eliminating some of the experimentation and spontaneity that marked the earliest interpretive efforts at GCNP.⁹²⁵

⁹²⁵ C. Frank Brockman, “Park Naturalists and the Evolution of National Park Service Interpretation through World War II,” *Journal of Forest History* 22:1 (January 1978): 43.

In recent decades, managers and interpreters at GCNP increasingly worked to balance natural and cultural interpretation at the Park, though its natural features are still considered the primary attraction. However, as visitors to national parks became increasingly diverse in social, cultural, national, ethnic, racial, religious, and economic backgrounds, it became increasingly challenging for interpreters to design programs to reach everyone. They had to find new ways to engage visitors and provide the new kinds of experiences they sought.⁹²⁶

Interpreters were supposed to make what they were interpreting relevant to their audience on an individual level, but amidst such a wide range of constituents this became nearly an impossible task. The struggle to determine what messages will be important to interpret for the NPS and its visitors in future years will likely be full of increasingly complex negotiations among ever-diversifying audiences.

Two sub-themes run throughout this examination of fluctuations in interpretive messages, activities, and policies. The first is the changing degree of inclusion of Native American history, culture, and perspective. The second is the relative importance of individual personalities in shaping the history of interpretation at Grand Canyon National Park.

In many ways it seems that the history of Native American interpretation at the Park can be understood in relation to changing national Indian policies.

NPS administrators often treated neighboring tribes in ways that reflected

⁹²⁶ Darryll R. Johnson and Donald R. Field, "Social and Demographic Change: Implications for Interpretation," in Gary E. Machlis and Donald R. Field, eds., *On Interpretation: Sociology for Interpreters of Natural and Cultural History* (Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 1984), 111-112.

prevailing political trends, from virtually ignoring them during the era of termination and relocation in the 1940s and 1950s, to increasingly working together with them to establish their own interpretive enterprises in the era of self-determination in the 1960s and 1970s. However, Native Americans have also demonstrated a great deal of agency through their frequent efforts to improve their representation in GCNP interpretation.

As mentioned above, the Fred Harvey Company was well-known for commodifying Native American culture, a trend that the NPS in its early days perpetuated. The NPS advertised events such as Hopi House dances for many years, and often provided little substantial information about local tribes apart from what arts and crafts they offered. Although the NPS tried to provide more scholarly interpretation of Native Americans through its archeological exhibits at Tusayan Museum, they often relied on stereotypes and rarely addressed contemporary Native American life and culture, preferring to focus on a romanticized ancient past. Vestiges of this type of interpretation remain even today, but Native American efforts to gain control over interpretation of their place in Grand Canyon history have made great strides in rectifying this. Native Americans fought to gain positions as NPS interpreters and develop tribal tourism enterprises, and NPS administrators seek out Native American input on their decision making and interpretive programming policies such as with the cultural resource reports various tribes created as part of the Glen Canyon Environmental Studies initiative, all of which help visitors to the Canyon gain a better

understanding of Native American culture, history, and perspectives and a richer overall experience at the Park.

Although some scholars have argued that individual parks and administrators have little control over the policies the NPS Washington Office enacts, my research revealed that individual personalities at both the local and national level have actually had a great deal of influence on the history of NPS interpretation.⁹²⁷ In particular, Edwin McKee, Louis Schellbach, Harold C. Bryant, and John Merriam played significant roles in shaping early interpretation at the Park, and for the most part saw great success in having their interpretive visions realized. Conrad Wirth and Ronald Lee likewise developed detailed goals and policies for interpretation during their tenure, and fairly effectively molded NPS policies to achieve them.

Other individuals such as Paul Schulz, Merrill Beal, and Vernon Dolphin had more mixed results in their efforts to shape interpretation. Though an experienced interpreter with a definite vision for where he hoped to take GCNP interpretation, Schulz took over during Mission 66, when the national NPS office undertook an unprecedented effort to centralize control. Beal guided the GCNP interpretive program competently for nearly a decade, yet his waning interest in the job of interpretation meant that he did not fight as hard as Schellbach had done to maintain the high quality of the program, and surveys from the time showed its downward slide. Vernon Dolphin approached the NPS as a private

⁹²⁷ Michael F. Anderson, *Polishing the Jewel: An Administrative History of Grand Canyon National Park* (Grand Canyon: Grand Canyon Association, 2000), vii.

citizen with grand ideas on how to radically alter GCNP interpretation. While the NPS found his ideas unfeasible overall, certain elements that he proposed such as a tunnel of time persisted in the minds of NPS interpreters, who continued to suggest them as interpretive programs over the years. Furthermore, the NPS in recent decades has worked toward increasing transparency by holding public forums when developing planning and management documents, opening the door for countless ordinary individuals to make their opinions and ideas heard and thereby shape the future of NPS interpretation.

From its humble beginnings with a few devoted individuals struggling to establish a respectable and cohesive program of education and interpretation for the public, the modern NPS interpretive program became a model for similar programs throughout the world. As an activity that is by nature conducted in the public spotlight and therefore subject to constant scrutiny, it is not surprising the amount of controversy and attention interpretation generates, yet it also has the potential to generate real change in attitudes and behaviors. Through its interpretive staff the NPS has an opportunity to educate the public about American natural and cultural history and heritage, as well as encourage them to take actions to influence how they are protected, relayed, commemorated, and regulated. Though it may never have gotten the respect or resources it desired, interpretation remains an important source of interaction among the federal government, the American (and international) public, and the accumulated national heritage represented by national park sites.

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APPENDIX A
HISTORIOGRAPHY

This dissertation draws on the observations and arguments of many different sources from a range of disciplines. Repositories such as the National Archives branch in Laguna Niguel, California, the Grand Canyon National Park Museum Collection, and the Arizona Collection at Arizona State University proved especially valuable in terms of primary sources. These included manuscripts, correspondence, reports, planning documents, promotional materials, and oral histories that helped reconstruct the ideas, personalities, and political maneuverings of a wide range of stakeholders in National Park Service interpretation. I also conducted my own oral history interviews with former and present Grand Canyon National Park interpreters to supplement these sources.

Secondary sources, such as official histories, travel guides, popular books, and academic studies, provided a foundation upon which to build my arguments and to guide my discussions of historical change. What follows is a brief analysis of the evolution and definition of the term interpretation, guided by a survey of literature about interpretation. Next, I review the most significant secondary sources that shaped this dissertation, divided into sections that address the history of Grand Canyon National Park and the National Park Service, Native Americans, and public history, though many of these sources are useful in multiple categories.

Interpretation

Many in the field of interpretation and in the National Park Service have long grappled with the question of how to define interpretation and its goals. Freeman Tilden once wrote that he had been working in interpretation for 25 years and, despite writing what most consider the definitive foundation of

interpretation theory, stated that he was never completely satisfied with any of his definitions. Many years later, Larry Beck and Ted Cable, two scholars who had also been working in interpretation for nearly a quarter of a century, likewise admitted that they still grappled with the definition and meaning of interpretation.⁹²⁸ Furthermore, though the concept and terminology of interpretation existed in the NPS from its earliest days, the position of “interpreter” was not a formal federal job name nor did it have an official description until 1994.⁹²⁹ Finding a clear definition of what interpretation is and what it means within the NPS is therefore a difficult task, though a survey of literature about interpretation helps clarify it somewhat.

The word “interpretation” can have a variety of meanings. Some definitions focus more on the entertainment side of it, such as historian Lee Whittlesey’s description of interpretation in his history of horse and buggy tour guides at Yellowstone National Park. He defines interpretation in the national parks as both “storytelling” and “the art of telling people about the wonders and attractions of a geographical area, that is, giving them information and provocation about a place so that they can more fully enjoy it.”⁹³⁰ Historian and

⁹²⁸ Larry Beck and Ted Cable, “The Meaning of Interpretation,” *Journal of Interpretation Research* 7:1 (2002): 7.

⁹²⁹ Douglas M. Knudson, Ted T. Cable, and Larry Beck, *Interpretation of Cultural and Natural Resources* (State College, PA: Venture Publishing, Inc., 1995), 5.

⁹³⁰ Whittlesey is the Park Archivist for Yellowstone National Park. Lee Whittlesey, *Storytelling in Yellowstone: Horse and Buggy Tour Guides* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2007), 1. This definition is

photographer Paul Schullery defines interpretation as “the art of appreciating.”⁹³¹

The main area of disagreement on what interpretation is, however, seems to center on the relationship between education and interpretation—whether the two concepts are separate or the same, and how to define the purpose and practice of each within the NPS.

As C. Frank Brockman, naturalist at Rainier National Park from 1928-1978, noted in his history of interpretation in the National Park Service, the NPS did not invent interpretation, but it “was largely responsible for the broad public recognition of its values in developing understanding and appreciation of nature and history,” which it accomplished by “[modifying] formal educational processes to arouse the latent interests and desires of park visitors.”⁹³² Brockman argued that interpretation was a fundamental aspect of national parks from their inception, since early statements spoke to the need to utilize individuals who could present facts that were both interesting and understandable to visitors. He believed that Muir in the late 1870s was the first to use the term “interpret” in the context national parks would later adopt, when he wrote of living in Yosemite: “I’ll interpret the rocks, learn the language of flood, storm and the avalanche. I’ll

problematic in that it seems to focus only on natural or scenic parks and physical features, and does not account for interpretation of historic sites or other intangible aspects or themes of national parks.

⁹³¹ Paul Schullery, *The National Park Service: A Seventy-Fifth Anniversary Album* (Roberts Rinehart Publishers, 1991), 52.

⁹³² C. Frank Brockman, “Park Naturalists and the Evolution of National Park Service Interpretation through World War II,” *Journal of Forest History* 22:1 (January 1978): 24.

acquaint myself with the glaciers and wild gardens, and get as near the heart of the world as I can.”⁹³³

Various national parks or areas that would later become national parks exhibited germs of interpretive activities early in their existence. These early guides, much like those at Grand Canyon National Park, tended to emphasize the strangeness, unusual features, and grandeur of the park, often with a dose of humor and tall tales. Although their focus was much different from later NPS interpreters, Whittlesey argues that visitor education by these early private and concessionaire guides “likely...served some of the same purposes it serves today: it promoted the park, helped visitors to enjoy it through understanding, and aided in the protection of the place by instilling appreciation.”⁹³⁴

Over the years the NPS has shuffled education and interpretation around within divisions, sometimes conflating the two concepts as the same and other times distancing them from each other. Particularly in the 1930s, education became almost a cognate with interpretation when the NPS established a Bureau of Research and Education. However, at the same time, the term “nature guide” declined in use and was replaced with the term “interpreter” as naturalists and historians began working together, especially following the addition of historic

⁹³³ Quoted in Brockman, 26. NPS historian Barry Mackintosh likewise points to Muir and other early nature writers as forerunners of NPS interpretation. Barry Mackintosh, *Interpretation in the National Park Service: A Historical Perspective* (Washington, D.C.: History Division, National Park Service, Department of the Interior, 1986), 1.

⁹³⁴ Whittlesey, 8-9, 265.

sites to the National Park System in 1935. By 1957, when Freeman Tilden wrote his definitive work on the subject, the job of rangers whose main role was to interact with and inform the public was widely referred to as “interpretation.”⁹³⁵ As Barry Mackintosh writes, even when people in the early NPS referred to education, they made it clear that they meant something other than traditional academic instruction. For example, in 1929 the Education Division of the NPS issued guidelines saying

Our function lies rather in the inspirational enthusiasm which we can develop among our visitors—an enthusiasm based upon a sympathetic *interpretation* of the main things that the parks represent, whether these be the wonder of animate things living in natural communities, or the story of creation as written in the rocks, or the history of forgotten races as recorded by their picturesque dwellings [emphasis added].⁹³⁶

While the concepts of both education and interpretation share many similarities, most people within the NPS have recognized interpretation as a separate category for much of the organization’s existence. For example, as early as 1932 the NPS made an effort to define a methodology or philosophy of interpretation in a booklet entitled *Research and Education in the National Parks*. In it, Harold C. Bryant, who was one of the early developers of interpretive programming in the NPS and later Assistant Director of the NPS and Superintendent of GCNP, and Wallace Atwood, Jr., listed four general policies that should guide interpretive services. These included avoiding typical

⁹³⁵ Knudson et al, *Interpretation of Natural and Cultural Resources*, 5.

⁹³⁶ Mackintosh, 83.

pedagogical mechanisms (such as the Socratic Method or examinations to measure the retention of knowledge), emphasizing both field experience and strong communication skills, and supporting a healthy ongoing research agenda that would generate facts that interpreters could incorporate into their programs.⁹³⁷ Today, there seems to be a fairly clear delineation between educational activities and interpretive activities, though each still incorporates elements of the other. As the NPS publication *Interpretation* stated in 1990, the NPS is a major contributor and active participant in the field of education, though “The Interpretive Ranger often provides excitement, stimulation, challenge, and motivation that is impossible to capture in a traditional classroom.”⁹³⁸

The work of interpretation has also been known by many different terms through the history of the NPS. Depending on whether a national park was classified as historic/cultural or natural, the work of interpretation was led by a person in the job of “Historian” or “Naturalist” respectively for many years. Harold C. Bryant pointed out that both of these terms essentially referred to interpretation. He argued that these two job names indicated a profession “separate from that of guide or teacher.” Though they were still involved in a form of education, the NPS had higher goals for these types of programs, such as cultivating democratic ideals in the citizenry, providing moral uplift for their

⁹³⁷ “National Park Service Administrative Manual, Vol 25: Information and Interpretation in the Field,” 1955-1957, GRCA 55370, Grand Canyon Museum Collections.

⁹³⁸ *Interpretation* (Summer 1990): 3.

visitors, and energizing the public to be more proactive in environmental preservation. As Bryant noted, though the dispersal of knowledge was good, “it was hoped the park visitor could be taught to think great thoughts, could be sent home full of new ideas, actually inspired.”⁹³⁹

For the purposes of this study I rely on the definition of interpretation provided by Freeman Tilden, who is widely considered to be the founder of the modern NPS concept of interpretation and who served as a consultant to four NPS directors.⁹⁴⁰ Tilden’s definitive *Interpreting Our Heritage*, which first appeared in 1957 (and is now in its fourth edition), was immediately hailed as mandatory reading for NPS personnel, and quickly became “an accepted classic in the literature of park management.”⁹⁴¹ As George B. Hartzog, Jr., NPS Director from 1964-72, pointed out in the forward to the 2nd edition in 1967, “Until the first

⁹³⁹ H.C. Bryant, “The Beginning of Yosemite’s Educational Program” in John W. Hanna, comp., *Interpretive Skills for Environmental Communicators*, 2nd ed. (College Station: Department of Recreation and Parks, Texas A&M University, 1974), 18.

⁹⁴⁰ Tilden started his career as a newspaper reporter, working in Boston, Charleston, and New York City throughout the 1920s and 1930s. He did not begin his career with the NPS until 1941, when he became the literary consultant for the agency at the age of 59. He was immediately captivated with the possibilities of interpretation, and insisted on working often as a front-line interpreter to gain more experience in this area, meaning his insights come from long personal experience and interaction with the public. Freeman Tilden, *Who Am I? Reflections on the Meaning of Parks on the Occasion of the Nation’s Bicentennial* (Washington, D.C.: NPS Office of Publications, 1975), 41.

⁹⁴¹ As just one example, Gary Everhardt, NPS Director from 1975-1977, wrote that Tilden was the “pioneer of interpretive philosophy and recognized father of modern park interpretation.” Freeman Tilden, *Interpreting our Heritage*, 3rd ed. (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1977), xi.

edition of this book...no one had attempted to analyze this fascinating new discipline, nor to identify its guiding principles.”⁹⁴² Today, the book is often still referred to as the basic field manual for all NPS interpreters (and those in many other agencies), and many colleges and universities use it as a textbook in courses on natural resource management, interpretation, and even public history.

In this book, Tilden allowed that there is an element of education in interpretation, but insisted that interpretation went beyond this to become an art form by appealing to the heart rather than the head.⁹⁴³ He seemed to see interpretation as the artistic expression of ideas, a cousin to traditional instruction in which information is used entertainingly as a vehicle to speak to the audience’s emotions, desire for understanding, religious spirit, love of beautiful things, and need to restore physical and psychological health.⁹⁴⁴ He admitted that interpreters were engaged in a type of education, though “It is not the classroom kind...It aims not to *do something* to the listener, but to *provoke the listener to do something to himself*.”⁹⁴⁵

Tilden found the definition of interpretation available in dictionaries at the time insufficient. Therefore, Tilden put forth his own definition of “Interpretation” (he always capitalized the term): “an educational activity which

⁹⁴² Ibid., xiv.

⁹⁴³ Ibid., 115.

⁹⁴⁴ Ibid., 27.

⁹⁴⁵ Italics in original. Ibid., 111.

aims to reveal meanings and relationships through the use of original objects, by firsthand experience, and by illustrative media, rather than simply to communicate factual information.”⁹⁴⁶ Today, even the Merriam-Webster dictionary reflects Tilden’s influence on changing the usage of the term, defining interpretation as: “a teaching technique that combines factual with stimulating explanatory information.”⁹⁴⁷ Tilden’s definition was based upon two main concepts: that interpretation should harness visitors’ natural curiosity to help enrich their mind and spirit, and that interpretation should reveal “a larger truth that lies behind any statement of fact.”⁹⁴⁸ Tilden also acknowledged what would become a growing refrain of interpreters in their attempts to justify their labor and contribution to the NPS, namely the idea that interpretation can be an important management tool. The book repeated a phrase originally found in the NPS Administrative Manual that even today remains the motto of many interpreters: “Through interpretation, understanding; through understanding, appreciation; through appreciation, protection.”⁹⁴⁹

Most other scholars of interpretation also seem to rely on Tilden’s definition and ideology of interpretation as well, though several have built on or

⁹⁴⁶ Ibid., 8.

⁹⁴⁷ “Interpretation,” Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/interpretation> (accessed 28 October 2010).

⁹⁴⁸ Tilden, *Interpreting our Heritage*, 8.

⁹⁴⁹ Ibid., 38.

added corollaries to Tilden's ideas and principles over time. Social scientists in particular became interested in interpretation in the 1970s and have focused more on understanding the visitor or audience. For instance, Donald Field and J. Alan Wagar define it as "the successful transmission of information to clientele groups."⁹⁵⁰ Still, sociologists Gary Machlis and Donald Fields cite Tilden as foundational to understanding the ideology of interpretation. They note that there are practical objectives to interpretation, such as assisting the visitor, accomplishing management goals, and promoting public understanding of a site, but as Tilden shows, it is also educational and inspirational.⁹⁵¹

Building on Tilden's work, in their studies of interpretation Field and Wagar identify several problems that diminish the effectiveness of interpretation, including an inadequate emphasis on interpretation in resource management agencies, a lack of understanding of behavioral patterns and their significance to interpretation, a mismatching of messages to visitors, and not monitoring the effect of interpretive efforts. They also offer many valid suggestions for ways to improve interpretation in such areas, while acknowledging they may not all be

⁹⁵⁰ Donald R. Field and J. Alan Wagar, "Visitor Groups and Interpretation in Parks and Other Outdoor Leisure Settings," in Gary E. Machlis and Donald R. Field, eds., *On Interpretation: Sociology for Interpreters of Natural and Cultural History* (Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 1984), 12.

⁹⁵¹ Machlis and Field, *On Interpretation*, 1-2.

feasible considering the time and budgetary constraints that most parks and historic sites usually face.⁹⁵²

Scholarly studies of interpretation have branched out to espouse theories relating to more specific areas of interpretation, such as environmental or indigenous issues, which are important concerns in this dissertation. Academics in the field of natural resource management have also expanded upon Tilden's themes and concepts. For example, Douglas Knudson, Ted Cable, and Larry Beck wrote what is basically a natural resource management textbook on interpretation, which they define as "the 'translation' of historic, cultural and natural phenomena so that the audience...can better understand and enjoy them."⁹⁵³ According to them, "Interpreters are the storytellers who transmit the essence and meaning of culture and nature to society" by uniting people with resources (environment) and culture (heritage) through programming and media. In other words, they help turn facts into stories and experiences, with the goal of enriching visitor experiences and encouraging conscientious use of resources. These authors make sure to emphasize that interpretation is a recreational activity, not just an educational experience.⁹⁵⁴

To achieve the goals of interpretation, these three authors believe that modern interpreters must have a strong background in cultural and natural

⁹⁵² Field and Wagar, "Visitor Groups and Interpretation in Parks and Other Outdoor Leisure Settings," in Machlis and Field, *On Interpretation*, 13.

⁹⁵³ Knudson et al, *Interpretation of Cultural and Natural Resources*, xvi.

⁹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, xvii, xix, 1.

resources, communication, psychology, and administration, and possess a strong imagination and sense of creativity. They also recognize the importance of interpretation to achieving management goals, such as understanding reasoning behind different policies and proactively protecting resources. However, they also have a more expanded view of what interpretation can accomplish, including an understanding of democratic decision-making, awareness of global ecology, and an ethical sense of place in history and the present. Ultimately, they see interpreters as the ambassadors of the agency for which they work, with the goal of turning visitors into skilled amateur interpreters (thereby making them amateur ambassadors for the parks).⁹⁵⁵

Sam Ham, a professor of Environmental Communication and International Conservation at the University of Idaho, also focused more on the issue of natural resource interpretation in his well-regarded 1992 *Environmental Interpretation: A Practical Guide for People with Big Ideas and Small Budgets*. Ham relies on Tilden's definition of interpretation to guide him, but he adds that interpretation involves translating academic or technical definitions of scientific terms or concepts into words and ideas that the general public can understand.⁹⁵⁶

More recently, David Larsen of the Mather Training Center wrote a humorous article for the *Journal of Interpretation Research* in 2002 that included his perceptions of the various functions of interpretation. He discussed several

⁹⁵⁵ Ibid., xix, xx, 7, 11, 66.

⁹⁵⁶ Sam H. Ham, *Environmental Interpretation: A Practical Guide for People with Big Ideas and Small Budgets* (Golden, CO: North American Press, 1992), 3.

different caricatures of interpretation: the never-ending gush of data, a type of entertainment, an attempt at sly propaganda, or a disguised form of education. While interpretation encompasses elements of each, it also aspires to more—namely, trying to find ways to connect the tangible and intangible for their audience while stirring them to form their own meaningful connections with a resource, and above all to pose questions rather than provide answers.⁹⁵⁷

In an article from 2002, Larry Beck and Ted Cable defined interpretation as “a form of communication having an educational function...with messages typically involving our natural legacy and/or cultural heritage.” They go on to point out that this method goes beyond just teaching facts but also attempts to reveal “meanings inherent in the resource that are relevant to the audience” in order to connect tangible, intangible, and universal concepts.⁹⁵⁸ They also believe that interpretation is an art form and therefore highly individualistic, meaning every interpreter’s product will be different based on their personal background, experience, and creativity. Likewise, an audience’s response to interpretation is individualized as well as based on the audience’s background and tastes.⁹⁵⁹

By 1995, the range of services included under the umbrella of interpretation in the NPS included personal services, publications, exhibits,

⁹⁵⁷ David L. Larsen, “Be Relevant or Become a Relic: Meeting the Public Where They Are,” *Journal of Interpretation Research* 7:1 (2002): 18.

⁹⁵⁸ Larry Beck and Ted Cable, “The Meaning of Interpretation,” *Journal of Interpretation Research* 7:1 (2002): 7-8.

⁹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 8.

audiovisual presentations, and outreach.⁹⁶⁰ Ralph Lewis, who worked in the NPS museum branch from 1946 until 1971, stated in his *Manual for Museums* that “Among the most important contributions the National Park Service has made since its founding in 1916 has been the development of extraordinary museum technology and administration—national in scope and international in influence.”⁹⁶¹ This helps illustrate the point that, while interpretation refers primarily to a service provided, it also involves devices such as museum displays or trailside markers that take the place of live interpreters.

As a way to make sense of these changes in interpretation’s definition, I turned to Barry Mackintosh’s *Interpretation in the National Park Service: A Historical Perspective*. This is the only published secondary source I found discussing the entire history of interpretation in the NPS (through 1986), and was an invaluable resource for this dissertation. Its overview of the history of interpretation in the service at the national level was essential to helping me place my own case study into the broader context of events and changes in NPS interpretation.

National Park Service and Grand Canyon History

Historian Michael Anderson’s works, especially *Polishing the Jewel: An Administrative History of Grand Canyon National Park*, provide the backbone for my understanding of the history of Grand Canyon National Park. However, my

⁹⁶⁰ Knudson et al, *Interpretation of Natural and Cultural Resources*, 47.

⁹⁶¹ Ralph H. Lewis, *Manual for Museums* (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, Department of the Interior, 1976), v.

dissertation contradicts his argument in *Polishing the Jewel* that GCNP administrators were caught in a bureaucracy that granted them little agency or autonomy in managing the Park. Anderson relies on world systems theory, which basically argues that the core (in this case the national NPS) exerts an almost insurmountable influence and control on the periphery (in this case Grand Canyon National Park), as a foundation for his administrative history of the Park. For example, in the introduction he states that he decided to refrain from referring too much to specific administrators or superintendents by name, since he argues that they were basically cogs in a distant bureaucracy and had little personal influence over park matters.⁹⁶² However, my research into the interpretive division shows that NPS employees at the Park had a great deal of influence over the shape that their interpretation work took there, especially in the early years of the Park, and that there was quite a bit of communication and sharing of ideas between the local and national NPS offices.

Whereas *Polishing the Jewel* is mostly limited to the NPS period of Grand Canyon history, Stephen Pyne's *How the Canyon Became Grand* provides a broader overview of the Grand Canyon in American culture. His intellectual history of the Canyon examines how changing cultural values affected how visitors tried to make sense of the Canyon, such as how the Spanish showed little interest in the natural wonder of the Canyon because of their hostility to Enlightenment science, yet in the mid-1800s the scientific revolution inspired

⁹⁶² Michael Anderson, *Polishing the Jewel: An Administrative History of Grand Canyon National Park* (Grand Canyon: Grand Canyon Association, 2000), vii.

Euro-American geologists to hold it up as a model for understanding processes of nature. However, he does not mention the role of formal interpretive programming in this progression, and largely ignores Native Americans, allowing my study to help fill in these gaps.

Because his is an intellectual history it is not surprising that Pyne focuses on the educated elite's role in creating the iconic symbolism of the Canyon, and while my study corroborates that this was often the case (particularly in the early days of the Park with the impact of John C. Merriam, Harold Gladwin, and others), I believe it also shows the role of the general public in contributing to the development of this image through their participation in interpretation. As Pyne concludes, "each visitor hears only the echo of his or her own voice" when contemplating the meaning of the Canyon, yet I believe my dissertation shows that interpreters have played a significant role in influencing how the visitors experience and think about the Canyon, thereby shaping their voice.⁹⁶³

Furthermore, by discussing the role of Native Americans in Grand Canyon interpretation, I am able to show how Grand Canyon cultures influenced perceptions about the area, whereas Pyne tends to focus more heavily on scientific aspects.

Geographer Barbara Morehouse also helps place Grand Canyon history in a broader perspective in *A Place Called Grand Canyon: Contested Geographies*. This book contains valuable information on the Park's cultural geography,

⁹⁶³ Stephen J. Pyne, *How the Canyon Became Grand* (New York: Viking, 1998), 158.

addressing its evolving “ownership” by both Native Americans and the federal government and the conflicts that such changes have caused. Morehouse argues that the region is united rather than divided by the Canyon, even while recognizing differences in how resources are valued, used, and managed. The book is arranged chronologically and focuses primarily on land management policies, especially regarding their impact on Native Americans. Morehouse’s examination of how Native Americans fought to have their voices heard in developing such policies meshes with my analysis about their efforts to gain more of a voice in interpretation. As Morehouse shows, management policies that ignore the varied interests and ecosystems of the Grand Canyon can leave the landscape inadequately understood and protected; likewise, my dissertation shows how interpretation that ignores elements of natural and cultural history of the region can lead to similar damage by failing to adequately protect resources, such as failing to inform the public about endangered species in the Park or desecrating Native American sacred spaces.⁹⁶⁴

Critical and scholarly works on the general history of the NPS abound. One of the most important of these is Alfred Runte’s *National Parks: The American Experience*, in which he argues that 19th century Americans felt a great deal of national insecurity over the lack of manmade monuments that symbolized European civilization. To combat this insecurity, Americans founded national parks on “worthless” lands (which were scenic but at the time considered

⁹⁶⁴ Barbara J. Morehouse, *A Place Called Grand Canyon: Contested Geographies* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1996), 3.

economically valueless) to create a new type of nationalist heritage based on the preservation of natural wonders. This dissertation provides a new perspective on Runte's argument by discussing how interpretation has made these "worthless" lands valuable by preserving and presenting their important natural and cultural values to the American and international public.⁹⁶⁵

In *Mountains Without Handrails*, Joseph Sax contemplates the role of preservationists in the modern park system and their fights with a public that is increasingly interested in the recreational uses of national parks (including river rafting of the Colorado River in the Grand Canyon). Sax argues that NPS policies rely a great deal on public opinion and pressure. He states, "If the Park Service is basically dominated by the ideology of the preservationists, it will act in certain ways...If, on the other hand, it has come to believe in the commodity-view of the parks, it will behave quite differently."⁹⁶⁶ Sax acknowledges the converse of this as well, noting that political pressures can significantly shape the NPS's response to such public pressures. While Sax's work is a wide-ranging, rather philosophical discussion, my own study looks at similar themes within an individual park in a more methodical way. Still, many of my conclusions match his: that a diverse public may have a variety of viewpoints on the purpose and messages of NPS interpretation yet those who make their voices heard play an important role in

⁹⁶⁵ Alfred Runte, *National Parks: The American Experience* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1979).

⁹⁶⁶ Joseph Sax, *Mountains without Handrails: Reflections on the National Parks* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1980), 91-101, 105.

shaping that interpretation (such as the tourists of the 1920s and 1930s who demanded archeological interpretation at the Canyon), but the leadership of the NPS also asserts its own policies from the top-down, especially when faced with political pressure that threatens its operation (as happened during the Eisenhower administration).

NPS interpreters and leaders frequently mentioned the importance of interpretation in shaping American thoughts and actions concerning conservation and environmental issues. To better understand the shifting meanings behind these terms, I consulted several sources in environmental history. Richard West Sellars' *Preserving Nature in the National Parks* was particularly useful because it links conservationist and environmentalist history to that of the NPS, with his arguments about the NPS conundrum between managing tourism and ecological concerns reminiscent of those of Joseph Sax.⁹⁶⁷ Sellars contends that NPS leaders have traditionally privileged tourist demands above ecological issues, and that they therefore have placed too much emphasis on pleasing the public (emphasizing "façade management" of the natural scenery) at the expense of scientifically and sustainably managing park resources. He argues that the majority of NPS funding goes to improving the visitor experience by building facilities and roads and public safety, leaving scientific research neglected. Ironically, even though interpretation can be considered part of this overemphasized visitor experience, my research shows that interpreters have

⁹⁶⁷ Richard West Sellars, *Preserving Nature in the National Parks: A History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997).

lamented the same thing about their own profession over the years, complaining about their inadequate budgets and the amount of money going into building tourism infrastructure.

My analysis supports some of Sellars' contentions, as it reveals that research was often one of the most neglected aspects of NPS interpretative work, and in particular biological research at the Canyon was largely ignored as I showed in Chapter 8. However, my dissertation contradicts other aspects of his arguments. For example, whereas Sellars asserts that the NPS resisted the advances of the modern environmental movement, I argue that, at least in terms of interpretation, it was eager to participate and was quick to develop policies insisting that NPS sites begin environmental education programs. While this could be used to support Sellars' theory that the NPS was just trying to please visitors, I would argue that its long emphasis on interpreting conservation and environmental issues, even to the point where the public complained that they were overly propagandistic, signals that something deeper was at work.

When combined, Samuel P. Hays' works *Conservation and the Gospel of Efficiency: The Progressive Conservation Movement, 1890-1920* and *Beauty, Health, and Permanence: Environmental Politics in the United States, 1955-1985*, provide a solid overview of political but also cultural motivations behind changing environmental values during the 20th century that helped guide my analysis.⁹⁶⁸ Hays argues that before World War II, the public saw nature as a

⁹⁶⁸ Samuel P. Hays, *Beauty, Health, and Permanence: Environmental Politics in the United States, 1955-1985* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987);

finite resource that had to be conserved and utilized efficiently and sustainably to provide material comforts, but that after the war an environmental ethic emerged in which Americans saw protection of natural resources as a path to improved social and personal health and quality of life. He contends that scientists and experts were at the forefront of the earlier conservation movement, while it is the public that has taken the lead on working for significant changes in the newer environmental movement. As indicated in my discussion of Sellars above, my own study confirms these trends, since the earliest interpretation at Grand Canyon tended to focus on passing along more academic scientific information to the public, then during the WWII and postwar era the public complained about conservation interpretation propaganda, and finally widespread public interest initiated the shift toward broader environmental interpretation in the 1960s and 1970s.

Native American History

One of the major areas of change in interpretation themes and management at Grand Canyon involves the fluctuating presence and role of Native Americans. The strained and sometimes hostile relationship between indigenous people and national parks has fairly recently become an interesting area of scholarly research, and these books were important in helping create a basic framework within which I could place my own study. However, these rarely

Samuel P. Hays, *Conservation and the Gospel of Efficiency: The Progressive Conservation Movement, 1890-1920* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959).

discuss how indigenous viewpoints, knowledge, or voice have been incorporated into the interpretation of national park sites. I also consulted scholarly studies of local tribes, which helped me better understand the historical relationship and Native American point of view of the NPS and Grand Canyon.

Joseph Meeker points out the well-recognized fact that early Euro-Americans often saw Native Americans as part of the natural landscape, and in telling the story of national parks tended to glorify or at least commemorate the Euro-American appropriation of their lands, meaning that many Native Americans do not celebrate national parks but rather see them as part of the legacy of land loss and cultural dispossession. As he stated in 1984,

When national parks were established to commemorate the white conquest of the American wilderness and its wild animals, Indians were of course included. So now we can see bears at Yellowstone, wolves at Mount McKinley, Hopis at Grand Canyon, and Navajos weaving blankets at many national monuments of the southwest. The national parks are places of humiliation for Indians who are displayed and exploited there.⁹⁶⁹

Unfortunately, this opinion (admittedly dating to 1984) seems to deny the agency of Native Americans in choosing the ways in which they interact with the NPS.

Mark David Spence makes a similar argument in his book *Dispossessing the Wilderness*. He points out that national parks were created in an image of uninhabited wilderness and the presence of Native Americans did not mesh with this image, so the federal government labored to remove Indians from the parks, as happened at Indian Garden in the Grand Canyon in the 1920s. Furthermore,

⁹⁶⁹ Joseph Meeker, *Red, White, and Black in National Parks* in Machlis and Fields, *On Interpretation*, 133.

policy makers in the early 20th century saw national parks as a place to inculcate a shared national identity, which at the time was built on ideas of the conquest of the American West, further alienating Native Americans from this “progressive” narrative.⁹⁷⁰

Works such as Keller and Turek’s *American Indians and National Parks*, Spence’s *Dispossessing the Wilderness*, and Burnham’s *Indian Country, God’s Country* further address this contentious relationship, while Catton in *Inhabited Wilderness* describes policies of power sharing within parks over natural resource use, such as hunting or fishing. However, none of these address whether Native Americans have had any impact on using interpretation at the parks to bring their unique perspectives to administrators or the visiting public. Instead, Barbara Morehouse’s *A Place Called Grand Canyon* uses a geographical perspective to look at the park as a contested landscape representing the values of various interest groups, particularly Native Americans, providing a significant foundation upon which to build my own narrative.

Most tribes have felt underrepresented or misrepresented in published interpretations of their connection to the Canyon. They have also felt that the NPS and park concessionaires have not given consideration to their wishes concerning interpretation. For example, in one report Navajo representatives complain,

⁹⁷⁰ Mark David Spence, *Dispossessing the Wilderness: Indian Removal and the Making of the National Parks* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 4.

Considering the richness and depth of Navajo traditions about and physical presence in the Grand Canyon, most literature and interpretive programs are woefully silent on the importance of the Grand Canyon to the Navajo people...we were shocked not only at the lack of recorded information about Navajo affiliation, but also at the seemingly pervasive attitude that we really didn't have much to research because Paiutes, Hopis, Havasupais, and Hualapais are the only tribes with any meaningful cultural and historical ties to the Grand Canyon.⁹⁷¹

Historians Robert Keller and Michael Turek reveal that this was a common story at many NPS sites. They explore the relationship between the NPS and several different tribes in their book *American Indians and National Parks* using case studies from various parks, including chapters on the Grand Canyon in particular. They point out that the agency inherited a lot of myths and ignorance about Native American history at many of its park sites, especially those where concessionaires had been well-established before the NPS gained a presence, and that the NPS did not do much to change it at first because they had many other pressing concerns.⁹⁷² Although Mather, Albright, and other NPS leaders had an interest in archeology and Native American art and artifacts, their knowledge of contemporary Indians was very limited. Furthermore, since tourists were interested in romantic stereotypes of Native Americans, and because these stories often made parks more dramatic, NPS administrators often did not want to disturb

⁹⁷¹ Alexa Roberts et al, *The River of Neverending Life: Navajo History and Cultural Resources of the Grand Canyon and the Colorado River* (Window Rock, AZ: Navajo Nation Historic Preservation Dept, 1995), 56.

⁹⁷² Robert Keller and Michael Turek, *American Indians and National Parks* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1998), 26.

these myths.⁹⁷³ My study of Grand Canyon interpretation confirms Turek and Keller's argument by showing the enduring legacy of the Fred Harvey Company's commodification of Native American culture in NPS interpretation at the Grand Canyon, particularly in its early decades as my discussion of Miner Tillotson's book *Grand Canyon Country* shows.

Michael Anderson chose not to go into detail on the role of Native Americans in his administrative history of Grand Canyon National Park because of "the simple truth that these people as well as non-human species have been marginalized in past management equations."⁹⁷⁴ While it may be true that local tribes have not had as much clout in Park management as other entities at the Canyon, such as the Fred Harvey Company, this dissertation shows that they were far from an inconsequential consideration in administrative concerns, particularly when considering the Havasupai's role in shaping the 1975 Grand Canyon Enlargement Act and its subsequent managerial modifications. They may not have been the primary focus of GCNP administrators, but my research reveals that Native American issues, from their physical presence at the Canyon to questions about reservation boundaries, were of concern to every Superintendent at least back to Miner Tillotson.

As the aforementioned books make obvious, the relationship between tribes and the NPS has long been a contentious one. One of the most significant

⁹⁷³ Ibid., 28. The authors include specific quotes from GCNP Superintendent Miner Tillotson to support this argument.

⁹⁷⁴ Anderson, *Polishing the Jewel*, vi.

areas of conflict between these groups involves cultural interpretation.⁹⁷⁵ NPS personnel were often oblivious to Native American needs or treated them patronizingly, while Native Americans often saw the NPS as just another bureaucracy out to take their land and threaten their way of life.⁹⁷⁶ Continuing efforts to negotiate an ongoing relationship between Native American tribes and the NPS is essential, however, for as Spence argues, both Native Americans and non-Indians see national parks as crucial to their political, cultural, and spiritual identity, though often in very different ways.⁹⁷⁷

In recent years the NPS has attempted to work more with local tribes to create more open relationships and sensitive interpretation, though there is still much work to be done in this regard. As Theodore Catton points out in his history of Native Americans in Alaskan national parks, Euro-Americans there were originally enthusiastic about Native Americans' presence and established embryonic forms of co-management with them, not realizing that the two groups did not share the same concept of "wilderness." Euro-Americans had romanticized ideas about indigenous culture living in harmony with nature and thought they would use primitive tools and live there in old-fashioned ways within the parks, thereby providing lessons to modern people in ecological

⁹⁷⁵ The authors note that Yosemite had one of the first park museums in the NPS system, but curators interpreted Native Americans as ancient relics or not at all, while most other places ignored their presence. Keller and Turek, xiv, 22.

⁹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, xii, xiii.

⁹⁷⁷ Spence, 7.

sensitivity and even serving as tourist attractions. Managers and citizens therefore were disillusioned when indigenous people used modern technology to harvest and consume resources, sputtering that they must not be “real” Indians, or had been corrupted by Western ideas or culture. The concept of ecological and cultural change among Native Americans is still hard for many Euro-Americans to grasp, and is therefore hard for NPS interpreters to communicate.⁹⁷⁸

I consulted a number of sources to learn more about the links between local Native American tribes and the Grand Canyon. Unfortunately, no work has yet been published that addresses the general Native American history of the Grand Canyon from prehistory to the present, so I relied on studies of individual tribes to better understand their histories. Most important in providing background history were works by Stephen Hirst on the Havasupai, Peter Iverson on the Navajo, Martha Knack on the Southern Paiute, Jeffrey Shepherd on the Hualapai, and Richard Clemmer on the Hopi. Although these books mention these tribes’ relationships to the NPS to varying degrees, they did not really address the issue of NPS interpretation.

Public History

Several works in the field of public history (beyond those already mentioned in my discussion above of the history of interpretation) influenced my arguments in this dissertation. Public historians are interpreters of the past to a public audience, and books on this topic contain important discussions of the

⁹⁷⁸ Theodore Catton, *Inhabited Wilderness: Indians, Eskimos, and National Parks in Alaska* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1997), 216-217.

audience and methods of historical interpretation to the general public. They helped me develop a better understanding of the dynamics between cultural institutions (among which I include the NPS) and the public, “culture wars” over how history is preserved and presented, and cultural landscapes.

Haitian author Michel-Rolph Trouillot has significantly influenced my thinking as a historian with his book *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*. Trouillot’s thesis about the power of history, and the fact that what is *not* said is often more illuminating and important than what *is* said, have made a powerful impression on me in considering the told and untold stories in Grand Canyon interpretation, especially concerning Native Americans. I believe that his arguments, though aimed at historians, have direct significance for interpreters as well. He shows that if historians are aware of silences in the creative moments of history, they can help inspire new narratives, generate an awareness of alternative interpretations, or reveal how history has been appropriated to serve specific purposes. Although history necessarily involves exclusions of some material in favor of others, it is my hope that this examination of interpretation at Grand Canyon National Park reveals some of the more important silences of past interpretations to help improve it for the future. As arbiters of information to the public, interpreters must be aware of the major role they play in empowering different aspects of natural and cultural history.⁹⁷⁹

⁹⁷⁹ Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995).

Studies of cultural landscapes also aided my analysis since they illuminate the interpretation of both natural and cultural features of scenic national parks. In particular, Arnold Alanen and Robert Melnick's *Preserving Cultural Landscapes in America* was especially relevant to my own study because it included chapters that analyzed the tensions between wilderness preservation and cultural landscape preservation. They recognize the importance of the NPS in starting cultural landscape preservation, but Melnick uses Yosemite as an example of where the agency often focuses on the outstanding natural features and tends to ignore its cultural imprints. My study reveals that, not surprisingly, the same argument can be made about Grand Canyon National Park; although there were instances in which the NPS turned their attention to cultural interpretation, such as with the development of Tusayan Museum, administrators usually considered it a tangential or secondary theme until the past few decades.⁹⁸⁰

As this dissertation has shown, over the years the public has expressed a great interest in the stories told at national park sites such as the Grand Canyon. Therefore books that dissect the public's relationship with the past and their interest in how it is presented have been useful to me in developing my own study. For example, the NPS often mentions its role in preserving and interpreting American heritage, but in *Possessed by the Past* David Lowenthal warns that heritage stresses the likeness of the past and present, highlighting parts of the past that today are seen as admirable and expunging shameful events. My own study

⁹⁸⁰ Arnold R. Alanen and Robert Z. Melnick, eds., *Preserving Cultural Landscapes in America*. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000).

shows how this is true in Grand Canyon interpretation, such as when the regional office in the 1950s urged interpreters to avoid too much emphasis on the ongoing mining history of the Park, since it complicated the NPS's image as a preserver of nature and wilderness.⁹⁸¹

In Martha Norkunas's *The Politics of Public Memory*, she examines how the city of Monterey, California, constructed its historical tourist attractions and what this reveals about how the community sees itself. She argues that the white middle class traditionally created tourist sites for white middle class visitors that reflected values and heritage that was familiar and reassuring to them, which is reminiscent of the early NPS and how it constructed interpretation at GCNP that was appealing to a specific constituency. For example, in her discussion of Fisherman's Wharf, Norkunas notes that interpretation denies the site's ethnic past, allowing groups such as Italians to mark sites but only if they are off the main tourist path so they do not challenge the dominant narrative of progress.⁹⁸² Similar to Norkunas's observations about Monterey, GCNP interpretations politicized public memory, imbedding certain ideologies in the minds of visitors that affected what they expected out of the site and the NPS, romanticizing certain pasts (such as that of ancient Native Americans) while glossing over others (such as contemporary Native Americans) while legitimizing itself by projecting its own

⁹⁸¹ David Lowenthal, *Possessed by the Past: The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History* (New York: Free Press, 1996).

⁹⁸² Martha K. Norkunas, *The Politics of Public Memory: Tourism, History, and Ethnicity in Monterey, California* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993).

values into its interpretations (particularly in its messages about conservation and efforts to generate public support for the NPS).

David Glassberg similarly looks at how Americans give meaning to the past in *Sense of History: The Place of the Past in American Life*. As he shows, public places (such as national parks) are arenas in which competing versions of history are debated, and where a sense of history is socially constructed, meaning that different people with different backgrounds or interests can read different interpretations into what they see there. However, they can also serve certain interest groups more than others. My own study complements Glassberg's, yet while Glassberg emphasizes how communities and individuals form a sense of place, I examine how a governmental agency regulates, absorbs, and reflects these various narratives, and how it therefore is a significant player in influencing the public dialogues that help develop such a sense of place.⁹⁸³

Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen also address the topic of how everyday Americans “use” the past in ways different than academic and public historians. They found that people draw on the past to guide their lives, using personal experience to make sense of the past, construct their identity, set priorities, and shape their future by learning from past mistakes. They also reported that African Americans and Native Americans in particular have a group narrative or shared consciousness about their past that is stronger than most other groups in America. Both groups have their own historical timeline, traditions, and

⁹⁸³ David Glassberg, *Sense of History: The Place of the Past in American Life* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2001).

figures, and critique mainstream history. Their observations show again the significance of interpretation and the important role that the stories interpreters tell can play in their audience's lives, further cementing their need for responsibility to present accurate and diverse information.⁹⁸⁴

Finally, the book *The New History in an Old Museum* by Richard Handler and Eric Gable informed my discussion of the AIM movement in challenging NPS interpretation. In it, anthropologists Handler and Gable analyze how Colonial Williamsburg has tried to implement the "new social history," a movement that began in academia in the 1960s and focused on traditionally marginalized topics such as race, class, and gender, into its business and educational programs since the 1970s.⁹⁸⁵ Their discussion of African American interpretation and presentation was particularly informative to my own interests in Native American interpretation at the Grand Canyon, especially in light of their argument that, despite a superficial commitment to the new social history's ideals, Colonial Williamsburg has failed to transform deeper institutional culture or practices. Though as a response to this movement the site has a larger cast of characters and topics, they are not presented critically, but instead just provide new ways to tell the same old stories.⁹⁸⁶ I believe this to be somewhat true of the

⁹⁸⁴ Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen, *The Presence of the Past: Popular Uses of History in American Life* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998).

⁹⁸⁵ Colonial Williamsburg is the creation of John D. Rockefeller, Jr., and W.A.R. Goodwin and is operated by a private foundation.

⁹⁸⁶ Richard Handler and Eric Gable, *The New History in an Old Museum: Creating the Past at Colonial Williamsburg* (Durham: Duke University Press,

NPS at Grand Canyon as well, though as a public institution it has made greater steps toward institutional change, such as by appointing an Indian Liaison and seeking out Native American perspectives and input in management practices through the Glen Canyon Environmental Studies initiative.⁹⁸⁷

This appendix primarily focuses on how studies of interpretation, the Grand Canyon and National Park Service, Native Americans, and public history have affected my research and where my own work fits within these arguments and theses because these areas provided the most significant information and theoretical foundation for my own analysis. However, interpretation as a practice covers a variety of topics, and interpretation as a policy relates to many administrative and managerial concerns. Therefore, understanding the history of interpretation at Grand Canyon requires reading across a broad spectrum of academic fields, including geology, archeology, sociology, natural and cultural resource management, and many areas of history. While I could not discuss them all here, the bibliography references such books that further enhanced my study.

1997). Handler and Gable focus a great deal on how history is created and interpreted at the site. One of the most interesting parts of their study is their comparison of what is taught in training sessions with its implementation on the “front lines” by costumed employees who deal with customers on a daily basis. I believe this would be an interesting exercise for someone studying present-day interpretation at NPS sites, though it was impossible to do for this historical study.

⁹⁸⁷ For more information see Roberts et al; T.J. Ferguson, *Ongtupqa Niqw Pisisvayu (Salt Canyon and the Colorado River): The Hopi People and the Grand Canyon* (Hopi Cultural Preservation Office, 1998); and Richard W. Stoffle, David B. Halmo, and Diane E. Austin, “Cultural Landscapes and Traditional Cultural Properties: A Southern Paiute View of the Grand Canyon and Colorado River” *American Indian Quarterly* 21:2 (Spring 1997).