Viewing Power and Place at Grand Canyon: Grand View Point, 1880–1926

By Yolonda Youngs

"The region is, of course, altogether valueless," Lt. Joseph C. Ives wrote in 1861. "It can be approached only from the south, and after entering it there is nothing to do but leave. Ours has been the first, and will doubles be the last, party of whites to visit this profitless locality."[1] Historians, geographers, and other scholars with the benefit of time on their sides frequently cite Ives's famously dour assessment as a magnificently inaccurate prediction for the future of Grand Canyon. However, Ives had an exceptionally rough journey through the canyon and one can understand his dark outlook. In 1857, he led a steamboat expedition to explore the navigability of the Colorado River under the auspices of the Army Corps of Topographical Engineers. His boat hit a rock in Black Canyon and sank, leaving him and his crew to navigate the hot, dry, and rough terrain of the inner canyon. While he did visit the south rim, his trip there was short and decidedly not comfortable or leisurely.

Standing at the south rim of the canyon at a different time and place, we catch a scene that would have shocked Ives (Figure 1). In 1907, tourists basked in the warm sun and socialized in front of the Grand View Hotel. At the time, the hotel was one of the few formal lodging options for tourists visiting the south rim. Opened in 1897, eight years before El Tovar Hotel, the Grand View Hotel claimed to be the "only first-class hotel" featuring large and well-decorated

[1] Quoted in Stephen J. Pyne, *How the Canyon Became Grand: A Short History* (New York, 1998), 41.

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Figure 1: Grand View Hotel at the south rim of the Grand Canyon, 1905. Courtesy of Grand Canyon National Park Museum Collection, GCNP Item #12091.

rooms at the canyon.[2] Visitors could enjoy the dramatic rim-side views from the hotel, dine in the restaurant, recuperate in their rooms, and brave mule or horse rides into the canyon's depths, guided by Grand View Hotel's owner Pete Berry. The hotel proved popular with tourists and grew in bursts from 1897, when Berry completed building it, to 1913, the year it closed for business. Postcards, photographs, advertisements, and tourist descriptions of the canyon during the early twentieth century prominently featured the hotel, yet today its existence and history is unknown to a majority of the over six million tourists who visit the canyon each year.

This paper explores the visual, economic, social, and cultural

[2] Linda L. Stampoulos, *Visiting the Grand Canyon: Views of Early Tourism* (Charleston, S.C., 2004), 44–45.

history of Grand Canyon as a story of power, place, and territory from 1880 to 1926. This is a key pivot point in time for the canyon, when its settlement history, economic development, tourism potential, and federal management shifted in several important ways. In short, Anglo settlers, federal land managers, the Santa Fe Railroad, and the Fred Harvey Company transformed the scenic beauty of the canyon into a commodity whereby certain locations along the canyon's south rim became a series of named viewpoints that codified economic hubs of hotels, shops, trailheads, and visitor services. In the process of developing these areas for the quickly growing tourism trade, they transformed these coves and lookout points into a commodity that functioned as an economic hub between the inner canyon and rim developments.

We'll trace this story through the short-lived career of Grand View Hotel told through images and maps paired with the timeline of majors shifts of management, ownership, and use at Grand Canyon. We bring all these threads together to explore how the process of visually representing and popularizing certain rim locations as scenic viewpoints shaped the canyon's development and economic promise as the canyon shifted from an "altogether valueless" location in the late nineteenth century to one of growing profit and popularity in the early twentieth century. To ground this approach, we will trace the brief history of Grand View Hotel, a south rim scenic location whose rise and fall as an economic portal into the canyon mirrors common patterns at other sites along the south rim during this early stage of development.

Many scholars have written about Grand Canyon's economic, cultural, social, and environmental history in the early twentieth century.[3] However, few have paired this perspective with an anal-

[3] A selection of influential readings not cited elsewhere in this essay include Stephen Hirst, *I Am the Grand Canyon: The Story of the Havasupai People* (Grand Canyon, Ariz., 2006); Robert B. Keiter, *To Conserve Unimpaired: The Evolution of the National Park Idea* (Washington, D.C., 2013); Mark Neumann, *On the Rim: Looking for the Grand Canyon* (Minneapolis, 1999); David Owen, *Where the Water Goes: Life and Death on the Colorado River* (New York, 2017); Byron E. Pearson, "How the Forest Service Saved the Grand Canyon," *Forest History Today*, Spring 2012, pp. 3–11; Alfred A. Runte, *National Parks: The American Experience*, 3rd ed. (Lincoln, Nebr., 1997); Richard W. Sellars, *Preserving Nature in the National Parks: A History* (New Haven, Conn., 1997); Marta Weigle, "From Desert to Disney World: The Santa Fe Railway and the Fred Harvey Company Display the Indian Southwest," *Journal of Anthropological Research* 45 (Spring 1989): 115–37; Donald Worster, "Environmental History: The View at the Grand Canyon," National Park Service website, https://www.nps.gov/parkhistory/hisnps/NPSHistory/environmentalhistory.htm (accessed on December 20, 2014).

ysis of contemporary cartographic and popular visual representations of the canyon (postcards, stereoview images, maps). In this essay, I suggest that the Grand View (hotel, point, and trail) provides a window into the past and a tourism geography and cultural landscape evolution story that was common during the transition years of the 1880s to early 1900s for Grand Canyon. The place known as Grand View was one of several locations along the south rim that Anglo settlers, federal management agencies, and postcard makers/photographers selected from a range of dramatic viewpoints. They crafted it to be an economic point of contact for tourism and, through the use of visual media such as postcards and photographs, a "scenic" location. My broader argument is that how people perceive the environmental beauty of the canyon, and where and what they label as scenic, is a social construction created over decades of visual representations of select locations along the south rim that are specific economic and historical markers for tourism. It is not to say that these locations are not breathtaking vistas. They are indeed some magnificent views. But it is important to recognize that the word "scenic" at Grand Canyon carries ideas and meanings that transform and commercialize the environment. A complex history of social and cultural power struggles for place, space, and territory between Native Americans, Anglo settlers, and federal public land management agencies is woven into many of the "scenic" viewpoints at the Grand Canyon.

By looking at the visual record of the canyon in the context of these changes, we can gain better insight into the canyon's history, use, and management. This essay is paired with a series of images and maps that illustrate some of the turbulent but often overlooked visual record of Grand Canyon's early tourism history. As we celebrate Grand Canyon National Park's centennial this year, lessons from this study can enrich our appreciation of this iconic place and inform decisions ahead for park managers, concession operators, visitors, and affiliated tribes.

Management, Settlement, and Ownership

The story of Grand View Hotel's rise and fall is woven into the larger fabric of historical settlement management and landownership

of Grand Canyon. The human settlement mosaic of the canyon includes eleven Native American tribes; Spanish missionaries and explorers; Anglo miners, settlers, and entrepreneurs; federal land managers from the U.S. Forest Service and the U.S. National Park Service; and tourists from a range of social, economic, and ethnic backgrounds. But the turn of the twentieth century captures the canyon at an important social, economic, and political shift.

Grand Canyon management and landownership transitioned between several titles and federal public land agencies during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It was first set aside as federally managed, public land in 1893 when President Benjamin Harrison created the Grand Canyon Forest Reserve, managed by the General Land Office under the Department of the Interior from 1897 until 1905. In 1905, the Grand Canyon Forest Reserve transferred to the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), an agency in the Department of Agriculture. President Theodore Roosevelt augmented the canyon's protected status by proclaiming portions of it as Grand Canyon Game Preserve in 1906 and Grand Canyon National Forest in 1907. Then, in 1908, Grand Canyon National Monument was carved from both of these areas (Figure 2).[4] The USFS managed the monument from 1908 until 1919 when it was transferred to U.S. National Park Service (USNPS) management. However, the canyon's infrastructural framework had already taken shape under the supervision of the USFS along with with the corporate economic might and organization of the Santa Fe Railroad and Fred Harvey Company. Building on the palimpsest of geologic fault lines and Havasupai and Hualapai footpaths and the rough work of pioneer individualists who built bridle and stagecoach trails and spur railroad lines, Grand Canyon's tourism landscape began to take shape. The flow of people, goods, and services flowed to the south rim of the canyon and specifically the emerging hub of trade, settlement, and sightseeing at Grand Canyon Village.

The human history of the canyon reaches further back in time, of course. Nine hundred years ago, Ancient Pueblo peoples lived in the canyon. By the sixteenth century, Spanish explorers, soldiers, and missionaries traveled into the far northern reaches of New Spain, introducing new items into trade networks and agricultural

[4] Michael F. Anderson, *Polishing the Jewel: An Administrative History of the Grand Canyon National Park* (Grand Canyon, Ariz., 2000), x and 8.

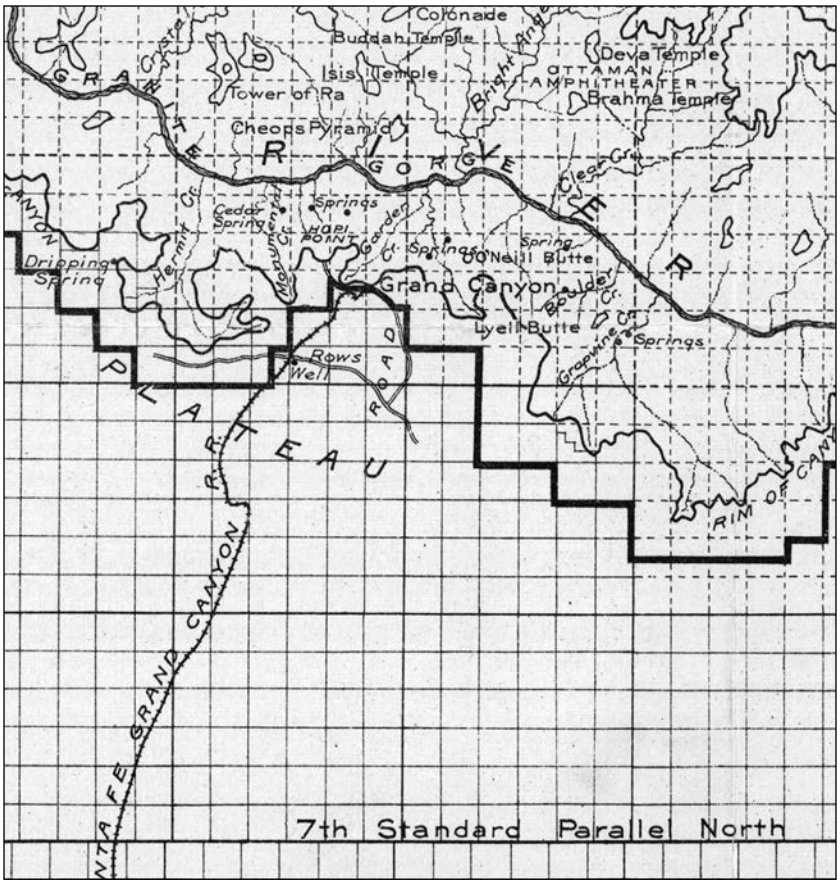

Figure 2: In this detail from a 1908 U.S. Forest Service map of the newly created Grand Canyon National Monument few tourist facilities are marked, but note the early road system taking shape and the Santa Fe Grand Canyon Railroad line from Williams to the south rim of the canyon. The railroad terminus at the canyon's south rim would develop into Grand Canyon Village and the center of Santa Fe and Fred Harvey's developments, several miles west of Grand View Hotel. Courtesy of Library of Congress Geography and Map Division. Item #98687191.

traditions as well as spurring a long period of territorial battles that shaped the settlement patterns of the Hopi, Navajo, Hualapai, and Havasupai. But it was John Wesley Powell's expedition down the

Colorado River through Grand Canyon in 1869 (and then again in 1871–1872) that popularized it for a larger audience. According to historian Stephen J. Pyne, "more than anyone else Powell made the Colorado and its canyons part of Americana." His narrative of the journey published in newspapers and government reports, "created the classic expression of the view from the river, the words by which his generation appreciated its revelation, the images by which tourists throughout the twentieth century have understood it."[5] This drew the nation's gaze to the canyon bringing along new social groups and management tactics.

In 1883, John Hance was the first non-Native settler at the canyon. He promoted mining and other development schemes at the canyon. Miners, loggers, livestock traders, surveyors, and settlers joined him on the canyon's rim and forested plateaus and built cabins, shops, roads, trails, and other networks linking the canyon to the rest of the nation. Indeed, according to geographer Barbara J. Morehouse, by the early 1880s, "the greater Grand Canyon had been radically transformed from a space shared by a few indigenous peoples since 'time immemorial' to an active place of cash-economy production and consumption."[6] A common story across the American West of white settlers displacing Native American tribal members occurred at Grand Canyon at the turn of the century.[7]

By 1900, the scene at the south rim of the canyon was a mixture of Native American residents, a growing number of Anglo settlers, USFS land managers, corporate railroad and hotel managers and developers, and growing numbers of tourists. (Visitation counts of tourists at the canyon did not start until the USNPS assumed control of the canyon in 1919. In 1919, there were 37, 745 visitors to the canyon.)[8] As with much of the country, these white settlers displaced Native peoples such as the Havasupai and Hualapai who had lived on and below the south rim of the canyon for generations.[9]

[5] Pyne, *How the Canyon Became Grand*, 57–58.

[6] Barbara J. Morehouse, *A Place Called Grand Canyon: Contested Geographies* (Tucson, 1996).

[7] Karl Jacoby, *Crimes Against Nature: Squatters, Poachers, Thieves, and the Hidden History of American Conservation* (Berkeley, Calif., 2001), 164–68.

[8] Grand Canyon National Park Annual Park Visitations, available on National Park Service website, https://irma.nps.gov/Stats/SSRSReports/Park%20Specific%20Reports/Annual%20Park%20Recreation%20Visitation%20%281904%20-%20Last%20Calendar%20Year%29?Park=GRCA (accessed July 6, 2019).

[9] Jacoby, *Crimes Against Nature*, 164–68.

Anglo settlers tried a variety of pursuits to make money including mining, trading, and constructing or augmenting transportation routes of stagecoach and bridle trails that could draw people to their nascent canyon rim-side businesses. As mining claims proved difficult to work and spotty for returns on investment of time and effort, some Anglo settlers saw that their economic futures rested with the tourists more than the inner canyon's ore. They already owned land and cabins along the canyon's rim and built trails into the canyon to access their mining claims. Perhaps these same elements could be repurposed for tourism. They pieced together a living by blending their mining in the depths of the canyon for copper and asbestos with tourist-trade services. From the mid-1880s through the early 1900s, Grand View Point was the "locus of South Rim visitation" and active mining and, as such, a key location for economic activity.[10]

Constructing a Grand View

Peter D. "Pete" Berry and his wife Martha were part of this wave of Anglo settlers and entrepreneurs. Although John Hance built the first Grand Canyon tourist lodging at Grand View adjacent to his homestead cabin and offered tents, meals, and mule trips, Pete and Martha Berry built and ran the first modern hotel—the Grand View Hotel—in the early 1890s.[11] The Berrys hosted train and stagecoach visitors, offering them lodging close to the rim; guided mule trips down the nearby Grand View, Hance, and Tanner Trails; meals; and other guest services.[12] By the early 1900s, Grand View Hotel expanded, and it was the south rim's most popular destination (Figure 3).[13]

The turn of the twentieth century saw an increasing number of tourists venturing to the canyon's south rim. Many of them recorded their experiences in words. Naturalist and writer John Burroughs published magazine articles about his trip there, while author, journalist, and editor George James Wharton released his widely read *The Grand Canyon: How to See It (1910).* Popular visual

[10] Anderson, *Polishing the Jewel*, 4; Michael F. Anderson, *Along the Rim: A Guide to Grand Canyon's South Rim from Hermit's Rest to Desert View* (Grand Canyon, Ariz., 2001), 58.
[11] Anderson, *Polishing the Jewel*, 4.
[12] Michael Anderson, *Living at the Edge: Explorers, Exploiters and Settlers of the Grand Canyon Region* (Grand Canyon, Ariz., 1998), 71.
[13] Anderson, *Polishing the Jewel*, 4.

Figure 3: Grand View Hotel during the height of its popularity and expanded development in the early twentieth century. Postcard produced by Detroit Publishing Company. Courtesy of Grand Canyon National Park Museum Collection, GCNP Item #10448.

images, in the form of postcards and photographs, reinforced the canyon's rising popularity. From 1903 to at least 1909, the photography company Underwood & Underwood produced a booklet, map, and set of stereoview photographs of Grand Canyon. These images provided a rough 3-D view of the canyon's rim and seemingly endless inner canyon cliffs and side canyons. They also captured a relatively brief but important economic and social transition at the canyon. Anglo settlers and entrepreneurs blended their avocations to benefit from both their mining claims to ore in the canyon and the steadily growing stream of visitors (Figures 4–6).

This period also coincided with a shift in federal public lands management from the United States Forest Service to the National Park Service. From 1908 to 1919, the USFS strategy tended to work with and for the local settlers to develop Grand Canyon. This strategy changed considerably with the shift in power from the USFS to the USNPS with the creation of Grand Canyon National Park in 1919. As historian Hal Rothman has noted, "Unlike foresters, who came from a decentralized tradition and needed the cooperation of locals to effect their duties, the Park Service managed comparatively small areas according to the needs of outsiders, not locals."[14]

[14] Hal Rothman, *Devil's Bargains: Tourism in the Twentieth-Century American West* (Lawrence, Kans., 1998), 68.

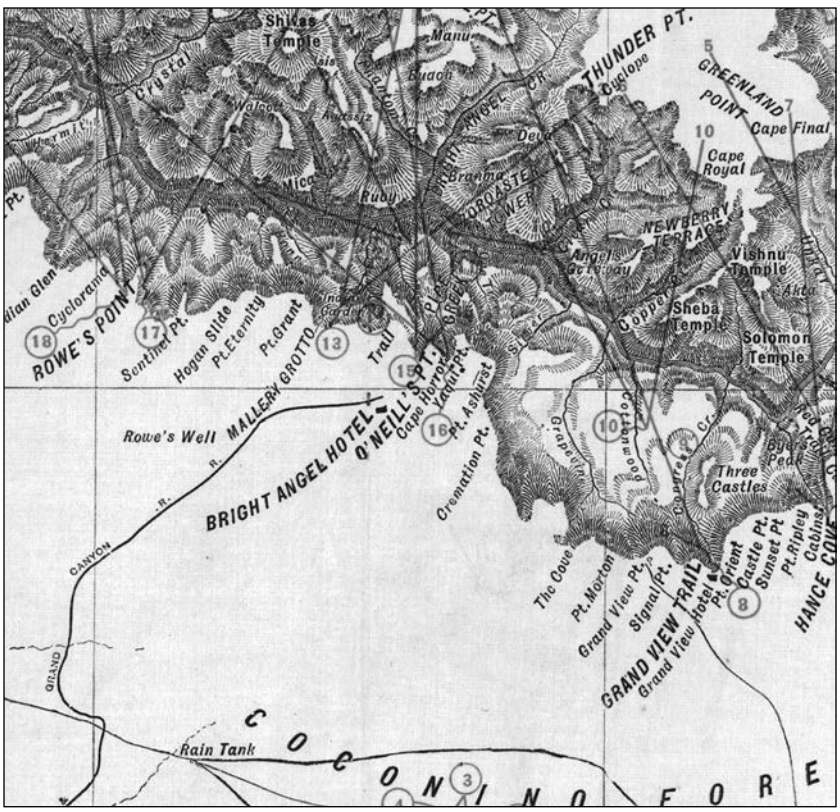

Figure 4: This detail from a 1904 "Grand Canyon of the Colorado" map, created by the stereoview photograph company Underwood & Underwood, reveals the locations of so-called scenic viewpoints and tourism development at the south rim of the canyon in the transitional years between mining and tourism economies. The map and image set was reprinted for several years between 1904 and 1909. The map was sold together with a small booklet and a set of stereoview images. Each image was numbered and tagged to a specific location on the map. The circled numbers match the image number and show the location of the photo, while the lines represent the image's viewshed. Bottom right of the map shows location 8 near Grand View Hotel and nearby Grand View Trail. Courtesy of Library of Congress Geography and Map Division. Item #98687190. See Figure 5 for the stereoview near this location.

Figure 5: A 1908 Underwood & Underwood stereoview photograph #8, "Descending into Grand View Trail by a short, steep mining path, Grand Cañon of Arizona." The image shows a man and mule pack team pausing for a break on the trail. From the collection of the author.

Figure 6: "Grand View Trail, Grand Canyon of Arizona." This 1906 Detroit Publishing Company postcard was a contemporary of the Underwood & Underwood stereoview depicting the same trail, yet they show quite different scenes. Instead of a man and mules descending a mining trail, here we see a group of riders and a wrangler riding up a tourist trail. Both images depict activity on Grand View Trail in the era of socio-economic transition for the south rim community, as Anglo settlers cobbled a living between mining and tourism. From the collection of the author.

At Grand Canyon, we can see this shift through the short life of the Grand View Hotel. Once a popular and flourishing tourism hub at the south rim, the hotel and its owners could not compete with the new El Tovar Hotel and associated tourism facilities blossoming at the terminus of the Santa Fe Railroad tracks on the south rim. Both hotels offered comfortable lodging, meals, mule rides, and spectacular rim-side views of the canyon (Figures 7–8). But as the nascent Grand Canyon Village grew, fewer visitors made the longer trek from the train station to the Berry's Grand View Hotel several miles to the east. The Berry's neighbors—other miners and settlers—also felt the pinch.

As the railroad and its corporate partner, the Fred Harvey Company, expanded their operations, locals complained the "Harvey company conspired to force them out of business." Indeed, many small, local business owners had to find a niche in the canyon's economic landscape or find a different occupation, usually by moving to Flagstaff or other nearby communities (Figures 9–10). An "intense construction program" at the south rim of the canyon followed the transition of lands from the USFS to the USNPS in 1919 as Grand Canyon Village took shape.[15]

The Berrys and their Grand View Hotel could not compete. It was the "best-decorated and roomiest hotel" in 1897 but in 1913, the Berrys conceded their loss to El Tovar. In a protracted battle that pitted the Berrys against the Santa Fe Railroad and Fred Harvey for tourist dollars and valuable rim-side real estate, the couple sold their property to the businessman, publisher, and politician William Randolph Hearst instead of caving in to their competitor's offers. Hearst demolished the hotel in 1929 and, with rumored relish, left the site undeveloped. The named viewpoint, Grand View, is all that remains. Looking at a map of Grand Canyon National Park in 1926, less than ten years after the USNPS assumed management of the canyon and Santa Fe and Fred Harvey expanded the operations, the Grand View Hotel was erased from the map and replaced with Grand View Point (Figure 11).

[15] Ibid., 68–69.

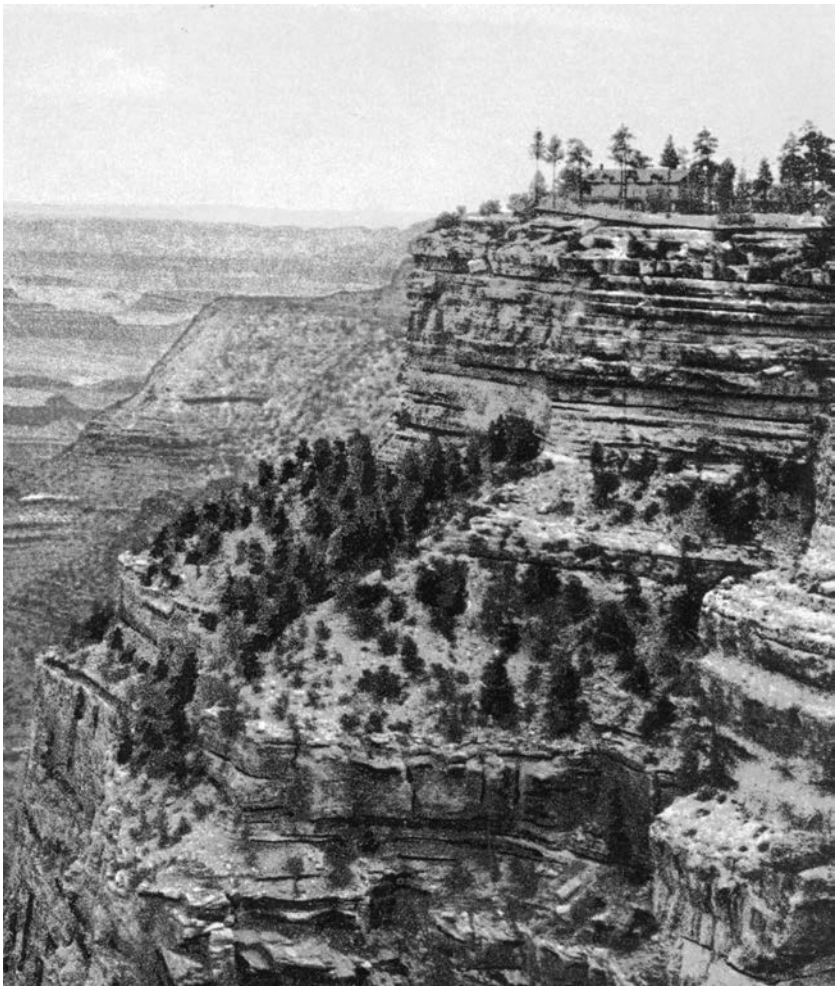

Figure 7: "Grand View Hotel, Grand Canyon Arizona." In this 1907 detail view of a postcard from Detroit Publishing Company, the Grand View Hotel is depicted on the edge of the south rim of the canyon with a soaring view of the canyon and steep cliffs. The image is strikingly similar to a postcard from the same era of El Tovar Hotel, the Santa Fe Railroad and Fred Harvey's lodging option just a few miles west of Grand View Point (Figure 8). The two hotels were in direct competition with each other for tourism dollars. Image #69480, the Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs: Photography Collection, New York Public Library Digital Collections.

Figure 8: "Hotel El Tovar, Grand Canyon of Arizona." Detroit Publishing Company postcard. Built by Santa Fe Railroad and run by the lodging and hospitality partner Fred Harvey Company, El Tovar Hotel was larger than Grand View Hotel and ultimately pushed out the competition from smaller, individual-entrepreneur-run hotels along the south rim. Although both the Grand View and El Tovar hotels shared similar spectacular rim-side views of the canyon, El Tovar benefited from its close proximity to tourist traffic at the terminus of the Santa Fe Railroad at Grand Canyon Village. Image #69590, the Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs: Photography Collection, New York Public Library Digital Collections.

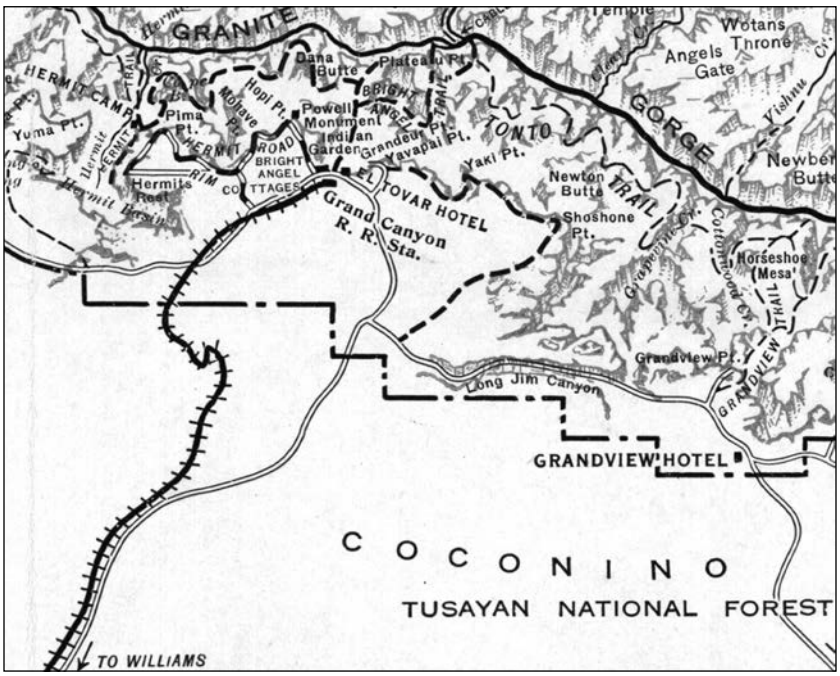

Figure 9: Detail from 1919 map "Grand Canyon National Park Arizona." In this section of the map we see the changing tourism-development geography and cultural landscape at the creation of Grand Canyon National Park and the transition between Forest Service and National Park Service management. Although Pete Berry sold the Grand View Hotel in 1913 and it closed for business that same year, the building stood until 1929. In this map, we see Grand View Hotel prominently labeled near Grand View Trail (lower right). El Tovar Hotel, just to the northwest (center), and Grand Canyon Railroad station are also focal points of the map at the end of the Santa Fe Railroad tracks and the expanding tourism center of Grand Canyon Village. Rand McNally and Company, 1919. Courtesy of the Library of Congress Geography and Map Division. Item #98687192.

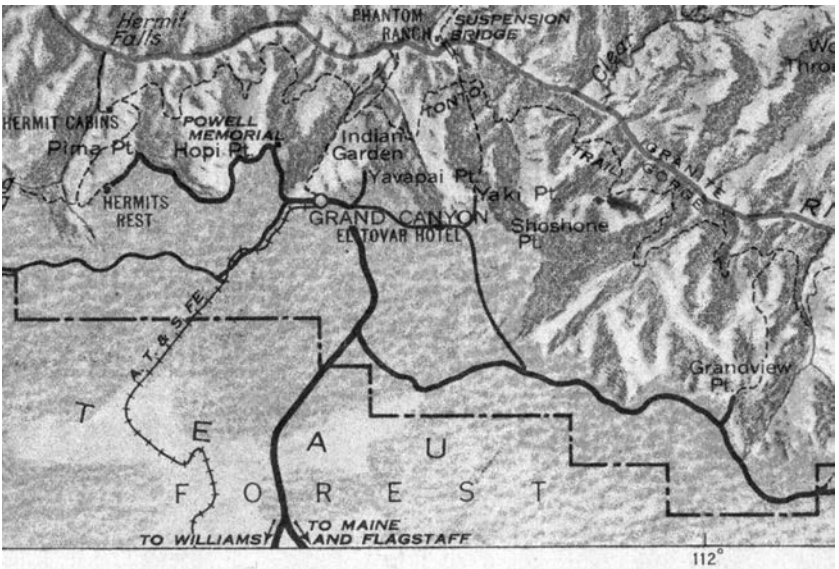

Figure 10: Detail from "Map of Grand Canyon National Park." In this 1926 map, the Grand Canyon has almost reached its first decade as a national park. The geography of tourism development has shifted from a service economy guided by individual, Anglo pioneers, entrepreneurs, miners and managed by the U.S. Forest Service to one of corporate-federal partnerships between the Santa Fe Railroad, Fred Harvey Company, and the U.S. National Park Service. Marks of this transition bear out in this map where Grand View Hotel and Trail fade away to only Grand View Point. El Tovar Hotel, on the other hand, remains firmly in the center of Grand Canyon tourism landscape at the terminus of the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railroad and main roads south connecting the canyon to Williams and Flagstaff. United States National Park Service, 1929. Courtesy of the Library of Congress Geography and Map Division. Item #98687204.

Conclusion

From an economic hub of mining and tourism trade, to a scenic viewpoint, Grand View's story reveals more than just a waxing and waning hospitality business. Two lessons emerge from this canyon history. The story of Grand View echoes across the postcards, photographs, and maps of the Grand Canyon from the 1880s to the 1920s. For example, looking closely again at the Underwood &

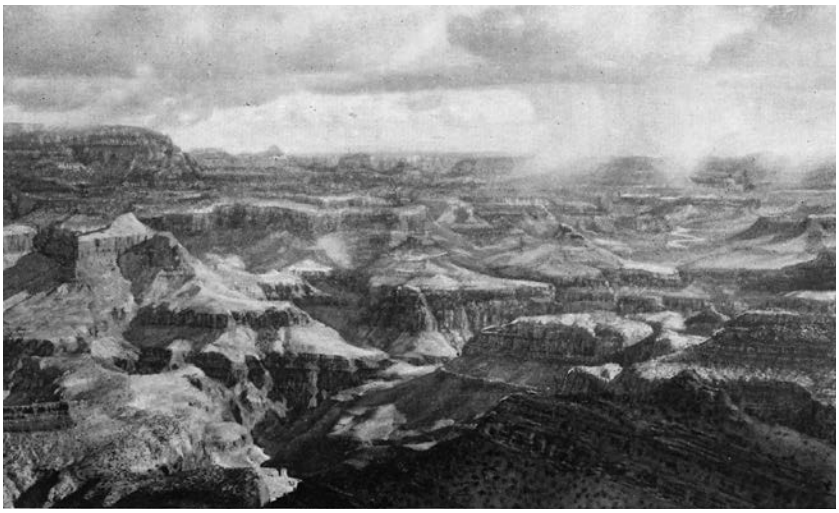

Figure 11: Grand View in retrospect. In this reproduction of a 1935 Fred Harvey Company postcard, the location of Grand View Hotel is only a memory, now shifted from bustling and popular lodging and tourism center of the early part of the century to a scenic viewpoint along the south rim of the Grand Canyon. From the collection of the author.

Underwood 1904 map, a plethora of mining and small business claims along the south rim of the canyon are evident in names like Hance Cove, O'Neill's Point, Mallery Grotto, and many others. Numerous postcards and photographs illustrate these hubs of business and trade. My point here is not to express melancholy feelings of loss for bygone hotels and other tourist infrastructure from a "simpler" time. It is instead to recognize that the Grand Canyon's history is deeply human, political, and environmental. Exploring a sliver of the social and visual history of Grand View Point—from the early 1880s, when Hance established his first tourist services and lodging, to 1926, the date of the final Grand Canyon map in our visual tour of Grand View Point's history and seven years after the USNPS assumed management of the canyon—provides a window into its past. The period between the 1880s and 1926 transformed the environment, the social networks of the south rim, the cultural landscape, and the economic potential of a national scenic landmark making its debut on a national

stage. Ives would have been shocked at the fate of this so-called "valueless" region.

A second lesson from this discussion is that visual representations of the environment and national parks are important, too. How people perceive the environmental beauty of the canyon—where and what they view as scenic—is an idea constructed from decades of visual representations of select locations along the south rim that tie to specific economic and historical hubs of tourism and trade. It is not to say that these locations are not beautiful, but instead to point out that the moniker of scenic at Grand Canyon also comes with a deep cultural, social, and economic history of power, territory, and commercialization of the environment.